

**EXPLORATION OF BIKO AND SANKARA'S POLITICAL THOUGHTS AND PRAXIS
IN RELATION TO AFRICAN RENAISSANCE AS A DECOLONIAL PROJECT**

by

LESHABA TONY LECHABA

Student Number: 2019876339

submitted in accordance with the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

At the



UFS · UV

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

SUPERVISOR: Dr Moorosi Leshoele

CO-SUPERVISOR: Prof Chitja Twala

November 2024

DECLARATION

Declaration Doctoral Student

I, Leshaba Tony Lechaba, declare that the thesis that I herewith submit for the Doctor of Philosophy in Africa Studies at the University of the Free State, is my independent work, and that I have not previously submitted it for a qualification at another institution of higher education.



14-11-2024

Student's Signature

Date

Centre for Gender and Africa Studies

(Name of Department)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother Elsina Lechaba, Quenton Lechaba, Tebatso Lechaba, Charity (Boledi) Lechaba, and Blessing Lechaba. My sincere gratitude to my aunt, Virginia Kekana. Thank you for your support and patience throughout my journey, and for always encouraging me to carry on despite some of the challenges I encountered along the way. This is appreciated. I am because you are! Le ka moso!

To those who departed from this world, my grandmother Meriam (Mologadi) Lechaba, my other granny Idah Moloya who always believed in me, my aunt Mpho Lechaba and Charlott Sebothoma. Although you are no longer with us, your spirit lives on.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to take this opportunity to thank my supervisors Dr Leshoele and Prof Twala for being part of this fulfilling intellectual journey with me. I have benefitted immensely from your knowledge, patience, and dedication. I am a better scholar because of your astute mentorship. Thank you for always being available to listen to my thoughts, suggestions and ideas. I believe that this experience has shaped and moulded me into the person I have become today... It has also opened my mind, to perceive the world through a different, and critical mind. This has also been a journey of self-discovery, which I am grateful for.

The financial assistance of the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS), in collaboration with the South African Humanities Deans Association (SAHUDA) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the NIHSS and SAHUDA.

Sincere gratitude to Ditshego Masete for agreeing to proofread and language edit my manuscript in a short notice.

To all my friends and colleagues at UNISA in the Department of Communication Science, thank you for your support and your words of encouragement.

ABSTRACT

The condition of coloniality in Africa is endemic and continues to perpetuate the problem of dependency. Africans are grappling with the imposed conditions, which explains the enormity of the task at hand. This persistence of coloniality, and neo-colonial relations concerning Africa, and the rest of the Global South entrenches the marginality of those located in these regions. The post-colonial African existence is predicated on the continued subjection of the colonised. This situation necessitates the process of de-linking. To de-link from the colonial matrices of power means to disassociate from the imposed imperialistic relations that are skewed towards the coloniser. Against this background, this study examines the political thoughts and praxis of Biko and Sankara, to determine their contributions and commitments in advancing African Renaissance as a decolonial de-linking tool. To this end, *Ubuntu* philosophy was employed as a philosophical lens and a radical hermeneutic approach was utilised as an interpretative tool. This thesis elucidates the significance and relevance of Biko and Sankara's political thoughts and praxis, which can be summed up in two words: Black Consciousness and authentic revolution. The former invokes that the African subject attains a critical consciousness to repudiate his/her subjection. The latter posits that a critically conscious subject is bound to seek a radical change in order to escape his/her conditionality. Furthermore, the prevailing situation dictates that a people-centric approach which is espoused by the principles and ethics of *Ubuntu* be advanced in response to the African condition. Seemingly, this people-centric approach can be read through and also reflected in Biko and Sankara's political thought and praxis.

Keywords: African Renaissance, Biko, Black Consciousness, Critical consciousness, de-linking, political thought, liberation, praxis, Pan-Africanism, Sankara, revolution, Ubuntu

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
CDR	Committees for the Defense of the Revolution
CMRPN	Military Committee of Recovery for National Progress
CNR	National Council of the Revolution
CSP	Council of Popular Salvation
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex
MRCNP	Military Committee for Redressment and National Progress
NCR	National Council of the Revolution
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NIHSS	National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences
NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania
POPI	Protection of Personal Information Act
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAHUDA	South African Humanities Deans Association
SARS	Special Anti-robbery Squad
SASO	South African Students' Organisation

SRC	Students Representative Council
TPRs	People's Revolutionary Courts
UN	United Nations
UNNE	University of Natal Non-European
USA	United States of America
WTO	World Trade Organisation

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

African Renaissance. Closely linked to the notion of Pan-Africanism, African Renaissance is a movement which attempts to mobilise Africans to unite against the tyranny of colonialism by redefining an African identity and freedom independent of colonial influence.

Bad faith. In existential philosophy, bad faith can be equated to self-deception and as such, it is paradoxical because “in order for me to deceive myself, I must both know the truth and not know it” (Sartre, 1956:64). It is pertinent in regard to liberatory discourses given that it advances criticality on the part of the oppressed subjects.

Black Consciousness. Biko (1978) defines Black Consciousness as the conscientisation of black people to realise the pressing need to rally together and wage a struggle against their oppression and negate the antiblackness associated with their identity. For Biko, Black Consciousness is an attitude and a way of life and seeks to advance a sense of pride among the oppressed blacks so that they freely embrace their value systems, culture, religion and worldview.

Critical consciousness. The notion of critical consciousness is imperative in the context of liberatory discourses. Critical consciousness pertains to the ability of the oppressed subject to exercise self-reflection regarding his/her situation and condition so that he/she escapes the imposed bondage and subjection.

Coloniality. The colonial domination relations that continue to exist between Europe and the formerly colonised in the form of subordination of the dominated cultures through its dimensions of power, knowledge and being to an extent that non-European cultures struggle to exist outside of these relations (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2007). Despite the dismantling of the formal structures of colonialism, the condition of coloniality still persists in the modern era.

Decoloniality. An active political project of de-linking from the imposed dichotomies articulated in the West that has to do with notions between the knower and the unknown, the subject and object, theory and praxis (Mignolo, 2007). It serves as a collective concept

for anti-slavery, anti-racism, anti-colonialism, anti-capitalism, anti-patriarchy, anti-Eurocentric hegemonic epistemology as a result of coloniality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

De-linking. A process of detachment from the colonial matrices of power that are associated with the condition of coloniality in the quest for attaining decoloniality, which is enacted through a process of making visible coexisting paradigms of thought that have been silenced and disavowed (Mignolo, 2007).

Liberation. An active radical political process of emancipation owing to the global hegemonic colonial domination of the colonised and marginalised subjects that existed for a period of five hundred years.

Pan-Africanism. A people-centred ideology that encompasses cultural, political and economic dimensions striving for political unity on the continental level with the aim of dismantling the entrenched neo-colonialism that continues to exist across Africa (Ijeoma, 2007).

Political thought. It is defined as an “aspect of social behaviour, of the ways in which humans behave towards each other and towards the institutions of their society; or it may be regarded as an aspect of intellectuality of their attempts to gain an understanding of their experience and environment” (Pocock, 2009:5). Texts are usually sites of political thought.

Praxis. Defined in relation to theory, as thought-reflection-action that gives shape, movement and meaning to action (Mignolo, 2018). Praxis is a combination of thinking and determines unity between theory and practice.

Contents	
DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	vi
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 The significance of the study	2
1.3 Problem statement	6
1.3.1 Research aims and objectives	7
1.3.2 The research objectives of the study	8
1.4 Biko and Sankara: a brief background	8
1.5 Theoretical/philosophical and conceptual framework	12
1.5.1 <i>Ubuntu</i> as a philosophical lens	12
1.5.2 <i>Ubuntu</i> and Pan-Africanism theory	16
1.5.3 Pan-Africanism theory	17
1.6 The persistence of coloniality/modernity	20
1.7 The concept of de-linking	22
1.8 African Renaissance	22
1.9 Research design and methodology	26
1.9.1 Qualitative research design	27
1.9.2 Data collection and analysis	28
1.9.3 Radical hermeneutic approach	29
1.10 Ethical considerations	31
1.11 Brief Chapter outline	32
CHAPTER TWO: PAN-AFRICANISM AND CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS	35
2.1 Introduction	35
2.2 <i>Ubuntu</i> and Pan-Africanism	37
2.3 Pan-Africanism as a liberatory discourse	41
2.4 Pan-Africanism	45
2.5 Pan-Africanist agenda: a critique	51

2.6 Pan-African Consciousness	61
2.7 Towards African Renaissance	67
2.8 Conclusion	70
CHAPTER THREE: EXPLORING AFRICAN RENAISSANCE AS A DECOLONIAL DE-LINKING OPTION	71
3.1 Introduction	71
3.2 The persistence of coloniality	72
3.3 De-linking process	82
3.4 Negritude and its influence on African Renaissance	89
3.5 African Renaissance defined	97
3.6 African Renaissance and the promotion of culture	105
3.7 Towards a decolonial de-linking project	111
3.8 Conclusion	115
CHAPTER FOUR: BIKO AND THE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS THOUGHT	116
4.1 Introduction	116
4.2 Biko's thought and the decolonial perspective	116
4.3 The notion of consciousness	123
4.4 The problem of bad faith	134
4.5 Biko and the idea of liberating the oppressed mind	141
4.6 Biko and the promotion of Black solidarity	148
4.7 Biko and the development of the Black Consciousness philosophy	157
4.8 Black Consciousness and African Renaissance	161
4.9 Black Consciousness and issues of gender	164
4.10 Conclusion	168
CHAPTER FIVE: SANKARA: A REVOLUTIONARY LEADER	170
5.1 Introduction	170
5.2 The problem of neo-colonialism	170
5.3 Revolution defined	177
5.3.1 The August revolution	180
5.3.2 Revolution as a social change	187
5.4 Sankara: a radical humanist	191
5.5 Sankara: a revolutionary leader	198
5.6 Sankara: The Pan-Africanist	204

5.7 Sankara's thought and African Renaissance	211
5.8 Sankara's revolution: a critique	213
5.9 Conclusion	217
CHAPTER SIX: TOWARDS AFRICAN RENAISSANCE	218
6.1 Introduction	218
6.2 Rebirth of the continent?	219
6.3 The problem of leadership	226
6.4 Critical consciousness and African Renaissance	233
6.5 African Renaissance as a critical discourse	236
6.6 Pan-Africanist African Renaissance	239
6.7 Towards a people-centric African Renaissance	244
6.8 Conclusion	247
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION	248
7.1 Introduction	248
7.2 The idea of conscientisation	248
7.3 Toward <i>Ubuntu</i> -centric liberation	251
7.4 African Renaissance: a de-linking project?	253
7.5 Lessons drawn from Biko and Sankara's political thoughts	255
7.6 Recommendations	256
7.7 Limitations of the study	258
7.8 Conclusion	259
REFERENCES	260
APPENDICES	279

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

This study examines the political thoughts and praxis of Steve Biko, and Thomas Sankara, and how these can be used to address the entrenched condition of coloniality using African Renaissance as a de-linking project. Although extensive literature on both Biko and Sankara exists, it should be noted that no study exists where both Biko and Sankara's political thoughts and praxis are juxtaposed to offer an in-depth understanding of the African condition. Furthermore, there is little research that examines both Biko and Sankara's thoughts in the context of African Renaissance as a de-linking project from the persistence of coloniality. Evidently, this study is uniquely positioned in its attempt to contribute to the liberation historiography of the African continent.

This is further in line with the envisaged dream of African unity and critical consciousness as the preconditions for the continent's advancement. I argue that the political thoughts and praxis of both Biko and Sankara are significant and therefore, relevant for the contemporary African context and thus, require examination. Biko's devotion to the notion of total liberation as espoused by the ideology of Black Consciousness, resonates with contemporary citizens of the Global South¹ in their quest for decolonisation and decoloniality. Chapter 4 of the thesis has highlighted and amplified the urgency of de-linking from colonial matrices of power that continue to pollute the psyche of the colonised subject and in the process, suspend his/her ontological existence. This can be read through Modiri (2018) who postulates that Black Consciousness serves as an emancipatory political vision, and praxis which presents an alternative framework for responding to issues of race, justice, and freedom in the present context.

¹ The dependency paradigm partitions the globe into blocs according to their state of development and economic statuses. Usually, countries in the West are regarded as developed or as belonging in the First World/Global North. Whereas countries that endured the brunt of colonialism, of which the majority are undeveloped, developing or sometimes referred to as the Third World. The latter reference is now replaced with the term, Global South to denote the global positionality of the developing world and the associated perpetual injustices emanating from colonialism. Most of these countries are located in the Southern hemisphere.

Similarly, Sankara's commitment to the self-determination of the African continent remains significant in the present context given his criticism of the perpetual dependency of the former colonies, and how this reinforces the system of neo-colonialism and other forms of subjugation. Chapter 5 elucidates Sankara's humanist, and Pan-Africanist agenda in advocating for the unification of the continent for the benefit of all Africans. Sankara's call for Pan-African unity and social transformation continues to dominate the discourse concerning African issues. For Harsch (2013), the elevation of Sankara's voice stems from dissatisfaction with the current African political, social and economic situation. It follows that drawing lessons from Sankara's revolutionary posture is pertinent. It is for these reasons that I contend that the political thoughts of Biko and Sankara are relevant to the contemporary African context and necessitate for a close and systematic examination and exploration.

1.2 The significance of the study

The African political thought has to do with the "original ideas, values, and blueprints for a better Africa that inform African political systems and institutions from the ancient period (Kush, sixth century BCE) to the present" (Martin, 2012:1). This thought is also reflected in speeches, autobiographical narratives, policy statements, and other such forms of writing by African leaders and statesmen. A separation of personhood and ideology is therefore made, necessitating an examination of these political actors and not their individualistic aspirations. Martin (2012) further asserts that African political thought informs practical solutions to political, economic, social and cultural problems as they relate to the historical circumstances in relation to the African context. As such, African political thought influences the political actions of the leaders concerned insofar as the advancement and upliftment of the continent are concerned. In the context of this study, the political thoughts of Biko and Sankara are examined in relation to these thinkers' radical interventions concerning the notions of conscientisation, de-linking and liberation of the African continent. More so given the unabated continuation of the condition of coloniality, through neoliberal tendencies and approaches.

It is thus pertinent to appreciate the climate in which the African leaders have to operate given the historical situation of colonialism. For this reason, their political thought and

praxis have to be radical and revolutionary as they navigate the entrenched condition of coloniality. This intervention has provided insights into how Biko and Sankara affirmed the significance of African unification, economic development and decolonisation. Sankara in particular, invokes a revolutionary leadership that is needed on the African continent to assert a critical conscious agency capable of promoting African Renaissance and Pan-Africanism. This has to be reflected in the praxis of all actors.

The praxis of Biko and Sankara are significant in understanding their critical consciousness amid the violence inflicted by colonialism on the African continent. Fratton (1986) observes that it is only through the praxis of revolution that the new order can be truly grasped. A revolutionary actor is bound to exercise critical consciousness which is imperative for escaping the bondage of oppression. As it will be evident in Chapter 4, Biko's thought is chiefly predicated on the idea of conscientisation as reflected in the philosophy of Black Consciousness. This heightened consciousness has to be reflected in one's praxis. Praxis, for Osorio (2009) affirms, and at the same time, denies the present, and, in the process transcends the imposed condition in order to validate society. In this regard, praxis becomes key because it puts thoughts into action to achieve the intended goal of attaining liberation.

According to More (2004:213), Biko was occupied with the restoration of the "lost African consciousness" and the attainment of unity among those oppressed, with shared existential experiences. This theme is prominent in Biko's thought as reflected in his call for solidarity among the oppressed groups, particularly, the black people (see Chapter 4). Furthermore, Biko advocated for critical consciousness among the oppressed as they navigate the imposed hegemonic spaces and conditions of subjectivity. Similarly, Modiri's reading of Biko's theorisation of Black Consciousness presents Biko's philosophical character as encompassing that which is counter-discursive; resistant to hegemonic narratives and always in conversation with the larger political universe of black radicalism and Pan-Africanism around the world (2017). This speaks to the relevance of Biko's ideas for the oppressed people across the globe—not just for South Africa and the rest of the African continent.

Evidently, central to Sankara's political thought is the significance of the 'people' as active members and beneficiaries of the revolution (Martin, 1987). This prominence of a people-centric theme is evident in Sankara's thoughts (see Chapter 5). This is reflected in Sankara's characterisation of the August revolution² as people-oriented. Undeniably, the praxis of Biko and Sankara is predicated on their embracement of *Ubuntu* philosophy. Against this background, I argue that both these leaders transcended the hegemonic system that imposed a sense of double consciousness³ that perpetuated their subjectivity and modes of modernity/coloniality in relation to their praxis and as such, there are lessons to be learnt by contemporary Africans.

For these reasons, as the succeeding chapters will indicate, a closer reading and a critical engagement of both Biko and Sankara's political thoughts and praxis has provided insights into the current African context. For instance, Biko highlights the significance of liberating one's mind to be critically conscious of the conditionalities, and subjection that keep the oppressed in a state of perpetual servitude. On the other hand, Sankara points out the significance of a revolutionary praxis that ought to be characterised by a people-centric approach to socioeconomic and political issues and confronting the problem of dependency. More importantly, Biko and Sankara's thoughts highlight the urgency of social transformation by advocating for a transformative praxis. Thus, I contend that their political thoughts and praxis advance and highlight the need for a de-linking process to be carried out.

² August the 4th revolution pertains to the overthrow of the government led by Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo in Burkina Faso wherein the National Council of the Revolution assumed power and installed Sankara as the President. The event was later characterised as signifying the Burkina revolution. For Sankara (1988), the August revolution signalled the struggle against neocolonial domination and exploitation. Furthermore, the August revolution is about the aspirations of the Burkina people in charting a new democratic society. Essentially, it is characterised as the people's revolution given the support that CNR received following the overthrow of Ouédraogo's government. (see Chapter 5).

³ The concept of double consciousness was conceptualised by WEB Du Bois and refers to what he regards as "[the] sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others ..." in relation to a black colonised subject (Du Bois, 2007:8). This has implications to the ontological being of a colonised subject given that her authentic self-consciousness is polluted by the entrenched hegemonic system of coloniality. It is through the veil of double consciousness that an authentic identity of the condemned subject is concealed as the world is viewed through an imposed lens.

In decolonial terms, a de-linking process entails a “radical transformation of the modern/colonial matrix of power which continues to define modern identities as well as the relations of power and epistemic forms that go along with them” (Maldonado-Torres 2010:115). The persistent violence inflicted by the logic of coloniality/modernity calls for radical action as espoused in Biko and Sankara’s political thoughts and praxis. Therefore, de-linking serves as a response to the entrenched rhetoric of coloniality as necessitated by a need for non-imperial/colonial societies (Mignolo, 2009). A question which this thesis grapples with pertains to whether the African Renaissance project fulfils the characteristics of a de-linking option in the context of decolonial interventions. Chapter two grapples with this aspect at length.

In Sankara’s frame of thought and ideological contention, the notion of psychological liberation was and continues to be key. Murrey (2018) observes that Sankara pursued a radical revolutionary agenda that addressed mental emancipation, and the affirmation of people’s agency, and thus should be considered a figure of promise for contemporary politics. Sankara was vocal about the colonised’s mental decolonisation and viewed this intervention as a precondition of a revolutionary agent. From this perspective, it can be argued that a radical decolonial undertaking is imperative in repudiating the condition of perpetual subjection. Hence, an attempt to explore the concept of African Renaissance as a de-linking project is important in that regard. A de-linking option is a precursor to liberation because African futures can only be imagined if liberation from coloniality is realised.

Hence, this study sought to critically engage the political thoughts and praxis of Biko and Sankara as reflected in their writings to determine whether any lessons can be drawn in relation to the advancement of African Renaissance as a decolonial de-linking project. As such, a synthesised analysis of the concept of African Renaissance as a decolonial tool was carried out in Chapter 3. The chapter further explored the concept of African Renaissance and whether it has the capacity of being used as a response to the entrenched colonial order. It should be noted that the perpetual hostility brought by the hegemonic global system needs radical intervention if true liberation is to be attained. As proponents of Pan-Africanism, African unity and advocates of true liberation, I contend

that examining Biko and Sankara's thoughts and praxis is pertinent in light of the perpetual neo-colonial social order.

There is little research that critically engages the political thoughts and praxis of both Biko and Sankara, and how they can foreground and advance the notion of African Renaissance as a decolonial de-linking tool. Through a critical examination of the political thoughts and praxis of both Biko and Sankara, this study seeks to bridge this gap, by foregrounding their commitment to the concept and practice of African Renaissance as a decolonial de-linking tool. Hence, the significance of this study insofar as liberatory discourses are significant in the context of the persistent condition of coloniality. Furthermore, they (Biko and Sankara) lived during different eras albeit both being impacted by colonialism – also apartheid for Biko. This study is an attempt to develop a coherent narrative from their thoughts in order to gain an understanding of how they responded to these oppressive conditions. I contend that this aspect enhances this study's contribution to knowledge given that insights from both leaders are pertinent and this has provided an interesting reading insofar as both perspectives are concerned. Given the persistence of coloniality, I argue that it is crucial to interrogate the political thoughts of these leaders as the continent of Africa searches for practical solutions to political, economic, social, and cultural problems that it is continuously confronted with.

1.3 Problem statement

This study problematises Biko and Sankara's political thoughts as reflected in their writings, and how these can be used to advance the project of African Renaissance when the latter is viewed as a de-linking tool. The persistence of the condition of coloniality, which is fraught with dehumanising factors dictates that a de-linking process be carried out by the formerly colonised (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018, 2013, Mignolo, 2009, 2007, 2000; Maldonado-Torres, 2006). Ultimately, the study seeks to respond to the entrenched social engineering and indoctrination associated with the rhetoric of coloniality and the perpetual dependency that emanates from this condition given that it continues to haunt the continent of Africa half a century following its political independence. This is the fundamental research problem that the proposed study seeks to investigate and address.

The conditioning of an African mind, which is associated with the persistence of coloniality “fundamentally transformed African communities and altered the fabric of African societies” (Muiu & Martin, 2009). I argue that, both Biko and Sankara’s political thoughts and praxis could be read as providing powerful insights into the understanding of African Renaissance as a de-linking tool in the context of the entrenched persistence of coloniality. This is achieved by reading Biko and Sankara’s political thought and praxis as reflected in their writings through an *Ubuntu* lens and a Pan-Africanism theory to elucidate a response to the perpetual condition of coloniality and the lessons thereof.

Therefore, the study grapples with the following research questions:

- What are the political thoughts and praxis of Biko and Sankara?
- Why are the political thoughts and praxis of Biko and Sankara still relevant in the contemporary African context?
- What lessons, if any, can be drawn from the political thoughts and praxis of both Biko and Sankara?
- In what way can the African political thoughts of Biko and Sankara advance the African Renaissance cause?
- How does the project of African Renaissance serve as a decolonial de-linking project?

1.3.1 Research aims and objectives.

In light of the above research questions, the following research aims and objectives will be sought.

Theoretically, this study aims to foreground endogenous epistemological as well as philosophical foundations as an attempt to reappropriate and draw from an African heritage and to reinforce their usefulness and relevance in addressing the African realities. To this end, *Ubuntu* philosophy is employed as a philosophical lens in conjunction with Pan-Africanism theory as a theoretical framework. Hence this study has contributed to the body of knowledge concerning the application of *Ubuntu* as a philosophical lens in the context of liberatory discourses. Another contribution to the body of knowledge pertains to the discourse of African Renaissance as a de-linking tool by

drawing from Biko and Sankara's political thoughts. Methodologically, the study aims to draw from Tsenay Serequeberhan's conception of radical hermeneutics as an analytical tool employed to analyse the African context.

1.3.2 The research objectives of the study

- To explore the significance and relevance of Biko and Sankara's political thoughts in relation to their advancement of the African Renaissance cause
- To critically analyse the concept of African Renaissance in terms of its suitability as a decolonial de-linking project
- To examine the political thought of both Biko and Sankara in relation to the notion of Pan-Africanism
- To interrogate and apply an Afrocentric theoretical framework premised on the principle of *Ubuntu* in order to understand and interpret African realities/experiences.

1.4 Biko and Sankara: a brief background

Although this thesis is concerned with the political thoughts and praxis of Biko and Sankara, it is necessary to provide a brief background of these leaders for the benefit of the reader. As such, a contextual background is necessary and therefore, this writer does not take for granted that the reader might have an idea of who these leaders are. This exercise is by no means meant to provide a comprehensive biographical account of Biko and Sankara but serves to provide some background on both of them. The reader is directed to a few relevant texts that track and trace the lives of these two leaders. These include but are not limited to *Thomas Sankara: an African revolutionary* (2014) by Ernest Harsch; *A certain amount of madness: The life, politics and legacies of Thomas Sankara* (2018), by A Murrey (editor); *Biko: a life* (2014), by Xolela Mangcu; and *Biko* (2017), by D Woods.

Bantu Stephen Biko was born on 18 December 1946 in Tarkastad in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. Biko was born at the time when the apartheid regime was legislated, rubberstamped, and imposed on the majority of Black South Africans. Biko witnessed the brunt of the apartheid regime, characterised by racial segregation synonymous with that

era (Wyatt, 2019). Biko was born in the specific politico-historical context where extreme racial segregation based on white privilege was prevalent. The period was characterised by the marginalisation and exploitation of the African majority. It is for this reason that Biko's anti-apartheid activism began at an early stage culminating in him, his brother Khaya and his friend Larry Bekwa being expelled from Lovedale College in 1963.

Biko was raised in a Christian home with affiliation to Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) politics, however, Biko found its exclusivist Africanism unappealing (Shills, 2015). This stance revealed his political autonomy from an early age. Pityana (2018) describes Biko as an ordinary young man who lived in ordinary times, but who made something extraordinary out of his life, not of his own will but through the machinations of an evil system. Pityana further asserts that Biko's life touched and shaped him. He would subsequently be admitted to St. Francis College where he graduated in 1965 and was admitted to Durban Medical School at the University of Natal Non-European (UNNE).

While at the University of Natal, Biko was elected to the Students Representative Council (SRC) in the first year. He was later elected the Chair of the South African Students Organisation (SASO) with Barney Pityana as the President at its launch congress in July 1969. Some of the members of this organisation included Barney Pityana, Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu and Themba Sono. According to Nengwekhulu (cited in Ndaba and Smith, 2019:6), Biko's election as the first president of SASO turned out to be a mistake because he was a "deep thinker and creator of ideas" and his election exposed him to the regime". But Nengwekhulu adds that they had no choice given the problem of leadership shortage at that time. It is through SASO that a blueprint for the philosophy of Black Consciousness was carved (Tafira, 2013).

The attainment of liberation is of paramount significance for the oppressed subjects as it re-humanises those who are dehumanised by the oppressive system. Thus, it is impossible to imagine a free and authentic African reality if the people are not free, *qua* liberated. An unfree subject is not yet fully human as his/her humanity is negated by the oppressive system. It is thus fundamentally crucial for the subject to be liberated in order to realise his/her full potential as a subjective human being. Biko's Black Consciousness

philosophy resonates with the oppressed people globally given the persistence of anti-blackness (refer to Chapter 4 on the problem of anti-blackness). It highlights the significance of psychological liberation. Hence, its relevance in the context of the persistence of coloniality of being. In this sense, the significance of Biko's political thought and praxis is echoed by Ahluwalia and Zegeye (2010) as they compare him to Fanon's interest in the psychology of consciousness and liberation of the oppressed mind.

However, Ahluwalia and Zegeye concede that Biko's political thought and praxis have not received attention internationally, and in Africa. I, however, contend that Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness as exemplified by the notion of psychological liberation has been studied extensively in South Africa. A satisfactory plethora of literature exists on the examination of Black Consciousness. However, in comparison, Fanon's thoughts have received more attention. This thesis argues that Biko's thoughts and praxis have elucidated insights regarding the notions of critical consciousness, African unity and liberation in the context of liberatory discourses. I advance this thought, juxtaposing the political thoughts of both Biko and Sankara as elucidating invaluable insights regarding some of the pressing challenges that the modern African continent continues to grapple with.

On the other hand, Thomas Sankara was born on 21 December 1949 in Yako, Central Upper Volta (which, he later renamed Burkina Faso). Sankara received military training at the Antsirabé Academy in Madagascar. He is described as an energetic and charismatic junior officer, who served as a soldier in the Burkina Faso military. He was later promoted to captain because of his military command abilities (Harsch, 2014). Sankara was influenced by Che Guevara's ideas, and Amilcar Cabral, particularly on the socialist ideology. He exemplifies the new type of post-World War military men who were not associated with the French colonial forces (Martin, 1987). The distinction with Sankara pertains to his characteristics of a leader who was sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the African masses.

Sankara led a life of modesty, dedicating his time and energy to improve and advance the existential living conditions of ordinary Burkina people and Africans at large. Martin (1987) regards Sankara as both a thinker, and a doer, as he did not only articulate his

vision, but also put his thoughts into practice with various degrees of success. As such, he embodied one basic principle of Marxism-Leninism – theory needs to be augmented with practice. He sought to transform the people of Burkina Faso in relation to the entrenched neo-colonial mindsets and advocated for self-sustenance and ultimately, de-linking from the neo-imperial attitudes. Sankara’s political philosophy and praxis were influenced by a variety of revolutionary and radical ideas, which included, among others, anti-imperialism, Pan-Africanism, African socialism and forms of Marxism. Sankara was assassinated on October 15, 1987, aged 38.

Sankara’s life and service as a soldier have provided valuable lessons for contemporary Africans who seek liberation from imperial domination (Campbell, 2018). Clearly, this study draws inspiration from Sankara’s lived experiences. Similarly, Murrey (2018) is of the view that Sankara’s life and political praxis continue to shape and inspire Pan-African youth activism and resistance across the African continent. I concur with Murrey’s observation of Sankara’s political praxis as being exemplary for present-day African youth movements. The present-day African youth continue to appeal for a revolutionary change which is authentic and meaningful and geared toward achieving social transformation on the continent.

Against this background, this thesis synthesises the political thoughts and praxis of Biko and Sankara to determine their relevance for Africa in the context of African Renaissance as a de-linking project today. As alluded to above, and this will also be elucidated in the subsequent chapters, there is a multitude of lessons to be drawn from these leaders insofar as a liberatory discourse is imperative for imagining African futures free from neo-colonial bondages. As such, for Africa to escape the colonial and neo-colonial realities, a commitment to liberatory interventions must take place. Biko and Sankara remind us that the present is appropriate for radical action as the urgency is evident. Furthermore, these two revolutionaries have demonstrated the principles of selfless leadership that foreground the needs of the ordinary people. One common theme that emanated from this exercise pertains to the notion of what I regard as ‘people-centric politics and praxis’. The principle of people-centredness is anchored on the *Ubuntu* philosophy. Hence, the deliberate choice to utilise the Afrocentric lens of *Ubuntu* and Pan-Africanism theory.

1.5 Theoretical/philosophical and conceptual framework

1.5.1 *Ubuntu* as a philosophical lens

This research is underpinned by an African-centred epistemology, as reflected through Gibrill (2014:160) who succinctly argues that “the task for the Africanist scholar is to rebuff and refute this [analytical posture of Eurocentrism] intellectual order”. In an African-centred epistemology, the centrality of human collectivism is key and this is epitomised by the ethics of *Ubuntu* philosophy. Hence, this is a conscious decision in selecting *Ubuntu* as a lens. *Ubuntu* is anchored in the ontological orientation of every African individual and, as such, I contend that it is evident in the political thoughts and praxis of both Biko and Sankara given their affirmation of the humanity of the oppressed, marginalised, and subjugated. This principle is embodied in their political thought and praxis as evidenced through this study.

As such, Biko and Sankara advocated for the agency of the oppressed individuals amid the imposed dehumanising conditions. Black Consciousness philosophy as espoused by Biko promotes the values of *Ubuntu* as an instrument of liberation. For Biko, the quest for true humanity should involve the idea of returning and regaining the human-centred society that Africa historically had (Khoapa, 2008). As such, Biko emphasised the significance of African values in the quest for liberation--drawing from endogenous insights as a response to the oppressive order. Therefore, his praxis was underpinned by the values and principles of *Ubuntu*, as he believed that Black Consciousness would render the oppressed as complete human beings who are free to express their authentic humanity.

