
The gaze of modern scientific reason, moreover, is a normalizing gaze. It is a gaze that assesses its object according to some hierarchical standard. The rational subject does not merely observe, passing from one sight to another like a tourist. In accordance with the logic of identity, the subject measures objects according to scales that reduce the plurality of attributes to unity. Forced to line up on calibrations that measure degrees on some general attribute, some of the particulars are devalued, defined as deviant in relation to the norm.¹

1 Introduction

Over and above cultural otherness, as *terra nullius*, Africa was ultimately a prehistoric zone of racial difference.² Writing about the ‘coloniality’ of power and Eurocentrism in the making of the Americas, Anibal Quijano implicates the classification of the world population into races as the most fundamental axis of colonial power.³ More specifically, Quijano highlights that the colonial project of codifying differences between the conquerors and the conquered into racial differences used a biocentric structure which placed the conquered in a natural and permanent position of inferiority.⁴ Walter Mignolo echoes Quijano, observing, in the final analysis, that the colonial world was founded and sustained through a geopolitical order whose foundation was race.⁵ Globally, this biocentric codification became

1 IM Young *Justice and the politics of difference* (1990) 125-126 (references omitted).

2 A McClintock *Imperial leather: Race, gender and sexuality in the colonial context* (1995) 30.

3 A Quijano ‘Coloniality of power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America’ (2000) 1 *Nepantla: Views from South* 533.

4 As above.

5 W Mignolo ‘The enduring enchantment (or the epistemic privilege of modernity and where to go from here)’ (2002) 101 *South Atlantic Quarterly* 927 at 934.

the racial *longue durée* with seemingly indelible epidermalising effects.⁶ The classification of what otherwise were geographically definable populations into races with calibrated hierarchised human essences, developed by Europeans in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and given rational imprimatur during the Enlightenment, has survived as a system for producing and reproducing social domination ever since.⁷ It has far outlasted slavery and colonisation in which it established its initial rationale in the form of a globalised racial pyramid in which 'white' was placed at the apex and people of black African ancestry permanently assigned to the lowest place.⁸

This chapter completes the discussion, begun in Chapter 3, of *foundational* or initial naming of Africans at the time of the colonisation of the sub-continent. I use the term 'foundational' to capture and consolidate the idea of epochal naming, introduced in Chapter 3. The focus in this chapter will be on the construction of African racial alterity.

In explicating the historical production of 'African' as racial identity in the colonial state, the chapter highlights that 'African' was a normative racial subsumption derived from a master dichotomous classification of races to signify its lesser half. 'African' stood for both racial and cultural signposting of evolutionary backwardness whose repository was black embodiment. In the calibration of races in colonial discourses, 'African' signified racial stigmata and the fetishisation of black embodiment: it meant a person with Negroid physiognomy assigned to the nadir of race.

I conclude the chapter by examining apartheid's pantheon of races if only to illustrate the extreme crucible of racialisation in which 'African' was moulded in some, though not all, parts of Africa. The aim is not to overconflate the discourse and treat all African colonies as if they were identical in the colonial imagination of race. Rather, it is to make some generalisable observations about the making of the African race in parts of Africa where the colonial polity put a premium on racial calibration and assuaging white racial fantasies of inherent superiority and domination.

6 S Wynter 'Unsettling the coloniality of being/power/truth/freedom: Towards the human, after man, its overrepresentation – An argument' (2003) 3 *CR: The New Centennial Review* 257 at 263; H Winant 'The dark matter: race and racism in the 21st century' (2015) 41 *Critical Sociology* 313 at 316-318; TF Slaughter 'Epidermalising the world: A basic mode of being black' in L Harris (ed) *Philosophy born of struggle: Anthology of Afro-American philosophy from 1917* (1983) 283-287.

7 L Poliakov *The Aryan myth: A history of racist ideas in Europe* (1974); Quijano (n 3 above) 533.

8 Wynter (n 6 above) 301, citing Poliakov (n 7 above).

Though the preponderance of colonial states in sub-Saharan Africa imagined racial citizenship in terms of a master dichotomy between ‘European’ or ‘white’ and ‘non-European’ or ‘African’, in those colonies in which there was ‘deep settler colonization’, such as Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), or in ‘break-away settler colonies’, such as South Africa, juridical racial regimes did not stop at two polarities.⁹ They also imagined and practised racial ‘trichotomies’ or even quadronomies’ in order to recognise ‘in-betweens’. Historically, ‘deep settler colonies’ and ‘break-away settler colonies’ have been the most ‘developed’, as it were, in terms of racial amplification of the originary dichotomy. Their polities, which were organised around race, serve as a useful case study not only of the construction of races in colonial discourses but in the banal persistence and amplification of race well after the founding of the African colonial state. With its development and institution of apartheid as a theory and praxis of white racial supremacy South Africa, particularly, provides us with an apt study in this regard.

2 The contribution of philosophy and science to the construction of African racial alterity

The focus in this section is on showing the roles played by European philosophical discourses and science – or more accurately pseudo-science – in the production of ‘Africans’ as a category at the nadir of race.

2.1 Philosophy

The construction of racial classification in the colonial state was predicated on a colonially propagated, singular, self-serving notion of evolutionary sameness tethered to essentialised difference in phenotype. Its genealogy can be traced back to the racial caste system that was spawned in

9 Here I am employing Anne McClintock’s taxonomy for describing colonial states. McClintock describes as ‘deep settler colonisation’ the colonisation experienced in colonies such as Rhodesia where there was deep penetration of colonial power and, furthermore, the colonial government clung to power with particular tenacity and even brutality: A McClintock ‘The angel of progress: Pitfalls of the term “post-colonialism”’ (1992) 31/32 *Social Text* 84 at 88. ‘Break-away settler colonies’ are countries such as South Africa (as it was before the fall of the apartheid state in 1994) which were ‘distinguished by formal independence from the founding metropolitan country, alongside continued control over the appropriated territory’: McClintock ‘The angel of progress’ (above) 89. South Africa, a former British colony, was recognised as a dominion in 1910 upon the creation of the Union of South Africa. It formally became a republic in 1961 and continued with, in fact accentuated, oppressive, brutish and exploitative colonial rule on the black population.

eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe and whose aesthetic, moral and scientific cultures constructed some bodies as pure, neutral and rational and others as impure, abnormal and mentally degenerate.¹⁰ Europe's celebrated philosophers, including Hegel, Kant, Hume, Locke and Voltaire spared little energy in propagating virulent racist views.¹¹ In this way philosophers provided key support to Western racial attitudes that began as merely travellers' and missionaries' cultural bias.¹² Voltaire, for example, saw world populations not so much as *homo sapiens* as different human species with the 'Negro race' definitely faring as the 'greatly inferior' race.¹³ Hume saw dichotomous human essences between innately superior and innately inferior races. He said:

I am apt to suspect the negroes and in general all the other species (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilised nation of any other complexion than white, or even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. ... Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction betwixt these breeds of man.¹⁴

At the time of colonisation, racial classification purported to be guided by evolutionary science.¹⁵ This science required signposting a pseudo-Darwinian racial asymmetry in which the black race and its diaspora stood for a backward movement to the primordial stage, whereas the white race stood for its forward movement to an epic stage. Other 'dark races' were assimilated into this polarity and assigned intermediate positions but in ways that assured that the critical faultline in terms of the laws of nature would be the black Negroid race. Black would come to signify human otherness, its extreme. Sylvia Wynter underscores that, from the outset, the Negro race would be consigned to the pre-Darwinian last link in the 'Chain of Being' as the stage which also marks the evolutionary difference between 'rational humans' and 'irrational animals', and 'man' and 'monkeys'.¹⁶

10 Young (n 1 above) 123; C West *The Cornel West reader* (1999) 70-86.

11 M Omi & H Winant *Racial formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s* (1994) 63; West (n 10 above) 82-84. See also KA Appiah *In my father's house: Africa in the philosophy of culture* (1992) 52; N Thiong'o *Decolonising the mind* (1981) 18; MS Copeland *Enfleshing freedom: Body, race and being* (2010) 10.

12 DA Masolo *African philosophy in search of identity* (1994) 3; Copeland (n 11 above) 10.

13 Thiong'o (n 11 above) 18, quoting from Voltaire as quoted, in turn, in TF Gossett *Race: The history of an idea in America* (1965) 45; West (n 10 above) 83.

14 Quoted in RH Popkin 'The philosophical basis of modern racism' in C Walton & JP Anton (eds) *Philosophy and the civilizing arts* 126 at 143, cited in SJ Gould *The mismeasure of man* (1981) 41; West (n 10 above) 83.

15 Quijano (n 3 above) 551-553; Winant 'The dark matter' (n 6 above) 317-318.

16 Wynter (n 6 above) 301.

The evolutionary distinction, to which the colonial project was wedded, translated into ontological dualism in the recognition of human essences with implications for citizenship status in the founded colonial states. Caucasoid physiognomy signified full citizenship, whereas Negroid physiognomy became a referent for civil death which was normatively enforceable by the colonial state through laws, policies and practices that required socio-economic subordination.¹⁷ In this way a biocentric disciplinary regime was given political and social reality across the world, wherever European imperial power announced itself. 'Wherever he goes, the Negro remains a Negro', Frantz Fanon wrote to underscore blackness as deeply inscribed racial stigmata: an ineradicable sign of excess and degenerate difference in colonial discourses.¹⁸ It is on this biocentric normative regime that the colonial state in Africa constructed its notion of citizenship as a bifurcated citizenship importing calibrated racial essences.

2.2 Science

The attraction of science, as Jonathan Jansen observes, is that it is more dependable as source knowledge and discoverer of truth.¹⁹ Its laws promise to eliminate uncertainty and rule out ideology. This view assumes, however, that science is not amenable to controllable outcomes through manipulation by the investigator.²⁰ From time to time, the ideologues of white supremacy have strived to manipulate science. Phrenology,²¹ craniometry²² and intelligence testing²³ are among the

17 Wynter (n 6 above) 315.

18 F Fanon *Black skin, white masks* (1967) 173.

19 JD Jansen *Knowledge in the blood* (2009) 180.

20 As above.

21 Phrenology is a 'science' for determining mental capacities by measuring the size of localised brain areas, the theory being that the larger the size of the localised part, the greater the cerebral capacity. It was first developed at the end of the eighteenth century with Franz Josef Gall, a French neuroanatomist and physiologist, recognised as the founding figure: Gould (n 14 above) 92 97-98.

22 Craniometry is a 'science' that developed as a by-product of phrenology at the end of the eighteenth century and was based on the theory that brain size and intelligence were correlated. S Dubow *Scientific racism in modern South Africa* (1995) 29; Gould (n 14 above) 57-60 64-65 82-112. Using craniometry, Morton, for example, a Philadelphia-based doctor and staunch defender of slavery, purported to show in two published works that whites had the biggest brains, blacks the smallest, and that Native Americans occupied an intermediate position: SG Morton *Crania Americana* (1839); SG Morton *Crania Aegyptiaca* (1844); Dubow *Scientific racism in modern South Africa* (above) 28-29; Gould (n 14 above) 53-54.

23 Intelligence testing refers to intelligence quotient (IQ) testing. It was pioneered by Alfred Binet, a French psychologist who, incidentally, had abandoned craniometry in favour of psychological methods as more dependable methods for measuring

scientific methods that race science historically enlisted in a bid to identify intrinsic biological differences and demonstrate that racial differences are fixed and deep, further entrenching the idea that black persons are intrinsically inferior to white people.²⁴ For example, following the defeat of the Herero and Nama people by the Germans at the turn of the twentieth century during the colonisation of South-West Africa (now Namibia) this part of Africa became a field laboratory for phrenology and craniometry by German race scientists.²⁵ The 'scientists' began with a hypothesis of natural racial degeneration among African people and the dangers of racial mixing, which they had little difficulty in proving.²⁶

Using the 'science' of phrenology, these 'scientists' assigned whites the status of *races frontalis* to mark their possession of the largest anterior parts of the brain that are associated with higher mental functions and therefore their superiority over blacks, who were assigned the status of *races occipitals* to mark their premiere position in respect of posterior parts of the brain that are associated with mundane tasks, involuntary movements, sensation and emotion.²⁷ Paul Broca, a French professor of clinical surgery, was an eminent phrenologist, whose main hypothesis was that human races occupied positions on a linear scale of mental capacities. In his robust

intelligence. In its original conception, IQ testing was intended not so much to measure intelligence in the abstract but to identify children who were performing below their expected level and were in need of 'special' education. Gould (n 14 above) 148; Dubow (n 22 above) 211-212. As IQ testing became popular, its use was extended beyond the original purpose. Especially in the United States, IQ testing became yet another instrument for giving legitimacy to biological determinism against a backdrop of a history of slavery, prevailing racial segregation and a doctrine of white supremacy in the same way as phrenology and craniometry had attempted to do: Gould (n 14 above) 155-157.