Furthermore, Biko (1978:108) observed that Africa’s contribution to the world will be in the form of giving the world a “more human face” – emphasising the centrality of the significance of the principle of humanness. Similarly, I contend that Sankara’s thought was anchored in the values of *Ubuntu* given his emphasis on the centrality of people in all aspects of his revolution. As such, Sankara promoted a people-centred Pan-Africanism (Daley, 2018). As detailed below, in *Ubuntu* philosophy, the centredness of a human is pertinent and this is demonstrated in the praxis of both Sankara and Biko hence the validity of this philosophical perspective in relation to this study. I argue that interrogating

their thoughts from the perspective of *Ubuntu* is bound to provide insights about discourses of emancipation in relation to how the dispossessed and the dehumanised can re-assert their humanity. As the latter is critical for their agency.

Ubuntu forms the core foundation of the indigenous communities of Southern Africa in terms of worldview, politics and relationships. As Ramose (2002:5) puts it, “the be-ing of an African in the universe is inseparably anchored upon *Ubuntu*”. It is indigenous and Afrocentric and therefore offers a different approach and perspective to realities (Ncube, 2010). As an alternative to other modes of inquiry that tend to be externally derived and Eurocentric, *Ubuntu* is humanistic in its nature and hence it is emancipatory. The notion of *Ubuntu* can be understood in terms of the two maxims which make up its core values and attitudes. The first pertains to a strong belief that a human being is human because of other human beings. This espouses the African philosophy to its depth, repositioning people at the centre through rhetoric and affirmative action to further perpetuate the African philosophy that; *motho ke motho ka batho* (Sesotho languages), and *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (IsiNguni languages), directly translated as “*I am because you are*”. The second maxim extends the humanity of the individual through the other and the external environment--a human being is human because of the otherness of other human beings. My humanity is only valid through the advancement of others’ humanness. The core principles of *Ubuntu* include, among others, collectivism, solidarity, interconnectedness, interdependency and empowerment (Ncube, 2010). It is also important to note that the centrality of life in *Ubuntu* is not only limited to humans but also extends to other non-human universes including the biosphere and the cosmos (Chuwa, 2014).

Ramose (1999) approaches the term *Ubuntu* as a hyphenated word as in *ubu-ntu* given that it is made of the prefix *ubu-* and the stem *ntu-*. Ramose further explains that the former pertains to the notion of *be-ing* in general and it is also always orientated towards the latter (1999). Clearly, Ramose’s morphological analysis of the word ‘*ubu-ntu*’, allows for a critical and more elaborate examination of the word, to offer an understanding of how one’s being is directly linked to the being of the other, through space and time.

Ramose elaborates on how the two components that make up the word *ubu-ntu* relate to each other in this way:

At the ontological level, there is no strict and literal separation and division between *ubu-* and *-ntu*. *Ubu-* and *-ntu* are not two radically separate and irreconcilably opposed realities. On the contrary, they are mutually founding in the sense that they are two aspects of *be-ing* as a one-ness and an indivisible whole-ness (1999:50).

Accordingly, given the verbal character implicit in *ubu-* when grounded by the stem *-ntu*, transforms *Ubuntu* into an abstract verbal noun (Dladla 2017). This characterisation of *Ubuntu* in relation to the ongoing process of *be-ing* proves that the centrality of motion in relation to the concept of *Umuntu* is paramount. This demonstrates the existence of the cyclic nature and quality of the *be-ing* constituted by *Ubuntu* philosophy. In this sense, the one who practices *Ubuntu* has to constantly propagate the harmonious motion of all entities required for its sustenance. Thus, the *be-ing* of this actor is predicated on his/her self-awareness about his/her surroundings insofar as all the elements involved complete his/her humanness. As observed by Ramose (1999), *Umuntu* constitutes that entity which continues to conduct inquiry into being, experience, knowledge and truth. This inquiry is an ongoing process which is impossible to bring to a halt unless the motion itself is stopped. Thus, given that all elements that make up a cyclical wheel are dependent on one another to keep the motion ongoing, its disturbance is bound to cause chaos.

Evidently, a reading of Ramose's philosophical conception of the *Ubuntu*, leads to a conclusion that this conception highlights the aspect of self-consciousness insofar as one's surroundings and situation are concerned. It equips one with the right philosophical tools for developing and maintaining a praxis that is predicated on the promotion of the quality of the essence of humanness. I problematise this principle as embodied in Biko and Sankara's political thoughts as evidenced by their quest to re-humanise the dehumanised subjects, to counter the logic of oppression which seeks to objectify the 'subject' by stripping him/her off his/her humanity. In *Ubuntu*, one is cognisant of the centrality of the living as these validate his/her humanness. Thus, *Ubuntu* is understood as *be-ing* human as verbal and continual motion, always in a constant state of revision (Dladla, 2017). As a result, *Ubuntu* as an abstract is ontologically tied to *umuntu* (the one

who practices *Ubuntu*) as the doer and the progenitor of the epistemology of *Ubuntu* in practice. Dladla (2017:54) argues further that *Ubuntu* should be viewed as a philopraxis in a sense that the condition of being human is insufficient as “one ought to become – in the ethical sense – a human being”. As such, the validity of the be-ing in *Ubuntu* philosophy is dependent on one’s actions in relation to others insofar as the recognition of their humanity and the establishment of humane relationships with them are pertinent.

For these reasons, *Ubuntu* transcends one’s thoughts and praxis necessitating one “to prove oneself to be the embodiment of *ubu-ntu* because the fundamental ethical, social and legal judgement of human worth and conduct is based upon the practice of *Ubuntu*” (Ramose, 1999:272). In this sense, a doer of *Ubuntu* needs to embody its ethical, social and legal underpinnings in relation to all aspects of life – in this context, through political thought and praxis. Hence my contention that both Biko and Sankara embodied the ethics of *Ubuntu* in their praxis and thoughts given their human-centred approach to politics.

Biko advocates for the re-affirmation of African norms, and values, and called for the restoration of an African way of life (Sogiba, 1996). In his own words Biko propagates the value of the centrality of human-centredness African philosophy to the cause of liberation. Biko (1978:367) maintains, “we must seek to restore to the black man [*sic*] the great importance to give human relations; the high regard to people in general”. Of course, the *Ubuntu* praxis permeated every aspect of his life as he regarded the philosophy of Black Consciousness as a way of life given its emancipatory characteristics for the dehumanised individuals. Similarly, the centrality of humanness is visible in Sankara’s thought and praxis in the form of his promotion of the equilibrium amongst the people, the environment and the universe as reflected in his project of reforestation in Burkina Faso (Leshoele, 2019). Sankara’s revolution was also anchored on the people as he argues that human dignity is key towards true liberation. Sankara advanced the transformative agenda by making a personal sacrifice for the benefit of the collective as a leader of Burkina Faso (Kandeh, 2004). Furthermore, Sankara’s affirmation of women’s rights speaks to his recognition of the significance of their humanity and demonstrates his embodiment of *Ubuntu* philosophy – given that in *Ubuntu* the validity of being human (*umuntu*) is dependent on the humanity of others. Sankara emphasised this point when

he said, “thus, women’s emancipation is at the heart of the question of humanity itself, here and everywhere” (Sankara, 1988:10).

Sankara’s main goal was to uplift the lives of ordinary members of society in relation to their material living conditions, to reaffirm their humanity and afford them social justice. Against this background, I argue that both Biko and Sankara embodied the spirit, ethics and values of *Ubuntu* in their political thoughts and praxis. This principle constituted their approach to politics as they understood the significance of the notion of humanism to African philosophy, cosmology and worldview. Therefore, I contend that both Biko and Sankara recognised, albeit implicitly, the potency of African humanism (*Ubuntu*) to fight against the imposition of colonialism, neo-colonialism and apartheid in the case of South Africa.

1.5.2 *Ubuntu* and Pan-Africanism theory

The main objective of Pan-Africanism is to liberate Africa, and Africans from the shackles of slavery, colonialism, racism, repression, and coloniality. Pan-Africanism has to be consciously enacted, and this requires radical agency from its proponents. One earns Pan-Africanity by embracing humanity (*Ubuntu*), and a shared concern for fellow Africans, by promoting its values (Moges & Muchie, 2020). Hence, the cross-pollination of these two philosophies. An Afrocentric approach to African reality is therefore key to guard against the danger of returning to a default positionality of Eurocentric ideology in relationship to Africa (Asante, 2020). Hence, the centrality of human-centredness in *Ubuntu* philosophy accords one with endogenous mechanisms and tools to think outside of the dominant rationality of Eurocentrism. Dladla (2017) asserts that in *Ubuntu* the condition of being human is conscious and continuous and this should be illustrated in one’s praxis as one navigates the imposed social condition and reality.

The current African condition dictates for a radical approach in relation to contemporary economic, development, cultural and social challenges. According to Chilisa (2012), the ‘we’ in *I/we* relationship in *Ubuntu*-informed research illustrates the notion of the rebirth of a people relegated to the margins within Euro-North American discourses. Hence, it is my contention that *Ubuntu* enhances the theoretical perspective employed in this study given that its foundational grounding is rooted in Afrocentric theoretical categories and

therefore, it is liberatory. However, it must be applied authentically, and critically to avoid the pitfalls associated with neo-colonial attitudes.

1.5.3 Pan-Africanism theory

While it is important to think of Africa as one, it is also critical to de-link from the Eurocentric attitudes of portraying Africa as a homogeneous space. Therefore, the heterogeneity of Africa and her people, which speaks to and about, unity in diversity, is reflected through various Pan-Africanism strands associated with a variety of thinkers such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Cheikh Anta Diop and Kwame Nkrumah, to mention a few (Rabaka, 2020; Laurea, 2015; M'bayo, 2004). Although these thinkers share a Pan-Africanism philosophy, they also reflect cultural heterogeneity informed by their places, spaces, and existence. Mazrui (2007) alludes to this diversity by positing that, Pan-Africanism be viewed as a system of ideas concerned not only preoccupied with political economy, but also with African culture, aesthetics, poetry and philosophy. It intersects with other African political, and intellectual thought of Black consciousness, Black nationalism, and socialism (Abbas & Mama, 2014). In Esedebe's words, Pan-Africanism brings in the notion of African Renaissance in defining this concept. Esedebe (1977:186) says:

Pan-Africanism is therefore a political and a cultural phenomenon that in the early stage regarded Africa and persons of African descent as a unit. It aims at the regeneration of Africa and the promotion of a feeling of solidarity among the people of the African world. It glorifies the African past and inculcates pride in African values.

From this definition, the notion of African unity and its restoration is evident and thus speaks to the advancement of African Renaissance by invoking the element of regeneration of Africa, which forms one of its core principles. Taking into account these critical arguments, I will also align my thoughts to Murithi's (2020:274) articulation the four pillars associated with what he terms the Pan-Africanism school of thought:

- i) A normative emphasis on adopting a trans-continental approach to framing and analysing political, economic and social processes in Africa:

- ii) An analysis predicated on the historical realities of the African continent:
- iii) A philosophical emphasis on the need for solidarity between Africans across the continent, as well as, descendants of the African heritage in other parts of the world:
- iv) A commitment towards improving the socio-economic livelihood of all Africans, including those in the diaspora, and confronting institutionalized forms of exploitation and repression wherever they exist, including confronting racism.

From the above description, a thread of African solidarity is evident with emphasis on frameworks that can make this ideal a reality. Furthermore, the socio-economic situation of Africans, including those from, and in the diaspora is highlighted as requiring some improvement. Such can only be achieved if solidarity among Africans is forged. Viewed from this perspective, Pan-Africanism theory can be used to dismantle the institutionalised forms of marginalisation that emanate as a result of the persistent condition of coloniality. Odamtten (2014) identifies three trends associated with the theory of Pan-Africanism, namely, intellectual Pan-Africanism, cultural-religious Pan-Africanism and political Pan-Africanism. He asserts that intellectual Pan-Africanism is reflected by the academic or systematic study of African and African diaspora societies and cultures. Cultural-religious Pan-Africanism has to do with the cultural and nationalist perspectives rooted in the celebration of diverse African cultural practices (Odamtten, 2014).

Furthermore, Odamtten regards political Pan-Africanism as involving political activism and nationalism in the form of civil protest marches, demonstrations, legislative challenges and political agitation that aim to bring about social change with regard to the lives of Black people globally (2014). Therefore, this perspective of Pan-Africanism invokes a conscious political thought and praxis of an African individual in the struggle against systemic oppression. Drawing from the political thoughts and praxis of Biko and Sankara, and how these advance the idea of Pan-Africanism, may provide insights on the discourse of agency, social justice and social transformation pertaining to the continent.

Scholars have also advanced what they term Pan-Africanist consciousness in response to the persistence of the neo-colonial system of repression (Murithi, 2020; Rabaka, 2020;

Esedebe, 1977; Young, 2010). I contend that both Biko and Sankara embodied the values of Pan-Africanist consciousness as demonstrated in their thoughts and praxis, and by their rejection of the condition of dependency. The ultimate goal of Pan-African consciousness is African unity, and solidarity and this can only be attained by firstly addressing the mental conditioning of Africans. As Gumede (2018) asserts that mental liberation is crucial as it offers a precondition for critical consciousness. Biko addresses this in his conception of Black Consciousness when he says: "...at the heart of this kind of thinking [Black Consciousness thinking] is the realization by blacks that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed" (Biko, 1978:74). Similarly, Sankara understood the significance of Africa carving her own development and, in the process, de-linking from the economic and political dependency from the West (Zeilig, 2018). Therefore, both these leaders should be regarded as Pan-Africanists who advanced African unity, social transformation and self-determination.

Pan-African consciousness can be traced from the moments that involved the humiliation and the marginalisation of Africa, and the diaspora, the racism that accompanied the slave trade as well as European imperialism. The notion of Pan-Africanist consciousness is conceptualised by Young in this way:

The notion of a Pan-African consciousness is central to the holistic paradigm in that it represents an identification with Africa on levels much deeper than isolated "ideas" about the physical continent. Pan-African consciousness refers to an awareness that members of African origin communities—and by extension the community itself— belong to a global African "family." It transcends mere reflections on Africa towards an awareness of kindred relationships among African origin people and communities. Finally, the presence of a Pan-African consciousness creates a sense of unity in struggle (Young, 2010:145).

For Young, the notion of Pan-Africanist consciousness advances and forges a sense of collective commitment to the prevailing socio-political struggles which continue to ravage the continent, and people of African ancestry globally. It can be argued that this kind of consciousness as explicated by Young encompasses the aspects of thought and praxis by further problematising what it means to be an African in the world fraught with injustices

that subjugate the African. For that reason, in this quest of Pan-Africanist consciousness one has to be consciously cognitive of the historical context in which the notion of Africanness is invoked. In this sense, self-awareness is key for a Pan-Africanist individual in forging a global African solidarity armed with requisite resolve in the liberation struggle.

As such, a conscious Pan-Africanist will be receptive to the radical interventions and discourses in the form of African Renaissance, and Black Consciousness philosophy. As Rabaka observes, the Pan-African consciousness promotes a sense of global African solidarity connected by common history, and shared lived experiences of anti-African subjugation (2020). In light of the perpetual systemic dehumanisation and subjugation of the African individual, drawing from Biko and Sankara's Pan-African consciousness is crucial given the need and urgency for liberation. Ideally, the Pan-African consciousness should be positioned as a precondition for African Renaissance as a de-linking project. It should be noted that this study does not adopt a particular approach to Pan-Africanism, it synthesises various strands of this theory in order to illuminate its applicability insofar as the struggle for liberation is fundamental element of the theory. The conscious decision not to choose a particular strand of the Pan-Africanism theory is grounded on an insider's view of Africa as a diverse home, accommodating people with diverse cultures, but nonetheless, shared experiences of marginality. Having discussed the theoretical framework of this study, the focus shifts to focus on key concepts utilised in the study with coloniality as one of them.

1.6 The persistence of coloniality/modernity

It is argued in this study that the perpetual advent of coloniality dictates that a radical intervention be carried out as a response to this hegemonic system. For that reason, a decolonial de-linking project is therefore necessary and, in this case, African Renaissance is proposed in response to this. In this context, as a way of advancing African Renaissance, the political thoughts and praxis of both Biko and Sankara are crucial in that regard. As already noted, both Biko and Sankara embodied the spirit of *Ubuntu*, advanced African unity, and were anti-colonialists, and anti-apartheid activists, respectively, and as such, their thoughts are bound to provide critical insights and consciousness in responding to the persistent advent of coloniality. The concept of

coloniality needs a brief explication. There is a distinct difference between the system of colonialism, and the logic of coloniality. Coloniality survives colonialism. As Maldonado-Torres puts it (2007: 241) “as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and every day”. It thus defines how we relate to the world and our surroundings. He elaborates extensively on the logic of coloniality by stating:

Coloniality, instead, refers to long-lasting patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor [*sic*], intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. ... It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other of our modern experience (Maldonado-Torres, 2007: 243).

It is evident that coloniality signifies the aftermath of colonialism, and can be used to study, and understand how colonial domination, as entrenched in cultural, economic and political hegemony still persists through other forms and means despite the withdrawal of the imperial forces. Coloniality is regarded as a general form of domination in the contemporary world system (Quijano, 2007). It exists as both a concept, and a condition of the lived experiences of the former colonised subjects (Walsh, 2010). The logic of coloniality manifests in three dimensions, namely, power, knowledge and Being. These matrices of coloniality sustain and maintain the domination of those at the periphery. The socio-politico aspects of the colonised condition maintain and sustain the subjectivity of the colonised individual. The subjection is thus manifest at the national level (centre vs periphery), erotic level (male vs female), pedagogical level (imperial culture vs peripheral culture) and religious level (Dussel, 1985).

The institutionalised violence is justified by the ontology and ideologies of the entrenched system. Seemingly the Euro-North, American ontology, and the sub-human status of the colonised African and global South subjects justifies the institutional violence inflicted on them. Evidently, critical consciousness is key in dismantling the colonial matrices of power. Biko and Sankara demonstrated this and for this reason, lessons can be drawn from examining their thoughts. Both Biko and Sankara’s thoughts must be examined and applied as exemplary lived experiences by contemporary Africans. Biko emphasised a

change of consciousness as fundamental towards total emancipation. More significantly, radical ideas from both Biko and Sankara are often raised as alternative solutions amid the persistence of coloniality.

Against this background, it follows that the process of de-linking from the rhetoric of coloniality dictates for an inward-looking process where endogenous projects are employed. Below I provide a brief explanation of the concept of de-linking.

1.7 The concept of de-linking

Decolonial thinking is born out as a result of the imposed advent of coloniality and it serves as a response to the said hegemonic condition. To de-link pertains to a process of thinking outside of the imposed dominant Euro-modern thought and to make visible coexisting paradigms of thought that have been marginalised (Mignolo, 2006). The process of de-linking rejects universal rationality but promotes a pluriversity of voices. Mignolo (2006:14) proposes what he terms conceptual de-linking which consists of thinking from the “absent perspectives and in critical perspective of philosophical assumptions that cast them [colonised subjects] as absent” and belonging to the margins. This means that a colonised subject has to consciously disavow and detach from the dominant Euro-modern narratives and in the process carry out the epistemic disobedience. Amin (2019) advocates for this radical rupture of dismantling Europe’s relevance as a prerequisite for a reimagined liberated society. He argues that the de-linking process is necessary to completely liberate Africans in thought, and action. The detachment is bound to afford the colonised agency as she grapples with the constant tension between the imposed hegemonic system of coloniality, and the racialised/dominated/ marginalised positionality he continues to occupy in the post-colonial, and post-apartheid period. To de-link is thus crucial in transcending the imposed condition of coloniality. This concept is explored in detail in Chapter 3. For this reason, it is argued in this study that African Renaissance can be employed as a de-linking tool.

1.8 African Renaissance

According to More (2002), the notion of African Renaissance was strongly present in the struggle of Africans, and the diaspora against slavery, colonialism and racism. As such,

is not a single event, but should be viewed as a process that is historically grounded, and continuous. This idea, and philosophy, has permeated generations of African philosophy, scholarship and political resistance, and has been sustained, nurtured, and developed through African, and decolonial political philosophies such as Pan-Africanism, Afrocentricity and Black Consciousness. In this sense, the notion of African Renaissance is the overarching discourse insofar as Africa's emancipation and liberation are concerned. The idea of an African Renaissance was borne out of the realisation that even with political independence, Africa continued to be exploited by Europe, and North America. This idea further problematise the realisation that political freedom in Africa has not brought economic independence, and this is evident in the international debt burden carried by Africa (Malisa & Missedja, 2020). According to Cossa (2009), African Renaissance is closely linked to the notion of Pan-Africanism as it attempts to mobilise Africans to unite against the tyranny of colonialism, by redefining an African identity and freedom independent of colonial influence. Hence, my argument that Pan-African consciousness evokes a precondition for the advancement of African Renaissance given that the former implores one to name the problem at hand in order to devise means of tackling it. In this case, the problem is the persistent neo-colonialist order, which calls for a radical intervention.

African Renaissance is defined by the African Renaissance Institute (2000) as:

A shift in the consciousness of the individual to reestablish our diverse traditional African values, so as to embrace the individual's responsibility to the community and the fact he or she, in community with others, together are in charge of their own destiny.

The notion of critical consciousness is evident from this definition which speaks to the logic of negating one's subjection in order to forge an authentic identity in response to the hegemonic forces of neo-colonialism. Furthermore, the emphasis on communitarianism as an African value is evident from the above definition, which epitomises *Ubuntu* philosophy as fundamental to the African way of life. According to Vale and Maseko (1998:277), African Renaissance should espouse to elicit "both a capacity to deliver the stuff of politics and a consciousness of the pain and humiliation of African people in a

continent, and a world, which remains entirely dominated by the cultural values of people who are not black". Mangu (2006) regards the concept of African Renaissance as a process that encompasses the restoration of the continent in the quest for self-discovery. Although it is unclear how these processes of restoration and self-discovery are to be attained, Bongmba suggests that the former South African president, Thabo Mbeki has conceptualised a programmatic vision of African Renaissance (2004). Through his articulation, has positioned the concept as an African agenda.

According to Bongmba (2004), Mbeki's conceptualisation of African Renaissance highlights the notion of a new social imperative, making it a critical component for change in Africa. The author contends that African Renaissance can be employed as a guiding principle towards true liberation as it espouses the embracement of African values and cultural practices that are endogenous to the continent and thus serve as alternative solutions to the current situation. It should be noted that African political systems were radically altered in order to serve Western interests. It follows then that a radical intervention be undertaken in order to reverse the situation. As such, a need arises to look to some of the African thinkers concerning their thoughts about the African situation, hence the synthesised analysis of both Biko and Sankara's political thoughts in this regard.

It is evident that the continent of Africa needs a radical transformation to reject Western dependency if development is to be accelerated and attained. For Gumede (2018), the kind of development needed in Africa should encompass the transformation of the mental, social, political and economic conditions. This brings to the fore the philosophy of Black Consciousness as conceptualised by Biko. As Masolo calls for the integration of the continent, Gumede, on the other hand, argues for the transformation in terms of how Africa handles her matters. Gumede further notes that Africa needs to incorporate the notions of *Ubuntu*, *Ujamaa* and *Harambee*⁴, given their authenticity to African identity

⁴ According to (Mbithi and Rasmusson, 1977), the concept of Harambee speaks to a collective effort, and embodies ideas of mutual assistance, joint effort, mutual social responsibility and community self-reliance. The concept is indigenous to Kenya. *Ujamaa* refers to Africanism socialism and emphasise the values of community and every aspect of society. This concept originates in Tanzania, through the leadership of its first President, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere.

(2018). It is against this background that Moges and Muchie argue that the current economic and political landscape in Africa is not conducive to sustainable economic and social development (2020). The scholars further contends that Africa needs to look inward if the contemporary conditions are to be transformed, given that the externally derived interventions have not dismantled the state of neo-colonialism fraught with attitudes of dependency. Therefore, I argue that the process of inward-looking begins with the decolonisation of the mind. For Muiu and Martin (2002), the fundamental prerequisites of a true African Renaissance pertain to Africans solving their own problems based on its history, culture and environment.

It is Ntuli who extends the discourse of African Renaissance to a process that seeks to achieve “the decolonisation of the mind” (2012:18). He illustrates African Renaissance as a decolonial project:

Renaissance, as both remembering and re-remembering, it is about taking stock of losses and regaining new insights from the past mistakes and shortcomings. It is about self-evaluation within the new architecture of cultures in a globalising world (2012:18).

In light of Ntuli’s conceptualisation of African Renaissance, it can be argued that the concept can be used to de-link from a repressive system of coloniality. As outlined earlier, de-linking is concerned with the shifting of the geography of reason, which should involve a process of mental decolonisation. As Ngugi Wa Thiong’o (2009:88) puts it, the process of “re-remembering Africa” becomes the only solution to de-link from modernity and this will ensure that African Renaissance becomes a reality. Clearly, Ngugi speaks on the need to re-educate through a de-linking process. On a same liberation footing, both Biko and Sankara were devoted to total liberation of the mind, body and spirit and were determined to dismantle the system of coloniality as demonstrated through their praxis. Although, it has been argued that the discourse of African Renaissance has been in existence for several decades albeit in varying forms, it only became prominent in the 1990s following the former South African President Thabo Mbeki’s articulation of the project. Following the review of the literature, there seems to be a lack of scholarly literature that makes a clear, critical, philosophical, and political link between both Biko and Sankara to the

project of African Renaissance. Through an examination of these African leaders' thoughts and praxis this study sought to make a significant contribution to the African Renaissance project. The concept is explored in Chapter 3. Following this brief definition of African Renaissance, the next section will focus on the research methodology employed to explore the research problem, respond to the research questions and achieve the objectives of the study.

1.9 Research design and methodology

This research study employed a qualitative research approach as guided by the central research problem which pertains to the exploration of Biko and Sankara's political thoughts and praxis, and their advancement to the African Renaissance. The methodological approach selected for this study is guided by the paradigm employed. As discussed above, the philosophical lens underpinning this study is *Ubuntu* and the theoretical framework is made up of the philosophy of liberation and Pan-Africanism theory. As such, the transformative paradigm is adopted necessitated a radical hermeneutic approach as a research method. A paradigm is defined as a general organising framework for theory and research that includes basic assumptions, key issues, models and methods (Neuman, 2014). According to (Chilisa and Kawulich, 2012), a transformative approach emerged as a response to criticisms levelled against the dominant research paradigms, in particular, their failure to critically engage with the realities of the marginalised groups.

A transformative paradigm denotes a collection of research designs influenced by various philosophies and theories with a common theme of emancipating and transforming communities (Chilisa and Kawulich, 2012). Biko and Sankara's thoughts reflect their commitment to social transformation and liberatory ethics hence, the suitability of this paradigm as a tool to examine them. Its assumptions can be summarised thus: on ontology, the transformative paradigm regards social reality as constantly changing depending on social, political, cultural and power factors (Neuman, 1997). On epistemology, this paradigm claims that knowledge is true, and can be transformed into practice to empower, and transform people's lives (Chilisa and Kawulich, 2012). Axiologically, researchers who adopt this paradigm view research as a moral and political

activity, and methodologically, it seeks to dismantle the illusions of false knowledge in empowering people and both qualitative and quantitative are applicable (2012). However, this study employs the former approach.

1.9.1 Qualitative research design

Qualitative research is viewed as “an emergent, interpretative and naturalistic approach to the study of people, cases, phenomena, social situations and processes in their natural settings in order to reveal in descriptive terms the meanings that people attach to their experiences of the world” (Yilmaz, 2013:312). Qualitative research is concerned with how social context impacts social phenomena. The researcher studies phenomena in their natural setting, with the to attain a clear understanding of the experiences at hand as “clearly as possible as its participants feel it” (Sherman and Webb, 2005:23; Wimmer and Dominick, 2011:48). The qualitative approach concedes that complete objectivity and neutrality are impossible to attain and therefore the researcher is not divorced from phenomenon under study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). That said, a qualitative study must demonstrate the principles of reflexivity, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Reflexivity refers to the assessment of the influence of the researcher’s background, experiences, ideological biases and interests during research whereas transferability pertains to the type of sampling employed (Chilisa, 2012). In terms of reflexivity, this researcher is aware of the importance of recording every thought, concern, problem, and bias throughout the research process. This conduct has enhanced rigour in the analysis process because of my ability to go back to the records to confirm and in some instances, revisit the conclusions drawn as a result of gaining a clearer understanding. For transferability, I endeavoured to provide a dense description of the phenomenon under study in the form of a comprehensive background on both Biko and Sankara. This task was enhanced by the plethora of literature that is available about Biko and Sankara—I had to strike a balance of ensuring that I only include relevant texts that respond to the central questions of this study. Given that replication is difficult to achieve in qualitative research, the principle of dependability comes to the fore. Dependability can be enhanced by providing a comprehensive description of methods employed in the study and this was

achieved in this study by applying the procedure of code-recode. Lastly, confirmability pertains to the extent to which findings can be traced to the data (Chilisa, 2012).

According to Creswell (2014), a qualitative study explores and describes phenomena – this study has undertaken an interpretative exploration of phenomena, namely, political thoughts and praxis of Biko and Sankara in relation to the project of African Renaissance. The research problem, the philosophical paradigm, the theoretical perspective and the associated research method elected for this study dictated that a qualitative approach be employed for this inquiry. According to Julien (2008:121), a qualitative researcher should “seek trustworthiness and credibility by conducting iterative analyses, seeking negative or contradictory examples ... and providing supporting examples for conclusions drawn”. This researcher has conducted an in-depth interpretative explorative inquiry of social phenomena at hand in Biko and Sankara discourses in order to elucidate their significance, and relevance for the contemporary African context in light of African Renaissance as a de-linking tool.

1.9.2 Data collection and analysis

In addition to the four main texts of both Biko and Sankara, a set of literature was used for this study as necessitated by the research problem, philosophical lens, theoretical framework and research questions. Regarding Thomas Sankara, documents that were used include texts on Thomas Sankara as guided by the key concepts of this study such as Sankara’s thought, Pan Africanism and his Burkina Faso revolution. In addition, his English translated texts, *Thomas Sankara speaks; the Burkina Faso revolution 1983-1987* (2007) and *We are heirs of the world’s revolutions: speeches from the Burkina Faso revolution* (2007) were also selected. Furthermore, audio visual materials in the form of documentaries about his life were also examined. In relation to the relevant material about Biko, I selected two main texts namely, *I write what I like* (1978) and *Towards true humanity in South Africa* (1978), in addition to other relevant literature written about him. The texts in question came out of the political context which inspired Biko’s thought and intellectual work.

I am of the view that the selected texts encapsulated the core messages that elucidated the political thoughts and praxis of these two African leaders. Therefore, a closer reading of these texts in the form of a radical hermeneutical analysis, adequately responded to the central research questions of this study. Following the selection of the relevant data, a radical hermeneutic approach was selected as an analytical and interpretative exploration tool for this inquiry. It must be noted that the language barrier presented some form of limitation to this study as the researcher is not fluent in French language in relation to Sankara material, however, most of the material selected for analysis has been translated into English, which, to some extent, mitigated the language risk and barrier concerned.

1.9.3 Radical hermeneutic approach

The term “hermeneutics” generally entails a process of text interpretation, or simply “the art of interpretation as transformation” (Ferraris, 1996). According to Montesperelli (1998), the main objective of a hermeneutic approach is to explore and analyse social phenomena, using qualitative methods, and non-directive interviewing techniques to collect data. For Chilisa (2012:44), hermeneutics entails “the process whereby we come to an understanding of given social text and choose two or more competing interpretations of the same text”. As opposed to the explanatory nature of the positivistic approach, the hermeneutic approach is interpretative in understanding social phenomena. Kinsella (2006:np) summarises the main characteristics of a hermeneutic approach as a:

[...] hermeneutic approach (a) seek[ing] to understanding rather than explanation; (b) acknowledges the situated location of interpretation; (c) recognises the role of language and historicity in interpretation; (d) views inquiry as conversation; and (e) is comfortable with ambiguity.

To elucidate an understanding of a social phenomenon at hand, the researcher has to bring to the fore all the various aspects involved and situate them in relation to one another in terms of their meaning construction. In addition, perhaps significant in this context, is the situated located interpretation element of hermeneutic inquiry. As Gardiner (1999:65) argues that the process involves creative interpretation that entails “a sympathetic engagement with the author of a text, utterance or action and the wider socio-

cultural context within which these phenomena occur". As such, I argue that a situated interpretation is crucial in the context of this study given its research problem and the aim thereof.

Thus, a hermeneutic conversation is concerned with finding a common language elucidated by the texts involved (Kinsella, 2006). Hence, hermeneutics rejects the notion that there can only be one authoritative reading of a text as the reading of a text is bound to be influenced by a multitude of factors, including, the historical, cultural, political, social or geographical conditions within which a text is produced. For Ricoeur (1976), textual plurality can be achieved through a process of distanciation which allows the interpreter to bring the contemporary socio-political, historical and cultural aspects into the analysis of the text.

Ricoeur's theory of interpretation is also key in this context as it allows the researcher to achieve congruence between philosophy, methodology and method (Geanellos, 1999). Ricoeur's theory of interpretation involves two stages, namely, the explanation and understanding. The former has to do with the articulation of what the text says and the latter is concerned with what the text talks about (Ricoeur, 1976). Given the notion of plurality of a hermeneutical analysis and keeping the objective of this particular project in mind, I situated my analytical framework from a decolonial perspective.

For this reason, the analytic approach adopted for this study is the radical hermeneutical analysis as conceptualised by Serequeberhan (1999). For Serequeberhan, a radical hermeneutic task is suited to analyse the contemporary African condition and situation. He elaborates further on the words, 'radical' and 'hermeneutical' thus:

Radical, because such a task is concerned with exploring and exposing the root-sources of the contradictions of our paradoxical present. Hermeneutical, because such a grounding exploration cannot but be a constant and ongoing interpretative and reinterpreted task undertaken in the contemporary world (Serequeberhan, 1995:19).

As such, given that the task is a continuous process of self-understanding in relation to a specific historicity and locality, radical hermeneutics consciously articulates the peculiarity

of the phenomenon under investigation. Serequeberhan (1995) further highlights that the interpretative nature of this tool aims at disclosing a future in congruence with the humanity of the human in African existence. This analytic approach which is situated from the exteriority is inspired by the philosophy of liberation. For Dussel (1996:137),

It [philosophy of liberation] has *explicit* consciousness of its peripherality, but at the same time it has a planetary claim (a claim to *mundialidad*). It confronts consciously a *European* philosophy (as much postmodernism as modern, procedural as well as communitarian) that conflates and still identifies its concrete Europeanness with its unknown functionality of center-philosophy during five centuries.

Furthermore, the study has revealed that it is crucial to scrutinise texts in terms of their historical, social and political context insofar as the meaning they construct. For instance, to fully grasp Biko's politics, one has to appreciate the politico-socio-economic context from which he navigated. Biko lived through the apartheid system characterised by the brutalisation, balkanisation, and degradation of the black majority. This constituted the ultimate dehumanisation of those alienated by the system. On the other hand, Sankara was influenced by Marxist-socialist ideas and how their radicality can respond to the condition of neo-colonialism. Thus, a hermeneutical approach has assisted this researcher in juxtaposing the political thoughts in question which gave rise to a synthesised evaluation informed by the politico-socio-economic context characterising the existence of these two African thinkers.

1.10 Ethical considerations

Ubuntu philosophy does not only serve as the philosophical lens adopted for this study but also informs all ethical aspects involved in undertaking this study. The *Ubuntu* ethical framework emphasises accountability on the researcher's part given its centrality of the human-centredness in all steps of human, life and academic research processes. A research approach that is informed by the principle of *Ubuntu* requires researchers to take into account the history of colonialism, and its effects on the colonised and invoke the concept of African Renaissance and Africanisation in research (Chilisa, 2012). For

this reason, I exercised consciousness and self-awareness during all the steps of the research process as guided by the *Ubuntu* ethical framework.

Although this study does not involve any human participation, it remains pertinent to uphold all ethical procedures that foreground the principle of human-centredness, from the design to the final write-up of the project. To this end, all raw data was stored and kept in a safe password-protected computer and on a password-protected external hard drive. This researcher endeavoured to uphold research ethics principles such as honesty and integrity in data gathering, reporting of the data, presentation of results as well as detailing of methods and procedures used in the process. Furthermore, this researcher adhered to all guidelines and procedures set by the University's code of ethics following the ethical approval of this project. Although this study did not involve human participation, I have read and reviewed the contents of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI Act) and adhered to its provisions during the research activities undertaken.

1.11 Brief Chapter outline

Chapter 1: Introduction and background

This chapter provides a background, context and the significance of the study. Furthermore, the chapter outlines and contextualises the research problem, the aim and objectives of the study, and the research questions. Furthermore, significant concepts are defined and mapping the philosophical, and theoretical framework is undertaken herein. Moreover, the chapter outlines the research design and methodology employed in this study.

Chapter 2: Pan-Africanism and critical consciousness

This chapter outlines the concept of Pan-Africanism as a liberatory discourse embodied by Biko and Sankara. It also addresses the link between *Ubuntu* philosophy and Pan-Africanism. Furthermore, the chapter articulates the significance of the notion of Pan-African consciousness and makes an argument that it serves as a precondition for the advancement of African Renaissance.

Chapter 3: Exploring African Renaissance as a decolonial de-linking option

The chapter sets out with the interrogation of the condition of coloniality by elucidating its undesirability and ramifications for liberation. It is then argued in the chapter that a radical intervention is necessary hence, the need for a de-linking process. The chapter explores the concept of African Renaissance by highlighting the main tenets and how it is inspired by movements such as Negritude. Furthermore, the chapter explores how the political thoughts and praxis of Biko and Sankara advance the notion of African Renaissance. The chapter concludes by examining the suitability of African Renaissance as a de-linking project.

Chapter 4: Biko and Black Consciousness thought

This chapter problematises the concept of consciousness insofar as it relates to the notion of liberation as advanced in the Black Consciousness philosophy. To this end, the chapter examines Biko's political thought from a decolonial perspective to demonstrate the significance of psychological liberation and the liberation of the oppressed. An attempt is made to link Black Consciousness with the notion of African Renaissance and also how Biko's thought advances the idea of de-linking from the entrenched coloniality.

Chapter 5: Sankara: a revolutionary leader

This analytical chapter examines Sankara's thought by tracing the Burkina Faso revolution, the circumstances that led to its occurrence, and whether the revolution advanced social change concerning the body-politic of the Burkina people. Moreover, the chapter looks into factors that signify Sankara as a revolutionary insofar as his leadership is concerned. Furthermore, the chapter examines his people-centric approach to socio-political issues that propelled his politics to be considered a radical humanist and a Pan-Africanist. Finally, the chapter examines whether Sankara's thought, and praxis advance the idea of African Renaissance as a de-linking tool.

Chapter 6: Towards African Renaissance

The chapter briefly provides a critique of African leadership that accentuates the Westphalian system and dependency before presenting an argument for revolutionary leadership as advocated by Biko and Sankara. As elicited in their thoughts, a

revolutionary praxis espoused by critical consciousness is a prerequisite in this process. In this regard, the idea of African Renaissance as a critical discourse is, therefore, highlighted, which in turn advances Pan-Africanism.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This chapter summarises the key findings of the study, and present recommendations for future research. The researcher further provides self-reflection remarks herein. Furthermore, the chapter addresses the research problem, the research questions as well as the aims and objectives identified in Chapter 1.

CHAPTER TWO: PAN-AFRICANISM AND CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

2.1 Introduction

The post-independence conditions and neoliberal attitudes and cultures of dependency have subjected the African continent to Western exploitations, through skewed and compromised relations. To this, Schittecatte (2012) asserts that the contemporary African situation is not different from the early days of independence which explains the persistent challenges of neocolonialism and neoliberal tendencies. As such, a shift of paradigm is necessary and imperative to respond to the ongoing subjugation of the continent. Araoye (2018) also maintains that Africa is still faced with the same global forces that created its postcoloniality characterised by elements of authoritarianism, corruption, military intervention, and leadership failures. Sankara predicted this perpetual condition when he observed that “neocolonial domination reduced our society to such degradation that it will take us years to cleanse it” (2017:67). I am of the view that Sankara would have been concerned with the current African realities and would be largely invested in the recent developments concerning a series of coup d’etats in his home country of Burkina Faso in just one year (2022)⁵. In responding to this urgent and compromised position, Africa needs to critically analyse its objectives to deal with the hindrances and challenges that constrain the advancement of social progress (Mazrui, 1995). Mazrui (1995:23) further calls our attention to the pertinent problems facing the African continent asserting that “drastic and radical measures have to be made to advance the social, cultural and economic development of the African masses”.

Undeniably, the post-independence development of Africa reflects imperial powers who frame the continent as an imperial project, derived and financed by hegemonic Western powers to serve their own interests (Cheru, 2009). Against this thought, an empirical deduction can thus be arrived at to problematise and characterise the post-independence as a mimicry of the past which further strengthens the status quo characterised by the external imposition of the linear form of the top-down development approach. Gumede

⁵ In January 2022, Paul-Henni Sandaogo Damiba took control of the Burkina Faso government by detaining the former President Roch Kabore. He was to be overthrown by a military group led by Captain Ibrahim Traore on 30 September 2022 who remains the leader currently (in 2024).

argues that the socio-economic dimension of the development of the continent is “where the hegemony of external influence and power is more prominent as it appears that Africans have lost their sense of worth, and being through the subordination of their culture, language, and identity to foreign domination” (2018:126). Gumede regards the loss of the sense of self and worth as a socio-cultural dimension of development. This explains the continent's current hegemonic socio-political-economic configuration, which relegates it to a state of perpetual dependency. Sankara acknowledged that there has been some form of minimal development on the continent, and further e highlighted the challenges that hindered its progress. Sankara (1988) concedes that some form of progress has taken place on the continent of Africa, however, the region continues to bear the intolerable brunt of the contemporary global system.

Ironically, the continent of Africa is still grappling with the same challenges Sankara identified in the year 1987 suggesting a need for concrete social transformation. In addition to other existential challenges, Africans are faced with political, economic, and cultural challenges with implications for their authentic Beings. The contemporary situation is undesirable for many Africans who continue to bear the brunt of the entrenched neo-colonial conditions as reflected in Magubane’s observation:

Today, as in the days when imperialism flourished, the Black world remains in the grip of poverty, illiteracy, disease, and hunger. Even though they are no longer subjected to the humiliation of institutional racism and colonial rule, little has changed for the Black masses (Magubane, 2000:419).

It is evident that the struggle of Africans for a decent livelihood, and social justice continues unabated in contemporary Africa. The implications for this situation for many of the African peoples are dire, given the entrenched perpetuation of social injustices and inequalities. A transformative and liberatory discourse is imperative to dismantle systemic oppressions, including those based on gender (Abbas & Mama, 2014). It is thus imperative that discourses on social justice, and transformation must be predicated on the total emancipation of anyone who is subjected and marginalised.

This chapter investigates and analyses, using Biko and Sankara’s thoughts, the idea of Pan-Africanism as a liberatory discourse. It begins by dissecting the notion of *Ubuntu*,

and its relationship to the idea of Pan-Africanism by pointing out how its principles are embodied in the thoughts and praxis of Biko and Sankara. The chapter goes further to outline some of the challenges associated with the promotion of Pan-Africanism before conceptualising the idea of Pan-Africanist consciousness. It is argued herein that given its capability of advancing criticality on the part of the oppressed, Pan-Africanist consciousness can serve as a conduit to promote the rhetoric of African Renaissance, particularly when the latter is considered as a model for the re-imagination of the continent in the context of the persistent coloniality. In light of the perpetual systemic dehumanisation, and subjugation of the African individual, it will be argued that the political thoughts of Biko and Sankara can provide in-depth insights concerning the discourses on agency, social justice, and social transformation of the continent in the promotion of a Pan-African vision, and African Renaissance. As a starting point, the notion of *Ubuntu*, and its link to Pan-Africanism is addressed.

2.2 *Ubuntu* and Pan-Africanism

Ubuntu as a lens through which the world is made sense may be useful to advance the Pan-Africanist agenda and the promotion of Africa's cultural centredness in the context of liberatory discourses and re-asserting of African agency. The dehumanisation and the marginalisation of the oppressed dictate that an undertaking of re-humanisation be carried out involving an in-ward looking process. Asante (1998) provides a link of *Ubuntu* to his notion of Afrocentricity when conceptualised as an analytic tool, and grammar that advances the African agency by centring the African experience. For Asante, an Afrocentric thinker ought to be cognisant of how his or her knowledge-production process is predicated on several historical, cultural and social factors. Asante (1998) observes that an Afrocentric thinker must have the ability to understand the interconnectedness of knowledge with cosmology, society, religion, and medicine to approach phenomena from a holistic perspective. I agree with Asante's assertion that the oppressed subject cannot use the language of the established order – in this context, *Ubuntu* philosophy should be viewed as stemming from outside of the Eurocentric gaze as its categories are endogenous and peculiar to African cosmology and experience.

Therefore, an Afrocentric thinker seeks to understand the notion of knowledge holistically by drawing from the rich oratory heritage including all facets of human experience. In this sense, African epistemology regards knowledge as the understanding of “the nature of forces and their (cosmic) interaction” (Naseem, 2002:307). In *Ubuntu*, the centrality of harmonious coexistence of humans and other living entities, including the environment is crucial. As Asante (2005:42-43) puts it,

Thus, harmonious and peaceful coexistence with all human beings (Bantu) and things (*Bintu*) stands as the fundamental characteristic and criterion of the credibility of knowledge. In this African scheme of things, epistemology (*Bwino*) and ontology (*Bumuntu*) are inseparable. To know is to foster the victory of goodness over bad character; it is to foster human flourishing and respect for nature.

Ubuntu speaks to the core ontological category of an African—and demonstrates the notion of an African as being at the centre of his or her existence (Asante, 1998). In this sense, an African agent of *Ubuntu* philosophy re-affirms his or her authentic ontological Being rooted in a worldview that truly represents her or his humanistic essence. However, this undertaking is complex – as Paulo Freire (1993) reminds us, the humanity of the oppressed has been stolen, which has implications for her or his ontological existence. Thus, the reclaiming of the humanity of the oppressed becomes instrumental in the attainment of her/his liberation. Liberation is thus imperative, and its moment is, therefore, the presence because its suspension is not an option in this regard. For, the suspension of the struggle for humanisation leads to the oppressed becoming what Freire (1993:44) regards as “oppressors of the oppressors” – herein referred to as being complicit in the advancement of the repressive system, which is, of course, unfortunate.

Ubuntu is epistemologically oriented towards the construction of knowledge which is undogmatic by character. Without *umu-ntu* neither the epistemology nor the ethics of *Ubuntu* can come into being (Ramose, 2017). The centrality of human life is crucial regarding the ethics of *Ubuntu*. Dussel has accentuated this aspect in his conceptualisation of the ethics of liberation when he writes, “human life is not only given spontaneously but its conservation and development is also imposed on us as an obligation” (Dussel, 2013:102). Similarly, Dladla reminds us that being human is not an a

priori insofar as *Umuntu* is concerned – the one practising *Ubuntu* has to embody the ethical and social responsibility that comes with that praxis. Dladla (2017:54) argues further that *Ubuntu* should be viewed as a philopraxis in the sense that the condition of being human is insufficient as “one ought to become – in the ethical sense – a human being”. This means that the validity of the be-ing in *Ubuntu* philosophy is dependent on one’s actions in relation to others insofar as the recognition of their humanity and the establishment of humane relations with them are pertinent.

What is noteworthy from this explanation by Ramose is the state of permanence of the movement involved, signifying a continuous cycle of coexistence between nature and humanity. Seemingly, one entity is incomplete if the other is not there – no wholeness exists signifying the disturbance of the equilibrium needed to sustain the harmony. Ramose speaks of the notion of wholeness as constituted by the entities and aspects involved in the multi-directional motion. He elaborates on the interrelationship that exists between the human being, and the environment as the embodiment of multi-faceted entities that make up the universe. In this sense, Ramose (2015) adds to this discourse regarding *Ubuntu* as an ecological-ethical-communitarian phenomenon by invoking the notion of wholeness, which is always in motion.

This brings us to the link between *Ubuntu* philosophy and the principle of *Maat*, and the process that foregrounds the relationship that ought to exist between humanity, and the environment, and the resultant harmony that emanates from this symbiotic relationship. The centrality of human-centredness is enhanced owing to how the *Umuntu* (the doer of *Ubuntu*) entity relates to all aspects of life that encompass the living, the environment, and the cosmos. For this reason, it should follow that both the concepts of *Ubuntu*, and *Maat* implore us to demand our agency in response to the marginalisation of the cultures, traditions, and values that embody our true ontological selves. I, therefore, contend that there lies the potential relevance of this epistemological orientation emanating from the margins to contribute to humanity insofar as it offers ethical responses to the environmental challenges that the global society is confronted with. It should remind the Pan-Africanist agents that in-ward looking is imperative in dealing with African challenges and re-affirming Africa’s rightful position globally.

Furthermore, in our conceptualisation of the marginalised knowledge systems pursuant to the much-needed agency and consciousness, it is pertinent that we return to these endogenous systems. It is for this reason that Serote (2012) has advocated for the enhancement of the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in understanding the African condition. For Serote, “the enhancement of IKS in this category must be with the vision and objective which encompasses the renewal, rebirth, reclamation and the furtherance of Pan-Africanism within the whole of the African continent, and the global context” (2012:36).

Biko advocated for the re-affirmation of African norms and values and called for the restoration of an African way of life (Sogiba, 1996). He valued the centrality of human-centredness as evidenced by the assertion, “we must seek to restore to the black man [sic] the great importance to give human relations; the high regard to people in general”. (Biko, 1978:367). For Biko, the *Ubuntu* praxis permeates every aspect of his life. As such he regarded the philosophy of Black Consciousness as a way of life given its emancipatory characteristics for the dehumanised individuals. The idea of Black Consciousness seeks to re-humanise the oppressed who have been dehumanised by the oppressive system by accentuating the positivity that comes with being African, including all the positive attributes of blackness. In this sense, the embodiment of blackness including all that completes it to make it a whole – the traditions, values, and culture that were suppressed and vilified, present a praxis towards emancipation.

Returning to the link between *Ubuntu* and Pan-Africanism, I reiterate my above thesis that the promotion of a human-centred approach in dealing with the notions of liberation, agency, and social justice, among others, is key. Pan-Africanism has to be consciously enacted, and this requires radical agency from its proponents. One earns Pan-Africanity by embracing humanity (*Ubuntu*), as this consciousness is bound to inform the praxis of social transformation. This critical consciousness is key insofar as a liberatory praxis equips a colonial subject to evade the mask of bad faith (see Chapter 4). An Afrocentric approach to African reality is therefore imperative to guard against the danger of returning to a default positionality of Eurocentric ideology concerning Africa (Asante, 2020). Hence, the centrality of human-centredness in *Ubuntu* philosophy provides one with endogenous

mechanisms and tools for thinking outside the dominant rationality of Eurocentrism. Dladla (2017) also views *Ubuntu* as the condition of being human, conscious and continuous, and this should be illustrated in one's praxis as one navigates the imposed social condition and reality. The current African condition dictates that a radical approach in relation to contemporary economic, development, cultural and social challenges, be undertaken. It is, therefore, my contention that *Ubuntu* philosophy enhances the emancipatory aspect of the Pan-Africanist agenda.

2.3 Pan-Africanism as a liberatory discourse

An understanding of Pan-Africanism as a liberatory discourse, necessitates that I address the concept of liberation as a point of departure. The notion of liberation, within the context of the African condition, has been a subject of debates among various proponents of Pan-Africanism ranging from intellectuals, and artists to political activists, albeit from different lenses. Liberation in Africa is a collective emancipatory project affording the masses the tools to resist oppressive hegemonic systems. Clearly, the ethics of liberation augment the radicality of the task at hand – that of agency, and social justice in confronting the condition of coloniality. Radical action of shifting the existing ways of thinking, and doing things is crucial to decolonial thinking, and the future of the development of the African continent. This project requires the enactment of epistemic disobedience, critical consciousness, and mental liberation, and both Biko and Sankara are the proponents of this radical action.

According to Dussel, the notion of liberation speaks to the transcendence of the imposed hegemonic system which marginalises the oppressed subject. As he puts it,

Liberation is not a phenomenal, intrasystemic action; liberation is the praxis that subverts the phenomenological order and pierces it to let in a metaphysical transcendence, which is the plenary critique of the established, fixed, normalized, crystallized, dead (Dussel, 1985:59).

From the above assertion, it can be noted that a liberatory discourse should seek to free the oppressed subject and adequately equip her/him to transcend the system that essentially affirms her/him authentic Being. Clearly, there are different types of being. I

use the word Being, to speak to and about the being afforded those deemed the masters in race and politics. I foreground that, in this grammatical articulation, the word allows the oppressed being to move from a space of object to subject, and to transcend the peripheral space he/she occupies, into the centre, where we determine his/her own being not in relation to his/her oppressed, but in his/her own right, as human and a complete subject. Therefore, when the oppressed who struggle against the death that stems from the entrenched hegemonic system/totality; through the praxis of liberation, the struggle for life, novelty is enacted beyond the imposed Being of that system. In this sense, a desirable liberated system is conducive to an expression of an authentic ontological self because the condemned subject cannot be alive *qua* liberated. In Biko's words this condemned subject is "a shell, a shadow of man [sic], completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity" (1978:31). Similarly, Sankara was very vocal about the plight of the condemned subject. He lamented that "these peasants are expropriated, robbed, molested, imprisoned, ridiculed and humiliated every day, yet they are the ones whose labour creates wealth" (1988:67). Hence, this condition is undesirable and has ramifications for one's critical consciousness in responding to the hegemonic system, and thus, the entrenchment of her complicity. Critical consciousness in this regard pertains to the ability of the oppressed subject to exercise self-reflection regarding his/her situation, and condition so that he/she escapes the bondage. It thus relates to the concept of Black Consciousness as informed by the process of conscientisation.

Liberation is intrinsically tied to the idea of Black Consciousness "for we cannot be conscious of ourselves and yet remain in bondage" (Biko, 1978:53). Therefore, the quest for liberation is crucial because to be dehumanised evokes a need to restore your humanity. Freire poses these pertinent questions concerning the *raison d'être* behind the pre-occupation with liberatory discourses when he writes,

Who are better prepared than the oppressed to understand the terrible significance of an oppressive society? Who suffers the effects of oppression more than the oppressed? Who can better understand the necessity of liberation? They will not gain this liberation by chance but through the praxis of their quest for it, through their

recognition of the necessity to fight for it. And this fight, because of the purpose given by it by the oppressed, will actually constitute an act of love opposing the lovelessness which lies at the heart of the oppressors' violence, lovelessness even clothed in false generosity (Freire, 1998:45).

I concur with what Freire has clearly articulated concerning the reasonable need to demand a liberatory path in light of the unacceptable circumstances inflicted on the oppressed. It is therefore the prerogative of the oppressed to seek liberation and they should not be deterred by the noise that downplays the importance of this exercise. The oppressed, in their realisation of their dehumanisation and subjugation, ought to make a conscious decision to escape this inexcusable condition. The detractors, having indoctrinated in the oppressor's sense of rationality, will always attempt to denounce the noble cause of liberation.

Black Consciousness for Biko involves the process of in-ward looking, and one way of doing this is by re-visiting African history in order to highlight the positive contributions of the Pan-Africanists who defied the subjection of the Euro-modernity. I contend that one of Biko's major preoccupations pertained to the psychological liberation of the oppressed people's psyches or minds, given the pervasiveness of the pollution inflicted by the hegemonic rhetoric. He denounced the imposed inferiority complex as it hinders critical consciousness on the part of the condemned subject. Biko (1978) highlights the denigration that ensued as a result of 300 years of what he terms, deliberate oppression and derision, which saw the pollution of the black individual's psyche. From this, it is thus clear that the deliberate subjection was meant to suspend the oppressed's critical consciousness so that the oppression is a de unavoidable practice. Of course, this is deceptive and serves to legitimise the imposed oppression.

Biko understood the impact of the oppressive apartheid system on the psyche of black people as his critical consciousness developed from an early age during the days of the National Union of South Africa (NUSAS), and the South African Students Organisation (SASO). He was actively involved in South African politics as early as during his days as a student. He founded SASO and was subsequently elected its president in 1969. It was through this radical anti-apartheid organisation that the blueprint for the philosophy of

Black Consciousness was born and propelled by Biko (Tafira, 2013). He was regarded by his peers – the likes of Barney Pityana and Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu, to mention a few, as a deep thinker and creator of ideas even though his frankness concerning the atrocities of the apartheid regime exposed him to that system. Hence, Pityana (2008) notes that it was Biko who articulated Black Consciousness ideas in a synthesised thought.

As a liberatory ethic, Black Consciousness emphasises that the oppressed masses, through their common interest, and commitment integrate their life, and praxis to mobilise the communities, and thus ultimately neutralise the elite class (Pityana, 2008). It is for this reason that Biko speaks with authority on liberation, and the significance thereof on the notion of complicity, and its ramifications as far as psychological liberation is concerned. He observes that “It is true the white systems have produced throughout the world some people who are not aware that they too are people” (Biko, 1978:20). Biko’s thought was concerned with the question of black liberation, the ontological question of agency and his thought resonates with the contemporary black world globally.

Biko advanced the idea of in-ward looking and drawing from the positive attributes of our culture to attain psychological liberation of the black masses. Sankara was also in agreement with this notion of seeking the positivity of the past in order re-imagine and shape a conscious society. This is crucial given that the contemporary African historicity, and the paradoxical presence dictate that a process of reclaiming the African experience of Being be carried out (Serequeberhan, 1995). Against this backdrop, I bring forth the notion of “return[ing] to the source” as proposed and conceptualised by Amilcar Cabral (1973). For Cabral, “return[ing] to the source” is a necessary movement insofar as the dismantling of the dominant forces is imperative. Cabral rightly observes that to ‘return to the source’ is imperative if one puts into context the imposed conditions of the oppressor upon the oppressed to an extent where their ontological being is annihilated with ramifications for their authentic sense of self.

For that reason, the “return to the source” notion can be linked to the aspect of anteriority as conceptualised by Dussel with respect of the reaffirmation of the subjected Other. The Other is denied her otherness and thus alienated to a point where her Being is lost – since her/his humanity is stolen. In his articulation of a liberation philosophy, Dussel (1985)

presents a counter-discourse that emanates from the periphery but at the same time, possesses explicit consciousness of its peripherality. Hence, the process of liberation in this context entails what Dussel regards as analogous to leaving prison and “affirm[ing] the history that was anterior and exterior to the prison” (1985:138). Thus, a liberation philosophy dictates that the “subject be alive” given that a “dead subject” cannot argue. To be alive in this context entails gaining a critical consciousness that fosters the negation of the subjection. It becomes a liberation from exclusion, misery, and oppression. For this reason, it is a pedagogical activity that is conditioned by political praxis, and thus an analectic philosophy.

To exercise the praxis of liberation one has to be brave, as you confront the logic of domination, however, through the affirmation of exteriority, you are well equipped with comprehension of the modalities of the entrenched dominant system and thus, you assume critical consciousness. Against this background, it can be argued that Biko and Sankara’s thoughts and praxis are anchored on the liberation philosophy rendering it relevant to this study. This aspect will also be evident in the subsequent chapters. Hence, the philosophy of liberation serves as an instrument in grappling with the discourse of Pan-Africanism and Black Consciousness given their focus on liberation thoughts and praxis. Having laid the foundation for the notion of liberation and its significance concerning the Pan-Africanist agenda, I will now focus on the concept of Pan-Africanism.

2.4 Pan-Africanism

As with other concepts in the field of Social Science, there is no agreed-upon single definition of the concept of Pan-Africanism. The concept is approached from different perspectives because it has transcended different historical moments and geographical locations. I will be drawing from various scholars, and their conceptualisation of the idea of Pan-Africanism in my attempt to provide a synthesised analytic framework toward a liberatory discourse. It must be stated that the notion of Pan-Africanism has been dealt with, analysed, interpreted, and critiqued by numerous scholars. For instance, Leshoele (2019) has comprehensively provided its historical background and traced the idea of Pan-Africanism in terms of its proponents such as Diop, Ibekwe, Prah, Garvey, Du Bois and Nantambu. The scope of this chapter is not preoccupied with the attempt to trace the

historical background of the concept of Pan-Africanism but rather to conceptualise it in terms of its capability to be a liberatory concept – to this end, *Ubuntu* philosophy was employed in terms of how it enhances the Pan-Africanist vision and agenda as a liberatory concept.

Pan-Africanism is multi-faceted as it is viewed as an idea, a movement, activism, a theory and praxis. It owes its existence to the entrenched oppression of the African people from the continent as well as the diaspora (Rabaka, 2020). Therefore, Pan-Africanism is liberatory as it re-envision and re-imagines the continent of Africa by formulating paths toward a politically, economically, socially and culturally liberated continent. It is my view that its potential capabilities are yet to be realised and hence this study's commitment to re-invigorate its significance by drawing from the thoughts of both Biko and Sankara as proponents of liberatory attitudes in pursuant of a genuine Pan-Africanist agenda which is necessary for the advancement of the continent of Africa.

According to Mazrui (2007), Pan-Africanism can be viewed as a system of ideas concerned not only with the political economy but also with African culture, aesthetics, poetry, and philosophy. It intersects with other African political and intellectual thoughts of Black consciousness, Black nationalism, and Socialism (Abbas & Mama, 2014). For this reason, a Pan-Africanist agenda promotes other anticolonial discourses, and thoughts as a response to the dehumanisation that was inflicted by the oppressive order. As such, I contend that Biko and Sankara are the proponents of the Pan-Africanist agenda as reflected in their thoughts and praxis.

A common thread that connects various strands of interpretations, and perspectives associated with the concept of Pan-Africanism has to do with its sense of solidarity based on a shared African history of transatlantic slavery and colonialism. Pan-Africanism for Enwezor entails: "...[the] promotion of the notion of a collective production of a common social space rooted in the twin ideas of the recognition of the discourse of otherness and the need for the regeneration based on that otherness" (2001:13). Proponents of the Pan-Africanist agenda have highlighted the significance of integration and unification of the continent including the African Diaspora. As Mbeki (2013) pointed out that the continent cannot realise its transformation agenda unless it acts in unity. Similarly, Sankara's notion

of Pan-Africanism relates to his call for African unity in the form of unifying liberation movements from across the continent. Sankara valued the significance of ordinary people whether as part of the revolution or in the quest of dismantling the hegemonic systems – and thus, calling for unity amongst the varying liberation organisations on the continent was key for his liberation endeavours. Biko was also a proponent of a Pan-Africanist agenda as he drew from the ideas of Kwame Nkrumah's vision of African unity; Julius Nyerere's African socialism and Kenneth Kaunda's African humanism.

Mazrui (2007) posits that Pan-Africanism can be viewed as a system of ideas concerned not only with the political economy but also with African culture, aesthetics, poetry, and philosophy. Pan-Africanism denotes an intellectual tradition and political movement that took shape in the first half of the twentieth century and could be traced from the Pan-African Conference held in London in 1900 extending to the *All-African People's Conference* held in Accra in 1958 (Rabaka, 2020:4). Attempting to define Pan-Africanism, Rabaka views it as “a simultaneously intellectual, cultural, social, political, economic and artistic project that calls for the unification and liberation of all people of African ancestry, both on the African continent and in the African diaspora” (2014:5). This definition by Rabaka adds to the crystallisation of the concept as an all-encompassing idea concerned with the liberation of Africans and the African diaspora. In my view, this presents a challenge associated with the concept because it becomes difficult to narrow it to a single idea that can be used to address a specific African issue.

According to Nkrumah (1963:132), the term “Pan-Africanism” emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century following its usage by Henry Sylvester-Williams and William DuBois at the Pan-African Congresses attended by scholars of African descent. The movement of Pan-Africanism was born out of resistance to colonisation and the dehumanisation of Africans in the diaspora (Mazrui, 1977; Andrews, 2017; Leshoele, 2019). According to Esedebe (1977), Pan-Africanism can be distinguished into two phases, namely: Pan-Africanism as an idea and Pan-Africanism as a movement, however, the concept is a collective of the two phases. For Rodney (1990), Pan-Africanism was necessitated by the struggle for liberation where Africans from different social backgrounds found themselves as subjects of a hegemonic system that denied

their humanity. For that reason, Pan-Africanism emerged as an “agency of restoration of African subjectivity as well as challenging the intellectual roots of colonial historicity” (Eze, 2013:664).