- 24 P Rich 'Race, science and the legitimisation of white supremacy in South Africa 1902 – 1940' (1990) 23 *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 665; S Dubow *Racial segregation and the origins of apartheid in South Africa 1919-1936* (1989); AJ Norval *Deconstructing apartheid discourse* (1996) 31-32; ML Fick 'Intelligence test results of poor white, native (Zulu), coloured and Indian school children and the educational and social implications' (1929) 26 *South African Journal of Science* 904. For a view on the use of science to justify racism in the United States, see R Horsman *Race and manifest destiny: The origins of American racial Anglo-Saxonism* (1981) 43-61, noted in KW Crenshaw 'Race, reform and retrenchment: Transformation and legitimisation in antidiscrimination law' (1988) 101 *Harvard Law Review* 1331 at 1370-1371 footnote 149.
- 25 D Olusoga & CW Erichsen *The Kaiser's holocaust: Germany's forgotten genocide* (2010) 245-251.
- 26 One of the race scientists was Eugen Fischer who published a book to prove a thesis of racial degeneration through racial 'mixing': E Fischer *Die Rehobother Bastards und das bastardierungsproblem beim menschen* (*The Rehoboth bastards and the bastardisation problem in man*) (1913); Olusoga & Erichsen (n 25 above) 249-250.
- 27 Gould (n 14 above) 92 97-98.

critique of biological determinism, Stephen Gould says this of Broca's scientific approach:

He traversed the gap between fact and conclusion by what may be the usual route – predominantly in reverse. Conclusions came first and Broca's conclusions were the shared assumptions of most successful white males during his time ... Broca and his school used facts as illustrations, not as constraining documents. They began with conclusions, peered through their facts, and came back in a circle to the same conclusion.²⁸

The 'objective' and authoritative value of science in resolving the troubling question of equal citizenship *vis à vis* the 'native' who, after all, was said to be in a state of arrested development²⁹ and recapitulation,³⁰ was not lost on colonial discourse. In 1937, Linde, a psychiatrist based in Cape Town, articulated the prevailing colonial sentiment of racially differentiated intelligence and scientifically valid calibrated citizenship when he said:

There can be one, and only one adequate reason justifying differentiation, and that is if the native can be proved to have an inferior intelligence to the European. In that case, that is, if he is really at the mental level of the child, we obviously cannot trust him with the vote or with other privileges of full citizenship.³¹

Gould, Dubow and other writers highlight the considerable effort and ingenuity that were employed by craniometrists to ensure that the scientific

28 Gould (n 14 above) 85.

29 In the early twentieth century especially, the theory that Africans had arrested cerebral development was popularised in colonial and scientific discourses through the alchemy of medical science, anthropological findings and travel writers. The thesis was that anatomical and physiological differences between the brains of whites and blacks were such that an adult African at best attained the cerebral development of the average seven or eight year-old European. This was because the brains of African people stopped growing after puberty and thereafter they deteriorated. The most widely-shared explanation for arrested development among scientists was the theory of premature closure of the brain sutures in Africans which stymied any further cerebral growth: Dubow (n 22 above) 198-204.

30 Recapitulation is an evolutionary theory that was established in the nineteenth century and was used to validate racial hierarchies. It is a theory that is based on the notion of retracing or reconstructing evolutionary lineage. The hypothesis is that when an individual grows, they pass through a series of stages that represent adult ancestral forms. As Gould observes, recapitulation served to confirm that the ancestral lineage of races had progressed to different levels of development and that some races progressed further than others. More specifically, the theory was used to confirm that adults of the 'inferior' black race were at the evolutionary stage of development of the children of the 'superior' race. Recapitulation became not just a biological deterministic tool but also a tool for organising racial hierarchies: Gould (n 14 above).

31 Cited in Dubow (n 22 above) 210.

racial inquiry always yielded inscribed racial identities.³² For example, if craniometry revealed that 'Negro' and 'Nordic' skulls had the same characteristics in terms of a dolichocephalic (long-headed) head shape, then new criteria, such as prognathism (measurement of the projection of the face and jaws beyond the forehead) and nasal indices (measuring the relative breadth to height of the nose), were introduced to fit a script in which anatomical characteristics of whites eventually trump those of their black counterparts.³³ Georges Cuvier, a leading French zoologist, got around the uncomfortable finding that 'primitive' races frequently turned out to be large-brained by suggesting that the large brain size of 'primitive' races was caused by development of the posterior region of the brain (the less cerebrally significant) and not the frontal region of the brain (the more cerebrally significant).³⁴

IQ testing historically provided its fair share of pseudo-science. In IQ testing differences among white children have largely been explained in terms of environmental differences, whereas heredity has been the explanation proffered for differences between black and white children.³⁵ Moreover, low IQ performance among whites has been treated as a problem that could be remedied through socio-economic intervention.³⁶ As Paul Rich notes, behind much of the science of race has been an unstated assumption that there is some form of racial order and hierarchy in which the white, Anglo-Saxon race occupies the premier position.³⁷ Iris Young captures the unsparing, all-out search for 'objective' standards to legitimise the supremacy of white bodies over dark ones in the following remarks:

In the developing sciences of natural history, phrenology, physiognomy, ethnography, and medicine, the gaze of the scientific observer was applied to bodies, weighing, measuring, and classifying them according to normative hierarchy. Nineteenth-century theorists of race explicitly assumed white European body types and facial features as the norm, the perfection of human form, in relation to which other body types were either degenerate or less developed. Bringing these norms into the discourse of science, however, naturalized them, gave the assertions of superiority an additional authority as truths of nature.³⁸

32 Gould (n 14 above) 73-112; Dubow (n 22 above) 29.

33 Dubow (n 22 above) 29.

34 Dubow (n 22 above) 29-30.

35 Rich (n 24 above) 679; Dubow (n 22 above) 223-232.

36 Dubow (n 22 above) 225-226.

37 Rich (n 24 above) 667.

38 Young (n 1 above) 128.

In the end the science of investigating racial differences became, foremost, the science of validating preconceived racial differences. Science about races, as Gould notes, became advocacy masquerading as objectivity.³⁹ ‘Scientific’ conclusions stemmed from the assumption that there were human races and that they could be ranked on a linear scale of human worth.⁴⁰ The genius of proving hierarchical racial differences using craniometry, for example, lay in selecting criteria for testing a hypothesis and modifying or abandoning the criteria if the outcome proved inconvenient, such as when it suggested that human variation might be ramified and random⁴¹ and that the overall genetic difference among races is astonishingly small.⁴² Instead of using information about genetic difference to benefit humankind, the science of race became a racist and racialising ‘scientific’ enterprise.

Thus, in its understanding of race, European race science privileged European body types and facial features as the perfection of human form, whereas different bodies and faces were classified as less developed or degenerate.⁴³ Degeneracy lay, as Sander Gilman and other writers⁴⁴ point out, in gross morphology. It could be found in skin colour, hair texture, facial features, shape of head and nose, location of eyes, structure of genitals, buttocks, hips, chest, breasts and so on, which can be observed or measured using comparative anatomical amarmentaria and given ‘scientific validity’. Saul Dubow captures the significance of anatomy as race when he says, to nineteenth-century Europe, physiognomy became a ‘powerful means of registering “otherness”’.⁴⁵

3 Re-membering Saartjie Baartman: Black embodiment, ascribed identity and fetishisation

In colonial discourses black embodiment historically served to provide white aggressive imaginary with a site for metonymic construction of lack and despised embodiment.⁴⁶ The exhibition of the semi-undressed person of Saartjie Baartman in Britain and France during her life, as well as parts of her body after her death, is telling of the black body as a site for

39 Gould (n 14 above) 85.

40 Gould (n 14 above) 86.

41 Gould (n 14 above) 73-112.

42 Gould (n 14 above) 323.

43 Young (n 1 above) 128; West (n 10 above) 75-82.

44 SL Gilman *Difference and pathology: Stereotypes of sexuality, race and madness* (1985) 156-158 191-194; Young (n 1 above) 128; West (n 10 above) 78-80.

45 Dubow (n 22 above) 23.

46 HK Bhabha ‘The other question ...’ (1983) 24 *Screen* 18 at 29; Young (n 1 above) 124.

aggressive racial fantasy, disavowal and fetishisation.⁴⁷ Her story stands, not only as testimony to the presence of egregious forms of racial and gender degradation in Europe at the time, but also captures poignantly how nineteenth-century Europe perceived African bodies as pathologised objects that merited a white, imperialist mastering gaze and ‘scientific’ dissection to give objective validity to racial stigmata and a biocentric structure of race which placed blacks in natural and permanent inferiority.⁴⁸ The gaze was racialised, gendered, sexualised and pseudo-scientific. It dis-membered Saartjie Baartman in the vilest possible manner in life and after death, reducing her to a caricature in order to cohere with a racial stereotype: a ‘Hottentot’ with diseased buttocks and hypertrophied genitalia.⁴⁹

Saartjie Baartman, who was born around 1789, is also known as ‘Sara or Sarah’.⁵⁰ Holmes alerts us to the controversy attending to her first name. Saartjie was the name she used when growing up:⁵¹ it is a name derived from Dutch. Used affectionately and sentimentally it means ‘little Sara’. Its Afrikaans form, according to Holmes, captures an intensity of affection and care which is lost when the name is anglicised to Sara or Sarah. At the same time, Holmes cautions us, Saartjie carries ‘-tjie’ as a suffix which, when used in a context of unequal relations between the namer and the named, conveys contempt, belittlement and subordination for the named. If the unequal relations are of a racial nature, as obtained at the time of her birth, then Saartjie also has a racially pejorative meaning depending on who the namer is. Many commentaries use Sara or Sarah in part to distance themselves from any racist connotation in ‘Saartjie’, and in part to use the name she was baptised with when she became a Christian convert in 1811 in Britain. However, I have chosen to use Saartjie on the

47 R Garland-Thomson ‘Integrating disability, transforming feminist theory’ (2002) 14 *National Women’s Studies Association Journal* 1 at 7; A Fausto-Sterling ‘Gender, race, and the nation: The comparative anatomy of Hottentot women in Europe, 1815–1817’ in J Terry & J Urla (eds) *Deviant bodies: Critical perspectives on difference in science and popular culture* (1995) 19–48; Young (n 1 above) 127; Gilman (n 44 above) 88–94; Copeland (n 11 above) 12.

48 C Crais & P Scully *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus* (2009) 54–57 72–81; R Holmes *African queen* (2007) 25–32; Quijano (n 3 above).

49 N Gordon-Chipembere ‘Introduction: Claiming Sarah Baartman, a legacy to grasp’ in N Gordon-Chipembere (ed) *Representation and black womanhood: The legacy of Sarah Baartman* (2007) 1 at 4. I parenthesise ‘Hottentot’ to capture the naming of subjects who were Khoisan in colonial discourses and convey its derogatory and racist connotations.

50 Crais & Scully (n 48 above) 107–109; Holmes (n 48 above) xii–xiv. Saartjie Baartman’s date of birth is an approximation due to the unavailability of a precise record.

51 Holmes (n 48 above) xii–xiv.

understanding that those who were affectionate towards her, including her family, called her by that name.