As an ideological construct, Pan-Africanism underestimated the complexity of human situations when the politics of race, identity and nationality are all blended on a single stage (M’bayo, 2004; Rabaka, 2020). However, it must be noted that its relevance remains in the contemporary context given that it serves as a reminder that the colonial dependency needs repudiation in a form of a counter-hegemonic discourse. Pan-Africanism has advocated for the liberation and the ultimate unification of Africa. As a theory and praxis, Pan-Africanism, intersect with other African political and intellectual thought such as socialism, Black consciousness, Black nationalism, and African queer thought and activism (Abbas & Mama, 2014). For Esedebe, Pan-Africanism should be viewed as both a political and cultural phenomenon. As he attempts to define it:

Pan-Africanism is therefore a political and cultural phenomenon that in the early stage regarded Africa and persons of African descent as a unit. It aims at the regeneration of Africa and the promotion of a feeling of solidarity among the people of the African world. It glorifies the African past and inculcates pride in African values (Esedebe, 1977:186).

From this definition by Esedebe, the notion of African unity is also evident, and its restoration is advanced as Africans are encouraged to look at the past as there lies their liberation. For this reason, Esedebe does not view the notion of Pan-Africanism as utopian. He distinguishes between two phases of Pan-Africanism, namely, as an *idea* and as a *movement*. Hence, Esedebe draws from Langley’s observation that “Pan-Africanism is not a movement that should be boxed and frozen into epochs and categories” (Langley as cited in Esedebe, 1977:186). On the other hand, Young (2010:142) provides two overarching definitions of Pan-Africanism, namely, the *traditional* and the *holistic*. The former for Young draws distinctions between emerging reflections on Africa and contemporary structural conditions. The latter focuses on the interconnectivity between a Pan-African consciousness and political activities throughout the diaspora (Young, 2010).

Young recognises the influence of John Henrik Clarke insofar as the conceptualisation of contemporary Pan-Africanist thought in the twenty-first century.

In Chapter 1, I articulated what Murithi (2022) terms as the four pillars of the Pan-Africanist school of thought involving among other aspects, the need for critical analysis of the African realities. Furthermore, the formulation of a philosophical emphasis on a need for solidarity among Africans (see Chapter 1). Against this background, the following themes emerge firstly, the Pan-Africanism as a trans-continental approach and thus, re-enforcing its global relevance, as an analytical tool for the historical realities faced by the continent. Another theme relates to Pan-Africanism as a philosophical lens suitable for explaining the African experience. The third pillar identified by Murithi is significant as it impacts the livelihood of ordinary Africans – the socio-economic aspect of the Pan-Africanist agenda.

However, Murithi does not offer clear, critical, relatable and responsive solutions on how the improvement of the socio-economic conditions can dismantle all forms of institutionalised repression. In my view, enhancing one's critical consciousness in light of his or her condition of bondage is bound to equip the said individual with the relevant grammar necessary to confront the dominant system as alluded to by Biko. But this struggle for social justice does not end there as it should consider the material lived experiences of the disenfranchised people. It is for this reason that Sankara advocated for the transformation of the economic conditions as he understood that besides the psychological transformation and abstract theoretical concepts, the economic realities ought to be addressed. For Sankara, rescuing Africans from the plight of poverty was and continues to be imperative as evidenced by his interventions in Burkina Faso. Ideally, Murithi's conceptualisation of a Pan-Africanist school of thought comes closer to a systemic analytical framework insofar as the concept can be used to confront issues of colonial legacy and the persistence of coloniality.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) has considered the epistemological evolution of the concept of Pan-Africanism by tracing its rebellious origin in the context of the entrenched dominant system of coloniality. For him, Pan-Africanism is a subaltern worldview that emanates as a revolt against pernicious aspects of racial hierarchies, and all other related impositions of the patriarchal, imperial, colonial and capitalist modern global order. In essence, the

genealogy of Pan-Africanism stems from the experience of oppression by Africans in the mainland as well as in the diaspora.

In this sense, the logic of Pan-Africanism is predicated on the mere existence of the postcolonial moment, which functions to dominate and dehumanise the other. It follows then that the condition requires the dominated to be agents and active participants in their quest for liberation. Essentially, the ethic of liberation dictates that a psychological shift be undertaken, and the enhancement of the centrality of African agency be sought after by drawing from African values, and ideals such as *Ubuntu* and *Maat* to defy and denounce Euro-modern categories which have been entrenched as normal and acceptable. Modiri observes Biko's Black Consciousness as being constituted by these three acts:

(1) Black people's social awareness of the foundational anti-blackness of the modern world; (2) a psychological recognition and situating of oneself as proudly Black and (3) the re-symbolisation of blackness as a building block towards the annulment of the anti-black world and the creation of new social reality, a "true humanity" informed by the history, experience and worldview of African peoples (Modiri, 2017:186-187).

Modiri's reading of Biko's Black Consciousness uncovers Biko's thought as premised on the positive re-imagination of Blackness as the negation of anti-blackness in an anti-black world. As such, Biko's work implores the black subject to understand the imposed politico-ontological place in the anti-black world (Sithole, 2016). Thus, a liberatory discourse is key, provided the right tools are utilised towards its attainment.

As alluded to above, the concept of Pan-Africanism is riddled with a variety of strands dependent on one's perspective. In this thesis, Pan-Africanism is defined as follows: a people-centric counter-hegemonic discourse aimed at the conscientisation of Africans concerning the awareness that their continued existence and survival in the post-colonial era is predicated in their political, economic and social unification to confront the persistence of the dependency problem. It must be people-centric in the sense that it must be inspired by the principles of *Ubuntu*. Furthermore, the notion of conscientisation is key

as it relates to the idea of Black Consciousness considering the damage that came with the indoctrination inflicted by the conditions of colonialism, slavery, neo-colonialism and coloniality. Moreover, this thesis crystallises that the advancement of a Pan-Africanist consciousness is bound to promote the idea of African Renaissance.

2.5 Pan-Africanist agenda: a critique

Some scholars and critics view Pan-Africanism as representing some form of intellectual elitism, political conservatism, and intra-racial ethnocentrism (Rabaka, 2020:2). Clearly, Rabaka calls our attention to the misdirection the philosophy has taken and laments its political exclusivity, selective cultures which seek to de-value the struggle for total liberation of all Africans, women included. For this reason, the scholar calls for the reimagination of the concept, suggesting a conception of *Pan-Africanisms* (plural) to incorporate the principles of radical inclusivity and insurgent intersectionality (2020). Therefore, Rabaka points out the plurality of Pan-Africanism amid different influences that various Pan-Africanists draw from. Despite the presence of women within the Pan-Africanist thought of the twentieth century, the intellectual narrative around the discourse of Pan-Africanism tends to put more emphasis on the works of men (Blain, Leeds & Taylor, 2014). In such a patriarchal approach, the philosophy and movement will not achieve its envisioned liberatory goals--liberation of the African mass. Abbas and Mama (2014) have also argued for the inclusion of women voices to amplify the course of Pan-Africanism. This inclusion should take into account, key women and female thinkers across Africa and the diaspora such as: Mable Dove Danquah, Adelaide Caseley-Hayford, Bibi Titi Mohamed, Funmilayo Ransome Kuti, Gambo Sawaba, Muthoni Likimani, Thenjiwe Mtintso, Charlotte Maxeke, Albertina Sisulu, to mention but a few. As such, the importance of Black feminist movements in pursuit of liberatory discourse for an all-inclusive Pan-Africanist vision cannot be underestimated and underplayed in the pursuit of total liberation.

The exclusion of women's contribution to the discourse of liberation relegates them to the periphery, and further signals their dual marginalization-as women and revolutionists, albeit the availability of evidence of their involvement in Pan-African thought and practice. The new ruling elites unashamedly re-entrench patriarchal power, leaving it to the feminist

movements to pursue the liberatory principles of a Pan-Africanist vision of an Africa that works for all African peoples (Ama & Mazama, 2014). Sankara highlighted the importance of women in the revolution's endeavours. He understood that a successful liberation from the colonial systems required active participation, and emancipation of women in the struggle. Women are at the bottom of the hierarchy of the hegemonic system of oppression associated with the condition of coloniality. As such, the success of a liberation struggle is premised on the inclusion of women in liberatory discourses so that their roles concerning the promotion of Pan-African vision are elucidated. As Boyce-Davies (2014) highlights, women's voices within Pan-African discourse have been erased. She asserts that there has always been a presence of active women who persistently advocated for the rights of women within the movement. These Pan-African feminists navigated a complexity of the intersections around race, gender, class, nationality and cultural affiliations in the context of attaining liberation for all the African people.

This assertion proves that women have been contributing towards the promotion of the Pan-African vision with their activism being carried out against all sorts of oppressive systems, including the system of patriarchy. To this end, I agree with Tsikata (2014) in her observation that Pan-Africanism must be inclusive, and flexible and must support the aspirations of the oppressed. Therefore, those operating in the realm of Pan-Africanism, be it politicians, leaders, educators, and so forth, must advocate for the true values of Pan-Africanism. In this sense, proponents of Pan-Africanism cannot relegate women to the margins as this is bound to perpetuate the domination associated with the hegemonic systemic oppression. For Mama (2005), the dominance of male voices within the African thought discourse must be properly addressed within the African scholarly community. The intervention of African feminists highlighted the significance of the intersections of race, class, gender oppression, religious alienation, and sexual identity (Campbell, 2018). Intersectionality holds that the conceptualisation of oppression within a given society (such as racism, sexism, classism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, and xenophobia) cannot act independently of each other. Thus, the liberation interventions ought to be mindful of this intersectionality by striving for an inclusive counter-hegemonic discourse.

Despite the criticism levelled against Pan-Africanism as a male-dominated discourse, it must be said that Sankara championed the agenda of women's emancipation during the times of entrenched patriarchy in the continent. Sankara expressed his view regarding women's emancipation with clarity. He advocated for the inclusion of women in all facets of society such as the economy, politics, and culture. Sankara was well aware that the liberation of African societies was anchored on the equality of both men and women. He understood that the system of capitalism thrives in subjugating and exploiting vulnerable individuals with women at the bottom of the hierarchical order. As such, the incorporation of women in the struggle against neo-colonialism becomes imperative as their subjection defeats the very goals of liberation. Sankara maintained his views regarding women empowerment during his International Women's speech in 1987:

[...] yet the authenticity and the future of our revolution depends on women. Nothing definitive or lasting can be accomplished in our country as long as a crucial part of ourselves is kept in this condition of subjugation – a condition imposed ... by various systems of exploitation (Sankara 1988, 2018:215).

It is crucial that a Pan-African vision must be all-inclusive in its approach and should not marginalise any sector of society, particularly women as they tend to bear the brunt of socio-economic injustices on the continent. Ekine (2012:np) – a Nigerian social justice and LGBTQI (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersexed) activist points to Sankara's radical inclusive approach to liberation by being “meticulous in explaining class relations and the everyday ways in which African masculinities work in collaboration with capital in exploiting women's labour and abuse of their dignity”.

That said, I note the silence from Biko's front concerning women's emancipation, and as the main actors in the struggle for liberation and social transformation. I am mindful of the fact that his emphasis at the time was mainly concerned with the dismantling of the evil, violent and hegemonic system of apartheid and his resistant message was concerned with liberating the oppressed black subjects – men and women included. Had he lived, he probably could have reviewed his language and views on patriarchy and adjusted his thinking accordingly. Against this backdrop, Seleoane (2008) observes that Biko's writing reflected the era of his time and deems it “unfair to apply to his writings language criteria

were not yet common in those days”. Duncan (2008) concurs with Seleoane in that regard by noting that Biko’s era was not sensitive to gender issues and Biko’s referral to ‘man’ in his writing is in a generic sense. That said, I reject this viewpoint simply because both Biko and Sankara were age contemporaries, and the latter was able to acknowledge the significant role that patriarchy plays in the domination and marginalisation of women. Therefore, this line of thought sets the two apart in terms of their political praxis.

Nevertheless, Masenya (2008) asserts that Biko’s thought should be emulated by present-day African women, which suggests that she does not view Biko as sexist, and patriarchal given that the articulation of Black Consciousness should lead to the self-affirmation, and liberation of women. Although Masenya maintains that women’s emancipation is yet to be attained in the current context, she fails to critique Biko’s silence on this issue given its significance. Thus, one would maintain that had Biko given his attention to the notion of patriarchy and its associated implications on women’s rights, perhaps more improvement could have been achieved on that front given his influence. As Masenya (2008:68) puts it, “Biko was certainly no advocate of the rights of women per se” but women were part of his broader quest for the humanity of black people. Thus, one would maintain that the marginalisation of women’s voices within Pan-Africanism negates the whole idea of liberation and amounts to bad faith. However, I am of the view that had Biko been alive today, he would have been more vocal on issues of women’s solidarity given the pervasive scourge of gender-based violence and the gender urgency in South Africa.

Another criticism of the Pan-Africanist agenda pertains to its failure to unify the continent, the underdevelopment problem, and the complicity of African leadership regarding its stagnation. The problem of African unity has been a point of contention for a while as evidenced by the assertion by Egudu (1978) that the idea of African unity has been impeded by the refusal of black leaders to coordinate their policies accordingly towards its attainment as they scramble to hang on to their power.

Egudu blames the failure to attain unity on the African leadership’s lack of critical consciousness of moving beyond the shackles of imperialism given the tendency to hold on to power. This problem of African leadership is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. I

contend that this reinforces bad faith in their politics and thought. Thus, Serequeberhan's harsh words concerning this type of leadership are justified considering the ramifications involved. He writes,

But its mimicry of the lifestyles of its Euro-American patrons and its callous disregard for human life cannot be wholly attributed to the colonial past. Lacking any proper self-knowledge, this elite persists in perpetuating the hegemony of a domineering and cruel past. The continental predicament resulting from this thoughtlessness, in all its tragic and comic poignancy, confirms Fanon's prophetic insight (Serequeberhan, 2004:64).

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013:78) concurs in this regard, highlighting the current Pan-Africanism agenda struggles to transcend the snares of neo-colonialism and neo-liberalism. It is for this reason that Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues that the current neo-liberal crisis calls for Africa to "intensify the institutionalization of Pan-Africanism as a way of survival within a world dominated by the phenomenology of uncertainty" (2013:78). The Pan-Africanism unity is key in dismantling the colonial matrices of power that continue to trap the continent with dependency, which allows for the plundering of African resources. For Ndlovu-Gatsheni the condition of coloniality can only be challenged if Africans fully embrace Pan-Africanism as both an ideological, and an enabler of economic freedom. This writer still maintains that the notion of critical consciousness is imperative and should serve as a precondition for the advancement of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. Araoye (2018) observes that Africa is still facing the same global forces that created its postcoloniality characterised by elements of authoritarianism, corruption, military intervention, and leadership failures. Araoye (2018) places the blame for the failure to attain African political, economic, cultural and social unification on the reliance on the colonially designed state system culminating in the emergence of two camps, namely, the Casablanca and the Monrovia groups. The former, which was led by the likes of Kwame Nkrumah envisaged an integrationist vision. The latter led by, among others, Leopold Senghor and Houphouët-Boigny of Ivory Coast were very conservative in their approach to African unity as they advocated for a gradualist approach, which served the interests of the neo-colonial forces and the continuation of the neo-liberal status quo.

These unfortunate circumstances are exacerbated by the fact that African leadership seems to be receptive to the continued and long-term control by the neo-liberal forces with implications for authentic African unity. This explains the turbulent nature of African politics since the advent of its independence. The continent has been riddled with leaders who lack critical consciousness. Araoye further observes that the dominant political settlements were largely impositions of the interests of the most powerful interest groups (2018). As Falola (2003) observes that the inherited European political systems have failed, resulting in most African countries collapsing following their independence. The political and social crises faced by some African 'nation-states' present issues of stagnation and thwart the developmental path of the said nations (Ibrahim, 2016). Hence, a search for an alternative to Western ideas is key given their failure to uplift citizens of the continent. In this political climate, the advent of coups is prominent owing to sponsorship from the neo-colonial forces. Take, for instance, the assassination of Thomas Sankara by forces loyal to his deputy Blaise Compaoré as supported by France (Araoye, 2018). It is therefore my contention that critiquing the current African leadership ought to be done notwithstanding the imposed challenges owing to the persistence of the neo-colonial agenda, which continues to rear its head unabated.

Arguably, African leaders and policies must be cognisant of the nature and extent of the impositions of the neo-colonial multi-national agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank exerted on African countries. The terms and conditions of these perpetuate the neo-colonial strategies that continue to trap and coerce the formerly colonised countries from Africa into conforming to their neo-liberal conditions. Given that Africa is a product of colonial, neo-colonial, and imperialist exploitation, some of the failures of post-independent states must be attributed to this reality. As observed by Ibrahim (2016:6) "the failure of Africa was premeditated to make her dependent and helplessly incarcerated in the grasp of neocolonialism and imperialism". Similarly, Biko views the exploitation and the degradation of black people as a deliberate act to keep them perpetually marginalised. As he puts it, "It was not a coincidence that black people are exploited – it was a deliberate plan, which culminated in even so-called black independent countries not attaining real independence" (Biko, 1971:21).

Although we can point out the complicity of some of the African leadership insofar as the underdevelopment of the continent is concerned, we need to be cognisant of the possibility, and the complexities of unwitting involvement given the lack of critical consciousness of the leadership concerned. However, we need to be critical of the African elite, who act in bad faith, and willingly participate in the marginalisation of the Africans as stooges of the neo-colonial agenda. Evidently, post-imperial leaders operate as “surrogates of the former masters with whose consent and periodic checks they receive their legitimacy as leaders” (Oruka, 2002:72). The dominant imperial external forces marvel at the disunity of the continent as this state of affairs advance their neo-imperialist goals to the detriment of Africans. It must be said that these IMF-sponsored reforms failed to uplift and advance the lives of ordinary Africans.

This situation is exacerbated by the external interest in Africa’s natural resources with little or no reciprocity by European interests, aided by corrupt African interest groups to the detriment of the continent. As Falola (2003) advises that the only relevance of Africa is in its minerals, crops, and cheap labour for the benefit of the West. It is for this reason that Sankara was vocal against Africa’s dependency on global multinational agencies such as the IMF, and the World Bank. Sankara was of the view that perpetual dependency reinforces and entrenches the neo-colonialist order. As he puts it, “He who feeds you, controls you” (Sankara,1987:65). For Sankara, Africa needs to be economically and socially independent and remove herself from the shackles of the neo-colonial and imperialist forces that use multi-national agencies to entrench the subjugation.

Therefore, one would argue that the initial step of dismantling the condition of dependency would be to make a conscious decision to improve the socio-economic conditions of the countries concerned, by formulating good policies that speak to that effect. Hence, I agree with Gumede (2018) about his idea of reconceptualising the African concepts and precepts such as *Ubuntu* into the African policy domain to revolutionise the way we think, conceive socio-economic programmes, perform public responsibilities, and relate to our fellow Africans. Mbeki highlights the implications of economic challenges to the African populace, the majority of which are the youth. Mbeki writes:

All available information suggests that for many years during our years of independence, the aggregate African economy declined. This meant that liberated Africa was generating continuously reduced volumes of wealth, even as the African population was increasing significantly. Practically, what this represented, perversely, was that African political liberation was accompanied by the growing material impoverishment of the liberated African masses (Mbeki, 2013:15).

In Mbeki's view the lack of sufficient economic growth, attributed to Western interventions in Africa, through various institutions as noted above, in an urgent call for concern and urgent intervention by African leaders. Attributed in this way, the decline in economic growth stifles the advancement of the Pan-Africanist agenda and has the potential to cause instability and unrest in addition to those already taking place currently in other regions such as in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In advancing this argument, one cannot ignore the July 2024 South African unrest which has left a stain on the development agenda of the country.

One aspect that presents itself as a challenge for the Pan-Africanist vision pertains to the urgent need for African unification. The era of Nkrumah can be regarded as the golden age of Pan-Africanist ambitions with great minds of the time articulating Africa's great dreams culminating in the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) (Mazrui, 2018). The OAU was later replaced by the African Union (AU), which was established in 2002. Campbell (2018) opines that the formation of the AU reflected the aspirations of Pan-Africanists as the body that represents the interests of all Africans on the continent of Africa. The body comprises several institutions that include the Pan-African Parliament, the African Court on Human and People's Rights, and the Central Bank. However, the OAU did not achieve the desired goals of consolidating solid continental unity as different leaders opted to pursue national programmes (Ochwada, 2005). Ibrahim (2016) expresses cynicism concerning the transformation of the OAU in that it lacks the capacity to transform the continent to realise its vision. However, Ibrahim is of the view that the OAU had to base its developmental model on the European Union (EU) template.

Although Ibrahim (2016)'s concern regarding the effectiveness of the OAU in tackling African issues, seem to suggest that the OAU should be fashioned on the EU. Clearly, Africa must chart its own path, which is cognizant of the conditionalities peculiar to the continent. In this sense, the OAU must strive to foster African values when formulating the necessary policies that are meant to enhance the lives of Africans. It must, therefore, recognise the significance of forging African unity in this process. It is thus concerning that after more than half a century following the articulation of the Pan-Africanist agenda of African solidarity by the likes of Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, and others, African unity remains a dream.

The acceleration of unification of the African continent is imperative if tangible emancipation of the continent is to be attained. Sankara's perspective on African unity resides with ordinary people not with the governments as he regards unity that emanates from the top as inadequate. Although Sankara does not provide a template on how to achieve this unity by the people, his political thoughts are centred on his notion of people-centredness in confronting the oppressive system as part of the struggle for liberation and emancipation. For it to be successful, this emancipation ought to emanate from within – that is, solutions tailor-made for the continent taking into account the historical, political, and social conditions of the continent. Against this, the critical question remains: what will constitute a united Africa? This is in light of the 'unmaking' impact of the colonial plunder, and the scramble for Africa – the continent remains culturally, politically, and socio-economically unmade. Hence, the sustenance of the perpetual state of coloniality, and thus necessitates a call for the remaking of the continent. Therefore, an Africanist worldview is crucial and imperative as it speaks to the process of de-linking. Lamola elaborates more on the process of the "remaking" of the continent when he writes:

The concept of remaking alludes to a fundamental reconstruction. It does not entail the ad-hoc rushes to solve symptomatic problems that so much beset contemporary Africa. Central to "remaking" would be a deliberate and conscious effort at developing a new and uniquely African way of looking at ourselves and understanding and interacting with the world outside of Africa (Lamola, 2013:35).

Sankara was very vocal concerning Africa disengaging and de-linking from its dependency on the former coloniser as it hindered the Pan-African vision. One form of this dependency was Africa's debt given that it entrenches neo-colonialism, and that it was designed to keep Africa dependent on the West, and to operate its affairs on their terms. Speaking at the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) conference held on 29 July 1987 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Sankara argued that the African debt was cleverly organised to reconquest the continent of Africa to entrench and reinforce the condition of dependency.

Sankara was very vocal regarding the machinations of the neo-colonial system and how it serves to keep Africa in a perpetual state of dependency given the imposed conditions that tend to accompany foreign aid and loans. This reflects Sankara's Pan-Africanist thought, which advocates for the process of delinking from the economic dependency of the West. This thought provides a point of reference for redressing the continent's skewed political economy fraught with elements of dependency that perpetuate the system of neo-colonialism. Sankara was hellbent on the rejection of dependency on foreign aid as reflected in his opposition to financial assistance from global organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank as they reinforce the system of neo-colonialism (Davis, 2013). Sankara held a strong view that Africans should form a united front to repudiate the illegitimate debt by harnessing their own resources to expedite the process of development which will ultimately uplift the lives of the African populace (Leshoele, 2022). This is what the idea of African Renaissance sets out to achieve—the regeneration of the continent by de-linking from the shackles of dependency entrenched by organisations such as the IMF and World Bank. Given that the continent is still confronted with challenges that are hindering the advancement of the Pan-Africanist agenda and vision, the pertinent question has to do with modalities of confronting our postcolonial present in light of the perpetual hegemonic condition. After attempting to conceptualise Pan-Africanism as a liberatory discourse, the focus now shifts to the notion of Pa-Africanist consciousness.

2.6 Pan-African Consciousness

Consciousness is an act in the process of knowing, meaning the act of “showing oneself” of whatever is happening around oneself. According to More (2017:41), self-consciousness is what distinguishes human beings from things and objects. Importantly, More distinguishes humans and other elements, observing that humans *are* consciousness. In the context of an oppressed subject, questions about consciousness pertain to the existential questions of ‘what I am?’ and ‘who am I?’ as a response to the imposed slave, colonial and antiblack consciousness (More, 2017:42). To be conscious, an African subject ought to be aware of everything around her/him and seek to escape the impositions of the dominant narratives. More’s thoughts intertwine with Biko’s on the pursuit of ‘consciousness’ on pursuit for freedom which became a catalyst for the emergence of the Black Consciousness philosophy. This rebellious attitude is found in Biko’s *I write what I like* and constitutes the principle of authenticity as conceptualised by the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. Biko transcended the notions of false consciousness, inauthenticity, and bad faith that were imposed by the apartheid system and realising that “we cannot be conscious of ourselves and yet remain in bondage” (Biko, 1978:24). As Sartre contends, consciousness is the precondition of human existence as it is a prerequisite for the attainment of freedom for the marginalised and racialised (1958).

It follows that Black Consciousness philosophy is premised on the matters pertaining to psychological liberation in the context of an imposed inferiority complex suffered by Black people around the globe. Black Consciousness entails the act of conscientisation which espouses the notion of critical consciousness among oppressed individuals, hence the connection with Jean-Paul Sartre’s notion of existentialism. It follows that critical consciousness is the very nuclei of Black Consciousness as the latter is radical and is committed to affirming the Black subject despite the dehumanisation that comes with the oppressive system. This dehumanisation sustains itself through subjection and subjectivity to a point where it appears ‘normal’ as conceptualised by Louis Althusser’s

notion of interpellation⁶. Biko highlights the objectives of Black Consciousness as pertaining to the idea of conscientising black people about the oppressive system that condemns them. Biko writes:

From this it becomes clear that as long as blacks are suffering from inferiority complex – a result of 300 years of deliberate oppression, denigration and derision – they will be useless as co-architects of a normal society where man [sic] is nothing else but man [sic] for his own sake. Hence what is necessary as a prelude to anything else that come is a very strong grass-roots build-up of black consciousness such that blacks can learn to assert themselves and stake their rightful claim (Biko, 1978:22).

Evidently, Biko's advice to the black person speaks to the notion of self-awareness in one's praxis to avoid being complicit in the entrenched hegemonic system. Biko's main objective as reflected in his writings is to conscientise black people about the reality of their subjection and this calls for a critical consciousness on their part. It is my view that the question of subjection insofar as it impacts the African subject, should not be underestimated given its implication for critical consciousness. For Sankara, a critically conscious agent is "the one with the masses, who has faith in them, and who respects them He [sic] renounces all authoritarian methods worthy of reactionary bureaucrats" (2017:69). Hence for Sankara, this agent is revolutionary as he/she advances the revolution course and is ready to take up arms in defence of his or her homeland. Similarly, Biko advised that a Pan-Africanist agent has to be one with the people. Biko maintains that:

In order to achieve real action, you must yourself be a living part of Africa and of her thought; you must be an element of that popular energy which is entirely called forth for freeing, the progress and the happiness of Africa. There is no place outside that fight for the artist or for the intellectual who is not himself [sic] concerned with, and

⁶ Althusser speaks of the act of interpellation through which an individual is constructed as a subject that subscribes to certain behaviours imposed by a given system. It is further posited by Althusser that the subject is in fact "always already subjects" and thus practices the activities of ideological recognition (1971:172-173).

completely at one with the people in the great battle of Africa and of suffering (Biko, 1978:35).

The centrality of *Ubuntu* philosophy as a guiding principle in relation to a liberation cause is evident. It must be noted that Sankara was speaking in a different context and reality about Burkina Faso's revolutionary struggle, however, his sentiment highlights his militant thought in resisting the neo-colonial system. In his critical text, *The wretched of the earth* Fanon (1963) reminds us that the process of decolonisation is always a violent undertaking, which involves an active exercise of dismantling the violent inhumane system. The violent nature of the decolonisation action may be interpreted as connoting the radicality of the process in the sense that the oppressed subject demands her liberation now. Similarly, Sithole (2016:49) also calls our urgent attention to the task of decoloniality suggesting that there should not be any more waiting for, "the moment is now". Enrique Dussel's philosophy of liberation presents a lens to understand the notion of consciousness in the context of oppression. The philosophy of liberation aims to (a) understand the process of oppression and its implications on the consciousness of the oppressed and (b) to highlight the significance of decolonial interventions to foster a liberatory trajectory (Dussel, 2013). Such philosophy contends that no liberation is possible without the freedom of those oppressed, which implies going further than the philosophy of identity, probing deeper than Western ontology and rationality, starting from ethical-political commitment and ending in the resolution of the interiority-exteriority contradiction (Osorio, 2009).

Therefore, liberation philosophy has to be articulated in action or praxis in order to challenge power. Hence, for Dussel, "[liberation] philosophy is a moment in the "assumption of consciousness" (the *concientizagao* of Paulo Freire) of the oppressed, of and in their praxis, which describes, and with that criticizes, the mechanisms of cynical rationality" (Dussel, 1985:49). From an African perspective, Asante (1993) considers conscientisation as a self-conscious decision to explain and analyse the world from the perspective of African agency characterised by Africans seeking to assert a subject place in the context of African history. This conscientisation process evokes agency in one's thought and equips one to confront one's marginality and subjection. It must be said that

the lack of agency perpetuates the condition of marginality. Biko is critical of the condition of marginality as it compromises one's critical consciousness and reinforces complicity within the system.

Hence, the process of liberation in this context entails what Dussel regards as analogous to leaving prison and "affirm[ing] the history that was anterior and exterior to the prison" (1985:138). Thus, a liberation philosophy dictates that the "subject be alive" given that a "dead subject" cannot argue. To be alive in this context entails gaining a critical consciousness that fosters the negation of the subjection. It becomes a liberation from exclusion, misery, and oppression. According to Sithole (2016), the philosophy of liberation is a decolonial tool as it accords those at the receiving end of oppression with the agency that negates their subjection. To this end, a new sense of consciousness is instilled so that a conscious subject is self-aware of the significance of self-determination and transcendence to negate his/her subjection.

For Sithole (2016), the ethics of liberation philosophy accords the oppressed with a new sense of consciousness, which explains the pervasiveness of the dominant system given the kind of work that ought to be done to escape the system. For this reason, it is a pedagogical activity that is conditioned by political praxis and thus an analectical philosophy. To exercise the praxis of liberation one has to be brave, as you confront the logic of domination, however, through the affirmation of exteriority, you are well equipped with comprehension of the modalities of the entrenched dominant system.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) highlights a triad of layers of African subjectivity. He regards the first layer as involving the aspect of alienation of the African subject with ontological implications and the second layer speaks to the element of dispossession of Africans. Furthermore, the third layer manifests in the condition of human suffering and degradation. Hence, it is by design that the entrenched modes of dependency and mimicry of the African subject are allowed to continue unabated. The African subject is relegated to a zone of non-entity characterised by aspects of lack and self-doubt.

Fanon (1963) addresses this aspect of complicity concerning its implication on self-consciousness as a result of assimilating to the oppressor's culture. He argues that the oppressed individual is conditioned to experience his/her subjection by ironically adopting

the oppressor's culture and in the process, suspending his/her ontological sense of being. This assimilation means that the oppressed continues and entrenches the work of the oppressor. This remains a major problem of some of the African leadership and some individuals in academia – their conditioning is so entrenched to the point of assuming the oppressor's role. For these compromised individuals, the struggle for emancipation is not a priority for as long as they do not embrace critical consciousness. Unfortunately, their complicity reinforces the subjection of the 'othered' individuals within the system.

Sithole (2016:7) argues that this African subject is constituted as "that which is living for the other". One might argue that the self is further othered and marginalised and negated. For Lechaba (2021) then, the notion of complicity is also a factor concerning the perpetuation of the oppressed subjection as the negation becomes an enabler of one's subjectivity and the practice becomes repeated without counter-hegemonic discourses. As Biko (1978:31) asserts regarding the complicity of a dominated individual that there is a need "to remind him [sic] of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused". Biko was referring to the oppressive nature of apartheid however, his analysis is relevant with regard to the entrenched hegemonic system which is still in existence.