Saartjie was a poor, unlettered woman of Khoisan descent. She was spirited out of the then Cape Colony and exhibited between 1810 and 1815 in London and Paris under a plan hatched by three men – Alexander Dunlop, Pieter Cezars and Hendrick Cezars. Ostensibly, she was to fulfil a contract for services, earn some money and return home. In reality, however, she was the object of financial and sexual exploitation. Though euphemistically exhibited as an exotic woman, in reality she was exhibited as an ‘ethnic pornographic’ object.⁵² Following her death from tuberculosis in 1815, Cuvier, the French zoologist, dissected her body, removing some parts.⁵³ Her skeleton, brain and genitalia were put on display in the Paris Museum of Man (Musée de l’Homme).⁵⁴

Cuvier was racially and sexually fixated on Saartjie Baartman. As part of his anatomical findings, he drew parallels with an orangutan and the lowest order of human species to confirm a thesis of physical affinity between apes and black people. In practice, Cuvier was only reiterating a racial pseudo-scientific theory that he had concluded and popularised prior to his encounter with Saartjie. In 1812, he had described ‘Africans’ as ‘the most degraded of human races, whose form approaches that of the beast and whose intelligence is nowhere great enough to arrive at regular government’.⁵⁵ For Cuvier Saartjie is positioned somewhere between a human and a homunculus: a missing link in the Chain of Being.⁵⁶ She is presented as a category of nature, pure biology. Saartjie is remade into the ultimate referent of Caliban, marking the incommensurability of the equal humanity of black African people. The following animality-suffused ‘scientific’ description of Saartjie’s bodily gestures and physiognomy by Cuvier is a poignant witness to her Calibanisation:

52 Crais & Scully (n 48 above) 54-57 72-81; Holmes (n 48 above) 25-32.

53 Georges Cuvier (1769-1832) was also known as Jean Leopold Nicolas Frederic Cuvier.

54 Y Abrahams ‘The great long national insult: Science, sexuality and the Khoisan in the 18th and early 19th century’ (1997) 32 *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 32 at 44; Dubow (n 22 above) 23; Holmes (n 48 above) 25-32. Saartjie Baartman’s remains were on display in the museum until 1974. Following the fall of apartheid, the South African government requested France for the repatriation of her remains. On 9 August 2002, 187 years after her death, Baartman’s remains were interred in Gamtoos Valley near where she was born in present Eastern Cape: ‘Saartjie Baartman born’, http://www.aaregistry.org/historic_events/view/saartjie-baartman-born (accessed 10 October 2016).

55 G Cuvier *Recherches sur les ossemens fossils* Vol 1 (1812) 105, as cited in Gould (n 14 above) 36.

56 Wynter (n 6 above) 301 303-304.

These movements had something brusque and capricious that recalled those of the ape. She had above all a manner of sticking out her lips much the same way as we had observed in the orangutan ... Our Bushman has an even more prominent muzzle than the negro and an even broader face than the Calmuck and nose bones flatter than the one and the other; in this last respect, I have never seen a human head that more resembles the apes than hers.⁵⁷

Cuvier uses Saartjie Baartman's embodiment as raw material to give a pseudo-scientific comparative anatomy a validity that is teleologically tethered to an already existing discursive hierarchy.⁵⁸ What is at play is explicable in terms of Althusserian interpellation rather than the production of science.⁵⁹ Racial perception and the desire to colonise and appropriate the physiognomy of African bodies determine an outcome pretending to be science. Under the mask of scientific precision Cuvier uses a scalpel, but Saartjie's cadaver in fact is summoned by a nativising discourse of race, class and the appropriation of the Enlightenment's elevation of reason. The darker side of Enlightenment reason is at play here:⁶⁰ it is a telos which keeps black embodiment within the limits of the ontological difference of those perceived to lack reason and beauty and thus are outside the limits of generic identity.⁶¹ The scalpel legitimises the power of defining others according to the logic of the discursive needs of the dissector and not the dissected.⁶² Prior to dissection, Saartjie's body is already determined as belonging solely to the order of material extension and consequently is doomed to death and destruction.⁶³ Cuvier successfully uses comparative anatomy to produce 'controlling' difference out of Saartjie's cadaver.⁶⁴ What matters to Cuvier in the dissection is not the anatomical variety he sees but his 'zero-point in orientation'.⁶⁵ The orientation represents a *maximum* field of vision from a determinate point.⁶⁶ Like Uncle Theo, Cuvier has a visual *habitus* or positionality.⁶⁷

57 English translation from G Cuvier 'Extrait d'observations faites sur le cadaver d'une femme connue à Londres sous le nom de Vénus Hottentote' in G Cuvier, P-Ch Joubert & FL Passard *Discours sur les révolutions du globe* (1864) 211 at 214-220.

58 Abrahams (n 54 above) 43-46; TD Sharpley-Whiting *Black Venus: Sexualized savages, primal fears, and primitive narratives in French* (1999) 23-24.

59 L Althusser *Lenin and philosophy and other essays* (1971); S Hall 'Who needs "identity"?' in J Evans & P Redman (eds) *Identity: A reader* (2000) 15 at 19-21.

60 JA Mbembe 'African modes of self-writing' (2002) 14 *Public Culture* 239.

61 Mbembe (n 60 above) 245-246.

62 R Wiss 'Lipreading: Remembering Saartjie Baartman' (1994) 1 & 2 *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 11 at 34.

63 Mbembe (n 60 above) 246.

64 Wiss (n 62 above) 35.

65 See the discussion in ch 1 sec 2 and in ch 6 sec 5.

66 As above.

67 As above.

His visual telos is *theocratic*: it is 'at home' when all bodies look white. What is outside the visual horizon is invalidated and the outcome is the nativisation of Saartjie Baartman.

Sadiya Qureshi points out that it is highly significant that on presenting his anatomical findings following the dissection of Saartjie Baartman's body Cuvier *reclassifies* her as being a 'femme de race Boschimanne' (female of the Bushman race).⁶⁸ As a result of this classification, Saartjie ceases to be of 'Hottentot type' and becomes 'Bushman type' so that her supposed racial essence is lowered even further in order for a better fit with a prior discourse that places 'Bushman' at the very bottom of the human chain and as close as possible to homunculi.⁶⁹ When classified as a 'Bushman', her embodiment, including her brain and genitalia, can be rendered ultra 'primitive' and analogous to those of apes. At the time, 'racial' science regarded the San people (in derogatory terminology, 'Bushmen') as human, but not quite human. Saartjie's black embodiment is made to serve as a yardstick in plotting a pseudo-Darwinian evolutionary progress, and to discern identity and the distinction between beauty and ugliness.⁷⁰ She is ascribed a normative identity she cannot negotiate: an identity nativised from without to mark the terrain of the primitive in contrast to a white identity as the paragon of the human species.⁷¹

To nineteenth-century European bourgeois aesthetics and culture, Saartjie Baartman was not only racially deformed, she also epitomised a sexually degenerate, dark race. Her genitalia, in particular, were pathologised and rendered the central image and episteme of the black female, representing 'lasciviousness, corruption and disease'.⁷² Forced to line up for calibration using a 'normalising scientific, aesthetic and moral gaze' mastered and controlled by a European investigator, Saartjie failed the normative test. As implied by Young in the epigraph, she was destined to fail the test as her body was already rendered 'deviant' by a prior discourse.⁷³ Under this normative gaze, she was fetishised and racially scorned.⁷⁴ In all these respects, however, Zine Magubane reminds us that

68 S Qureshi 'Displaying Sara Baartman, the Hottentot Venus' (2004) 42 *History of Science* 233 at 242-243.

69 As above. The aim is not to 'dignify' 'Hottentot' (see n 49 above) but to imply that in colonial discourses an even greater racial inferiority was ascribed to 'Bushman'.

70 Sharpley-Whiting (n 58 above) 23.

71 As above.

72 Gilman (n 44 above) 85-94; Dubow (n 22 above) 23.

73 Young (n 1 above).

74 Foucault summarised the 'normalising gaze' as entailing five stages, namely, (i) comparison; (ii) differentiation; (iii) hierarchisation; (iv) homogenisation; and

Saartjie was unexceptional in her racial debasement, which was part of a much wider repertoire of debasement experienced by colonised peoples at the hands of imperial Europe.⁷⁵ Saartjie Baartman serves as an emblem of nineteenth-century Western philosophical, cultural and scientific traditions and practices for representing non-European bodies which were mediated by the logic of identity and its origins in the Enlightenment.

3.1 Logic of identity

The pathologisation of Saartjie Baartman's dark body can be understood as symbolising the challenges that Western philosophical, political, and cultural tradition has historically experienced in comprehending foreign, non-European worlds.⁷⁶ The challenge stems from a Cartesian spirit that lacks the capacity to comprehend the 'you', and is only faithful to its own understanding.⁷⁷ It is, according to Achille Mbembe, a tradition in which that which is not 'I' poses an insurmountable difficulty that can be resolved only by denying the existence of any 'self but its own'.⁷⁸ The idea that we have 'concretely and typically, the same flesh',⁷⁹ as Mbembe underlines, became problematic for Western philosophical and political traditions when faced with different phenotypes and physiognomies. Clearly, the classificatory system that European culture used on Africa and its inhabitants took othering to an extreme.⁸⁰ The system did not read difference as meaning 'not to be like' in the sense of being non-identical, but meaning 'not to be at all' (nothingness).⁸¹ The classification produced African peoples that epitomised absolute and degenerate otherness.⁸²

Over and above its appropriation in the service of the project of imperialism, a Cartesian approach to race and its binary dialectics can be explicated through the 'logic of identity'.⁸³ Drawing on the deconstruction discourses of Adorno, Derrida and Irigaray, Young criticises 'the logic of

(v) exclusion. M Foucault *Discipline and punish* (1977) 182-183; Young (n 1 above) 125-126.

75 Z Magubane 'Which bodies matter? Feminism, poststructuralism, race and the curious theoretical odyssey of the "Hottentot Venus"' (2001) 15 *Gender and Society* 816.

76 JA Mbembe *On the post-colony* (2001) 2.

77 L. Frobenius *Schicksalskunde im sinne des kulturwerdens* (1938) 111 (first published in 1932 and translated as *Destiny of civilisations*), cited in M Saman 'Senghor's other Europe' (2012) 1 *Savannah Review* 23 at 33-34.

78 Mbembe (n 76 above) 2.

79 As above.

80 As above.

81 Mbembe (n 76 above) 4.

82 Mbembe (n 76 above) 2.

83 Young (n 1 above) 98-99.

identity' in Western philosophical thought for reckoning with perceived varied phenomena through a single, totalising classificatory system which reduces everything to a unity under a hegemonic principle and necessarily represses difference.⁸⁴ It is a logic, as Rosemary Wiss emphasises, that interprets difference from a position that is dependent on and is assimilated to a prior privileged position that is taken as the authoritative view of self, truth and reality.⁸⁵ The prior position represents a discursive centre: a given standard from which to exclude, invalidate or incorporate.⁸⁶ The racial caste system appropriated by colonial and apartheid polities was constructed on such an assimilative logic of identity. It reckoned with equality only if difference was reduced to unity. It was a 'self-generating and autonomous' archive of racial classification: creating the difference and maintaining it through racial surveillance.⁸⁷ The racial caste system reduced the plurality and particularity of different embodiments to unity, using whiteness as the standard of intelligibility to bring everything under control.⁸⁸ It succeeded in creating mutually exclusive categories in which one half of the dichotomy was elevated above the other, which was regarded as human but incomplete and ripe for exploitation.

Expounding on the logic of identity and its foundation in a fantasy of origin which generates mutually exclusive and hierarchical oppositions that transform what is merely different into the 'absolute other', Young says:

... it has no foundation outside itself, it is self-generating and autonomous. Its pure identity or origin ensures that its representation of reality will be unambiguous and true. The logic of identity also seeks to reduce the plurality of subjects, their bodily, perceptual experience, to a unity, by measuring them against the unvarying standard of universal reason. The irony of the logic of identity is that by seeking to reduce differently similar to the same, it turns the merely different into the absolutely other. It inevitably generates dichotomy instead of unity because the move to bring particulars under a universal category creates a distinction both inside and outside. The first side of the dichotomy is elevated over the second because it designates the unified, the self-identical, whereas the second lies outside the unified as chaotic, unformed, transforming, that always threatens to cross the border and break up the unity of the good.⁸⁹

84 Young (n 1 above) 97-98, drawing on TW Adorno *Negative dialectics* (1973); J Derrida *Of grammatology* trans GC Spivak (1976), originally published in 1967; L Irigaray *Speculum of the other woman* trans GC Gill (1974).

85 Wiss (n 62 above) 34.

86 Wiss (n 62 above) 36.

87 Young (n 1 above) 98.

88 Young (n 1 above) 99.

89 As above.

Drawing critically on the Enlightenment thesis, Cornel West underscores the logic of identity, seeing the absolute otherness and discursive exclusion of dark bodies in European modern discourse as the inevitable outcome of a European normative gaze.⁹⁰ The European classificatory system was self-referencing. It used forms of scientific investigation, rationality, Cartesian epistemology and European aesthetic and cultural norms to set the parameters and draw the boundaries of knowledge. In this way the unintelligibility and even illegitimacy of asserting equality in beauty, culture and intellectual capacity between black and white bodies was assured.⁹¹ It is clear that Europeans were not, in effect, discovering Africans but ‘inventing’ them in the same way as they did for colonised people elsewhere.⁹²

Against this backdrop the scaling of bodies under colonialism, apartheid and the doctrine of white supremacy were neither an innovation nor an aberration but rather, a logical application of a normative gaze rooted in Western scientific claims and the Enlightenment. If ever Saartjie Baartman’s anatomy measured up to European humanity it was to the ‘lowest’ and ‘most disgusting’ classes of European ‘prostitutes’ who, like the objectified ‘Hottentot’, had a pathological genital physiognomy.⁹³ The significance of racially-differentiated genitals, as Gilman writes, is that it is, in no small measure, part of validating the scientific thesis of hierarchical racial difference and, in turn, racial superiority and inferiority.⁹⁴ It conveniently connected physiognomy with moral and intellectual capacities.

3.2 Fetishisation

Iris Young analyses racial oppression partly through corporeality.⁹⁵ She sees racism as contingent upon the existence of a group that is defined by a dominant discourse as having an ugly body that must be feared, avoided, hated or derided.⁹⁶ For Kobena Mercer, the production of raced black embodiment through a white binarising normative gaze can be understood

90 West (n 10 above) 75.

91 As above.

92 L. Lange ‘Burnt offerings to rationality: A feminist reading of the construction of indigenous peoples in Dussel’s theory of modernity’ in LM Alcoff & E Mendieta (eds) *Thinking from the underside of history: Enrique Dussel’s philosophy of liberation* (2000) 135 at 138.

93 Gilman (n 44 above) 94.

94 Gilman (n 44 above) 83-91 112.

95 Young does so in a chapter titled ‘The scaling of bodies and the politics of identity’ in her book *Justice and the politics of difference*: Young (n 1 above) 122-155.

96 Young (n 1 above) 123.

as ‘a logic of fetishisation’ in which there is disavowal of difference.⁹⁷ It is mimetic representation aimed at bestowing objectification in order to make present for the subject that is doing the gazing something that is absent in the person that is gazed at and, in the process, assuaging the racial fantasies of the gazer.⁹⁸ Skin colour in the form of blackness has served as the most visible fetish: the ethnic signifier.⁹⁹ Baartman’s embodiment was fetishised in the extreme.

In psychoanalysis, when the body is fetishised by a normative gaze fantasy is at play.¹⁰⁰ Fantasy serves as an intervening factor to construct a representation in which there is *displacement* – the substitution of an object for something that is a dangerous force.¹⁰¹ What is fetishised opens the door to an ambivalent identity – whether racial, cultural or sexual – that swings between affirmation of something that is whole and similar on the one hand, and disavowal of something that constitutes lack on the other hand.¹⁰² It is disavowal that turns what is fetishised into a grotesque figure that summons ‘defence’ in the gazer. Disavowal, Hall explains, is the means by which a powerful desire for what is gazed at is simultaneously indulged and denied.¹⁰³

Shawn Copeland observes that it is Fanon, more than any other writer, who poignantly captures how black embodiment was transformed by racial subjugation and rendered a fetish.¹⁰⁴ Fanon articulates the hegemony of whiteness and its dominance in the representation of embodiment. He captures the purposeful and crushing objectification of black embodiment in ways that evoke its plaintive loss, shock and

97 K Mercer ‘Reading racial fetishism: The photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe’ in S Hall & J Evans (eds) *Visual culture: The reader* (1999) 435 at 437, originally published as a chapter in a book, K Mercer *Welcome to the jungle: New positions in black cultural studies* (1986).

98 Mercer in Hall & Evans (n 97 above) 437.

99 Mercer in Hall & Evans (n 97 above) 444.

100 An essay written by Sigmund Freud in 1927 has provided a foundational psychoanalytic explication of fetishism in writing on the subject: S Freud ‘Fetishism’ (1927) in S Freud *On sexuality* (1977) 345-358; S Hall ‘The spectacle of the “other”’ in S Hall, J Evans & S Nixon (eds) *Representation* (2013) 215 at 257. However, whilst from a Freudian perspective sexuality plays a formative role with the phallus as the object of displacement, such a perspective seems overly narrow and not easily reducible to racial, class and cultural hierarchies, for example. It is better to open fetishisation to a wider interpretation to render it permeable to a variety of social contradictions: McClintock (n 2 above) 184. Indeed, the section on Baartman in this chapter proceeds on the premise of giving fetish a wider interpretation to include race, culture and class.

101 Hall ‘The spectacle of the “other”’ (n 100 above) 256.

102 Bhabha (n 46 above) 27.

103 Hall ‘The spectacle of the “other”’ (n 100 above) 257.

104 Copeland (n 11 above) 15; see also Young (n 1 above) 122-123.

anguish.¹⁰⁵ In *Black skin, white masks*, Fanon draws on phenomenology to speak for black embodiment in its overburdened and fetishised moment when he says:

My body was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recolored, clad in mourning in that white winter day. The Negro is an animal, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly; look, a nigger, it's cold, the nigger is shivering because he is cold, the little boy is trembling because he is afraid of the nigger ... All around me the white man, above the sky tears at its navel, the earth rasps under my feet, and there is a white song, a white song. All this whiteness that burns me ... I sit down at the fire and I become aware of my uniform. I had not seen it. It is indeed ugly. I stop there, for who can tell me what beauty is.¹⁰⁶

Baartman's body was given back to her transformed, disassembled and stereotyped by three main forms of marking – the racial, the gendered and the sexual. It came back as a fetish: a spectacle, in *excess* of what it was in order to assuage the need for a prototype figure for black racial degeneration and sexual deviance that speaks to a fantasy of origin and identity.¹⁰⁷ Her new embodiment was totally recognisable to the European normative gaze whose discursive strategy was its cause and effect. For Baartman, it was dismembered embodiment 'clad in mourning' and totally unrecognisable. Baartman's blackness, femininity and sexuality were returned but remade by discursive white racial power. These features were 'sprawled out, distorted and recolored' to reflect and conform to a new disciplinary aesthetics of race, gendered sexuality and the demand for a racial stereotype.

If we transpose Freudian psychoanalysis onto the public display of Baartman in order to think through the modalities of stereotyping in colonial discourse, we see fetishisation in its multiplicities or cross-cutting determinations.¹⁰⁸ The multiplicities articulate racialised, gendered and sexualised difference.¹⁰⁹ Baartman is not just black but is also a woman and a sexual object. Her body is rendered the site for the confluence of fetishisation and phallogentric fantasy inscribed in both the economy of domination and power and the economy of gendered patriarchal pleasure and desire.¹¹⁰ We see not just a gaze directed at Baartman's body. We see also obsessive masculine gazing of a profusely eroticised nature directed at

105 Copeland (n 11 above) 15.

106 Fanon *Black skin, white masks* (n 18 above) 113-114.

107 On the need for 'excess' in creating stereotypes, Bhabha (n 46 above) 18-19.

108 Bhabha (n 46 above) 19.

109 As above.

110 As above.

'Hottentot' women.¹¹¹ Because the gaze is a transgressive fantasy, it must, simultaneously, be disavowed.¹¹² In this instance, colonial discourse served as a figleaf and licence for unregulated European voyeurism.¹¹³ For the European onlookers, who were overwhelmingly male, Baartman's colour, gender and buttocks served as a displaced sexual object – her genitalia.¹¹⁴

Under a European patriarchal gaze Baartman is racially scorned at the same time as she is sexually desired.¹¹⁵ Beneath the veneer of racial revulsion lay an intense, violent sexual desire that in colonial discourses was part of a broader sexualised political economy and the effect of a regime of power. Cultural imposition, physical violence and the plunder of African lands were not only raced but also deeply implicated in gender and sexuality.¹¹⁶ In the gendered imagination of the phallic ego of white males, like African lands, Baartman's embodiment represented a 'category of nature' to be conquered and penetrated.¹¹⁷ Her body was remade by white masculine power as part of a broader sublimated sexual economy of imperialism that set its gaze on Africa.¹¹⁸

4 Apartheid and the banality of race

The creation of races under apartheid is particularly instructive for understanding the historical production of 'African' as ascribed racial alterity. Apartheid doctrine and practice explicate most vividly the production of the racial othering of 'African' in colonial discourses as a negative racial category in ways that were directly tethered to legitimising the economic exploitation of 'Africans'. In this sense the classification of races under apartheid brings to life Higginbotham's analysis of race as social construction and political signification. Drawing an analogy with gender and class, Higginbotham said of race:

111 Julien-Joseph Virey, a French writer who is credited with writing a standard study of race in the early nineteenth century, described 'Hottentot' women as having a "voluptuousness" that is developed to a degree of lascivity unknown in our climate': *Dictionnaire des sciences médicales (Dictionary of Medical Sciences)* (1819) 398-403. The quoted words and phrases are cited in Gilman (n 44 above) 85; Dubow (n 22 above) 20-24; R Miles & M Brown *Racism* (2003) 37.

112 Mercer in Hall & Evans (n 97 above) 437.

113 Hall 'The spectacle of the "other"' (n 100 above) 258.

114 As above.

115 McClintock (n 2 above) 22-24.

116 McClintock (n 2 above) 22-24; A Loomba *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (2005) 128-131.

117 McClintock (n 2 above) 22-24; Loomba (n 116 above) 128-131.

118 R Scott 'The Dark Continent: Africa as female body in Haggard's adventure fiction' (1989) 32 *Feminist Review* 69 at 84-85; Copeland (n 11 above) 12.

Like gender and class, then, race must be seen as a social construction predicated upon the recognition of difference and signifying the simultaneous distinguishing and positioning of groups vis-à-vis one another. More than this, race is a highly contested representation of relations of power between social categories by which individuals are defined and identify themselves. The recognition of racial distinctions emanates from and adapts to multiple uses of power in society. Perceived as 'natural' and 'appropriate', such racial categories are strategically necessary for the functioning of power in countless institutional and ideological forms, both explicit and subtle.¹¹⁹

The creation of races under the apartheid system was an outgrowth of the British colonial racial caste system. A racial caste system was practised in Boer Republics as well as British colonies before the institution of official apartheid.¹²⁰ Christi van der Westhuizen highlights that racial segregation, as a clear and concerted national policy, did not begin in the Boer Republics.¹²¹ Instead, its genesis is closely identified with the South African Native Affairs Commission set up by Milner.¹²²

Alfred Milner was the British Governor-General of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony after their annexation in 1900.¹²³ He was a pillar, par excellence, of the British imperial establishment. In his quest to advance British imperialism he intended to transform South Africa into a modern industrial capitalist state. However, unwilling or insufficient black labour stood in the way. To overcome this obstacle Milner set about developing an exploitative policy for governing blacks and extracting black labour, not least for the mining sector which was the imperial gem.¹²⁴ To this end, in 1903, the South African Native Affairs Commission (Milner Commission) was set up to examine and co-ordinate 'native' policy and labour issues.

The Milner Commission conducted hearings from 1903 to 1905. It made recommendations, many of which were later to become not only constituent but cardinal parts of the architectural design of apartheid,

119 EB Higginbotham 'African-American women's history and the metalanguage of race' (1992) 17 *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 251 at 253-254.