Biko further laments the ramification of complicity of the black subject, maintaining it has been "reduced to an obliging shell, he looks with awe at the white power structure and accepts what he regards as the 'inevitable position'" (Biko, 1978:22). For that reason, a question arises in terms of how the subjectivity of an African having been dehumanised by the system of coloniality impact on her perception of her reality insofar as her compromised agency negate her humanity? Of course, this is not to argue for a lack of self-awareness among the African subject but to highlight the significance of critical consciousness given the pervasiveness and the reinforcement of the Euro-American colonial tropes. The central concern was to rethink the theme of the African subject emerging, focusing on him/herself, withdrawing, in "the act and context of *displacement* and *entanglement*" (Mbembe, 2001:15). [*emphasis original*].

It is very evident that aspects of the subject, subjection, and subjectivity concerning Africans are pervasive and have an impact on one's agency and critical consciousness in the context of the hegemonic discourses and these were central in Biko's philosophical

thought. Sithole (2016:18) maintains in that regard that the lived experience of the black is the nuclei of Biko's thought. Against this background, the indoctrinated other should seek to attain critical consciousness for she cannot afford to be complicit as she navigates the neo-colonial systems. The promotion of Pan-African consciousness will be hindered by the lack of critical consciousness.

According to Murithi (2020:380), the persistence of neo-colonial systems of governance on the African continent hinders the promotion of Pan-African consciousness as they allow for the continued marginalisation of the majority of African people. Therefore, a challenge is to figure out how to advance a Pan-African consciousness and forge a Pan-African identity which is imperative to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of Africans across the continent, and the African diaspora. As noted above a radical approach is imperative, given the persistence of the subjection of an African – with women being at the centre of this condition. It is therefore my argument that the advancement of a Pan-Africanist consciousness will, in turn, lead to psychological liberation and agency and ultimately, reinforce a commitment to the economic, cultural, political and social advancement of the continent. A conscious Pan-Africanist agent denounces any marginalisation and oppression of any kind, be it, patriarchy, Afrophobia, tribalism, and other forms of domination – as this negates the very idea of liberation. Thus, a liberatory attitude and consciousness compel the agent to undertake social change and to resist any form of subjugation including the subjection of women. Hence, a Pan-African consciousness is imperative.

According to Esedebe (1977), Pan-African consciousness can be traced from the moments that involved the humiliation, the marginalisation of the African diaspora, the racism that accompanied the slave trade, as well as European imperialism. The notion of Pan-Africanist consciousness is key and speaks to the awareness of all African communities about the importance of fostering unity and solidarity essential to conquering their bondage.

For Young (2010), the notion of Pan-Africanist consciousness advances and forges a sense of collective commitment to the prevailing socio-political struggles that continue to ravage the continent and people of African ancestry elsewhere globally. As Rabaka

observes, the Pan-African consciousness promotes a sense of global African solidarity connected by common history and shared lived experience of anti-African subjugation (2020:13). Hence, for Biko (1978:30), a critically conscious individual is 'alive' and will not be complicit in the subjection. It is for this reason that Biko advances the ideas of pride and dignity among black people given how the hegemonic system of oppression has infused and cemented a sense of inferiority among this marginalised group.

This speaks to a radical act of shifting ways of thinking and doing things for a lack of critical consciousness means susceptibility to manipulation, which is undesirable. Biko and Sankara are proponents of this approach given that liberation for them is imperative and must be sought at all costs. It is therefore my contention that Pan-African consciousness is bound to enable the African to transcend the imposed hegemonic condition propelling her/him towards the regeneration of the continent in pursuit of an African Renaissance.

2.7 Towards African Renaissance

According to More (2002), the notion of the African Renaissance was strongly present in the struggle of Africans and the diaspora against slavery, colonialism, and racism and as such, is not a single event but should be seen as a process that is historically grounded. According to Makgoba (1999: xii) African Renaissance is a "unique opportunity for Africans to define [themselves] and [their] agenda according to [their] own realities and taking into account the realities of the world around [them]". This idea has been kept alive, nurtured, and developed through political philosophies such as that of Pan-Africanism, Afrocentricity, and Black Consciousness. Hence, my argument that Pan-African consciousness evokes a precondition for the advancement of African Renaissance given that the former implores one to name the problem at hand in order to devise means of tackling it. In this case, the problem is the persistent neo-colonialist order, which calls for radical intervention.

Masolo provides some useful propositions essential for the success of African Renaissance:

The idea of African Renaissance comes as an antithesis to the Afro-pessimist thesis. The African Renaissance is Afro-optimistic, and can only be realized through the social, economic and political regional integration of African states. If the idea of Renaissance is to be brought to fruition, three transformations are necessary for the survival of Africa in the global village. Firstly, the politics of the privatization of the state which has characterised African politics must be superseded by a politics that take into account the socio-economic and political aspirations of the people. Secondly, this can only be achieved when African economics and politics are regionally unified to the extent that a single currency is formed. Thirdly, a paradigm shift in relations between people and the environment needs to form part of the new social, economic and political arrangement (Masolo, 2002:671).

The above passage by Masolo provides a clear link of the idea of African Renaissance to the ideology of Pan-Africanism concerned with the social, economic and political integration of the continent. It was highlighted above that Africa is still grappling with issues of integration and re-integration, economic development and other socio-political problems that hinder the advancement of the Pan-Africanist agenda. Therefore, I agree with Masolo's articulation of the idea of African Renaissance as anti-thesis to the Afro-pessimist thesis in that practical solutions are offered instead of re-stating the gloomy predicament as articulated by the other (Afro-pessimism) school of thought. It follows then that a need for the enhancement of the African Renaissance is justified, however, its promotion is premised on the critically conscious African leadership that prioritise the African people as a collective.

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), the new Pan-African agenda cannot be propagated on a hostile and imperialistic Euro-American epistemology that imposes global imperial designs. However, More (2002) regards African Renaissance as signalling how Africans perceive themselves within modernity and proclaim the emergence of a new perception and redefinition of African problems within the context of (post) colonial and (post) apartheid realities. Therefore, African Renaissance is a product of and successor of Pan-Africanism. It follows then that having developed and assumed a Pan-Africanist consciousness, this agent is bound to consciously and actively articulate a rhetoric that

centre Africa and promotes her values, humanity and rightful place in the world. For this reason, Black Consciousness should constantly remind the Pan-Africanist agent about the dangers of the oppressive system and in the process, possessing an ability to avoid the mask of bad faith.

This is what Biko meant in his articulation of Black Consciousness in that it seeks to alert the African subject about her capabilities insofar as her liberation necessitates that “blacks can learn to assert themselves and stake their rightful claim” (1978:30). For Biko, Black Consciousness involves the process of in-ward looking and one way of doing this is by re-visiting the African history in order to highlight the positive contributions of the Pan-Africanists who defied the subjection of the Euro-modernity. Sankara was also in agreement with this notion of seeking the positivity of the past in order re-imagine and shape a conscious society. For example, Sankara demonstrated this commitment with his interventions, among others, the reforestation programme and the planting of trees in Burkina Faso. This is crucial given that the contemporary African historicity and the paradoxical presence dictate that a process of reclaiming the African experience of Being be carried out (Serequeberhan, 1995:24).

As articulated by both Biko and Sankara, it is evident that the continent of Africa needs a radical transformation that rejects dependency if development is to be accelerated. For Gumede (2018), the kind of development needed in Africa should encompass the transformation of the mental, social, political, and economic conditions and this is espoused in Biko and Sankar’s thoughts. This brings to the fore the philosophy of Black Consciousness as conceptualised by Biko. It is for this reason that Gumede argues for the transformation in terms of how Africa handles her matters. Gumede further notes that Africa needs to incorporate the notions of *Ubuntu*, *Ujamaa*, and *Harambee* given their authenticity to African identity (2018). It was argued in this chapter that African cultural elements such as *Ubuntu* and *Maat* can be employed to re-imagine the Pan-Africanist agenda as they speak to the ontological reality of Africanness to foster the centrality of human-centredness. It is against this background that Moges and Muchie argue that the current economic and political landscape in Africa is not conducive to sustainable economic and social development (2020:57).

Hence, this author contends that Africa needs to look inward if the contemporary conditions are to be transformed given that the externally derived interventions have not dismantled the state of neo-colonialism fraught with attitudes of dependency. Therefore, I argue that the process of inward-looking as espoused by the likes of Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Walter Rodney and Thomas Sankara, begins with the decolonisation of the mind, which is the major tenet of the Black Consciousness philosophy. For Muiu and Martin (2002), the fundamental prerequisites of a true African Renaissance pertain to Africans solving their own problems. As they put it, “Africa must solve its problems the African way based on its history, culture, and environment” (2002:34). Both leaders, Biko and Sankara were devoted to total liberation of the mind, body, and spirit, and were determined to dismantle the system of coloniality as demonstrated through their praxis.

2.8 Conclusion

As argued in this chapter, Pan-Africanism is concerned with the solidarity of Africans and is borne out of the need to respond to the persistent condition of coloniality and neo-colonialism. I contend that both Biko and Sankara’s thoughts add a liberatory dimension to the discourse of Pan-Africanism given that they highlight the significance of critical consciousness. They implore us to express a liberatory praxis that transcends the categories and apparatuses of the oppressive systems in pursuit of critical consciousness. Hence, the notion of Pan-African consciousness is key in this context and serves as a pre-condition for African Renaissance. This chapter outlined the concept of African Renaissance in relation to the advancement of the Pan-Africanist agenda – a critical analysis of African Renaissance as a de-linking tool will be undertaken in the following chapter. The resonance of Biko and Sankara’s thoughts for the contemporary African context is thus highlighted given the veracity of the impact of coloniality on the colonised. Biko’s conception of the philosophy of Black Consciousness equips the colonised subject with an ability to resist the imposed dehumanisation of the oppressive system whilst Sankara promotes a liberatory praxis that includes women as the main participants towards a just and inclusive liberated society. The next chapter will explore the concept of African Renaissance as a de-linking option in responding to the perpetual hegemonic system of coloniality.

CHAPTER THREE: EXPLORING AFRICAN RENAISSANCE AS A DECOLONIAL DE-LINKING OPTION

“Accordingly, it must therefore be that the principal task we face is to answer the critical question – what must be done to achieve the objectives which all Africans and progressive humanity accept as being of fundamental importance to the renewal and renaissance of Africa!”

Thabo Mbeki

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the concept of Pan-Africanism as a liberatory discourse in relation to the principles of *Ubuntu* philosophy. It presented an argument that a Pan-Africanist consciousness is necessary as a tool to wage the struggle against the imposed hegemonic condition of the colonised. As such, a critically conscious individual is equipped to navigate and negate his/her domination and, in the process, carve a conducive foundation to re-imagine and regenerate the space for her/her authentic ontological self in the quest for self-determination. However, to reach the desired outcome, a comprehensive diagnosis of the ensuing problem is required. Below I interrogate the persistence of coloniality to elucidate its undesirability, which necessitates a radical intervention in this regard. I will then argue that a de-linking process is inevitable in this context. It is argued that the condition of dependency which is exacerbated by the condition of coloniality is intolerable to those who are subjected to their potency. I will proceed to explore the concept of African Renaissance by highlighting its main tenets and describing how it was influenced by the Negritude movement, among others. Furthermore, the political thoughts of Biko and Sankara are interrogated regarding how they advance the spirit of African Renaissance. Finally, I present an argument for the suitability of African Renaissance as a decolonial de-linking project. Given the persistence of the conditionalities associated with coloniality, a process of de-linking is crucial in this regard.

3.2 The persistence of coloniality

Understanding the entrenched condition of coloniality is imperative to devise the means of repudiating this hegemonic system. As Biko asserts, “we have to acknowledge before we can start on any programme designed to change the [colonial] status quo” (1978:31). In imperial reasoning, the human species re-emerged as socially classified and racially hierarchised in accordance with assumed differential ontological densities (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2022). In this context, nobody escapes the class, sexual, gender, spiritual, linguistic, geographical, and racial hierarchies of the modern/colonial/capitalist/patriarchal world-system. Coloniality allows us to understand the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administrations, produced by colonial cultures and structures in the modern/post-colonial capitalist/patriarchal world-system (Grosfoguel, 2007).

The pervasiveness of coloniality manifests itself in three dimensions, namely, the coloniality of power, knowledge and Being. These dimensions are useful analytical tools to get a deeper understanding of its manifestation and deep-rootedness. The coloniality of power confronts the western domination and exploitation of the non-western societies including and not limited to, the control of African economies, land expropriations and the exploitation of labour and natural resources (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Coloniality of power highlights the social hierarchal relationships of domination and exploitation between the West and Africa. These power structures are still at play and informs the contemporary relations from a Eurocentred perspective.

Coloniality of knowledge manifests itself within the level of enunciation where the enunciator regulates the terms of the conversation to an extent that the enunciated (colonised) assumes the position of a puppet (Mignolo, 2018). In this sense knowledge is only rational if it emanates from the Empire and all the other knowledges are relegated to the margins. Evidently, the colonised knowledge serves to displace other cultures and spread the ‘rationality’ of Western modernity. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) asserts in this regard that coloniality of knowledge imposed Western forms of knowledge so that the colonial domination can be entrenched and reproduced.

The relationship emanating from power and knowledge led to the conceptualisation of coloniality of 'Being'. Coloniality of Being delves into the lived experience of the colonised subject, which is associated with the condition of condemnation because of one's otherness. This is what Maldonado-Torres (2010) refers to as signifying the lack of ontological resistance and the absence of rationality from the part of the colonised. Coloniality of Being serves to condemn and subject the colonised individual to a zone of a non-entity *qua* human. In this sense the ontological existence of the condemned subject is perpetually disavowed. These interconnected dimensions accentuate the conception of colonial power as intrinsically linked to the ongoing colonial experience.

For Sankara (1988), imperialism needs to be dismantled given its pervasiveness in that it keeps on spreading misinformation regarding the true reality of the oppressed's condition. Thus, its dismantling is imperative. Sankara (1988) stresses how the imposition and the subjection of imperialism negatively impact the psyche of the oppressed to an extent that the subjected Other accepts its normality. He views imperialism as an enemy of the revolution, and as such, it must be countered as it infiltrates, and devalues societies that reside outside of its rationality. Repudiating this entrenched subjection and its related hegemony is imperative to re-humanise the dehumanised subjects. It is my view that both Biko and Sankara 's political thoughts are predicated on the attainment of liberation and hence, their interrogation is crucial for the contemporary context. The impact of coloniality has degraded the African individual by subjecting her/him to foreign values and traditions and thus ultimately polluting her/his mind and consciousness. Nkrumah concurs with Sankara's assertion with regard to how the complex machination and indoctrination of imperialism operate. Nkrumah (1968) argues that imperialism has infiltrated the psyche of the colonised African to the extent that they become brainwashed by its conditioning of being 'saved' to entrench the Western-trained Western propaganda.

The psychological propaganda of imperialism and neo-colonialism sustains the subjection of the oppressed so that the latter is stripped of her/his self-consciousness and to an extent that the paternalistic treatment of the oppressor is preferred. The seemingly pro-apartheid attitudes of longing for the apartheid regime in South Africa, by anti-radicalists, despite concrete evidence of its atrocities that were inflicted on the black

majority by this system is questionable. However, it is no surprise that the old is often longed for in the new South Africa, given that the old has in many ways spilled into post-apartheid. Biko (1978) foresaw this, arguing that the anti-black apartheid system of what he terms 'evil doers' in South Africa has constructed a black subject which denounces his/her true identity through its mission of dehumanisation.

It is therefore clear from Biko's assertion that the oppressive system of 'evil doers'⁷ as he labelled it, sought not only to inflict violence upon the oppressed subjects but to also infiltrate his/her mind so that he/she does not seek liberation. It is therefore empirical to nurse both the psychological and physical wounds of the apartheid system on the black body. Biko goes further to describe the degradation of the black subject as an individual who he characterises as denoting a slave, timid, a shell, and a shadow of man, among some of the adjectives he uses concerning the racialised individual. The contaminated mind of the black subject was Biko's unit of analysis, so to say and for him, that condition needed a radical intervention. Critical consciousness and self-awareness must then be sought and attained if the subjected blacks are to escape this condition. Clearly, for Biko (1978) the answer lies in the promotion of the philosophy of Black Consciousness because its adoption entails a kind of conscientisation that ultimately serves to negate the hegemonic system notwithstanding the indoctrination that accompanies the latter. In this sense, Black Consciousness is about re-affirming one's humanity in the context of denigration and subjugation.

Biko evokes the transcendence effect of the Black Consciousness philosophy as it implores the oppressed subject to reaffirm his or her humanity and to gain critical consciousness. That said, the type of language employed in the above statement may be interpreted as being patriarchal in some quarters. This critique is justified in my view and certainly diminishes his message. However, the reader in this context may need to

⁷ Here Biko was very critical and rightly so, of the Apartheid system in South Africa and its associated de-humanising effects. Thus, given its systemic oppression of black subjects, the white domination can be regarded as evil for, they perpetuated atrocities that condemned the subjected blacks. In my view, this system was evil to such an extent that the United Nations declared it a crime against humanity. It must be said that its impact is still being felt by those who were subjected to its brunt.

exercise leniency as this kind of language tends to represent the era from which Biko belonged, where the word, 'man' denoted a human being. Nevertheless, his message of critical consciousness is significant and relevant considering the prevalence of the state of coloniality.

This pervasiveness which comes with the persistence of the state of coloniality cannot be ignored and therefore, its dismantling is key. Ngugi wa Thiong'o speaks of the brutality of what he deems the colonial act when he writes:

A colonial act – indeed, any act in the practice of power intended to produce docile minds. The lynching of captive Africans in the American South, often accompanied by the brutal removal and public display of their genitalia – the strange fruits borne by Southern trees that Billie Holiday sang about – was likewise meant to instil fear and compliant docility (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 2009:4).

The machinery of the hegemonic oppressive system sought to sustain its power which was based on the capitalist logic of slavery and cheap labour, which was required to maintain that system. The success of the modern/colonial world-system is anchored in making subjects that are socially located on the oppressed side of the colonial difference, to think epistemically like the ones in the dominant positions (Grosfoguel, 2007). Maldonado-Torres (2013) articulates some of the pertinent issues associated with the condition of coloniality to an extent that the subjection that comes with the system continues to choke those who continue to breath it. According to Maldonado-Torres, coloniality is pervasive to an extent that a subject cannot escape its wrath. Maldonado-Torres, writes:

Thus, coloniality survives colonialism [and] is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breath coloniality all the time and every day (Maldonado-Torres, 2013:97).

Although one has to concur with Maldonado-Torres's analysis pertaining to coloniality as being reflected in every aspect of modern life, he seems to suggest that it is impossible

to think outside of its matrices, which is problematic in my view. According to his logic, the notion of critical consciousness which negates one's subjection is non-existent or limited despite advocating for a decolonial turn in that context. I contend that Maldonado-Torres's assertion highlights, rightfully so, the appearance of coloniality as 'normal' and natural as a result of its coercive power, which was sustained over a long period. However, to think outside of its subjectivity can be possible if enacted authentically as evidenced by Biko and Sankara's politics and praxis. Apart from the thinkers such as Biko and Sankara, many others such as Frantz Fanon, Leopold Senghor, Amilcar Cabral, Kwame Nkrumah, and Cheik Diop, to mention a few were able to escape the bondage associated with the hegemonic system by formulating counter-hegemonic thoughts that are still relevant and applicable in dismantling the persistent state of coloniality. For example, Nkrumah's notion of conscientism has shaped contemporary Pan-African thought. Similarly, Fanon's radical philosophy continues to inspire many contemporary thinkers insofar as understanding the colonial violence and its implications on the oppressed.

I contend that this speaks to the essence of what made Biko and Sankara stand out and thus warrant a critical examination of their political thoughts in light of the contemporary African realities. Biko and Sankara's resistance to the hegemonic system of oppression posed a huge nuisance to the oppressors and this led to their demise with the former at the hands of the apartheid police and the latter through a western imperialist-sponsored coup. The similarities that can be drawn from both these thinkers have to do with their people-centric approach in their praxis anchored on the *Ubuntu* and *Maat* principles (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of these concepts). The statement Sankara uttered to the members of the National Council for the Revolution (CNR) about the true characteristics of a revolutionary is illustrative of his people-centric politics. Sankara describes this revolutionary as "one with the masses, who has faith in them, and who respects them" (Sankara, 1987:98).

However, given that the inscription of coloniality is entrenched following the three centuries of dispossession, dehumanisation, degradation and enslavement that were rationalised by the problematic logic of racialisation. These conditionalities relegated non-

Europeans to a sub-human status. It is for this reason that Mafeje posits that the hegemonic system must be challenged as it denies the colonial subject freedom. Mafeje's argument is demonstrated in this manner:

We would not talk of freedom, if there was no prior condition in which this was denied; we would not be anti-racist if we had not been its victims; we would not proclaim Africanity, if it had not been denied or degraded; and we would not insist on Afrocentrism, if it had not been for Eurocentric negations ... Of necessity, under the determinate global condition an African renaissance must entail a rebellion – a conscious rejection of past transgressions, a determined negation of negations (Mafeje, 2008:107).

Evidently, Mafeje's conception of African Renaissance is in line with the proposed radical version argued in this thesis and moves us a step closer to a de-linking intervention. Mafeje speaks of African Renaissance as constituting a rebellion, suggesting a more radical intervention that recognises and denounces the dehumanising atrocities associated with coloniality. Coloniality is not equivalent to colonialism, and it is not derivative from or antecedent to, modernity. Coloniality and modernity constitute two sites of a single coin. In the same way as the European industrial revolution was achieved through the coerced forms of labour in the periphery, the new identities, rights, laws, and institutions of modernity such as nation-states, citizenship and democracy were formed in a process of colonial interaction with, and domination/exploitation of, non-Western people (Grosfoguel, 2017).

In his proposition of advancing the *Ubuntu* ethics as a response to contemporary African conditions, Ramose underscores the urgent need for Africa to de-link from the imposed condition of coloniality. Ramose (2017) explains this urgency of disassociating Africa from what he regards as constructive and deadly conditions which need a radical struggle if justice, peace and unity are to be achieved. Furthermore, Africa has to wage war against the Euro-American plundering of its resources and natural environment driven by their capitalist greed. Ramose highlights the predicament that the continent finds itself in because of the historical impositions associated with the system of colonialism as well as neo-colonial practices which continue to exacerbate several socio-economic and political

challenges on the continent. Given the severity of this situation on the continent, which has implications for social justice, peace and economic development, it is imperative that radical interventions be adopted, guided by *Ubuntu* ethics which should provide appropriate tools to confront the persistent condition of dependency.

Sankara explains the link between colonial hegemony and neo-colonial reality which continues to affect the existential living realities of the formerly colonised. In essence, Sankara's argument is predicated on the perpetual nature of neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism as he posits that the neo-colonial society resembles the colonial society. Every state apparatus such as the army, administrative function, and education system was replaced by neo-colonial versions with fundamental ramifications for the true independence of the post-colonial African state (Sankara, 1988). This situation illustrates the pervasiveness of the neo-colonial agenda as the withdrawal of the colonial administration did not signal the introduction of independence per se. Accordingly, Garvey (1977) asserts that Africans need to rid themselves from the inferiority complex and seek religious, political, social and educational freedom. In support of Garvey, I add economic freedom to the list, to support the notion of complete independence-- a theme central to this thesis. This assertion is in line with the Black Consciousness philosophy which stresses the need to liberate the mind of the oppressed. This is because of the entrenched coloniality and its engineering consequences.

Sankara saw coloniality as sustained through social, economic, cultural, epistemic and political apparatuses that are deeply rooted in the colonial and racialised localities. Therefore, given these conditions, a challenge is to figure out how to advance a Pan-African consciousness and forge a Pan-African identity which is imperative to fulfil the hope and aspirations of Africans across the continent. It is through these interventions espoused by Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance discourses that a path toward liberation can be attained. In his conception of a Pan-Africanist agenda, Garvey (1977) posits that the enslaved subjects of Africa must first free themselves mentally to attain total liberation, which is crucial for the advancement of the continent. For Garvey, Africans must free themselves mentally, spiritually, and politically to escape the perpetual slave mentality and to re-affirm their humanity.

Thus, Garvey promotes the idea of Pan-African consciousness as constituting a tool to de-link from the colonial shackles. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2009) speaks of the perpetual search for wholeness as a result of what he refers to as the condition of dismemberment caused by the persistence of coloniality. For Ngugi wa Thiong'o then the process of re-membering the continent is key and serves as one of the core themes of Pan-Africanism. This is what Biko described as the process of inward-looking as a way of countering the imposed mental pollution of coloniality's *longue durée*. Biko outlines the severity of this mental pollution in this way:

[...] in an effort to destroy completely the structures that had been built up in the African Society and to impose their imperialism with an unnerving totality the colonialists were not satisfied merely with holding a people in their grip and emptying the Native's brain of all form and content, they turned to the past of the oppressed people and distorted, disfigured and destroyed it. No longer was reference made to African culture, it became barbarism (Biko, 1978:31).

It is thus evident that the problem of mental colonisation is significant and serves as an obstacle to total liberation, which has prompted the conceptualisation of a radical counter-hegemonic response in the form of Black Consciousness philosophy. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2009) further crystallises this argument when he posits that reclaiming the past triggers a positive change in the colonised's psycho-affective equilibrium because it links them to the memory and ultimately re-awaken their consciousness. Therefore, for Biko one of the aspects of Black Consciousness is the idea of inward-looking by drawing from the positive aspects of indigenous cultural values. Biko speaks of the notion of the oneness of the community as one of the positive cultural aspects that the oppressed people can draw from, and this brings to the fore the centrality of *Ubuntu* as evidenced by his thought. The notion of a Pan-Africanist consciousness, which is imperative insofar as the liberation of the continent is key, was addressed in detail in the previous chapter (refer to Chapter 2).

The anti-capitalist decolonisation and liberation cannot be reduced to only one dimension of social life. It requires a broader transformation of the sexual, gender, spiritual, epistemic, economic, political, linguistic and racial hierarchies of the modern/colonial world system (Grosfoguel, 2007). Sankara (1988) goes further to detail the intricacies of

neo-colonialism when viewed from his perspective as a political leader and in his capacity as the leader of the Burkina Faso revolution. He remarked during his interview with the Intercontinental Press, which took place on 17 March 1985, that the pervasiveness of imperialism is more felt when one assumes the political office given that one is confronted with its machinery first-hand. Sankara was adamant that through his careful analysis of the machinations of imperialism, he discovered its *modus operandi*, which was to plunder, kill and humiliate the oppressed African subject while at the same time appropriating the natural resources. Its machinery is hell-bent on sponsoring insurgencies and instability on the continent to entrench and perpetuate the status quo. As a matter of fact, Sankara strongly denounced the impositions of imperialism, and dedicated most of his life to educating those willing to listen about its dangers (see also Chapter 5).

In my view, Sankara's critical consciousness and liberatory praxis concerning the struggle against the system of neo-colonialism greatly influenced his politics of anti-imperialism. Hence, I argue that his denouncement of the system negates the potential possibility of complicity and renders his revolutionary message and attitude authentic on behalf of the ordinary popular masses. Although his assertion of not possessing a full understanding of the complexities associated with the oppressive system might be regarded as exposing his naivety, his self-awareness is evident on the contrary. This self-awareness brings forth the aspect of self-consciousness insofar as the agency required to confront the hegemonic system of neo-colonialism can no longer be delayed. Hence, the proposition and the recognition that imperialism needs to be defeated at all costs.

Biko was very critical of the notion of liberal ideology as it perpetuates the condition of dependency, which continues to relegate blacks to the margins – as this false narrative hinders what he considers the total liberation of black people. Similarly, Sankara was vocal on issues of dependency as he reflected this in many of his speeches. Sankara impeccably orated to the people of Burkina Faso as a constant reminder to de-link from the shackles of imperialism. Addressing the first national conference of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs), which took place from 31 March to 4 April 1986, he continued to conscientise the attendees about some of the important principles of the revolution, including the notion of self-determination. He remarked that the conditions and

the environment surrounding their struggle (in Burkina Faso) are not conducive to independent development which they were envisaging at the time suggesting the enormity of the hard work required. The struggle for self-determination is bound to be laborious and fraught with multiple challenges but it is worth pursuing. This sense of motivation and determination is reflected in Sankara's revolutionary slogan, "Homeland or death", which is a constant feature of his speeches (Sankara, 1988).

Sankara highlights the difficulties which he refers to as "traps" associated with the structural systemic domination which continues to exist as a result of the entrenched persistence of coloniality enforcing and reinforcing the perpetuation of dependency. It is then imperative to be conscious of the status quo insofar as the de-linking process is concerned. For Sankara, the masses must exercise self-consciousness and be willing to sacrifice some of the 'privileges' that come with the state of conformity such as the refusal of foreign aid, in some instances, as "[...] we [the Burkinabe people] really do not want aid that creates a welfare mentality" (Sankara, 1988:294). It follows that the marginalised black people will launch the struggle for their liberation due to the imposed condition of marginality. The negation of the hegemonic system becomes key, and a de-linking process is imperative in this regard.

Furthermore, Sankara was of the view that the situation required some form of radicalism considering its ramifications for the colonised subjects. He argued that a fundamental change requires "a certain amount of madness" (Sankara, 1987:232). For him radical thought is predicated on the notion of defiance as one has to be consciously clear in his/her thought and praxis, and this has to be illustrated in one's actions of defiance. As he puts it, "in this case, it comes from nonconformity, the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, the courage to invent the future" (Sankara, 1988:232). It follows that the marginalised black people are bound to launch the struggle for their liberation due to the imposed condition of marginality in this regard.

3.3 De-linking process

In decolonial terms, a de-linking process entails “radical transformation of the modern/colonial matrix of power which continues to define modern identities as well as the relations of power, and epistemic forms that go along with them” (Maldonado-Torres 2006:115). De-linking acknowledges that the contemporary global system is fraught with Eurocentric impositions that relegate other knowledges to the margins and thus deny the idea of pluriversality, which recognises the co-existence of diverse realities and epistemologies. This means that Western indoctrination and conditioning make it difficult to think outside western modernity. Therefore, there is a need to epistemologically transcend, and decolonise the Western canon and epistemology (Grosfoguel, 2007). There is no universal way of truth as Grosfoguel asserts:

(1) That a truly universal decolonial perspective requires a broader canon of thought than simply the Western canon (including the Left Western canon); (2) that a truly universal decolonial perspective cannot be based on an abstract universal (one particular that raises itself as universal global design), but would have to be the result of the critical epistemic/ethical/political projects towards a pluriversal as opposed to a universal world; (3) that decolonization of knowledge would require to take seriously the epistemic perspective/cosmologies/insights of critical thinkers from the Global South thinking *from* and with subalternised radical/ethnic/sexual spaces and bodies (Grosfoguel, 2007:212).

Grosfoguel rejects the universality of western thought given that it perpetuates the modes of subjection relating to other subjects located outside of its ontological existence. I concur with Grosfoguel’s assertion that re-centring the epistemologies located in the Global South is paramount to negating the imposed conditionalities. The people occupying these subalternised spaces are subjected to experiences of lack, inadequacy and inferiority. In this case, the re-affirmation of their authentic ontological selves is bound to re-invigorate their humanity. In this sense, Sankara recognised the damage that comes with the conditioning of the colonised subjects as he called for “[...] the recondition[ing of] our people to accept themselves” (Sankara, 1987:197). It follows that this reconditioning ought to be anchored on African principles and values. It is for this reason that the notion

of *Ubuntu* is highlighted as positing African cosmologies and epistemologies that authentically centre African experiences and realities at the centre of the African interpretation of life and existence.

Accordingly, Mignolo stresses the process of de-linking insofar as the epistemic decolonisation is key to re-affirming authentic cosmologies and knowledges. Mignolo elaborates on this aspect in this manner:

To do so, I need to de-link from the history and experiences of Western Christian and secular Europe and their corresponding conceptual structures and structure of feelings; that is, from a cosmology grounded in the languages and experiences of European men. Other histories and experiences whose conceptual structures and structures of feelings, grounded in language and experiences alien to European men, were silenced because they were considered inferior, from the perspective of European cosmologies. The imperial perspective was assumed to be the only valid one therefore superior (Mignolo, 2006:9).