120 R First et al *The South African connection: Western investment in apartheid* (1973) 66; DK Stasiulis 'Pluralist and Marxist perspectives on racial discrimination in South Africa' (1980) 31 *British Journal of Sociology* 463 at 472; C van der Westhuizen *White power and the rise and the fall of the National Party* (2007) 14; S Terreblanche *A history of inequality in South Africa 1652-2002* (2002) 179-296.

121 Van der Westhuizen (n 120 above); Terreblanche (n 120 above) 246; PE Louw *The rise, fall and legacy of apartheid* (2004) 1-26.

122 Van der Westhuizen (n 120 above) 15; Louw (n 121 above).

123 Louw (n 121 above).

124 As above.

namely, racial separation of landownership with a clear division of South African territory into prime white areas and deprived African areas (the so-called homelands or tribal reserves), the establishment of 'native' locations in white towns, influx control to regulate the movement of blacks into cities, mission-based rather than state schooling for blacks, separate native councils to administer affairs concerning the welfare of blacks, and black disenfranchisement.¹²⁵ The point is not that this was the first time that racial segregation was being instituted: racial segregation had long been a practice in the administration of South Africa under both Dutch and British colonialism.¹²⁶ Rather, as Van der Westhuizen highlights, this is the first time that an overarching policy of racial segregation was being prepared for inscription into law.¹²⁷ Against this backdrop Sampie Terreblanche notes, the Milner Commission became, if not immediately, then certainly in the medium and long term, a major part of the edifice for the ideological justification of apartheid, the impoverishment of blacks and the migrant labour system.¹²⁸ Indeed, Terreblanche describes the apartheid system that was propagated by the National Party as scrupulously built on foundations laid down by the English establishment.¹²⁹

Racially discriminatory legislation passed before the inauguration of official apartheid in 1948 was mainly the product of the Union Parliament.¹³⁰ As part of implicating British imperialism in the apartheid project, Terreblanche observes that it is not insignificant, apart from the nine years of pact government (from 1924 to 1933), as of 1910 when the Union was established, and up to 1948 when the National Party took office, governance in South Africa was largely under an English

125 Van der Westhuizen (n 120 above) 15; Louw (n 121 above); Terreblanche (n 120 above) 246. For example, a direct progeny of the Native Affairs Commission is the Native Lands Act 27 of 1913, which was passed by the Union Parliament and regulated ownership of land, creating 'reserves' for blacks and confining blacks who, numerically, exceeded the whites, to about one-eighth of the land mass of South Africa. The same applies to the 'pass' system and the creation of 'homelands'.

126 Terreblanche (n 120 above) 151-217.

127 Van der Westhuizen (n 120 above) 14-15.

128 Terreblanche (n 120 above) 246.

129 Terreblanche (n 120 above) 313.

130 Examples of discriminatory legislation passed before 1948 include the Mines and Works Act 12 of 1911 as amended (which prescribed entry into employment on racial lines, reserved jobs for whites, and prohibited industrial action by black mineworkers); the Native Lands Act (n 125 above) and the Urban Areas Act 21 of 1923 (which divided the country into urban and rural areas and restricted the movement of blacks into urban areas); the Wages Act 27 of 1925 (which prescribed higher wages for white workers).

establishment¹³¹ which, therefore, had a conscious, dedicated hand in entrenching white political power and racial segregation.¹³² Thus, the dye of unequal citizenship through racial segregation had already been cast when the National Party came to power in 1948.¹³³ By then the status of privilege had already been conferred on whites. They were already protected from economic competition with blacks though state policies and laws sanctioning racially discriminatory remuneration, job reservation for whites, spatial demarcation, the pass system and the establishment of reserves for blacks.

Thus, apartheid constructed its races on a foundation of colonial racial ideology. The weight of historical evidence implicates the British establishment far more than its Afrikaner counterpart in the spawning of apartheid ideology, built around social Darwinism and white supremacy. Though the semantics of apartheid came from the bowels of the National Party and were popularised for the first time in the 1948 'general' election,¹³⁴ it is more accurate to recognise, as Mandela, the founding president of post-apartheid and democratic South Africa, said in his biography, that 'apartheid was a new term but an old idea'.¹³⁵ Racial segregation and discrimination, as instruments for inscribing white supremacy onto the South African political economy, predate legally inscribed apartheid. Racist laws, policies and practices have their genesis in the country's colonial heritage under British imperialism.

Whilst apartheid built its racial ideology of white supremacy on a foundation laid down by the colonial archive, it added its own imprint to project race as an integral part of a soteriological sphere in which all peoples have their own unique theological identity.¹³⁶ Apartheid hybridised the colonial archive in order to also anchor whiteness in

131 Terreblanche (n 120 above) 247.

132 As above.

133 Van der Westhuizen (n 120 above) 63.

134 According to Terreblanche, the term 'apartheid' was coined by the National Party during campaigns in the 1948 'general election': Terreblanche (n 120 above) 312. Save for the inclusion of the 'coloured' vote, the 1948 election was a 'whites'-only election. It was a 'general' election only in the sense that, however, racially exclusionary, within a racial oligarchy that enjoyed external recognition in the international arena, including the United Nations, its outcome effectively decided the government of the day. The 'coloured' vote was removed from the common roll in 1956, when the Separate Representation of Voters Amendment Act 30 of 1956 was passed: Van der Westhuizen (n 120 above) 48.

135 N Mandela *Long walk to freedom* (1994) 104; BM Magubane *The political economy of race and class in South Africa* (1990) 226.

136 On Christian theology's contribution to racial thinking, see WJ Jennings *The Christian imagination: Theology and the origins of race* (2010).

racialised as well as ethnicised soteriology.¹³⁷ Racial fantasy, manifesting as Christian nationalism under the tutelage of the Dutch Reformed Church, allowed apartheid ideology to appropriate the Bible so that racial hierarchisation could be understood as fulfilment of the Book.¹³⁸ Parallels were drawn between the Great Trek and the Israelites' journey to the Promised Land. Whites, or more specifically Afrikaners, were imagined as God's chosen people who had overcome unimaginable odds and were destined for the Promised Land. The chosenness of Afrikaners was clearly articulated by, for example, JC van Rooyen, chairperson of the Afrikaner Broederbond, in 1944.¹³⁹ He said:

In every People in the world is embodied a Divine Idea and the task of each People is to build upon that idea and to perfect it. So God created Afrikaner People with a unique language, a unique philosophy of life, and their own history and tradition in order that they might fulfil a particular calling and destiny here in the southern corner of Africa. We must stand guard on all that is peculiar to us and build upon it. We must believe that God has called us to be servants of his righteousness in this place.¹⁴⁰

137 C van Wyngaard 'White theology amidst white rhetoric on violence' in R Drew Smith et al (eds) *Contesting post-racialism: Conflicted churches in the United States and South Africa* (2015) 96 at 97-99.

138 L Thompson *The political mythology of apartheid* (1985); R Müller 'War, religion, and white supremacy' (2004) 10 *The Princeton Theological Review* 17 at 18; DJ Bosch 'The roots of Afrikaner civic religion' in JW Hofmeyr & WS Vorster (eds) *New faces of Africa: Essays in honour of Ben Marais* (1984) 14-35; A du Toit 'The construction of Afrikaner chosenness' in WR Hutchison & H Lehmann (eds) *Many are chosen: Divine election and Western nationalism* (1994) 115-139; R Hamerton-Kelly 'Biblical justification of apartheid in Afrikaner civil religion' in K Keulman *Critical moments in religious history* (1993) 161-172; GJ Rossouw 'Essentials of apartheid' in JW Hofmeyr et al (eds) *1948 plus 50 years. Theology, apartheid and church: Past, present and future* (2001) 88 at 97.

139 The Broederbond was a semi-clandestine exclusively white, Afrikaner, male organisation formed in 1918 so that it could serve Afrikaner nationalism by being 'wholly devoted to the service of the Afrikaner nation' in all walks of life: Thompson (n 138 above) 46. In 1943 Hendrik Verwoerd said: 'The Afrikaner Broederbond must gain control of everything it can lay its hands on in every walk of life in South Africa. Members must help each other to gain promotion in the civil service or any other field of activity in which they work with a view to working themselves up into important administrative positions': quoted in Thompson (n 138 above) 46. More than any other National Party leader, Verwoerd substantially expanded the role of the Broederbond within the state after taking office as Prime Minister in 1958: Posel *The making of apartheid 1948-1961* (1991) 242-244.

140 Quoted in Thompson (n 138 above) 29.

Therefore, it was left to Ham's children – the blackened and cursed family – to resign themselves to their lowly place in the divine order of things.¹⁴¹ In Afrikaner nationalism the Dutch Reformed Church was transformed into a people's church – *volkskerk* – such that the boundaries between religion, culture and the apartheid state became blurred.

4.1 Creating 'Africans', 'Coloureds', 'Indians' and 'whites'

The South African apartheid system was designed as a pyramid. To give expression to white nationalism, it comprised 'whites' at the apex, 'Africans' at the nadir, with 'Coloureds' and 'Indians' in intermediate positions.¹⁴² The political imaginary was to invest apartheid with 'authentic organicity' so that racial identities could be accepted as natural, closed and directly linked to differential citizenship commensurate with racial desserts.¹⁴³ This section serves as a background to understanding racial positioning among inferiorised 'races' under apartheid.

4.1.1 'Africans' and 'whites' as extreme polarities

The 1950 Population Registration Act divided South African humanity into three racial groups: 'white', 'Coloured' and 'native'. Colonial discourses on race in the South African context, in which apartheid

141 The mythology created from the biblical story of Ham is to paint the Bible as telling a story in which white racism has divine approval: J Kovel *White racism: A psychohistory* (1984) 63-64. The self-serving interpretation of the Bible provides a way out of the scripture that says that all humanity is descended from Adam and Eve who are racially represented in much of Christendom as white. By saying that blacks are direct descendants of Ham, upon whom a curse of servitude was placed, and thus justifying a master-servant relationship between whites and blacks with the latter destined to remain as hewers of wood and drawers of water, Christendom is able to claim Adam and Eve as white: Van der Westhuizen (n 120 above) 56; Miles & Brown (n 111 above) 25. The account in the Bible is that, after overindulging in wine, Noah is inebriated and falls asleep in his tent. Inadvertently, he is uncovered and his genitals are exposed. Ham, one of Noah's sons, unlike his more obedient siblings who look away and take a garment to cover his nakedness, looks straight at his father's genitals. For this indiscretion and disrespect, with God's approval, Noah punishes Ham not only by banishment, but also by putting a curse of servitude on Ham and his descendants – the Hamites: Genesis 9: 18-27. In racial mythology or fantasies inspired in part by biblical understandings, blackness has not just been a way of marking black people as a racial caste destined to be servile and subordinate. Blackness is also symbolic of what is ugly, sinful and impure. Whiteness appositely has opposite qualities: Kovel (above) 61-92; Fanon (n 18 above) 188.

142 Population Registration Act 30 of 1950, for example, required every person in South Africa to be registered according to their 'racial characteristics'.

143 Norval (n 24 above) 301.

steeped itself, had initially imagined two ‘full blooded’ races¹⁴⁴ – a colonising, innately superior and civilising white race and a colonisable, innately inferior, indigenous black race, members of which were described as ‘natives’ (later to be used interchangeably with ‘Bantu’, ‘blacks’ or ‘Africans’). ‘Native’ was colonial nomenclature of a derogatory and belligerent nature to describe a member of the indigenous population.¹⁴⁵ It served to denote the bestial but tameable nature of the ‘supposedly’ human object of conquest.