The process of de-linking serves to enhance the principles of self-awareness and critical consciousness associated with one's thought, and praxis in a sense that it accords one with critical tools to confront the entrenched condition of coloniality, and to think outside of the logic of western imposed thought. Moreover, one is conscientised of the validity of one's cosmology and ontological being in advancing one's critical consciousness as opposed to being entrapped by the imposition of European cosmologies and realities. The assumption that comes with the universality of the Eurocentric perspectives of knowledge and being as constituting the 'the universal truth' about reality is undesirable and necessitates decolonial interventions in this regard. Therefore, de-linking negates the subjection which arose from the Eurocentric reality that views an African subject as an object, and not as an agent of her/his own thought. One is then prompted to contend that the notion of *Ubuntu* enhances the process of de-linking as it encourages one to make sense of this phenomena as predicated on the centrality of the principle of humanness pertaining to all aspects of human life. In this sense, the agency and consciousness of an African subject are affirmed suggesting a praxis that is liberatory and authentic.

The one who practices *Ubuntu* is bound to be conscious of human life in her/his praxis and thought as embodied in the maxim: *I am because you are*. For this reason, the African subject asserts her/his agency by demonstrating critical consciousness affirming authentic ontological being as characterised by *Ubuntu* metaphysics, which is detached from the Eurocentric perspective. In this sense, the African subject is conscientised to negate and reject his/her dehumanisation and degradation given the self-awareness that comes with his/her *Ubuntu* praxis. It is therefore my contention that to consciously undertake the process of de-linking, one must avoid being trapped in the modes of superficiality, complicity and conformity within the hegemonic system of coloniality. Amin (2011) proposes a process of de-linking from the global matrices of capitalism. This must be read as a clear and intentional recognition that the current hegemonic capitalist system is undesirable and harmful to humanity in the Global South and necessitates a de-linking process.

Historical capitalism must be overtaken, and this cannot be done unless the societies in the peripheries (the great majority of humanity) set to work out systemic strategies of delinking from the global system and reconstructing themselves on an autonomous basis, thus creating the conditions for an alternative globalisation, engaged on the long road to world socialism (Amin, 2011:175).

One is prompted to agree with Amin's critique of the current global system as it perpetuates the subjection of the African subject. The current capitalist world system is predicated on the subjection and marginalisation of those located in the Global South by exploiting their labour whilst denying their humanity. Moreover, it failed to uplift the lived experiences of those situated in the margins, subsequently enriching the colonisers at the expense of the colonised. Hence, one concurs with Ewalefoh's (2022) assertion that Africa needs to be the master of its own fate. This is evident judging from its four hundred years' experience of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism that its liberation will not be externally derived. The relevance of Pan-Africanism as a response to the entrenched conditions of marginality was argued in the previous chapter, in that it calls for the unification of the continent on matters of economy, politics, and social transformation.

However, this vision can only be attained if the advent of dependency is challenged. The capitalist system perpetuates the entrenchment of dependency and condemnation of Africans. It is this condemnation which dictates that a de-linking approach be carried out. Accordingly, the idea of returning to the source as conceptualised by Cabral (1973) is key as an alternative to the current system. To this end, I position the *Ubuntu* philosophy as a source of authentic African thought and praxis that can re-humanise that which was dehumanised by the global capitalist system. *Ubuntu* is epistemologically oriented towards the construction of knowledge which is undogmatic given that without *umu-ntu* (the one practising *Ubuntu*) neither the epistemology nor the ethics of *ubu-ntu* can come into being (Ramose, 2017).

It follows that *Ubuntu's* ethics and rationality reject any subjection and degradation of the human as well as the environment they occupy. Senghor (1974:13) also speaks to and about the harmonious and symbiotic relationship between humanity and the environment maintaining that “the relations between men and nature, consist of magical bonds”. Then the idea of returning to the source becomes imperative and serves as a dialectical negation of the entrenched logic of coloniality. In this context, *Ubuntu* ethics can be viewed as the ‘source’ in question given that its eco-socio-ethic dimensions are predicated on the idea of the wholeness of the human as an antithesis of the Eurocentric thought. The latter is fraught with the modes of subjection toward non-European subjects. It must be said that the notion of returning to the source does not entail embracing everything pre-colonial but a conscious attitude towards forging an authentic African identity. For this reason, one has to concur with Maathai in her assertion that what is required on the continent of Africa is a “...revolution in ethics that puts community before individualism, public good before private, and commitment to service” (Maathai, 2010:115). This speaks to the principles of *Ubuntu* as embodied in both Biko and Sankara’s thoughts and praxis.

The need for Africa, and African in the diaspora, to ‘return to the source’ is an urgent call to re-affirm an authentic cultural identity that has been relegated to the margins and rendered insignificant by the oppressive modalities. This condition has prompted the condemned subjects in question to be self-conscious of their state of marginality and to

seek liberation. For Cabral, this process has to be enacted to re-discover their authentic identity as he argues for its capacity to repudiate the hegemonic oppressive system. As posited by Wynter (2003:266), the marginalised people of Africa “were made to reoccupy the matrix slot of Otherness – to be made into the physical referent of the idea of the irrational/subtropical Human Other”. It is this otherness gaze that perpetuates their continued subjection because as subalterns they do not have a voice and agency, the lack autonomy. It follows that the perpetual condition of marginality and subjectivity is unbearable to the extent that the subject is forced to negate it.

For this reason, the African subject or any oppressed individual needs to consciously detach from the malevolent system, by refocusing their energies on endogenous cultural values. However, Mafeje (2000) cautions us on the potential of a revolution in Africa, by Africans, highlighting that when Africans speak for themselves and about themselves, the world is bound to hear an authentic voice. Moreover, Gumede (2018) is also of the view that the dominant paradigms associated with western thought are not suitable to deal with the African condition and reality and, therefore, a concerted effort towards rethinking Africa, is required. It is my view that the de-linking process is precisely about detachment from the current global order and its associated modes of co-option and consequently, the mask of bad faith.

For Wynter (2003), the logic of coloniality/modernity continues to define the human experience through its manifestations of coloniality of power, (economic and political) of knowledge and being (gender, sexuality, subjectivity and knowledge). To de-link serves to respond to the need for non-imperial/colonial societies (Mignolo, 2009). As Biko (1978:55) remarks “we can never wage struggle without offering a strong counterpoint to the white races that permeate our society so efficiently”. This efficient permeation that Biko refers to is key to understanding the pervasiveness of the imposed hegemonic system. Although he was addressing and critiquing white supremacy in the form of apartheid in South Africa – it must be highlighted that the pattern of the logic of coloniality operates similarly across the globe. Its main objective is to sustain the hegemonic order and its associated machinations.

Similarly, Sankara emphasised the significance of a people-centred movement insofar as the struggle against imperialism is concerned. For him, “[...] when the people stand up, imperialism and the social forces allied with it tremble” (Sankara, 1988:79). Undeniably, Sankara highlights the power of communalism anchored in *Ubuntu* ethics in dismantling the hegemonic system of imperialism. In this sense the people are empowered when they come together to fight against the common enemy of colonialism. Biko further remarks that, “...what is necessary as a prelude to anything else that may come is a very strong grass-roots build-up of black consciousness such that blacks can learn to assert themselves and stake their rightful claim” (Biko, 1978:22). For Biko, the promotion of Black Consciousness is key to repudiating the hegemonic system and seek liberation.

Hence, a decolonial shift is imperative. For Mignolo, a decolonial shift should be viewed as a “project of de-linking”. As he further elaborates:

Delinking means to change the terms and not just the content of the conversation – the content has been changed, in the modern/colonial world by Christianity (e.g. theology of liberation); by liberalism (e.g., the US support to de-colonisation in Africa and Asia during the Cold War). Delinking requires that economic, political, philosophical, ethical, etc., conceptualisation based on principles that make the Bible, Adam Smith and Karl Marx necessary but highly insufficient. (Mignolo, 2007:16).

Mignolo further asserts that we, therefore, need to “de-link, in thought and action, in thinking and doing from the colonial matrix” (Mignolo 2013:45). The persistent violence inflicted by the logic of coloniality/modernity calls for radical action. Therefore, in de-linking we need to reconsider the current rationality because theorising from its frame becomes paradoxical and constitutive of bad faith. For this reason, de-linking is not authentic if enacted within the hegemonic frame of western modernity (Mignolo, 2007). It is imperative that we de-link ourselves from coloniality. Decolonial thinking “challenges the colonial distribution of differences, inventing conflictual modes of resistances and introducing alternative mappings of the human through different geographies of nature and epistemic apparatuses” (Luisetti, 2012). This means that we need to move away from the assumption that everything should be conceived and thought of from the empire. The

geography of reason should shift and this needs to be done by centring the marginalised localities and lived experiences. Hence, the centrality of *Ubuntu* philosophy insofar as it highlights and promotes the authenticity of Africanness in politics, social relations and epistemologically.

Accordingly, to de-link is to disassociate from the rhetoric of coloniality to affirm all forms of knowledges that were colonised, silenced, repressed and denigrated by the hegemonic modernity and the violence it inflicts on the 'other' (Mignolo 2007). Mignolo (2007) proposes a move towards what he terms "Transmodernity". Central to the notion of Transmodernity is critical border thinking that leads to the decolonisation of knowledge and of being. Mignolo (2007) explains the idea of Transmodernity constitute an overall orientation of decolonising and de-linking towards pluriversality, which promotes and affirms the co-existence of many worlds.

In this sense, to de-link is predicated on the notion that all kinds of knowledges must be accorded equal opportunity. Sankara (1988) speaks of the permanent struggle against all forms of domination, indicating how de-linking becomes imperative to dismantle the chains associated with the entrenchment of coloniality. Accordingly, Mignolo argues for the promotion of pluriversality as a way of thinking and interpreting phenomena outside of modernity as a way of de-linking from its shackles. Decolonial thinking in this regard constitutes a conscious constant confrontation of the canonised rhetoric of coloniality to transcend one's subjectivity. Mignolo notes:

It [decoloniality] is, above all, a diverse horizon of liberation of colonial subjects by colonial subjects themselves. There cannot be a decolonial global design, for if that were the case, it would be the reproduction of ego-centred personalities who have the master key of decoloniality (Mignolo, 2007:455).

It follows that there is no single master toolkit available with regard to the process of de-linking given that this type of reasoning stems from the marginal positionality of the colonial subject as a rejection of the universal imposition of coloniality. Sankara (1987) postulates that given that coloniality is a system, it needs to be confronted with a counter-hegemonic system involving the mobilisation and organisation of all the relevant parties affected by its violence.

Before addressing the question of whether African Renaissance can be employed as a de-linking project in the context of global coloniality, I wish to contextualise and define the concept in question, however, I will outline its influence in the form of the Negritude movement.

3.4 Negritude and its influence on African Renaissance

The concept of African Renaissance can be traced back to the Negritude movement. It is, therefore, prudent to briefly outline the notion of Negritude to discern its linkage and influence on the concept of African Renaissance. The Negritude movement advocated for blackness to practice self-love amid all the negative connotations associated with it (Irele, 2002). As such, affirming the positivity of blackness became the mode of resistance by the oppressed. Although at times criticised for its tendency to being nationalist reductionistic, Negritude movement paved the way for the discourses around the ideals and values of African Renaissance.

Negritude movement was borne out of the realisation that the African memory was disconnected and served as a resistance against the anti-blackness associated with the French colonial hegemonic system. It further aimed to advance the regeneration of black people's cultures on the continent of Africa and in the diaspora. As such, affirming the positivity of blackness became the mode of resistance by the oppressed. Its point of departure pertains to the context of black degradation and condemnation wherein blackness was associated with negativity. The condemnation and devaluation of blackness prompted the formulation of the Negritude movement. There is therefore a connection between Negritude and Biko's Black Consciousness as both movements aim to emancipate blacks to re-affirm their humanity in the world.

In the same vein, Black Consciousness originated from a group of students belonging to the South African Students Organisation (SASO), which was founded by Biko as a resistance tool against apartheid (More, 2014). More (2014) provides the link between the two movements, namely, Negritude and Black Consciousness as both re-appropriating the negative terms associated with blackness – 'negro' and 'black' respectively. Therefore, both these movements strongly denounce the dehumanisation

of black people, and advocate for self-consciousness and self-determination. Biko affirms this, indicating that:

So, in 1968 we started forming what is now called SASO – the South African Students Organisation – which was firmly based on Black Consciousness, the essence of which was for the black man [sic] to elevate his own position by positively looking at those value systems that make him distinctively a man in society (Biko, 1978:164).

Like the Negritude movement, Biko's conceptualisation of Black Consciousness is concerned with the hostility towards blackness as a race, culture and identity amid hostile conditions that deny its essence of Being. To this, Biko asserts that the inferiority complex suffered by black people because of 300 years of deliberate oppression requires that blacks "assert themselves and stake their rightful claim" (Biko, 1978:22). For this reason, blackness identity is a right and should be authentically enacted in whatever form it deems fit. Although not explicitly stated, Biko and his contemporaries drew inspiration heavily from Negritude Movement, among others, to craft their conceptualisation of Black Consciousness philosophy. Leopold Sedar Senghor who was the poet-president of Senegal is regarded as one of the founders of the Negritude Movement together with Aimé Césaire from Martinique in the Caribbean. Senghor regards the movement as encompassing several values concerning black people globally, namely: the philosophic nature, politics and arts. Senghor defines Negritude (1974) as a movement deeply rooted in the values of black people while at the same time, acknowledging the existence of other civilisations including the European civilisation. For Senghor, Negritude is about the positive affirmation of the black individual within a broader world-system that negates his/her existence. In a sense, Negritude demands that the black subject be recognised with all his/her culture, identity and value system.

Senghor's conception of Negritude is predicated on a need for self-affirmation of the African subject given the cultural alienation that came with slavery and colonialism. The result of this entrenched condition of coloniality has led to the pollution of the black psyche including the essence of their blackness given its pervasiveness. For this reason, Irele observes that "Negritude is therefore in the beginning a movement of black solidarity,

sharply differentiated from the Marxist concept of class solidarity by a racial consciousness” (Irele, 1964:9). Here we need to underline the phrase, ‘black solidarity’ and its key difference to other global philosophies and regarding how Negritude inspired other emancipatory discourses such as Pan-Africanism, African Renaissance and Black Consciousness, among others. The significance of black solidarity is key, and it is reflected in the Black Consciousness philosophy as a call for black people to utilise their group power to resist the imposed hegemonic system. As Biko puts it:

The call for Black Consciousness is the most positive call to come from any group in the black world for a long time. It is more than just a reactionary rejection of whites by blacks. The quintessence of it is the realisation by the blacks that, in order to feature well in the game of politics, they have to use the concept of group power to build a strong foundation from this. Being a historically, politically, socially and economically disinherited and dispossessed group, they have a strong foundation from which to operate. The philosophy of Black Consciousness, therefore, expresses group pride and the determination of the blacks to rise and attain the envisaged self (Biko, 1978:74).

From this, it can be inferred that the call for the unification of black people across the globe is pertinent given that their subjectivity degrades and denigrates them as a group - - their mobilisation is thus pertinent if they are to dismantle the hegemonic system. In order to attain liberation, the oppressed blacks have to operate as a unit. This is to leverage their group power for, it is through their solidarity that they get to actively fight the system as its sustenance is dependent on their lack of collective voice. Therefore, Black Consciousness serves to mobilise black people to attain critical consciousness in order to negate their subjectivity associated with the identity of blackness. Again, the centrality of the principles of *Ubuntu* and *Maat* has to be promoted to advance this mission of a decolonial shift in the quest for the struggle of hope for renewal. This brings to the fore the African diaspora as envisaged by the Pan-Africanist agenda. In this sense, blackness must use its group solidarity and consciousness as a tool to respond to the oppressive system and devise radical actions to forge a decolonial narrative that will take

the continent forward amid the systemic violence that continues to choke it (blackness identity).

Sankara (1988) rightfully characterised this condition of subjection, which continues to haunt blackness as emanating from the system of imperialism by highlighting its undesirability insofar as it perpetuates the servitude mentality associated with blackness. In his observation, Sankara is of the view that the hegemonic system of oppression manifests itself by coercing the subjected individuals to adopt its ways for its survival. This process is carefully engineered to zombify its subjects so that they negate their self-awareness. In a sense, the system owns them in a way and to escape it, the subject has to be radically conscientised.

Sankara highlights the conditioning that comes with the hegemonic system of imperialism culminating in an inferiority complex for the oppressed subject characterised by what Biko equates to the state of losing one's manhood. The manhood metaphor in this context serves to illustrate the urgency associated with the subjectivity of black people in this context. As such, the justification for interventions such as Negritude and Black Consciousness cannot be overemphasised. As Sartre puts it, the Negritude movement is born out of the abyssal depths in the quest for their authenticity. He writes:

The herald of the black soul has gone through white schools, in accordance with a brazen law which forbids the oppressed man [sic] to possess any arms except those he himself has stolen from the oppressor; it is through having had some contact with culture that his blackness has passed from the immediacy of existence to the meditative state. But at the same time, he has more or less ceased to live his negritude. In his choosing to see what he is, he has become split, he no longer coincides with himself. And on the other hand, it is because he was already exiled from himself that discovered this need to reveal himself (Sartre, 1964:20).

One is convinced by Sartre's assertion concerning the validity of Negritude movement insofar as it re-affirms the positivity of black identity in responding to the undesirable system of oppression and serves as an anti-racist ideology. Diawara (1996) postulates that the idea of Negritude was full of positive promise and aimed at lifting its followers above the tribe and making them part of nations. In essence, Negritude provided a solace

for the oppressed blacks where they felt accepted, and welcomed and their blackness affirmed, which would have been great for their sense of humanity.

Négritude movement was instrumental in forging critical consciousness for those who encountered it and served as a tool for the struggle against anti-blackness rhetoric. Therefore, it is suggested by Diawara that Négritude should be regarded as a source from which to draw insofar as the history and culture of the people of Africa must find an equal place within the global system. It follows that the Négritude movement connotes more than just poetry in French but a call for Africans and black people globally to assert themselves as part of history that rejects all forms of domination and a struggle for liberation.

I contend therefore that the call for regeneration, re-awakening, re-affirmation and all other similar notions cannot be overemphasised enough given the entrenchment of black subjectivity which affects all aspects of the black life. Black Consciousness forms part of this call as it serves as a critique of dominant powers, and also to make black people aware of “the blackness of their skin – and to operate as a group to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude” (Biko, 1978:53). It must be said that blackness is regarded as a problem associated with several lacks and it is always required to prove its humanity. It is for this reason that Sithole observes that ‘What plagued blackness in the past, continues to plague blackness in the present’ (Sithole, 2016:5). It follows that the notion of antiblackness which was a concern then for the founders of the Négritude movement continues in the present. This illustrates the relevance of the discourses of African Renaissance and Black Consciousness in as much as they accord the oppressed with concrete tools towards a liberatory praxis.

Senghor recognises the fact that European civilisation shaped the contemporary African state of affairs and as such, it should be used as a learning experience in forging the Afrocentrist-oriented civilisation, which should draw from other non-European polities. The latter share common characteristics and similar paths to the continent of Africa insofar as the challenges brought by the conditions of imperialism are concerned. In this sense, Négritude does not only evoke the self-affirmation of the black race, but also touches on the issues of the advancement of the continent. It can also be regarded as an

anguished quest for belonging and a self-definition discourse aimed at the regeneration of an African identity in the context of alienation and degradation (Irele, 2022). Thus, like the discourse of African Renaissance, Negritude has to do with the re-articulation of authentic African identity which has been polluted by the imposed hegemonic cultural system.

Senghor articulates the principle of communitarianism which is entrenched in African communities and thus serves as the essence of Africanness. In this sense, the relational attitude is reinforced and predicated on the principle of people-centredness. This writer maintains that the notion of people-centredness is paramount and centred on the affirmation of the humanness of the other than the self. This brings to the fore the notions of *Ubuntu* and *Maat* and their significance concerning Africans, and the advancement of their authentic voices. Although Senghor does not explicitly refer to *Ubuntu* and *Maat* in his conceptualisation of Negritude, there is a link between these three concepts insofar as the centrality of people-centredness and the communal attribute of African identity are essential. I contend in this regard that the political thoughts of the critically conscious proponents of the Pan-Africanist agenda such as Biko and Sankara ought to embody these principles as they are rooted in the African value system and principles. Biko highlights this aspect of affirming one's blackness as an antithesis of whiteness. Biko observes that the manifestation of the interrelationship between blacks and whites is predicated on the former assuming the role of a sub-human, and slave. He further posits that the only response is the affirmation of one's blackness as a tool to negate whiteness. This lies in the black subject's affirmation of the communal inter-dependence with fellow blacks as opposed to the promotion of the value of individualism by whites. It is this positionality that will lead the black subject toward liberation (see also Chapter 4).

This serves to illustrate the significance of the inter-relational attitude associated with African communities as opposed to the Eurocentric perspective, which is fraught with oppressive characteristics. For Biko, African values are important in that they restore the authentic voices and agency of Africans in the quest for their liberation. As such, Biko calls for what he terms the "re-awakening of the sleeping masses" through the practice of Black Consciousness characterised by what he considers as active participation "in the

battle of Africa and of suffering humanity” (Biko, 1978:35). Therefore, Biko suggests that some sort of regeneration and reawakening of consciousness ought to be enacted to conscientise and mobilise the oppressed subjects about the importance of radical liberatory praxis in the context of a dehumanising global system.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the significance of critical consciousness is key when attempting to dismantle the hegemonic systems of bondage associated with them. It is thus worth noting as Sartre has also asserted that “a black man [sic] is a victim of it [oppression] *because he [sic] is a black man* insofar as he is a colonized native or a deported African” (Sartre, 1964:18). Given the imposed subjection associated with blackness, radical thought and a liberatory praxis are significant, for, the curse of blackness is a perpetual condition which alienates one’s authentic Being. An escape, as it were, becomes a necessity – of course not from blackness itself but from the conditions that dehumanise your sense of Being.

Pityana concurs that the reclamation of authentic culture draws on elements of communalism and solidarity that engender an “understanding of human nature, of creativity and the arts, of wisdom and insight” (Pityana, 2008). Biko advocated for the centrality of African values and cultures given their significance in advancing authentic attitudes and praxis in the case of apartheid South Africa. As he puts it, “a country in Africa, in which the majority of the people are African must inevitably exhibit African values and be truly African in style” (Biko, 1978:26). Similarly, Sankara views the significance of African values and culture as a way of forging and fostering authentic African ideas and knowledges. This is evidenced by his proposal of instituting a research centre aimed at, among others: studying African culture, African music, arts and African languages (Sankara, 1985). The Institute of Black Peoples was opened in 1990 following the overthrow of the revolution⁸.

⁸ During his visit to New York City, United States of America (USA), Sankara inaugurated the art exhibition of Burkinabe people at the Third World Center in Harlem. Sankara stated that his revolutionary government decided to create a centre dedicated to studying the origins of the black race as well as the evolution of their culture, music, art and languages, to mention a few of its objectives.

Sankara's thought and praxis were also influenced by the Negritude movement as he regarded its ideas as significant in the struggle against the Euro-American domination of the colonised subjects. As he puts it, "we would search in vain for genuinely new ideas that have emanated from the minds of our 'great' intellectuals since the emergence of now-dated concepts of Negritude and African Personality" (1985:157). Although he referred to the concept of Negritude as dated, he was not suggesting that it was ineffective as he conceded that the ideas shaped his politics and consciousness. The influence of the Negritude movement was evidenced in his promotion of the positivity associated with the black identity. He advocated for instilling pride and memorialisation of the African heritage so that "the coming generation don't accuse us of sacrificing or silencing the Black man" (Sankara, 1985:146). Thus, the significance of preserving and asserting the authentic African cultural identity so that the African knowledge systems can be passed to future generations. However, the first step must begin with the current generation.

Following the discussion on the concept of Negritude and its influence on the promotion of African Renaissance, it is also clear that it shaped the thoughts of Biko and Sankara on matters of the re-affirmation of the black identity. Another significant figure that can be linked to the concept of African Renaissance is Pixley ka Isaka Seme. He was one of the early pioneers of the African Renaissance vision as reflected by his famous 1906 speech at Columbia University in New York, titled *The Regeneration of Africa*. The opening words to his speech were "I am an African and set my pride in my race over against hostile public opinion", which later inspired Thabo Mbeki's "I am an African" speech. Ka Isaka Seme outlined his Africanness vision in this manner:

The brighter day is rising upon Africa. Already I seem to see her chains dissolved, her desert plains red with harvest, her Abyssinia and her Zululand the seats of science and religion, reflecting the glory of the rising sun from the spires of their churches and universities. Her Congo and her Gambia whitened with commerce, her crowded cities sending forth the hum of business, and all her sons employed in advancing the victories of peace – greater and more abiding than the spoils of war ... The generation of Africa means that a new and unique civilisation is soon to be added to the world (Ka Isaka Seme, 1906:406).

Interestingly, a century has already passed since Ka Isaka Seme orated this powerful speech about the regeneration of Africa in New York. However, although considerable positive strides have been made on the continent; it remains one of the least developed continents globally. One would therefore contend that it is rather disappointing that the call for the regeneration of the continent continues to be on the agenda, notwithstanding the challenges relating to the legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism. As Isaka Seme further asserted that “the African already recognises his [sic] anomalous position and desires a change” (Ka Isaka Seme, 1906:407). I contend that both Biko and Sankara’s thoughts have been influenced by the “anomalous position” of the continent, as referred to by Isaka Seme, highlighting the need for a liberatory praxis given its undesirability. The current decolonial rhetoric has meant that issues of the regeneration of the continent, the Pan-Africanist agenda and consciousness and African Renaissance are part of the contemporary discourses on the reclamation of Africa.

The central question remains: can the idea of African Renaissance serve as a decolonial de-linking tool in responding to the persistent condition of coloniality? In an attempt to respond to this critical question Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s notion of the idea of Africa becomes a starting point. For Ngugi wa Thiong’o, the African idea led to the concept of the rebirth of Africa as a “consciousness in organised opposition to the oppressing otherness of that was Europe” (Ngugi wa Thiong’o, 2009:73). This idea should not be compared with the European Renaissance as the latter signalled the emergence of European modernity culminating in the contemporary capitalist global system. Ngugi wa Thiong’o therefore, argues that African Renaissance serves as the struggle against the darker side of European modernity, the latter is fraught with dehumanising effects.

3.5 African Renaissance defined

The idea of an African Renaissance was borne of the realisation that even with political independence, Africa continued to be exploited by Europe and North America. Furthermore, the African-Western debt also indicate that A political freedom in Africa had not brought economic autonomy, (Malisa & Missedja, 2020). It is the debt burden which keeps Africa dependent on the west to the extent that its development is curtailed. Hence Sankara was adamant that the burden of foreign aid is undesirable and suggested that

the affected African states must reject this imposed debt. Sankara (1988) posited in this regard that the affected states need to forge a united front against foreign debt. This suggests that the idea of African Renaissance is predicated on the advancement of African unity.

The idea comes as an antithesis to the Afro-pessimist thesis. Afro-pessimism discourse reinforces the narrative that questions the humanity of black people across the globe and thus justifies their continued subjection and exploitation. Therefore Afro-pessimism should be rejected as it questions the validity of black liberation as espoused and promoted by both Biko and Sankara's thoughts. Gordon observes that "overcoming this [Afro-pessimism] requires purging the world of antiblackness" (Gordon, 2017:106). This is what preoccupied Biko and Sankara's thoughts and praxis – to wage a struggle against the hegemonic discourses that relegate blacks to a zone of non-being where their lives are insignificant. Therefore, Afro-pessimism serves to reinforce and entrench the rhetoric of coloniality where blacks and other races of non-European origin are constantly reminded of their sub-human status and their incapability of rationality. In this sense, Afro-pessimists consider the status quo of black subjection as insignificant even when atrocious incidents that demonstrate anti-blackness attitudes continue to persist. Again, this is how the rhetoric of coloniality operates – the status quo should continue, according to its logic, of course.

Conversely, the African Renaissance is Afro-optimistic, and can only be realised through the social, economic and political regional integration of African states – this fosters the Pan-Africanist idea. If the idea of African Renaissance is to be brought to fruition, three transformations are necessary for the survival of Africa in the global village (Masolo, 2002). Firstly, the politics of the privatisation of the state which has characterised African politics must be superseded by politics that take into account the socio-economic and political aspirations of the people. Secondly, this can only be achieved when African economics and politics are regionally unified to the extent that a single currency is formed. Thirdly, a paradigm shift in relations between people and the environment needs to form part of the new social, economic and political arrangement (Masolo, 2002). These three

elements for Masolo, constitute the approach to be taken to attain the goals of African Renaissance.

Although the unification of the continent remains a major factor concerning the development of the continent, it is unclear as to what exactly is meant by the politics of the privatisation of the state and on the other hand, the preferred kind of governance envisaged is not described. Perhaps, the contention should be about de-linking from a capitalist system and embracing a people-centric system of governance predicated on socialist values and principles. The third point being expounded by Masolo concerning African Renaissance is very crucial, bringing to the fore the aspect of the environment as a key component for a sustainable Africa. For me, this serves to illustrate the significance of *Ubuntu* as an eco-philosophical ethic as it affirms the principle of wholeness cosmology – the relation between human beings and their physical environment. As Ramose puts it, “without such care, the interdependence between human beings and physical nature would be undermined” (2015:70). The care being referred to here has to do with the core principle of *Ubuntu* philosophy, which advances the centrality of human inter-dependence as encapsulated in the maxim, *Motho ke motho ka batho* or *Umuntu ngumuntu nga bantu*. Loosely translated, my humanity is dependent on the humanness of the other.

The caring attitude should extend to the physical environment given that any disruption of the cycle of wholeness impacts the whole ecosystem and, in the process, puts doubt in the completeness of one’s humanity. Human beings should strive for a balance of all the elements that complete the cycle that constitutes wholeness. Therefore, one would argue in this regard that an African Renaissance that bolsters the significance of the harmonious inter-dependence between human beings and their environment is not only people-centric in its approach but ensures the sustainability of the continent and thus securing its future amid the advent of the global climate crisis. This serves to demonstrate the significance of enacting the process of de-linking because this process forces us, rightfully so, to interrogate our whole dimension of Being *qua* existence in an environment that denies that core existence. *Ubuntu* ethics should remind us about our duty to advance and promote the idea of people-centredness in our praxis and thought.

Sankara was a proponent of an ecologically conscious society where the harmonious balance between people and the physical natural and environment is key. He highlighted the significance of nature preservation as reflected in his government policy of reforestation. Sankara took the environmental aspect seriously and regarded it as a fundamental dimension of a people-centred ecosystem. In his appreciation of the ecological dimension of the African cultural system, Sankara exhibited commitment towards the course of environmental preservation with a policy direction that emphasised the significance of nature conservation. This was evidenced by his campaign for reforestation. (See also Chapter 5).

Accordingly, this policy evokes an Afrocentric traditional system that protects and values the importance of the physical and natural environment and thus encompasses the notion of wholeness as highlighted by Ramose's description of *Ubuntu's* ecological dimension. This illustrates Sankara's politics and his thought leadership, demonstrating the idea of transcendence because of his self-awareness and critical consciousness. For Sankara, a true Afrocentric leader must consider the historical context of the situation at hand considering the dehumanising effects of coloniality; and exercise a conscious political action that is inspired by the notion of people-centredness. Furthermore, Sankara was conscious of the centrality of the indigenous knowledge systems in dealing with the reality that he was confronted with and as such, acted accordingly to reverse the destruction that came with colonial conquest.

This praxis is for the benefit of the people and ensures security for future generations as well. His self-awareness demonstrates the ethics of *Ubuntu's* philosophy. Seemingly, in the *Ubuntu* cosmology, the disturbance of the wholeness harmony entails an undesirable disruption of the humanness dimension, which is central to *umu-ntu* and in the process disregards the sacredness anchored on the maintenance of the balance between human beings and their physical nature. As Sankara pointed out that the imposition of Cartesianism rationality has relegated the traditional belief systems to the margins and thus disregarding the importance of preserving the environment. Hence, the concept of African Renaissance as a vehicle for self-discovery is proposed.

Mangu (2006) regards the concept of African Renaissance as a process that encompasses the restoration of the continent in the quest for self-discovery. In line with Mangu's observation, this self-discovery pertains to the idea of reinvigorating African values and principles for the benefit of the African people. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2009) also argue for the re-remembering of Africa, as it was dismembered. This process can only be done if critical consciousness is fostered and, for Biko, the process involves serious self-introspection to comprehensively answer the conditions at hand. Biko states that . "we have to evolve our own schemes, forms and strategies to suit the need and situation, always keeping in mind our fundamental beliefs and values" (1978:102). It is therefore evident for Biko that the centrality of the African belief systems and values serves as a cornerstone for confronting the imposed conditions and further demonstrates that, if they are engaged thoughtfully, they may yield the desired solutions.

Therefore, the promotion of African Renaissance is predicated on the principle of critical consciousness, inspired by the commitment to materially transform the African conditions. It is my view that Biko and Sankara's thoughts should inspire and demand from the proponents of African Renaissance modes and principles of attaining what Mangu labels as self-discovery. One important theme in this regard is the notion of culture, which will be addressed later in this chapter.

Another proposition about the African reality that necessitates for African Renaissance is what Mbeki describes as the unmaking of Africa because of over 300 years of colonialism, oppression, slavery and neo-imperialism. Mbeki refers to the notion of 'remaking of Africa' as follows:

Accordingly, our striving to achieve the Renaissance of Africa must focus on the 'remaking' of Africa. That 'remaking' must aim to achieve exactly the objectives which Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, Emperor Haile Selassie and Kwame Nkrumah set before and during the establishment of the OAU. Some of the central questions we will have to answer in this regard, as we celebrate the OAU@50, to respond to the challenges posed by the Emperor Haile Selassie, are:

- Of what should this remaking of Africa (and re-creation) consist?
- Who will be the creators? (Mbeki, 2013:16).

Mbeki made these remarks during the fiftieth anniversary of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) that took place in Addis Ababa on 25 May 2013, which has since changed its name to the African Union (AU). The OAU was established in 1963 to advance the Pan-Africanist idea and African unity and some of its founders include, among others, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere and Kenneth Kaunda. One of the OAU's main goals was the unification of the continent. However, modalities of attaining this were not outlined and became a point of contention among the leaders of the time. The irony of Mbeki's observation is that fifty years on (when Mbeki was writing the piece in 2013), the unification of the continent remains a dream. Furthermore, Sankara was critical of the OAU already in 1984 as he suggested that its goals be redefined. Sankara argued that:

The OAU cannot continue to exist as it has. The desire to engage in unity-mongering won out quickly over the desire to realise unity. Many things were sacrificed in the name of unity and through unity-mongering. The peoples of Africa are increasingly hard to please today. And because they are, they're saying no to meetings and conferences whose function is to adopt resolutions that are never acted on, or whose function is to not adopt long-awaited resolutions that could be acted on. Africa stands face to face with its problems – problems the OAU always succeeds in avoiding by putting off their solution until tomorrow (Sankara, 1985:124-25).

The above assertion by Sankara raises a critical concern on the effectiveness of the OAU insofar as the promotion of African unity and other resolutions by the leadership concerned were taken seriously. Sankara calls for the OAU to be proactive and decisive concerning the challenges confronted by the African continent. It must be noted that Sankara pointed this issue out in 1984, twenty-one years of the OAU's existence. Interestingly, twenty-nine years later, Mbeki was still calling for the OAU to respond to the challenges raised by its founders in 1963. For Mbeki, the attainment of African unity as envisaged by the founders of the OAU, is crucial given that it is a prerequisite for true liberation and renaissance. Mbeki calls this process the 'remaking' of the continent. The notion of re-making the continent holds that Africa was invented by the coloniser in the sense that the impositions of the social, political, cultural and economic systems were externally derived. Hence it has to chart its own path without paternalistic external

influences. As already alluded, the path toward a prosperous Africa is predicated on its unification.

However, Mbeki concedes that the goal of African unity continues to be elusive and, in the process, delaying the realisation of African Renaissance. Inspired by the late Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi Mbeki identifies the challenge of African leadership as one of the obstacles contributing towards the hindrances to attaining African unity – refers to the leadership in question as “a rent-seeking leadership”. (Mbeki, 2013: 18). As Mbeki further posits that , “our ruling elites in these countries had turned into self-enriching thieves exercising States power, who are grabbing as much as they could, which wealth others had created” (Mbeki, 2013:18). Clearly, Mbeki posits the rampant corruption and decline in morality among the African leadership as detrimental to the on-going decline of the continent. Similarly, Araoye views the failure to forge the unity amongst the African leaders as an indictment. He elaborates on circumstances surrounding their divisions and their implications for the Pan-Africanist development agenda:

The failure of an ideo-philosophically divided leadership of the continent to consolidate the colonially designed states system into a single strong and viable continental political federation (thereby radically realigning the continental political geography) has haunted the evolution of Africa since independence. Two camps emerged in the struggle: the Casablanca group, whose integrationist vision was encapsulated in the struggles of Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and a conservative Monrovia group led by the likes of Houphouët-Boigny of Ivory Coast (officially the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire), Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal, and William Tubman in Liberia, whose insistence on a gradualist approach to substantive African unity merely reflected the interests of their neo-colonial controllers and their personal predilections, which were informed by personal political interests to maintain the status quo (Araoye, 2018:685).

This observation of the failure of the said African leadership to promote and advance the resolutions of the OAU illustrates their lack of commitment towards attaining the Pan-Africanist goal of African unity. It is therefore my contention that the attitudes demonstrated by some of the said African leaders tend to be based on their egocentric,

self-serving agenda leading them in the footsteps of their colonial predecessors further aiding the neo-colonial agenda. Consequently, the crisis of leadership has implications for the advancement of the African Renaissance agenda given that a fragmented Africa is incapable of dealing with the persistent challenges. Thus, the leadership must be conscious of the challenges that Africa is confronted with. In his analysis of the Burkina Faso conditions following the revolution, Sankara identified a group of problematic people whom he referred to as 'enemies' of the revolution. For him, the enemies of the people are anti-revolutionary and serve to advance the neo-colonial agenda. Sankara viewed such opportunistic individuals as state bourgeoisie. For Sankara (1988), this problematic group of people use state apparatus to enrich themselves and accumulate wealth at the expense and exploitation of the poor labour force. This bourgeoisie as he referred to them, resisted the revolutionary regime because they did not want to relinquish their privilege for the good of the people. Thus, they tend to cause problems by instigating instability to advance their selfish interest.

While I acknowledge that, these few examples do not paint an accurate picture concerning the political situation of the continent, they illustrate the need to critically confront some of the obstacles that hinder the promotion and advancement of African Renaissance. It must be said that the threat of instability has negative implications for African citizens as reflected by the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) characterised by, among other concerns, the displacement of ordinary citizens. Against this background, one would agree with Sankara's analysis as far as the state bourgeoisie perpetuates the marginalisation and subjection of the people and this goes against the principles of *Ubuntu* and constitutes bad faith. Anyone who engages in such anti-humanistic practices is short-sighted, lacks critical consciousness and therefore, suffers from the problem of complicity and condones the Afro-pessimistic narrative. This is also against the spirit of Black Consciousness and constitutes self-hate *qua* anti-blackness. It is for this reason that Sankara pointed out that new thinking by the OAU is imperative as the status quo is unsustainable for the ordinary African. Sankara warned against the complicity of African leadership:

Before it's too late – because it's already late – these elites, these men of Africa and the Third World, must come back to who they are – that is, to their societies and to the misery we have inherited. They must understand that the battle for a system of thought at the service of the disinherited masses is not in vain. They must understand too that they can only become credible at an international level by genuinely inventive, that is, by painting a faithful picture of their people. This picture must allow the people to achieve fundamental changes in the political and social situation, changes that allow us to break from the foreign domination and exploitation that leave our states no perspective other than bankruptcy (Sankara, 1985:158).

Again, the dominant theme in Sankara's political thought of people-centredness is evident from this statement. In this sense, a critically conscious leader ought to reject the politics of self-centredness and exercise the principle of thought leadership characterised by what Gumede refers to as “connotes[ing] a leadership orientation underpinned by an unconventional ideology that is historically nuanced, culturally sensitive and contextually grounded” (2015:93). A thought leader needs self-awareness and critical consciousness to bolster her or his commitment to transform the material living conditions of his or her fellow human beings and this requires one to embody the principle of *Ubuntu*.

3.6 African Renaissance and the promotion of culture

The significance of African pride is crucial as it serves as a steppingstone to re-defining yourself in terms of the values and essence of what makes one black/African in the context of the hegemonic global order. The use of culture as an attribute of Africanness needs to be promoted as a way of repudiating the negative perception of Africanness and be employed to promote and advance the regeneration of the continent. Speaking in Harlem during an exhibition of Burkinabe art, Sankara highlighted the significance of culture in advancing the African agenda. He said, “we want to be left free, free to give our culture and our magic their full meaning” (Sankara, 1988:145). This suggests that the struggle for liberation means freedom to express one's culture and identity authentically and to an extent, one's authentic being. Sankara further asserts the significance of African

culture in promoting the African Renaissance cause and thus should be studied to affirm its relevance for the contemporary context. As he remarks:

We'll also be studying the evolution of his [black individual] culture, African music throughout the entire world, the art of dress throughout the entire world, African culinary throughout the entire world, and African languages throughout the entire world. In short, everything that enables us to assert our identity will be studied in this centre (Sankara, 1988:146).

The research centre in question referred to by Sankara in the above statement was opened in 1990 in Burkina Faso following the overthrow of the revolution. It must be said that there has been a proliferation of African studies research centres in the global north claiming to address African issues. However, these research centres are sometimes criticised for their Eurocentric posture and their tendency of not centring Africa and Africans in their knowledge production process. Sankara's vision sought to promote and advance the African culture and its evolution globally for the benefit of all Africans be they from the continent or in the diaspora. Clearly, Sankara sought to counter the study of African by the global North, which further sinks the continent into debt, social, and political decay through its misrepresentation of African nations. Clearly, for Sankara, the study and definition and redefinition of Africa must be carried out by Africans with the conscious of where Africa comes and seeks to go.

It can be argued that Sankara was conscious of African agency in line with Molefi Asante's conception of the principle of Afrocentricity and *Ubuntu* philosophy. Asante describes the notion of Afrocentricity as "a conscious, quality of thought, mode of analysis, and an actionable perspective where Africans seek, from the agency, to assert subject place within the context of African history" (2007:76). This then promotes the notion of people-centredness given that phenomena are analysed and dealt with from the perspective of African agency and rejection of Eurocentric approach, which tends to treat Africans as objects and not as subjects with agency. Biko highlights the people-centred approach to life as a hallmark of African culture and for him, this distinguishes Africans from Eurocentric attitudes. Biko observes that, "one of the most fundamental aspects of our culture is the importance we attach to Man [sic]" (1978:45). Biko refers to this approach

to humanity as a “man-centred society”. This illustrates the significance of a people-centric approach regarding all aspects of society because this has a bearing on one’s politics, praxis and thought in how one relates to fellow humans.

Accordingly, the centrality of *Ubuntu*’s philosophy is evident from Biko’s observation. This approach to life should permeate all human aspects and interactions insofar as striving for wholeness should inform our actions and attitudes. Similarly, the notion of people-centredness is evident and illustrates its significance for dealing with African realities. This implies that a people-centred transformation is imperative as it puts a human above all other considerations and therefore will strive for the conservation of life while also considering the aspect of wholeness in the process. This implies that this philosophical outlook does not place profit over the prosperity of humanness as opposed to a capitalist, Cartesian rationality, which inspired the idea of dominating the Other.

For Asante, African culture becomes the centre of inquiry with a commitment to reaffirming African cultural elements and values as part of greater humanity. Hence, for Asante Afrocentricity serves as a critical lens for approaching African Renaissance and to further “suggest an optimistic note about the renaissance in African Studies as a precursor to the complete African resurgence” (Asante, 2007:66). The use of African cultural artefacts to advance the project of African Renaissance is also promoted by Biko as a way of defiance by affirming self-assertion, group pride and solidarity. For Biko (1978), the oppressed masses should be able to transform their common pain of oppression to articulate their culture thereby restoring faith and hope for liberation. Thus, culture is seen as a tool for resistance against oppression.

Hence the link to the philosophy of Black Consciousness is evident – which asserts that black people wherever they find themselves, need to take pride in their value systems, their culture, their religion, and their outlook on life (Biko, 1978). Biko lamented how black people, particularly South Africans, negated their blackness, which then made them susceptible to denigration as that which is black and its associated attributes, including culture was perceived negatively. Of course, it can be argued that although Biko’s critical analysis of the black inferiority complex took place in the 1960s and 1970s, the status quo still remains in the contemporary context to some extent. This is because the notion

of antiblackness remains persistent as reflected in the economic disparities between the whites and blacks in post-apartheid South Africa. A black body continues to endure the violence and indignity of poverty in post-apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, the persistence of coloniality continues to hold the marginalised subjects in bondage. Biko further highlights this fact by quoting Frantz Fanon in his analysis of the perverted logic of oppression, which pollutes and contaminates the mind of the subjected Other by deliberately relegating their culture to the margins and associating it with all kinds of evil and barbarism. This has implications for the oppressed subject as she/he is forced to have a negative outlook on life for the said imposed condition devalues her identity and to an extent, her sense of being.

Thus, an attitude change is necessary and becomes a viable weapon to confidently confront the system. In this sense, the subjugated blacks need to draw from their own values, culture and tradition to escape their bondage lives and repudiate the hegemonic system and this can only be possible if they speak in a united voice and solidarity with one another. Furthermore, given centuries of distorting the African history, culture and value systems, a conscious regeneration of our culture, knowledge systems and cosmology is therefore necessary. For Amilcar Cabral, affirming the positive attributes of one's culture is key to attaining total liberation – as espoused by his concept of “return to the source”, as he remarks:

A people who free themselves from foreign domination will be free culturally only if, without complexes and without underestimating the importance of positive accretions from the oppressor and other cultures, they return to the upward paths of its environment, and which is nourished by the living reality of its environment, and which negates both harmful influences and any kind of subjection to foreign culture (Cabral, 1973:43).

Cabral highlights the significance of culture insofar as the process of liberation is concerned and for him, it should be consciously used as a framework to re-Africanise the continent in reclaiming her heritage. Cabral advocated for the promotion of African culture and stresses its contribution to the global culture and for African values to find their rightful position alongside other cultures. As indicated above, an authentic approach to African

cultural systems and values serves to advance the entire humanity and thus, presents a viable alternative to the current hegemonic conditions that tend to devalue the lives of those it regards as sub-human. Cabral highlights what he refers to as the “indestructible character of the cultural resistance” (Cabral, 1973:59). This means that drawing from one’s culture as a mode of rebellion is bound to re-humanise one’s ontological being.

Similarly, Biko’s thoughts are centred on the reaffirmation of the humanity of the oppressed people as they need to realise that their liberation is anchored on their own praxis. In other words, the attainment of freedom is reliant on attaining critical consciousness as invoked by the philosophy of Black Consciousness and, as such, affirming one’s essence of blackness is imperative. Like Cabral (1973), Biko did not advocate for cultural essentialism but propagated for using those cultural aspects that advance one’s humanness such as music, poetry, arts and film to fight domination and to denounce and escape from the imposed sense of inferiority associated with their being.

Biko was occupied with the goal of re-asserting the humanity of the oppressed as the negation associated with the hegemonic machinery dehumanises the subjected other wherein one’s humanness is denied by the system. It does follow logically to seek true liberation in the quest of being fully human *qua* liberated. Of course, Biko was analysing the apartheid system and its associated degradation and domination that were meted on the black majority during his time. However, the system of apartheid or the hegemonic characteristics associated with coloniality is still persistent following the advent of the new dispensation (cf. Madlingozi 2018; Modiri, 2018). In this sense, one would appreciate a Black Consciousness approach to African Renaissance is thus necessary given that black people are yet to attain total liberation as evidenced by the perpetual condition of lack. In this regard, I agree with Du Toit's (2008) argument that Black Consciousness should be regarded as a beacon of African Renaissance as it evokes Africans to think for themselves and not rely on external ideas.

It is for this reason that Asante (2007) considers African Renaissance as a revolutionary movement that compels African people to interrogate and locate their history and values and for him, the Nile Valley civilisations, Kemet, is the starting point in this regard. Asante elaborates on this assertion that Kemet presents a rich African heritage that Africans can

draw from insofar as the Renaissance of the continent demands that its people re-tell its authentic history that accurately represent its past to forge its future. Asante (2007) foregrounds the Egyptian civilisation as significant towards the promotion of African Renaissance.

It is evident from the above passage that for Asante the principle of *Maat* is central to all aspects of African life and should be a source of renewal. In this sense, to re-invigorate what is authentically African, *Maat* should be the starting source of inspiration, consciousness and praxis. As alluded to in Chapter 2, the principle of *Maat* is closely related to *Ubuntu* philosophy as both approaches promote and advance people-centredness in every human aspect. It can then be argued that both Biko and Sankara embodied the principles of *Maat* and *Ubuntu* in their praxis as espoused by the 'politics of return' as espoused by Cabral (1973). To return to what constitutes African an authentic African ontological being who negates her suppression by drawing from her/his cultural agency.

Hence, for Asante, the principle of *Maat* is then an antithesis of Western thought in that it negates the West's imposition of the idea of individuality as opposed to the notion of collectivism espoused by the *Ubuntu* maxim: *I am because you are*. In this sense, *Ubuntu* and the principle of *Maat* are anti-hegemonic tools given their advancement of the collective goods and their sense of exteriority in relation to the Western modernity advanced in Descartes's *ego cogito: I think, therefore I am*. This Eurocentric interpretation of reality should be understood as constituting Europe as "being the center of world history as an essential trait of the modern world" (Dussel, 2000:470). This is demonstrated by the West's domination of othered polities and nations (cf. Dussel, 2000). In this sense, Descartes's *ego cogito* principle gave rise to the provincialisation of Europe with a detrimental impact on other regions of the world, particularly the African continent allowing for the denigration and oppression of black people around the world. One would therefore submit that Asante (2007) presents a convincing argument about *Maat* and to an extent *Ubuntu* philosophy as a living concept that could generate ideas and concepts for an African Renaissance.

3.7 Towards a decolonial de-linking project

Perhaps an assertion by Mudimbe regarding an Africanist approach to studying phenomena needs a mention. For Mudimbe (1998:23), Africa needs to produce its “own peculiar mode of episteme, construct its intentions and analyze its being”. This speaks to the idea of decolonisation which aims to re-affirm and re-assert African knowledges and others in the global south that were marginalised and rendered invisible by the dominant Eurocentric system. It is, therefore, my contention that approaching and deconstructing the post-imperialism, post-colonialism and the post-apartheid in the case of South Africa crisis using *Ubuntu* lens is key as it affords one tools for the authentic restoration of ontological Africanness as it was dehumanised and rendered insignificant. I contend that Biko and Sankara embodied this attitude in their praxis which was evidenced by their people-centred approach insofar as their politics and their approach to phenomena are anchored on the centrality of the people.

Gutto (2006) observes that the notion of African Renaissance brings to the foreground the realisation amongst Africans of their contribution to global civilisation, therefore, recognising their potential influence on the world order. This can only take place if critical consciousness is attained as the pervasiveness of the hegemonic system will always seek to deny one’s agency. This condition will always hinder the promotion of African Renaissance because the one who lacks critical consciousness is bound to be indifferent insofar as its significance is concerned. However, as already stated, the process of de-linking is inevitable. As Ngugi wa Thiong’o (2009:88) puts it, the process of ‘re-membering Africa’ becomes the only solution to de-link from Euro-modernity and this will ensure that African Renaissance becomes a reality. As he writes that “re-membering Africa will bring about the flowering of the African Renaissance”. The project of re-membering Africa for Ngugi wa Thiong’o stems from the conceptualisation of the continent a dis-membered place and space because of colonial imposition. Ngugi wa Thiong’o writes:

The dismemberment of Africa occurred in two stages. During the first of these, the African personhood was divided into two halves: the continent and its diaspora. African slaves, the central commodity in the mercantile phase of capitalism, formed the basis of the sugar, cotton, and tobacco plantations in the Caribbean and

American mainland The Berlin Conference of 1884 literally fragmented and reconstituted Africa into British, French, Portuguese, German, Belgian, and Spanish Africa. Just as the slave plantations were owned by various European powers, so post-Berlin Conference Africa was transformed into a series of colonial plantations owned by many of the same European powers (Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 2009:6).

The notion of dismemberment of Africa for Ngugi wa Thiong'o entails a process of degradation and dehumanisation which began with the Trans-Atlantic slavery trade which traumatically, and violently displaced of Africans, instigating, through violence and ideological thought process their detachments from themselves. Furthermore, this dismemberment was also enacted during the partitioning of the continent into European colonial territories to advance the Euro-modern capitalist agenda. This then highlights the diasporic significance regarding the quest for liberatory interventions. The notion of solidarity amongst the oppressed subjects in Africa and the diaspora is thus imperative insofar as the process of renewal or the re-memberment of Africa, as it were, is key. This process of the Western making of a Black Atlantic is aptly articulated by Lemelle and Kelley in their text, *Imagining home: class, culture, and nationalism in the African diaspora* (1994). As they write:

[...] the making of a Black Atlantic culture and identity, in general, and Pan-Africanism, in particular, was as much the product of 'the West' as it was indigenous to Africa. But racial capitalism, imperialism, and colonialism – the process that created the current African diaspora in the first place – could not shape African cultures(s) without Western culture itself being transformed (Lemelle & Kelley, 1994:8).

This then necessitates the interrogation of Euro-modernity which led to the current conundrum associated with the conditions of coloniality. Again, this brings to the fore the need for de-linking and re-memorialisation as dictated by what has been alluded to as the dismemberment of the continent in the form of African Renaissance. It is for this reason that Sankara speaks of the incomplete mission of the revolution in his analysis of his tenure as the leader of the Burkina Faso revolution suggesting that the condition of coloniality continues. He asserts that the end goal of liberation is predicated on the

attainment of true liberation where the exploited and oppressed fully realise their humanity which is characterised by social justice (Sankara, 1988).

Evidently, for Sankara, the revolution pertains to the transformation of ordinary lives where their full realisation of humanity is achieved. Hence, his characterisation of the Burkina revolution, which culminated in him assuming power, as a people's revolution. This people-centric approach was also demonstrated in his praxis. (see also Chapter 5). A people revolution is centred on the needs of the ordinary people but also it must conscientise the masses accordingly for political consciousness to be attained. This will obviously strengthen their agency and encourage their full participation in matters of politics, economy and social transformation. For instance, Black Consciousness denotes a radical thought; however, its revitalisation can be bolstered by the advancement of African Renaissance if the latter directs us to de-link from the colonial thought, which purports to be universal. Hence for Vale and Maseko (1998:277), African Renaissance should espouse to elicit "both a capacity to deliver the stuff of politics and a consciousness of the pain and humiliation of African people in a continent, and a world, which remains entirely dominated by the cultural values of people who are not black". This assertion recognises that the hostility of the contemporary global system towards black subjects globally and calls for "[blacks] to realise the urgent need for a re-awakening of the sleeping masses" (Biko, 1978:34). Interestingly, Biko speaks of the urgency of this re-awakening agenda as espoused in the Black Consciousness, suggesting that it also calls for African Renaissance.

In this sense, African Renaissance serves as a process that is rooted in African philosophical foundations that synthesises a multitude of Afrocentric discourses that promote African belief systems of ideas and values. It is, therefore, my view that African Renaissance draws its ideas and principles from other Pan-Africanist ideals such as African philosophy, Black Consciousness, Negritude and the ethics of *Ubuntu* and *Maat* as an attempt to provide a coherent response to the multitude of challenges faced by Africans. African Renaissance is predicated on the elements of what Araoye refers to as transcendentalism, transformation and emancipation. Therefore, African Renaissance evokes the notion of critical consciousness or some sort of rebellion toward achieving

transcendence. It serves to repudiate the hostility of the hegemonic forces toward one's essence of Being with ramifications to issues of psychological. It is for these reasons that Biko and Sankara's thoughts are preoccupied with the aspect of psychological liberation as a key element to repudiating the hegemonic forces of coloniality. Memmi (2013) encapsulates the aspect of the psychological dimension in the context of liberatory discourses as he asserts that decolonisation is not passive but requires praxis. The latter is predicated on the notion of critical consciousness to begin self-reflection by questioning the legitimacy of colonisation.

This raises the significance of consciously devising mechanisms of thinking outside the matrices of coloniality despite their entrenched machinery as failure to do so fosters one's complicity. The persistence of coloniality has meant that the canonised Euro-American rhetoric and discourse continue unabated and covertly with ramifications for African agency. As noted earlier in this chapter that to transcend the edifice of the rhetoric of Euro-American modernity is a daunting task given the entrenchment of its institutions, the economic and social aspects as well as the epistemological dimension. It is for this reason that Araoye (2013) observes that African Renaissance should be viewed as a black-centred counter-hegemonic discourse against the dominant structure of the global system and thus, seeks to radically repudiate this hegemonic order from an Africanist worldview. I contend that this description of African Renaissance is in line with what is proposed in this chapter – a decolonial de-linking tool. This perspective advocates for a commitment to African cosmology and value systems as a reaffirmation of one's ontological Being follows as dictated by the principles of *Ubuntu*.

Again, the notions of the 'returning to the source' and Negritude are evident from this assertion and the centrality of an African-centred approach of people-centredness is also advocated by Biko's stance. This is further in agreement with Araoye's interpretation of African Renaissance insofar as African cosmology, belief systems and values can be transformative and emancipatory. However, to reject the entrenched Euro-American modes of making sense of the world requires a critical consciousness from the oppressed subject as lack of it invites complicity and bad faith (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion on these aspects). To simply reject the hegemonic systems and their imposed

values and attitudes, is insufficient if one is to ultimately attain true liberation. In this regard, this liberatory process requires a commitment to advance and promote the African-centred approach to any social, political, or religious phenomenon (Asante, 2007). Logically that a liberated agent is bound to return to her/his source to re-affirm his/her authentic ontological self *qua* human as espoused by the philo-praxis of *Ubuntu*. Then a transformatory trajectory is bound to be attained and by so doing, fostering her emancipation.

3.8 Conclusion

It is evident that the persistence of coloniality is undesirable, particularly to people who are subjected to its systemic exploitation and dehumanisation. It is for this reason that its entrenchment must be challenged, and dismantled considering its overreaching consequences felt by the Global South community and other victims located in the Global North. Against this background, the process of de-linking is inevitable as it serves to challenge the universalism of Eurocentric rationality which enabled the continuation of the status quo. Biko and Sankara's political thoughts are crucial in this process as they revitalise self-awareness and critical consciousness needed to de-link from the entrenched rhetoric of coloniality. Furthermore, Biko and Sankara's politics affirm the validity of the Afrocentric cultural systems as evidenced by their embodiment of *Ubuntu* philosophy and in the process advancing African Renaissance as a decolonial de-linking tool.

The next chapter will explore Biko's political thought further to elucidate his conception of Black Consciousness in relation to its advancement of critical consciousness.

CHAPTER FOUR: BIKO AND THE BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS THOUGHT

“It [Black Consciousness] seeks to channel the pent-up forces of the angry black masses to meaningful and directional opposition basing its entire struggle on realities of the situation. It wants to ensure a singularity of purpose in the minds of the black people and to make possible total involvement of the masses in a struggle essentially theirs”.

Steve Bantu Biko

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined how the persistence of coloniality calls for the articulation of a de-linking tool in the form of African Renaissance. It was argued that both Biko and Sankara’s political thoughts should be employed to advance the idea of African Renaissance in that regard. The focus of this chapter is premised on Biko’s political thoughts in relation to his conceptualisation of Black Consciousness philosophy. An attempt will be made in this chapter to problematise the concept of consciousness as it relates to the notion of liberation and to illustrate its significance in that regard. This is to illustrate that its suppression is detrimental for the subjected ‘Other’ who suffers in the face of adversarial conditions that are imposed by the hegemonic system to entrench her/his subjection. This has ramifications for her/his freedom and ultimately, liberation. It is for this reason that self-awareness as articulated by Biko’s conception of Black Consciousness becomes imperative as it enables the formerly colonised to understand the root causes of their existential experiences to devise the relevant mechanisms of dealing with the situation at hand.

4.2 Biko’s thought and the decolonial perspective

Coloniality/modernity seeks to sustain and perpetuate the status quo involving the Euro-North American rationality through the pollution of being and self-consciousness of the marginalised bodies. Therefore, a need arises to problematise this situation and its implication for the contemporary African social reality. Serequeberhan (1994) highlights some of Africa’s entanglements concerning its colonial legacy and a need to transcend

the resultant conditions arguing that the present-day African conditions are infiltrated by the rigid neo-colonial and institutionalised forms of negative self-awareness of what he terms 'Europeanised Africans'. These conditions impede and hamper interventions that are meant to transform the continent at individual, societal, national and continental levels.

Africa's harsh historic consequences of coloniality impact its ability to forge and define its future based on the imposed conditions as demonstrated by the continued Eurocentric gaze and the perpetual colonial realities. This problem associated with colonial legacy has ramifications for the agency of African leadership given the persistent dependency imposed by the situation fraught with exploitative and hostile treatment from the Western dominant powers. This is the predicament that most of the Pan-Africanist proponents such as Nkrumah, Lumumba, Sankara and Biko, among others, were concerned with – the forging of an Afrocentric path that is free from colonial influences and resistance to the entrenched coloniality.

Coloniality in its 'cruel' form of capitalism demands that the oppressed black bodies and all their physicality be subjected survive and, thus, their perpetual marginalisation holds the key to its survival. The oppressed's existence is in a dialectical relationship to the oppressor, as his/her antithesis—without them, the oppressor could not exist (Freire, 2005). It follows then that the oppressive machinery serves to keep the oppressed oblivious of her/her oppression and assimilate into it as the dominant positionality. The existence of the hegemony does not happen by chance but denotes a systemic operation aimed at interpellating its victims to conform to the imposed oppressive social order. Bakhtin (1998) posits that assimilating to dominant discourses has far-reaching implications on the individual's behaviour in relation to her/his ideological interrelations with the world. This subject is then forced to suspend her/his authentic ontological existence by assuming the authoritative discourse, which for Bakhtin determines our own existence in the world. Hence, Biko's Black Consciousness is predicated on the notion of self-reflection on the part of the oppressed to escape his/her subjection.

Interestingly, modernity and its proponents maintain that the civilisation of the backward nations of the world was necessary and its impositions, although violent, were inevitable.

Hence it persisted unabated for over five hundred years and in the process dehumanising, subjugated, and plundered the natural resources of the colonised masking as civilisation. As Biko observed, “it is still true that the system derives its nourishment from the existence of anti-black attitudes in society” (1978:24). I am inclined to agree with Biko in that regard because of how the global system was intentionally configured to denigrate and deny the blackness identity of its rightful place in the world. The entrenched system prospers on the back of the conditioning of the colonised masses to carry out its goal of amassing wealth illegally without any due regard to those who are subjugated in the process. This process is fraught with aspects of dehumanisation which “denies human rights to human beings whom it has subdued to violence” (Sartre, 1974:20). It must be conceded that following more than five hundred years of slavery, colonialism, imperialism and apartheid, the conditioning and manipulation are now entrenched to an extent that the configuration of the global world system distorts the reality and experiences of the colonised groups. Freire regards this condition as constituting “the fear of freedom[which] may equally well lead them to desire the role of the oppressor or bind them to the role oppressed” (2005:46).

On a similar footing, Gordon (2020) equates the system of coloniality to a pandemic fraught with dehumanising features that relegate its victims to a state of misery. In this ‘pandemic’, the victims are ‘infected’ hierarchically with members of the black society being at the bottom of that hierarchy. In this sense, the perpetual narrative continues. Gordon (2020) continues with this pandemic metaphor and posits that this logic serves to ‘quarantine’ black people and ultimately choke them given that the global system is designed to relegate them to what Fanon (1963) termed a “zone of non-being”. It is for this reason that Biko became preoccupied with this positionality as it instilled a sense of fear among the black individuals due to its ruthless violence of repression. For Biko, this sense of fear constitutes powerlessness among the colonised with ramifications for their sense of authentic being. This condition is undesirable because “it erodes the soul of black people” (Biko, 1978:83). In this logic all forms of non-European realities including the idea of knowledge production, are discredited.