Both the ‘white’ racial caste and the ‘native’ caste were imagined to possess a purity of race, save that it was purity of polar and hierarchical opposites. However, at the time that the Population Registration Bill was proposed to a white Parliament, ‘whites’ and ‘natives’ were not the only races as colonial racist and racialising discourse had long begun the process of (mis)recognising a third racial caste – ‘Coloureds’ – but had yet to complete the architecture on the essential features and status of the ‘Coloured’ race.¹⁴⁶ In this sense ‘Coloured’ was a race in the making rather than a race completely made at the time that the National Party came to power. Prior to the Population Registration Act, the making of the ‘Coloured’ race had taken the form of official racial typing which was ad hoc rather than systematic. ‘Coloured’ was a fluid rather than a fixed racial category. Posel observes, for example, that under the Natives Representation Act of 1936,¹⁴⁷ well-educated ‘natives’ could submit a petition to be promoted to the status of ‘Coloured’.¹⁴⁸

4.1.2 ‘Coloureds’

Colonial racial discourses historically have been ambivalent towards ‘Coloureds’.¹⁴⁹ In one sense, colonial discourses pathologised ‘Coloureds’, regarding them as ‘half-castes’ or a ‘mixed or hybridised race’

144 D Posel ‘What’s in a name? Racial categorisations under apartheid and their afterlife’ (2001) 47 *Transformation* 50 at 55.

145 See the discussion in ch 6 sec 3.

146 Posel makes the point that ‘coloured’ was part of the hierarchical racial categories employed in segregationist South Africa prior to the apartheid era but its use was, on the whole, marked by the absence of a ‘fixed, officially authorised racial categorisation’. In consequence, people could move in and out of the ‘coloured’ category. For example, one could be ‘coloured’ for the purposes of accessing work, and yet be ‘native’ for the purposes of entering into a customary marriage: Posel ‘What’s in a name?’ (n 144 above) 54.

147 Act 12.

148 Posel (n 144 above) 54.

149 Van der Westhuizen (n 120 above) 60.

and a physical sign of 'miscegenation'.¹⁵⁰ 'Coloureds' were imagined to be the degenerate and unstable offspring of white men who had abandoned middle-class respectability and fallen prey to the effusive and uninhibited sexuality of 'Hottentot' women.¹⁵¹ According to this perspective, 'Coloureds' posed a threat to the purity of the white race. However, the colonial imaginary also ascribed to 'Coloureds' a higher status than the objectified 'natives', as exemplified in the extension of the franchise to 'Coloureds', among other 'racial' privileges.¹⁵² Though the National Party government was later to take away many of the racial privileges hitherto accorded to 'Coloureds', nonetheless, it implemented apartheid on the footing or with the sentiment that, when juxtaposed with 'Africans', 'Coloureds' would at least be subjected to a 'softer' brand of apartheid in a number of socio-economic spheres.¹⁵³

In colonial racial aesthetics, 'Coloureds' had a distinct phenotype and physiognomy that lay somewhere between the purity of 'whites' and the raw savageness of 'natives'. The colonial imaginary was that 'Coloureds' were educable and could be brought up to middle-class respectability and to a level where they emulated but could not become white. In a number of areas, including the extension of the franchise and access to semi-skilled jobs, 'Coloureds' were treated preferentially relative to their 'native' counterparts, and in line with the colonial imaginary that they were superior to 'natives'.¹⁵⁴ What the Population Registration Act did was to ascribe to 'Coloureds' the authority and stability of race, albeit by the draconian means of inscribing into law that 'Coloureds' were not only a distinct race, but also that although superior to 'natives' they were inferior to 'whites'.

Despite seeming to resolve the ambivalence surrounding the Coloured race, apartheid created new problems, even on its own terms. 'Coloured' was legally a residual racial caste; it was all that 'white' or 'native' was not. Apartheid overestimated the ease with which a person's residual racial

150 Rich (n 24 above) 676; Dubow (n 22 above) 185-189; Van der Westhuizen (n 120 above) 55; J Martens 'Citizenship, "civilisation" and the creation of South Africa's Immorality Act, 1927' (2007) 59 *South African Historical Journal* 223 at 225.

151 On colonial perceptions of the sexuality of 'Hottentot' women, see the discussion on Baartman in sec 3 above.

152 The 'coloured' franchise was entrenched into law by the South Africa Act of 1909. It was removed by the National Party government in 1955 as part of apartheid policy, following a protracted challenge involving the courts: Van der Westhuizen (n 120 above) 44-48.

153 Van der Westhuizen (n 120 above) 49-50.

154 I Goldin *Making race: The politics and economics of coloured identity in South Africa* (1987) 3-73.

identity could be told: gross morphology is not always compliant. Race did not prove to be the indelible badge on the forehead that apartheid race discourse imagined. Telling the difference between 'native' and 'Coloured', 'Coloured' and 'white' was not always the easy task it was meant to be, but an exercise in cattle branding for the committees that were charged with the task of racial classification in disputed cases.¹⁵⁵ Families were torn apart because one member was darker than the others or their hair was too woolly and could not pass the 'pencil test' in apartheid's racial grid.¹⁵⁶ The 'racial misfit', therefore, could not legally continue to live with their family and had to be relocated to their rightful racial home in accordance with the racial spatial demarcations prescribed by the Group Areas Act.

Another problem created by apartheid in 1948, the year the National Party came to power and began constructing and implementing apartheid, was that to describe everyone who was not a 'white' person or a 'native' as 'Coloured' meant to a large extent the creation of a new race out of 'indigenous races', 'mixed races' and migrant 'races' that had migrated to South Africa as slaves or indentured labour from Malaya, China, and India.¹⁵⁷ Far from being a matter of using common sense, in the end, even on apartheid's own terms, racial classification became a messy enterprise as either the racial groups did not accurately match 'popular' understandings of race at the street level or the phenotype or physiognomy of an individual simply refused to live up to the expectations of the manual used by apartheid racial classifiers. Crude tests were devised to resolve 'hard' cases: cases where gross morphology did not easily give out the

155 M du Plessis & S Peté 'Kafka's African nightmare – Bureaucracy and law in pre- and post-apartheid South Africa' (2006) 31 *Journal for Juridical Science* 39 at 42-43. Those disgruntled by the racial classification could appeal to a Race Classification Board and ultimately the courts; RH du Pre *The rape of the 'Coloured' people* (1992) 87-89.

156 The texture of one's hair was used as an important marker of race. The 'pencil test' (or comb test) consisted of running a pencil (or comb) through one's hair. If the pencil (or comb) was halted by tight curls, a person claiming to be 'white', for example, was likely to be classified 'coloured': R Ormond *The apartheid handbook* (1986) 26; Du Plessis & Peté (n 155 above) 42-43.

157 Amendments to the Population Registration Act attempted to improve racial classifications by subdividing the 'coloureds' into subgroups and removing 'Indian' from a subcategory of 'coloured' and making it a distinct race. In the end, over and above 'natives' (later to be rehabilitated to 'Bantu' and then 'black') at the base of the racial pyramid and 'whites' at the apex, South Africa ended with seven intermediate racial categories, namely, 'Cape coloured, Malay, Griqua, Chinese, Indian, other Asian, other coloured': Proclamation 46 of 1949; Du Pre (n 155 above) 86.

'race' or could not comply with the morphological expectations of the racial classifiers.¹⁵⁸ The racial tests had the effect of not only dehumanising those who were being tested but also of amplifying, as well as normalising, racialised reasoning among South Africans.

4.1.3 'Indians'

The classification of 'Indians' to describe persons who had emigrated from the Indian subcontinent or their descendants as an intermediate racial group under apartheid mimicked the racial politics of the British Empire and, in turn, the influence of a hierarchical or pyramidal understanding of race under evolutionary pseudo-Darwinism. In this understanding 'Indians' were treated differently from the indigenous black race. As people of Asian ancestry they were understood to occupy an intermediate position, second to white. Stephen Howe captures the evolutionary thinking at play in this racial pyramid in the following statement:

European whites were at the top of this pyramid or ladder, and only they were fully capable of abstract thought, technical progress, efficient government, true cultural creativity ... Asian peoples occupied intermediate positions. Some were acknowledged to possess considerable intelligence, and Indian, Chinese, or Arab civilisational achievements could not be entirely denied. Africans were lower still down the scale, often believed to be inherently less intelligent and incapable of building or sustaining an 'advanced' civilization.¹⁵⁹

In the African colonies, Asians became a 'subject race' to use Mamdani's term.¹⁶⁰ Whites were the only full citizens as the colonising race; subject races were made into 'virtual' citizens.¹⁶¹ At the same time as depriving them of the status of full citizens, the colonial polity offered the potential of becoming full citizens. Certainly, people of Asian descent were set apart from indigenous 'natives' – the core objects of colonial dominance and exploitation.¹⁶² In this sense apartheid doctrine simply gave juridical

158 Appearance and social standing were the two operative criteria for determining race. As Posel has argued, they operated tautologically, one reinforcing the other according to popular biocultural perceptions of race: Posel (n 144 above) 53. A close reading of hair on a person's head as well as bodily hair, facial features, complexion, residential location, occupation, friends, associates, and food and drink, became signifiers of race in borderline cases: Posel (n 144 above) 62-63.

159 S Howe *Empire: A very short introduction* (2002) 86.

160 M Mamdani *When victims become killers: Colonialism, nativism, and the genocide in Rwanda* (2001) 27.

161 Mamdani (n 160 above) 27-28.

162 Mamdani (n 160 above) 27.

recognition to an already calibrated 'race'. 'Indians' became one of apartheid's subject races.

In her writings on the making of 'Indians' in South Africa, Kathryn Pillay observes that the epithet 'Indians' became an apartheid technology for the making of an Indian 'race'.¹⁶³ 'Indians' became a shorthand not just ascribing racial identity solely on the basis of phenotype to peoples whose ancestry originated from the Indian subcontinent irrespective of their heterogeneities, but also legitimising that identity in a material, physical and socio-economic sense in the apartheid polity. Whilst the Population Registration Act of 1950 as amended did the classification, other laws and policies, including the Group Areas Act, reinforced the classification to give existential 'truth' to the classification of 'Indians' as an intermediately positioned 'race'. Against the backdrop of a state-ordained pyramidal structure of race, the racial classification was a resounding success in the sense that it caused the ascribed group, on the whole, to internalise the classification, imagine an 'Indian' race and order its socio-economic life according to the apartheid script.¹⁶⁴

4.2 Racial positioning among inferiorised 'races'

Ultimately, being South African meant, first and foremost, identifying one's 'correct' racial home within the legally prescribed categories of race. The birth as well as the death certificate recorded race, thereby capturing a full biographical cycle of race. To make assurance doubly sure so as not to miss out on one's racial benefits or escape from one's racial burdens, during one's life one would be required to possess, as proof of one's identity, an identity certificate that recorded not just one's birth date, gender, and citizenship but also one's race. Such was citizenship under apartheid. Race became seminal and, paradoxically, a banality of quotidian life.

The subdivision of 'non-white races' into 'Coloureds', 'Indians', and 'Africans' ultimately was a calculated political stratagem by a racist and racially dominant class that was keenly aware that it was small in number compared to the 'Africans' and that it needed 'other races' as collaborative buffers to sustain its dominance. Subdividing the exploited races through

163 K Pillay 'South African families of Indian descent: Transmission of racial identity' (2015) 46 *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 121; K Pillay "'The coolies here": Exploring the construction of the Indian "race" in South Africa' (2017) 34 *Journal of Global South Studies* 22; K Pillay 'Perpetual foreigners: Indian identity in South Africa (1948-1994)' (2017) 10 *Diaspora Studies* 45.

164 Pillay "'The coolies here'" (n 163 above) 53-58.

differentiated inferiorisation served to augment white political power through 'divide and rule'. By conferring relative racialised privileges on 'Coloureds' and 'Indians' and legitimising the 'super-exploitation' and 'super-marginalisation' of 'Africans', apartheid was able to frustrate and thus delay the construction of a strong and united opposition.¹⁶⁵ The quadruple racial grid became a device for not only signposting the 'master race' but also creating a buffer system comprised of the not-so-inferior 'Coloureds' and 'Indians' as racial allies to keep at bay the doubly inferiorised 'African' race, numerically the largest group and therefore the most threatening to the white racial citadel.

Apart from serving the interests of white nationalism as a buffer system, the creation of intermediate races under apartheid served to produce a phenomenon of racial positioning among the 'intermediately inferiorised races'. Being placed in an intermediate racial category as 'Coloured' or 'Indian' came with a commensurate sense of racial privilege relative to 'Africans'. Apartheid succeeded in inculcating a strong sense of relative racial superiority among 'Coloureds' and 'Indians' over 'Africans' and an accompanying sense of duty to guard their own racial space against encroachment by 'Africans' using precisely the same racial ideology scripted by apartheid. Thus in significant political ways, the social construction of profusely racialised identities in South Africa, though initiated and ultimately controlled by whites who had monopoly over political and socio-economic power, paradoxically became an ever-alluring collusive enterprise between the 'superior' race and the intermediately 'inferior' races.

The intermediate racial positioning of 'Coloureds' and 'Indians' under apartheid shows that a 'race' that is labouring under racial oppression can become consciously complicit in the fable of racial supremacy when it finds something redemptive in being placed, not at the nadir of race, but in an intermediate position. A lesson to learn from colonial and apartheid's racial classifications is that the making of racial identity, even under a robust racial oligarchy, is rarely a one-way street that is policed completely by the original maker. Kwame Anthony Appiah points out that a racial identity whose origin lies in 'misrecognition' by the 'master race', nonetheless, can be appropriated by its 'victims' to the point of flourishing¹⁶⁶ and even be guarded with conspicuous tenacity regardless of the racialised myths that underpin its original making – especially if it

165 Young (n 1 above) 122.

166 Appiah (n 11 above) 178.

means not occupying the most stigmatised position.¹⁶⁷ This phenomenon is particularly evident in the making of a 'Coloured' identity prior to the democratisation of South Africa in 1994 as Roy du Pre reveals in his book, *The rape of the 'Coloured' people*.¹⁶⁸ His arguments for the equality of 'Coloured' people are less a claim for affirmation of an equal humanity than a plaintive cry for the disappointed expectations of 'Coloured' racial positioning.

The pervading equality and racial identity arguments in *The rape of the 'Coloured' people* are contradictory or even, unwittingly racist. In one sense the author, a political historian who self-identifies as 'Coloured', laments the racist premises of apartheid and the injustices meted out to all inferiorised 'races'. In another sense, though, the book is a plea for the realisation of promises of preferential treatment for 'Coloureds' that were made but were not kept by successive white governments. Du Pre quite unambiguously conveys that he would have been content with a system in which 'Coloureds' were treated as 'whites', notwithstanding that other 'races' were subjected to different and burdensome racial status. Clearly, Du Pre lacks a vision of even formal equality, let alone substantive equality, not least because the author's arguments are unconsciously steeped in apartheid racial thinking or an approximation thereof. His arguments are based on a racialised or biologised understanding of 'Coloureds' as a 'race' with the same or nearly the same racial essence as 'whites' as well as on an implicit inegalitarian concession that calibrated racial essence can legitimately determine differentiated citizenship. It is an understanding that is not atypical and has been harboured by intermediately inferiorised 'races' in comparable racialised settings.¹⁶⁹

167 'Passing' was one of the phenomena produced by the racial hierarchies erected by colonialism and apartheid. It was an escape valve for those whose gross morphology allowed them to move from a 'lower' racial category to a 'higher' one. Much of passing took the form of 'coloured' passing for 'white' much more than 'native' passing for 'coloured'. Passing came with benefits as well as burdens. On the benefits side, especially if one managed to pass for 'white', would be privileged access to socio-economic goods, including education and employment. On the burden side, however, one would have to cut oneself off from family, relatives and friends as association with family, relatives and friends of a 'lower' racial category could invite official suspicion and loss of the 'passed' category through 'downward' reclassification: Du Pre (n 155 above) 90; I Goldin (n 154 above) 80; G Lewis *Between the wire and the wall: A history of South African 'coloured' politics* (1987) 164-165.

168 Du Pre (n 155 above).

169 Discussing 'coloured' identity in the then Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), James Muzondidya gives, as an example of racial positioning, a resolution that was taken in the mid-1920s by the Umtali (now Mutare) Coloured and Asian School Advisory Board (a board comprised of parents) demanding the removal of 'native' and 'half-caste' pupils from a school designated for 'coloureds' and 'Indians' by the colonial

At the same time, it is important not to paint 'Coloured' self-identity with the same brush: Du Pre's viewpoint is one of many viewpoints on 'Coloured' identity. In the post-apartheid era, especially, other perspectives by commentators who self-identify as Coloured seek to assert or argue for a 'Coloured' identity as an ethnicity that does not depend on a colonial archive of racial essence for its sustenance but, instead, is constructed as a socio-political reality within a South African socio-political milieu. In this post-apartheid construction of 'Coloured' identity, 'Coloured' people are agents in the making of their identity, and not merely recipients of a racialised colonial identity. They are makers of a racially decentred 'Coloured' identity which does not necessarily succumb to the confining essence of race or, at least, does not seek to perpetuate a racialised identity.

However, whilst post-apartheid discourses on colouredness are making a discursive effort at deconstructing essentialised coloured identity to decentre race and carve out a space for 'Coloured' identity(ies) as deraced, heterogeneous and fluid ethnicity(ies),¹⁷⁰ some discourses remain hostage to nativism, even if unwittingly. More specifically, there are discourses which purport to be disruptive of apartheid discourse on race but concomitantly fail to disrupt colonially spawned raced whiteness and blackness and in fact depend on it as a racially opposite referent, scarcely problematising, for example, the apartheid category of 'Africans'.

government. The parents insisted that admission be limited to 'pure children of coloureds and Indians'. J Muzondidya 'Race, ethnicity and the politics of positioning: The making of coloured identity in colonial Zimbabwe' in M Adhikari (ed) *Burdened by race: Coloured identities in Southern Africa* (2009) 156 at 164. On racial positioning in the United States, see, for example, LC Ikemoto 'Traces of the master narrative in the story of African American/Korean American conflict: How we constructed "Los Angeles"' (1993) 66 *Southern California Law Review* 1581; CR Lawrence 'Foreword. Race, multiculturalism, and the jurisprudence of transformation' (1995) 47 *Stanford Law Review* 819 at 829-835.

- 170 See for example Z Erasmus 'Creolisation, colonial citizenship(s) and degeneracy: A critique of selected histories of Sierra Leone and South Africa' (2011) 59 *Current Sociology* 635; Z Erasmus 'Throwing out the genes: A renewed biological imaginary of "race"' (2013) 60 *Theoria* 38 at 45; D Bowler & L Vincent 'Contested constructions of colouredness in the Kuli Roberts saga' (2011), https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/politics_seminar/RBt_AUqa5bE (accessed 27 May 2018); T Petrus & W Isaacs-Martin 'The multiple meanings of coloured identity in South Africa' (2012) 42 *Africa Insight* 87; W Isaacs-Martin 'National and ethnic identities amongst the coloured population of Port Elizabeth, South Africa' (2014) 14 *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 55; M Ruiters 'Collaboration, assimilation and contestation: Emerging constructions of coloured identity in post-apartheid South Africa' in Adhikari (n 169 above) 104 at 112.

Mohamed Adhikari's writings on 'Coloured' identity fall into this category.¹⁷¹ They serve as an example of a discourse on colouredness which purports to move away from race as essence but is simultaneously heavily inflected with nativism and the persistence of the ideology of race. In Adhikari's construction of 'Coloured' identity as fluid and transformative, paradoxically 'Africans' and 'Bantu-speaking' people from which 'Coloured' identity differentiates itself remain trapped in raced straightjackets. The 'Africans' in Adhikari's article are simply abstracted from colonial and apartheid discourses. The category 'Africans' is never problematised. Instead, it is ascribed a colonially spawned primordial identity in which 'Africans' are pure, transcendent and homogeneous subjects that are frozen in time.

Historically, 'Coloured' self identity has nearly always accepted rather than challenged nativism through its appropriation of the colonial archive of 'Coloured' people as a 'mixed race' placed somewhere between the superiorised racial essence of 'whites' and the inferiorised racial essence of 'Africans'. To this extent it has largely been complicit in the fable of race and seemingly incapable of imagining an alternative collectivity to race as deterministic biology. The demise of apartheid has opened spaces for the construction of a more fluid 'Coloured' ethnicity(ies) that does not depend on the sedimentation of apartheidised racial intermediateness for its assertion or recognition. Coloured identity need not be raced identity. As is any other identity, 'Coloured' identity is subject to radical historicisation, in the sense intended by Hall.¹⁷²

4.3 **Apartheid as not so much about apartness but about *baasskapism***

Under the political tutelage of its best-known ideologue, Hendrik Verwoerd, apartheid attained dizzying heights of fantastical racial ideology.¹⁷³ Verwoerd and some of the key architects of apartheid, such as

171 Adhikari has written extensively on 'coloured' identity. For my argument, however, it suffices to cite one of his articles as paradigmatic of a discourse that remains wedded to apartheid categories of race even if that may not be the author's intention: M Adhikari 'Hope, fear, shame, frustration: Continuity and change in the expression of coloured identity in white supremacist South Africa, 1910–1994' (2006) 32 *Journal of Southern African Studies* 467. In this article Adhikari conflates the two categories of those who are 'Africans' and those who are 'Bantu-speaking' to form one raced and ethnicised category – a subsumption – that is distinguishable from who is 'coloured'.

172 See ch 2.

173 Although apartheid was an institutional creation coming from the bowels of the National Party and Afrikaner nationalism, Verwoerd, who was Prime Minister of South Africa from 1958 until his assassination in 1966, is widely credited by opponents

Nic Diederichs and Piet Meyer, were race obsessed partly on account of having absorbed some of the racial views of the Third Reich.¹⁷⁴ Apartheid architects came to see racial differentiation as a 'final solution' not for genocidal purposes but for the purposes of subordinating and economically exploiting the inferiorised races.¹⁷⁵ The principal imaginary of apartheid was of a society in which every 'race' knew its place economically, politically and socially.¹⁷⁶ The professed resolve of the architects of apartheid was to establish a permanent *baasskap* society.¹⁷⁷ The notion of a *baasskap* society was underpinned by an assumption of not only a natural racial hierarchy but also a racialised and gendered hierarchy.¹⁷⁸ It encapsulated the colonial philosophy of racial mastery by the colonists and settlers and racial subordination of the colonised as the twin principles of governing blacks.¹⁷⁹ A white man – *baas* – especially, stood as a perpetual master, father figure and lifelong trustee for the eternally child-like black people who depended on him for their welfare.¹⁸⁰ Thus, eliminating 'Africans' would have undermined the essence of *baasskapism* as it would have produced a racial paradise but without subject races to dominate and exploit economically.

My point is that the doctrine of *baasskapism* says more about the primary objects of the project of apartheid than is suggested by term 'apartheid'. The Afrikaans word 'apartheid' literally means 'separateness'

of apartheid as the most polarising face of apartheid and its most powerful ideologue. Steve Biko, the founding leader of the Black Consciousness Movement, described Verwoerd as an 'able' theoretician guiding the National Party to convert a policy of naked, wanton discrimination and segregation into a euphemistic separate development policy: S Biko *I write what I like* (1978) 96. According to Mandela, Verwoerd was the 'chief theorist and master builder of grand apartheid': Mandela (n 135 above) 417.

174 Van der Westhuizen (n 120 above) 70; Terreblanche (n 120 above) 301.

175 As above.

176 Posel (n 144 above) 52.

177 The Afrikaans word *baasskap* literally means 'boss-ship' or mastership or lordship: *Pharos Afrikaans-Engels English-Afrikaans Woordeboek/Dictionary* (2005). It is a term that was used and popularised by the architects of apartheid as well as the National Party to reinforce the message of white supremacy and attendant hierarchical social ordering. Simply put, *baasskap* conveys the idea that the 'white man' is boss and will always remain so, exercising paternalism and guardianship over the servile and lesser dark races: Mandela (n 135 above) 104. For an account that combines a pictorial as well as a narrative of the *baasskap* society, see D Goldblatt *South Africa: The structure of things then* (1998).

178 R Sylvain 'Bushmen, boers and baasskap: Patriarchy and paternalism on Afrikaner farms in Omaheke Region, Namibia' (2001) 27 *Journal of Southern African Studies* 717.

179 M MacDonald *Why race matters in South Africa* (2006) 7.

180 MacDonald (n 179 above) 7-8.

or 'apartness'.¹⁸¹ However, whilst the etymology of 'apartheid' carries the imagery of a desired absolute physical separation of races, in practice, apartheid was a hybrid form of racism combining elements of both 'dominative racism' as well as 'aversive racism'.¹⁸² Apartheid entailed, on the one hand, direct mastery of whites over blacks but also daily association between blacks and whites, especially in the economy and in the home, where blacks constituted the backbone of much-needed menial cheap labour to white households under white supervision (dominative racism). On the other hand, apartheid was about professing aversion towards blacks as an inferior and repulsive caste (aversive racism). In both respects, apartheid was the progeny of a colonial tradition spawned by British imperialism. But what distinguished apartheid from British colonial racism is that it was racism which had as its outstanding features brazenness, exhibitionism and lack of apologia: these were outgrowths of Afrikaner nationalism.¹⁸³ Apartheid accentuated both dominative and aversive racism with something approaching religious zeal. Its ideology and praxis embraced and nurtured a much more virulent strain of both dominative and aversive racism than its colonial predecessors.

Race is the vehicle through which *baasskapism* found expression. Race was ultimately the archetypical organising principle of apartheid in respect of the recognition of human worth and status. Race and racial differentiation are what determined the distribution of social and economic benefits and burdens. Physical appearance, more significantly 'whiteness', is what earned privilege and empowerment, and 'blackness' is what attracted burden and disempowerment. As critics of a traditional Marxist position on apartheid have pointed out, phenotype rather than ownership of land or capital was the most significant factor determining socio-economic status during apartheid.¹⁸⁴ The relationship between white and black was legally unambiguously inscribed as a relationship of

181 *Pharos dictionary* (n 177 above).

182 These typologies of racism are suggested by Joel Kovel: Kovel (n 141 above) 31-33; Young (n 1 above) 141-142. Kovel has written about racism from a 'psychohistorical' perspective. He posits the psychodynamics of dominative racism in Freudian oedipal terms of sexual object and conquest, and aversive racism in pre-oedipal terms of fantasies of dirt and pollution and the urge to expel the body standing over and against a purified abstracted subject. Kovel also advances a third type of racism which he calls 'metaracism' to signify a stage where racial supremacy is no longer the animating ideology, and there is no conscious systemic effort to dominate or avoid 'other races' as such, but the configuration of the economy determines the domination of one group by the other: Kovel (n 141 above) 48-50; Young (n 1 above) 142.

183 JS Ndebele *Rediscovery of the ordinary* (1991) 38.

184 PL van den Berghe *South Africa: A study in conflict* (1979) 267-268; Stasiulis (n 120 above) 465; F Fanon *The wretched of the earth* (1967) 30-31.

power and disempowerment, of domination and subordination. Fanon argued for a nuanced application of Marxist economic theory when addressing economic inequalities in the colonies whose master dichotomies he saw as quintessentially Manichaeic. He said:

The originality of the colonial context is that economic reality, inequality and the immense difference of ways of life never come to mask the human realities. When you examine at close quarters the colonial context, it is evident that what parcels out the world is to begin with the fact of belonging to or not to a given race, a given species. In the colonies the economic substructure is also a superstructure. The cause is the consequence; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich. This is why Marxist analysis should always be stretched every time we have to deal with the colonial problem ... It is neither the act of owning factories, nor estates, nor a bank balance which distinguishes the governing classes. The governing race is first and foremost those who come from elsewhere, those who are unlike the original inhabitants, 'the others'.¹⁸⁵

Race played a singular role in the creation of the system of white privilege and has outlasted the legal demise of apartheid. Race and *baasskapism* are what held white nationalism together. They are the principal reasons for the oppression of black South Africans. The prosperity of whites and white privileges were directly, and not incidentally, connected with the exploitation and pauperisation of blacks.¹⁸⁶ The maintenance of colonialism and the institution of apartheid served constantly to reproduce conditions of racial oppression and exploitation to assuage white nationalism.¹⁸⁷

Apartheid served as an enabling instrument of white nationalism in more ways than one. It succeeded in inculcating in whites, from the cradle to the grave, a distinct sense of entitlement to self-determination and permanent political and economic dominion over South Africa on the grounds of a supremacy that was exclusively based on phenotype. Merely by virtue of being white one had an instant incontestable claim to membership of a privileged caste. Furthermore, whiteness invested one not only with a moral claim to seeing black people as standing in opposition to the self-determination of whites and hence legitimate objects of antipathy and domination in virtually every sphere of life, but also with a moral duty to defend white privilege and the rightness of the exploitation of blacks.

185 Fanon (n 184 above) 30-31. Renate Zahar makes the same point as Fanon about the primacy of racism in understanding the socio-economic disparities produced by colonialism: R Zahar *Frantz Fanon: Colonialism and alienation* (1974) 25-26.

186 Zahar (n 185 above) 18.

187 As above.

Whatever differences there were between the English and Afrikaner political constituencies, they paled into insignificance when contrasted with mutual unity and purpose when it came to maintaining white supremacy and white privileges.¹⁸⁸ In these ways, apartheid not only helped to create cohesion among whites but also a sense, or more accurately, an illusion of equal white citizenship in much the same way that the institution of slavery, and later segregation, did for whites in the United States.¹⁸⁹

5 Ode to an open Africanness

Racial identities, like all identities, are subject to the play of history. We need to ask questions about whether the racial categories in colonial and apartheid dispensations still carry the same meanings or whether there have been changes and shifts that gesture towards a desaturation of the apartheid term 'race'. If racial categories still carry the same saturated meanings, it speaks not only to the success of apartheid but also the failure of a democratic dispensation to imagine a future without apartheid races. What does being African mean as an identity in South Africa today? Who is African and what is Africanness? Have the categories of 'African', 'Coloured', 'Indian' and 'white' changed?

Apartheid fell in 1994, officially. However, we must still ask the question: What happens to oppositional racial identities with calibrated racial essences once their juridical authority has been dismantled? Do they continue as elective affinities or do they metamorphose into benign relational identities? The intensity of the ideology and praxis of race under colonial and apartheid governance and its categorical differentiation of races causes us to raise the question Edward Said asked in *Orientalism*.¹⁹⁰ Said asked whether one can divide human reality into clearly different cultures, histories, traditions, societies, *even races*, and survive the consequences, humanly.¹⁹¹

The supreme effort made by the colonial and apartheid states to divide people into distinct races with distinct characteristics and citizenships produced not just polarised distinctions, especially with all the oppression and violence it took to maintain the distinctions. It also produced the

188 Magubane (n 135 above) 230-231; H Arendt *The origins of totalitarianism* (1962) 199-200.

189 K Karst 'Why equality matters' (1983) 17 *Georgia Law Review* 245 at 269; Crenshaw (n 24 above) 1370-1372; Higginbotham (n 119 above) 259.

190 E W Said *Orientalism* (1979).

191 Said (n 190 above) 45 (my emphasis).

banishment of social space for fruitful, mutual and respectful encounters between different cultures, traditions and communities that were moulded into distinct races.¹⁹² In the process, the humanity of cultures, traditions, and societies that were 'misrecognised' by apartheid was sacrificed on the altar of racial bigotry and exploitation. Equally, the humanity of the ideologues of apartheid and their adherents was also lost. In short, to answer Said's rhetorical question, apartheid did not and could not survive – humanly – its racial project.

It is reasonable to surmise that, though apartheid was formally interred with the inauguration of a democratic constitution in 1994, it left racially bruised peoples and communities in its wake. It bequeathed to democratic South Africa a profusely racialised people: a people whose lifeworlds and interpretive horizons were imbued with an ideology that impressed upon them the naturalness and logic of accepting racial essences and racial positioning as the prime gateway to citizenship.

Precisely because apartheid's *raison d'être* was a bifurcated racial state, it bequeathed a people and a nation largely without an archive of mutually shared common citizenship or a common egalitarian ethos and communitarian values to draw upon as a single nation when building democratic South Africa, save for the political consensus reached at Kempton Park to begin afresh and a Constitution which mandates and, more significantly, requires a new beginning, a new imagination about how to be human without the tag of calibrated racial essences.¹⁹³

For South Africa, paradoxically, the place of race seems assured because the structural effects of colonialism and apartheid are deeply rooted. Their legacies remain not just visible, but seemingly indelible in our socio-economic sectors. The challenge of our time is to give substance to the promise of race, so that, in Derrida's words, apartheid can be reduced to the state of a term that is confined and abandoned to memory – a term in disuse.¹⁹⁴ This is an enormous challenge.

It takes the entire nation to build common citizenship. Juridical fiats have their role to play, but nation-building is far more than the text of a constitution. For South Africa, part of making a new beginning and sustaining a new beginning requires having a conversation about race and about Africanness. In a country where the salience of race has been not

192 Said (n 190 above) 46.

193 A Sparks *Tomorrow is another country: The inside story of South Africa's negotiated revolution* (1996); H Ebrahim *The soul of a nation: Constitution-making in South Africa* (1998).

194 J Derrida 'Racism's last word' (1985) 12 *Critical Inquiry* 290 at 291.

only historically affirmed, but also accentuated in ways that are socially, politically and economically divisive, exploring new beginnings about inclusive citizenship calls for a deeper and continuing dialogue about race to share critical understandings about what race is and what it means today in South Africa, including its new formations, its connections with power/disempowerment and vulnerabilities, and ultimately, a dialogue about common citizenship.

Against this backdrop the speech 'I am an African', by then Deputy-President Thabo Mbeki, which was delivered to the South African Parliament on 8 May 1996 on the occasion of the adoption of the final South African Constitution by the Constitutional Assembly, can be read at a number of levels.¹⁹⁵ The speech, possibly the finest since the demise of apartheid in articulating an inclusive ontology of Africanness, can be read from a South African perspective as an attempt to transcend the legacy of apartheid and its pantheon of races. The speech seeks to consign to memory the idea of 'Africans', 'Coloureds', 'Indians' and 'whites' as South Africa's races in favour of a deraced oneness – Africanness. From a broader continental perspective, the speech speaks to deraced pan-Africanism after the colonial moment. The Africanness in Mbeki's speech, as the following abridged parts show, puts a salience not on biology, as the colonial discourses prescribed, but on belonging:

I am an African.

I am formed of the migrants who left Europe to find a new home on our native land. Whatever their own actions, they remain still part of me.

In my veins courses the blood of the Malay slaves who came from the East. Their proud dignity informs my bearing, their culture a part of my essence. The stripes they bore on their bodies from the lash of the slave master are a reminder embossed on my consciousness of what should not be done.

I am the grandchild of the warrior men and women that Hintsá and Sekhukhune led, the patriots that Cetshwayo and Mphephu took to battle, the soldiers Moshoeshe and Ngungunyane taught never to dishonour the cause of freedom.

My mind and my knowledge of myself is formed by the victories that are the jewels in our African crown, the victories we earned from Isandhlwana to Khartoum, as Ethiopians and as Ashanti of Ghana, as Berbers of the desert.

195 Mbeki's speech is available at http://www.soweto.co.za/html/i_iamafican.htm (accessed 2 February 2018).

I come of those who were transported from India and China, whose being resided in the fact, solely, that they were able to provide physical labour, who taught me that we could both be at home and be foreign, who taught me that human existence itself demanded that freedom was a necessary condition for that human existence.

Being part of all of these people, and in the knowledge that none dares contest that assertion, I shall claim that – I am an African.

In its expansive African imaginations Mbeki's speech is an affirmation of Hall's thesis about identity. It conceives identity as real and imagined, complex, dynamic and open-ended, unlike the racially saturated Africanness that was bequeathed by colonial and apartheid discourses. Mbeki's articulation of Africanness can be understood as the decentring of the race of Africanness. Race is present, but as a historical record and socio-political phenomenon, not as an essence. It leaves Africanness open to different and transformative appropriations by apartheid's races – 'Africans', 'Coloureds', 'Indians' and 'whites'. If Mbeki's imaginaire gestures towards a metaphysics of Africanness, it is certainly not a metaphysics of radical alterity but one of historically conscious presence in and belonging to Africa.