Therefore, decolonisation becomes an option by which the current world system is transformed. In the words of Maldonado-Torres (2006:117), decolonisation entails “radical transformation of the modern/colonial matrix of power which continues to define modern identities as well as the relations of power and epistemic forms that go along with them”. Decolonial thinking seeks to undo the impact of colonialism, slavery, colonialism and imperialism and to propagate a just environment that recognises the humanity of the subjected individuals. This then presents the notion of pluriversality where the coexistence of other epistemologies and realities is promoted (cf. Mignolo, 2007). Decolonial thinking provides a space wherein African philosophy and epistemology can be equally applied to investigate the African condition to transform it into a humanistic society where the agency of a human individual is promoted.

As opposed to the logic of Euro-Western rationality which for Sartre arbitrarily constructed two types of individuals, namely, “one for which privilege and humanity are one ... and the other, for whom a denial of rights sanctions, misery, chronic hunger, ignorance or, in general, sub-humanity” (1974:20). The latter group belongs in the margins of the global system of which the majority are located in the Global South and for which both Biko and Sankara fought for their liberation as illustrated in their thoughts and praxis. It must be said that the struggle for liberation concerning the formerly colonised nations wages on, given the pervasiveness of coloniality. As argued by Biko the struggle for a “true man-centred society whose sacred tradition is that of sharing” is worthy of being undertaken so that true liberation can be attained (1978:357). In this regard, *Ubuntu* philosophy should be adopted in an attempt to re-imagine a social system that fosters and protects the humanity of all human beings, particularly the marginalised Other. Similarly, Nkrumah concurs with Biko’s assertion regarding the importance of the humanistic approach in the emancipation of the people. Nkrumah (1970) notes that the liberation of the African people should translate in the liberation of its people. For Nkrumah, the undertaking should involve two aims: the restoration of the egalitarianism of human society and the mobilisation of the resources toward the attainment of that restoration. This speaks to a need to mobilise the people towards a common course—to achieve social justice through a fundamental humanisation of the condemned.

This demonstrates the significance of a human-centred approach pertaining to the socio-economic and political problems that are facing the continent of Africa. It is interesting to note that Nkrumah's observation was made over five decades ago and continues to be relevant in the current context. A critic may argue that against Nkrumah's thinking that Ghana failed to achieve the goals in question, in particular, the mobilisation of Africa's resources to benefit the Africans and ultimately attain emancipation. But in that regard, I am reminded of the aspect of dialectics which conceives that to understand any social phenomenon, we have to take into account both the process by which it became what it is as well as the broader context in which it is found (Ollman, 2003). In other words, the historical context by which a social phenomenon exists are key to understanding the social reality under investigation. Therefore, the historical context through which Nkrumah and others were operating in ought to be taken into account for a criticism of their ideological postures. As such, it is my view that the likes of Nkrumah's political thought have inspired the advent of the decolonial turn and contributed to Biko and Sankara's formulation of their Pan-African ideas. Nkrumah's idea of conscientism illustrates the path through which Africa must chart to attain liberation.

For Sithole (2016), the process of decolonial thinking involves the aspect of shifting the geography of reason characterised by engaging the philosophical questions from the existential conditions of blacks. The existential condition of subjection seeks to impose an unbearable weight on those who are oppressed and to maintain the status quo. Sithole argues that it was this shifting of the geography reason that enabled Biko to "dissect the anatomy of apartheid, and thus fuelling black subjectivity through Black Consciousness" (Sithole, 2016:37). In other words, Biko could transcend his subjectivity by drawing his thought from endogenous knowledge systems despite the imposed propaganda of the dominant system. This suggests that Biko's thoughts were decolonial and aimed to conscientise the oppressed people to think outside of the edifice of colonial concepts as the precondition of a liberatory discourse. As such, the function of conscientisation is to highlight the aspect of self-reflection on the part of the colonised.

In my view, Biko should be regarded as a decolonial thinker as his writings serve to conscientise and sensitise the black society about the undesirability of their conditions.

Biko further seeks to implore them to seek the requisite mechanisms of escaping their situation and strive for liberation. Biko's writings evoke a transformative rapture that rightfully challenges subjection and subjugation. To Biko, authentic humanness is an ethical and moral right to all people in particular those located in the Global South. A decolonial thought is predicated on the realisation that the persistence of Eurocentric reality has to be denied by its victims so that its myths of civilisation are exposed and condemned. The idea is to conscientise the oppressed about their imposed conditions and to devise ways of confronting and dismantling the hegemonic system. This process of liberation struggle must be inward-looking. Biko (1978) opines that the inward-looking approach has to aim at re-writing African history in a way that accurately depicts and represents the authentic cultural reality that is rooted in the oneness of community. In this context, inward-looking pertains to the realisation that the quest for liberation lies from within.

Biko highlights the principle of community as inherently African, which needs to be affirmed and incorporated into the politics and social life of Africans. This speaks to the philosophy of *Ubuntu* and its significance regarding the interrelationship between individuals and groups as the integral part forming the core of society. It must be contented in this regard that the communalistic perspective must also promote inclusivity so that it avoids the unintentional consequence of marginalising others, particularly historically vulnerable groups such as women and the LGBTQI+. One major criticism of the Black Consciousness movement pertains to this lack of inclusivity – this aspect will be explored later in this chapter. Furthermore, given that 'true African history' was distorted by the coloniser and in the process relegating the African modes of knowing to the margins as they were deemed to be lacking rationality and, in the process, reinforcing the notion of inferiority. The imposition of Eurocentric rationality led to what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) refers to as the invasion of the mental universe of Africa. Ndlovu-Gatsheni observes that the said invasion was instrumental in polluting the authentic African being as evidenced by the epistemic independence which contribute towards the perpetual sense of timidity.

The impositions of the Eurocentric thought relegated indigenous knowledge systems to the margins and in the process, polluting the psyche of the subjected Africans to force

them into believing that the world must be understood from that lens. Therefore, in a dialectic involving Eurocentric and Afrocentric knowledge systems, the latter assumes the position of illegitimacy. Biko sought to redress this anomaly by affirming the significance of African culture. As a decolonial thinker, Biko exposed the irrationality of Eurocentric thought. Biko (1978) asserts that colonialism emptied the brain of the Native and further distorted, disfigured and destroyed his/her past by constructing it into an evil and barbaric reality which needed negation. In this regard, the native is indoctrinated and conditioned to escape her/his reality and embody the culture of the oppressor.

Through assuming and maintaining an image of superiority, modern civilisation regarded any other knowledge to be insignificant, barbaric, and primitive and for that reason, necessitated rescuing from this unfortunate predicament. In this obscured logic, the African had to disavow her/his culture to assimilate into a foreign one. Based on its so-called barbaric cultural systems and values, it deserved to be signified as a 'dark continent'. In this context, the word 'dark' signifies a multitude of negative connotations associated with the continent characterised by many lacks, such as poverty, irrationality, and barbarism. These tropes are advanced and highlighted to a point where they become deep-rooted in the psyches of the oppressed. It is for this reason that Biko posits that the African culture, although condemned by the system, be utilised to redefine authentic African identity, in particular, its emphasis on the centrality of a human being. Ngugi wa Thiong'o concurs with Biko's approach to the notion of culture as a vehicle towards a decolonial discourse. For Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986), the imposed colonial perspective on culture impacted the mental universe of the colonised with implications on how people perceived themselves and how they relate to the world. This view is also shared by Fanon (1963) concerning the polluting of the colonised culture as the coloniser does not value anything that does not subscribe to the Euro-modern norms.

For the coloniser, an African subject had to discard all his/her value systems including their indigenous knowledge systems to be modernised owing to the backwardness of their traditional value system. Again, this logic is deeply flawed and has to be challenged. The significance of the reclamation of the authentic African value systems is echoed by Pityana, one of the activists and advocates of Black Consciousness alongside Biko. He

argues that the reclamation of authentic culture should draw on elements of communalism and solidarity that engender an “understanding of human nature, of creativity and the arts, of wisdom and insight” (Pityana, 2008:57). In this sense the promotion of *Ubuntu* philosophy ought to be central in all facets of our social, economic and cultural life. For this reason, I argue, as I have done so in the preceding chapters that the Black Consciousness espouses the values of *Ubuntu* and views it as an instrument of liberation. Black Consciousness is predicated on the notion of consciousness which is key for its advancement.

4.3 The notion of consciousness

The aspect of consciousness is integral to the philosophy of Black Consciousness and can be regarded as a determining factor as far as this political thought and activism is concerned. As noted by Biko “the interrelationship between the consciousness of the self and the emancipatory programme is of paramount importance” (1978:53). This suggests that one needs to be conscious of one’s positionality and marginality to critically engage with her/his conditions in the quest for liberation. Therefore, consciousness predetermines liberation because, without it, the oppressed become complicit in their subjugation. How does one begin to wage a liberation struggle without being self-aware of her/his undesirable condition? Therefore, consciousness is vital in liberatory discourses, and also in Black Consciousness philosophy given that it enables one to imagine a transformative system that compels the oppressed to deny her/his negation. As such, Biko asserts in this sense that “we cannot be conscious and yet remain in bondage” (1978:53). Hence, its significance in the context of a liberatory discourse.

What distinguishes human beings from things and objects is their possession of self-consciousness. It’s this awareness of their being, in relation to other things which makes them a conscience species. All consciousness is consciousness of something and in this context, consciousness takes an ontological perspective as opposed to being epistemological. Furthermore, we are not referring to consciousness in a physiological sense but from an ontological perspective. Human beings act and their consciousness determines the nature of that particular action towards a particular situation. A conscious being exists for itself in that it is aware of itself, stands apart from itself, thinks about itself,

and has a relationship with itself. Gordon's elaboration on the nature of consciousness sheds light on this aspect. As he puts it:

For consciousness to be *of* something, the thing must be *there* through which the relationship of being conscious of it is *here*. This here-there relationship means consciousness must be *embodied*; it must be in space and time. Consciousness must be somewhere... Without being somewhere, consciousness would be either nowhere or everywhere, without a *there* or *here* through which to be anywhere. This means that we could be disembodied only through denying the perspective or embodied standpoint from which we imagine disembodiment (Gordon, 2020:47).

Gordon's explanation of the notion of consciousness is predicated on the idea that it exists because of something. Consciousness must be there as a result of that entity, which calls for it. In other words, to be conscious is to recognise your surroundings and whether these affect your authentic ontological sense of being in order to act accordingly. For instance, a dehumanised individual requires a critical consciousness to escape her/his negation for her/his human existence is threatened. Consciousness is related to the notion of self-awareness. Without consciousness, there is no self-awareness. Consciousness is the essence of self-awareness as it is manifested in our own symbolic interaction with the world around us. Consciousness is always in existence and prompts the individual in its possession to act. Sartre (1956) observed that consciousness is the precondition of human existence as it is a prerequisite for the attainment of freedom for the marginalised and the racialised. Critical consciousness is born out of one's ability to analyse the conditions of one's existence and subsequently act accordingly. Thus, Black Consciousness is a consciousness that is aware of something in the form of the repression of blackness (More, 2017). A consciousness of oneself as a black human being is of paramount importance because of its subjection and the anti-blackness that regards it as a problem.

In the context of Biko's thought, consciousness of blackness is imperative as a response to the perpetual anti-blackness, which negates the humanity of a black subject. The following statement by Biko clearly explains factors that moulded his consciousness and ultimately his political thought when he wrote:

I have lived all my conscious life in the framework of institutionalised separate development. My friendships, my love, my education, my thinking and every other facet of my life have been carved and shaped within the context of separate development. In stages during my life, I have managed to outgrow some of the things the system has taught me (Biko, 1978:29).

Here Biko provides an account of factors that have influenced his politics and thought. He highlights how every facet of his life was influenced by the hegemonic system of apartheid as having grown up in South Africa in the height of the apartheid era. Ironically, Biko was born in 1948 – the same year that the Nationalist Party assumed power in South Africa. That was the year that marked the institutionalised formation of the apartheid system, which Biko rightfully labelled as purely evil and unjustifiable. One of the close friends of Biko, Barney Pityana describes him as having made decisions to seek answers to the imposed conditions of dehumanisation as a direct result of the system of apartheid. This then demonstrates his orientation of self-awareness, which led to his conceptualisation of a liberatory discourse as encapsulated in the formulation of Black Consciousness. Of course, this is not to suggest that he is to be solely credited for the conceptualisation of the Black Consciousness philosophy, however, he must be recognised for his crucial role in its development as he was at the forefront of the movement during its formulation.

Biko's anti-apartheid activism started at an early stage of his life as demonstrated by his active involvement in student politics, which culminated in the formation of the South African Students Organisation (SASO). Biko's readings of some of the influential texts at the time, including, among others, Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) and Paulo Freire's *A pedagogy of the oppressed* (1970), had a significant influence on his political thought (Pityana, 2008). Pityana further notes that Biko's conceptualisation of Black Consciousness was a result of a culmination of ideas emanating from, among others, civil rights movements in the United States of America, the Ethiopian movements, Negritude, and the Pan-African movement. These movements were concerned with the problem of anti-blackness as they conscientised blacks of their culture, identity and their humanity amid their oppression. Furthermore, Biko was one with the ordinary masses as he listened to their concerns and drew inspiration from their conditions. It was this condition

of black marginalisation that prompted Biko to advocate for a critical consciousness that advanced a new way of thinking that repudiated the dominant system in the form of Black Consciousness.

This illustrates Biko's commitment to the cause of liberation as he understood that any plausible proposition that is presented ought to be rigorously developed if it was to evoke an interest in those it is aimed at. Returning to Biko's statement above, one may argue that he learned to "outgrow" and escape the propaganda of the system as a result of his critical consciousness as he developed a critical lens to analyse the undesirable sociocultural conditions that confronted black people at the time. Not only did he analyse the material conditions, but he also proposed a solution in the form of a counter-hegemonic discourse of Black Consciousness. As he remarked about apartheid that "nothing can justify the arrogant assumption that a clique of foreigners has the right to decide on the lives of a majority" (Biko, 1978:29). This is further demonstrated in Biko's criticism of the Bantustan policy that was imposed by the apartheid system in South Africa. Biko remarked that the said policy was meant to perpetuate and entrench the black subjugation as it was aimed to create a false sense of hope among the oppressed to detract them from the goal of attaining liberation. This was aimed to silence them from demanding what was rightfully theirs—the land and natural resources.

It must be highlighted that the Bantustan idea was designed to keep the black majority landless because through its implementation blacks were relegated to the fringes of the country. In addition to those so-called homelands amounting to a small portion of the total land of the country, the land in question did not offer any opportunities in terms of agriculture, and other economic activities. Furthermore, the fact that 20% of the population controls 87% of the land whilst the majority only control a measly 13% is morally wrong and presents a recipe for disaster. Against this backdrop, one is bound to agree with Nkrumah's (1963) observation that the majority nation of a given polity must be the rightful owners of that specific land as much as they have to provide the government of the country in question. Sadly, over four decades following the passing of Biko, the situation of landlessness coupled with other related socio-economic challenges continue to plague the black majority in the perpetual condition of servitude. Although Biko's critical analysis

highlighted the fraud associated with the Bantustan policy, he did not present a framework for challenging it, which was in my view, a shortcoming on his part. However, it must be said that Biko demonstrated critical consciousness as illustrated in his rejection of the imposed inhumane policies of apartheid as he conscientised the marginalised to exercise a re-awakening.

Biko understood that the imperial locus of the enunciation has ramifications for the consciousness of the former-colonised as the entrenched Euro-modern reality denies their being and ultimately, self-consciousness. This leads to the pollution of one's self-consciousness and ontology because the subjection is brutal and sustains one's dependency. In light of this Sithole (2016; 43) also asserts that the black body "...is a problem and also the problem of being black in the ontological form" In this sense the black subject is denied its ontological nature because its sub-human status makes it impossible for the existence of its authentic self. The subjected individual's thinking is thus influenced by the dominant indoctrination to sustain the inferiority complex that has infiltrated your being. Biko demonstrates this aspect by repudiating the role, which Western religion played in the capturing of the minds and souls of African subjects to the extent that their authentic being became polluted. Biko writes:

It was the missionaries who confused our people with their new religion. By some strange logic, they argued that theirs was a scientific religion and ours was mere superstition in spite of the biological discrepancies so obvious in the basis of their religion. They further went on to preach a theology of the existence of hell, scaring our fathers and mothers with stories about burning in eternal flames and gnashing of teeth and grinding of bone. This cold cruel religion was strange to us, but our forefathers were sufficiently scared of the unknown impending anger to believe that it was worth a try. Down went our cultural values (Biko, 1978:49).

The element of fear is discernible from Biko's observation in relation to his criticism of the role of religion, Christianity in particular, in relation to its impact on the souls and minds of the oppressed. Although this view that Biko articulates may appear to be somewhat paternalistic, one needs to appreciate the violence that accompanies the logic of colonisation. The colonisation process was brutal, and this is also reflected by its

repressive institutions including religion as one of the tools employed by the system. In this subjection, the native is abruptly forced to abandon her/his way of living and to adopt the oppressor's culture as it was deemed superior and rational. The native is then alienated from his/her sense of being because of the foreign mode of the imposed cosmology. For More (2004), the imposed consciousness on blacks influenced every aspect of their lives including their cultural, political, economic, linguistic and religious aspects as a group. The group assumes the position of non-entity marked by insignificance of lives, which is observed by Sithole (2016) as being black in an anti-black world. This has ramifications on the consciousness of the subjected individuals.

Sithole (2016) further notes that blackness is constituted by its binary to whiteness and in the process being reduced to the level of a non-entity. Manganyi (2019) aptly articulates the concept of being black in the world when he observes that the black body is made to feel unwholesome, and the white body is associated with the standard of wholesome. Thus, this suppression suggests the black subject disavow his/her blackness so that he/she becomes human as constructed from the perspective of the oppressor. Of course, this does not make this unconscious subject fully human in a sense of humanity *qua* ontological existence.

Thus, a black body is marked by a plethora of lacks and other dehumanising experiences imposed on it by the oppressive global social order characterised by its difference from whiteness. This subjected body is constantly condemned as a result of its deviance from whiteness given that the latter constitutes the societal normative norms and possesses ontology. Therefore, the damnation associated with blackness serves as a constant reminder of its undesirability and incompleteness. It is therefore crucial as Manganyi posits that black people be conscious of their blackness:

Consciousness of our experience of suffering also means on the positive side that we share the mutual knowledge of wanting to escape from this suffering. To the extent that we are conscious of being black people will we be more in a position to improve on our lot (Manganyi, 2019:23).

This explains the need to be conscious of blackness because its mere existence is confronted with hostility and subjection. Therefore, the black subject is compelled to

escape her/his experience – what Biko refers to as a process of re-awakening. The rationale for the articulation of Black Consciousness is thus evident as Biko maintained that the subjection of blackness should be defeated. In this context, Black Consciousness is a “manifestation of a new realisation that by seeking to run away from themselves and to emulate the white man, blacks are insulting the intelligence of whoever created them black” (Biko, 1978:53). For Biko, emulating whiteness is self-defeating and cannot be an option despite the rejection of the condemnation of their blackness. It is the embodiment of critical consciousness that can bolster their resistance to the oppressive system. Similarly, Sankara recognised the necessity concerning the change of attitudes and the mind-sets of black people insofar as their fight against oppression must define their existence. Sankara said these words at a rally in Harlem in the United States of America (USA):

There are many of us Africans – very many in fact – who have to understand that our existence must be devoted to the struggle to rehabilitate the name of the African. We must wage the fight to free ourselves from domination by other men and from oppression. Some Blacks are afraid and prefer to swear allegiance to whites. They must be denounced (Sankara, 1987:149).

Similar to Biko’s disdain for white assimilation, Sankara is also critical of this aspect as it demonstrates the cowardice and timidity associated with blackness and thus perpetuates the status quo. Of course, for both these leaders, assimilating to whiteness is not an option as it is based on the lack of consciousness, hence, the need to wage a fight against the domination occupied their political thoughts. I contend that a critically conscious being is bound to reject any subjection imposed on her/him despite the deep rootedness of the hegemonic system. Therefore, assimilating to whiteness cannot be an option in this regard.

Sartre (1956) employs an existential analysis of the notion of consciousness as a precondition for freedom as he posits that freedom is the being of consciousness. As such, consciousness ought to exist as a consciousness of freedom. Formulated in this ways, Sartre’s leads us to ask the critical question ‘what form does consciousness of freedom assume’? Grappling with this critical question, Sartre argues that through

freedom the human being is his /her own past (as also his future) in the form of annihilation. Therefore, it is in anguish that man/woman gets the consciousness of his/her freedom. To Sartre anguish is the mode of being of freedom as consciousness of being “it is in anguish that freedom is, in its being, in question for itself” (Sartre, 1956:29). To put it in another way, anguish is distinguishable from fear as it pertains to our decisions in relation to the impending situations and circumstances that we are faced with, dictating that we make certain choices in this regard. This has implications for our freedom as our actions have consequences not only to ourselves but also to others and this poses the burden of responsibility. In this sense, our choices are not just random but are based on certain interests. The notion of anguish is what Sartre regards as the fear of radical freedom. Simply put, the notion of radical freedom presents an individual with a dilemma of either being complicit in his/her subjection or setting out to transcend his/her dehumanisation. The latter option is predicated on the affirmation of the Black Consciousness philosophy. The problem of complicity, on the other hand, pertains to what Sartre referred to as bad faith as discussed below – this has implications for consciousness.

This illustrates the pervasiveness of the system of oppression as it co-opts and keeps the oppressed in a state of servitude because its sustainability is dependent on this domination. It follows that the quest for liberation requires commitment and hard work on the part of the oppressed individual. This is based on the machinations of indoctrination associated with the structural systemic oppression that shapes and conditions the very structure of their thought (Freire, 2005). Hence, through recognition of this subjection that the oppressed gain self-awareness which prompts them to seek liberation. A need to discard the psychological oppression suffered by black people arises following a heightened consciousness.

It is thus plausible to deduce that the solution to the predicament of oppression lies in the significance of critical consciousness. This is where the subjected ‘Other’ can be able to enact the state of transcendence and ultimately, the attainment of her/his liberation. Biko regards the notion of consciousness as necessary to come up with solutions facing the oppressed. Biko posits that “having found the right answers we shall then work for

consciousness among all people to make it possible for us to proceed towards putting these answers into effect” (Biko, 1978:97). Black Consciousness entails the act of conscientisation which espouses the notion of critical consciousness among the oppressed individuals. Biko considered the transformation of consciousness to be the catalyst for liberation. Clearly, when critical consciousness is attained, it is bound to be instrumental in transforming the lives of the oppressed given that the self-awareness that accompanies it can grant them tools to provide solutions regarding their imposed reality. For Biko, this action is crucial because the Black society has elements of a being defeated.

Biko was responding to a question concerning the aspect of conscientisation and what it entails in the context of Black Consciousness. The idea of self-awareness is predicated on the realisation regarding the undesirable conditions that Black people are confronted with amid the oppressive system. Biko was speaking against the advent of apartheid and its dehumanising factors. It is my view that this observation by Biko has resonance with the contemporary conditions faced by Black people given that their existential conditions remain undesirable. Biko suggests that the answer lies with Black people to dismantle the oppressive system however, in his view, the principle of self-awareness is imperative. Biko goes on further to say that the process of devising ways of solving their problems, can only be achieved if blacks work as a group thus reinforcing their humanity. This then suggests the notion of solidarity becomes a precondition for attaining true liberation.

However, for the subjected individual to realise its significance, she/he must address the imposed conditions of subjectivity associated with her/his subjection. Firstly, self-awareness of the imposed social reality is key and secondly, devising a suitable framework to deal with the condition should then follow. Therefore, a critical analysis of the problem of subjection as illustrated in the anti-blackness attitudes becomes relevant in this context. Sithole (2016) articulates this problem of black subjection clearly when he observes that being black in the world means that the black subject is coerced to negate his/her blackness as the inflicted denouncement in the form of the matrix of violence demands that the race conversation be absent so that persistent subjugation continues. Adopting this positionality is problematic and constitutes death in the sense that the

oppressed subject is not alive *qua* free and liberated in an antiblack existence. Hence, the notion of Black Consciousness is imperative as Biko asserted.

Sithole (2016) refers to the Black Consciousness philosophy as an intervention that conscientise the oppressed to understand the machinations of the systemic oppression that negates their blackness. Sithole further makes a crucial point that the system does well to mask its violence perpetuated on the oppressed blacks to deny them the requisite tools to fight it. This state of affairs sustains and maintain the status quo. Therefore, the importance of self-awareness becomes crucial for true liberation to be attained. Conscientisation is thus a call for Black solidarity given that the entrenched institutions that subjugate the black subject are entrenched and pervasive. This aids the continuation of coloniality as a system given that it depends on an epistemology of ignorance and negates the 'othered' individuals of their humanity to justify the perpetuation of exploitation, domination and annihilation. It follows that a coherent counter-hegemonic discourse in the form of Black Consciousness is key as it equips the oppressed individual with the necessary toolkit to systematically negate his/her domination. Black Consciousness conscientise the black subject about the urgency of his/her situation.

Freire posits that the reality of the oppressed is undesirable and requires critical awareness. He further asserts that the task of the oppressed "is to struggle for their liberation together with those who show true solidarity, must acquire a critical awareness of oppression through the praxis of this struggle" (Freire, 2005:51). This task is reflected in the idea of Black Consciousness as it systematically confronts the oppressive system by emphasising the significance of self-awareness among the oppressed. This process for Freire must be radical and constitutes the principle of critical consciousness on the part of the oppressed. Freire remarks:

To achieve this goal, the oppressed must confront reality critically, simultaneously objectifying and acting upon that reality. A mere perception of reality not followed by this critical intervention will not lead to a transformation of objective reality—precisely because it is not a true perception (Freire, 2005:52).

It is thus plausible to deduce that without self-awareness; the persistence of oppression is bound to continue unabated with implications for the black society and other

marginalised groups in the diaspora and the Global South. Freire advocated for what he termed the pedagogy of the oppressed as a tool to conscientise the oppressed subjects about their situation to enable them to adopt a radical liberatory praxis for the sake of their humanity. It is evident that Biko's thoughts were influenced by Freire's articulation of this kind of transformative pedagogy. Biko takes this idea further by calling for the liberation of the black mind through the embodiment of Black Consciousness. This is in light of the dehumanising effect of the oppressive system. This notion of consciousness as expressed in the philosophy of Black Consciousness pertains to the call for action. In this sense, Manganyi argues that such action "will require all the ingenuity and creativity of we [blacks] as a people are capable" (2019:27). This then speaks to the idea of black solidarity as argued below in this chapter as a basis for a framework that fosters mobilisation of the subjected blacks to be conscious of their subjection in order to devise means of dismantling the shackles in question.

Biko noted in this regard that "It is only by recognising the basic set-up in the black world that one will come to realise the urgent need for a re-awakening of the sleeping masses" (1978:34). This then highlights the significance of consciousness in relation to the liberatory discourse because it leads one to take an action. Notwithstanding its entrenched nature, Biko notes the urgency required to dismantle it. It is, therefore, my view that this call for action is justifiable because the negation of one's humanity is unbearable given the conditions it imposes on one's existence of being black in the world. Therefore, it is evident that the concept of consciousness is critical in the context of liberatory discourses. As noted in Chapter 2 in relation to the advancement of Pan-Africanism, the aspect of consciousness was considered to be a catalyst in that regard.

Biko's critical thought is also evident in the realm of religion as reflected in his re-configuration of Christianity. Biko was instrumental in introducing black university students to the notion of Black Theology which resonated with many students at the time given its perspective on existential Christianity that resonated with their situation of oppression (Wyatt, 2019). This illustrates an act of defiance on Biko's part as he was critical of what he regarded as "colonialist-tainted" Christianity (Biko, 1978). For Biko, the church as configured from a colonialist lens entrenched the acts of subjugation and

marginalisation of the oppressed blacks. However, Wyatt (2019) observes that Christianity has helped to shape Biko's Christian thought and praxis where selfless sacrifice of life for the liberation of the oppressed majority in South Africa was equated to Jesus's teachings.

In his conceptualisation of Black Theology Biko conceived a Christian model that sought to re-humanise the oppressed blacks within the solace of their spirituality that "we [the oppressed blacks] cherish, we love, we understand, and one that is relevant to us" (1978:63). For Biko, the notion of Black Theology was aimed at responding to the existential living conditions of those who are condemned by the hegemonic system. This Black Theology must decisively respond to the suffering and the degradation of the oppressed and must not exploit their spiritual disposition. The notion of Black Theology provided the oppressed with the tools to present a situational interpretation of Christianity from their perspective as the oppressed blacks. It sought to relate the suffering of blacks in a sense that it employs tools to resist the oppression and as such, restore meaning and direction concerning their understanding of God.

Thus, it follows that Biko dedicated his life to the struggle against the evil and exploitative system of apartheid and the quest to liberate the oppressed until his demise on September 11, 1977. I contend that this is one of the significant contributions of Biko's political thought for the colonised, oppressed, condemned subjects of the world. It is evident that the notion of conscientisation was instrumental in Biko's thought. As such, it is through the embodiment of critical consciousness that a subjected individual can escape the mask of bad faith.

4.4 The problem of bad faith

Bad faith requires things to remain as they are because it is predicated on the notion that a change is not required. However, it is due to bad faith that the continued subjection of black people is left to continue because it conceals the reality of subjection. It must be noted that the term 'bad faith' in this context denotes a philosophical posture as opposed to the legal aspect of it. For Sithole (2016), bad faith is problematic in the sense that it relegates blacks to the margins of a globalised world system, and enables their enslavement and degradation, thus encouraging their complicity. It is then clear that bad

faith is something that does not come out of the authenticity of the existential condition, but from something that does not form part of the embodiment of being – it forms itself as part of the existential reality that denies the fact that oppression exists or becomes complicit in it (Sithole, 2016). For Sithole, subjection is entrenched because of bad faith which maintains itself through the suspension of consciousness and disavowal. Bad faith is thus problematic because it downplays the condition of subjection and subjugation.

The suspension of one's consciousness as Sithole asserts, allows for the subjection to be inflicted on the oppressed subject. The mask of bad faith denies the subjected individual the tools to confront her/his oppression and ultimately succumb to the state of imposed inferiority. Gordon (2020) observes that bad faith strips one of consciousness and in the process serves as an imposition of non-relationality. Bad faith manifests in various ways and it can involve the aspect of belief. For instance, one might disregard one's imminent ailment and hold a strong belief that they are healthy despite the contrary evidence provided by the medical practitioner of one's unwellness. Here the actor is in bad faith because self-awareness is suspended and ultimately, lying to themselves or committing self-deception.

It is under oppressive existential conditions that those who are oppressed will often try by all means to avoid the brutality and horror through which oppression presents itself and, worse, not take responsibility but become complicit in their own oppression (Sithole, 2016). This state of affairs is undesirable, and it became one of Biko's main concerns in that it demonstrated a sense of complicity by blacks amid the dehumanising conditions exerted by the hegemonic system.

It is no surprise that Biko was very vocal on the significance of self-awareness as the lack thereof denies them an opportunity "as co-architects of a normal society where man [*sic*] is nothing else but man for his own sake" (1978:22). Therefore, to achieve this reality the oppressed individual has to centre his/her humanity as the ultimate goal of liberation because a dehumanised subject is rendered sub-human by the system. Failure to seek liberation is in bad faith. Gordon laments the self-defeat mentality that has infiltrated black people as a result of the dehumanising machinations of oppression. As he writes:

It is one thing for nonblack people to look at black people from outside, as though black people were only a surface in a world, *things* – but for black people to do so is an extraordinary defeat. It is akin to concealing that we have no point of view (Gordon, 2020:15).

Given that the logic of antiblackness is to deny black people freedom and to disavow their humanity, it is thus a concern for blackness identity to negate its existence as a result of the lack of consciousness. One is thus prompted to propagate the notion of *Ubuntu* as an antithesis of antiblackness as it exposes the latter's irrationality insofar as humanity is predicated on the promotion of the humanness of others. Hence, Manganyi (2001) postulates that Black Consciousness and solidarity will only be meaningful if the individual embraces the community as the foundation of his/her existence – thus, espousing the maxim, *I am because of you are*. In this sense, the antiblackness logic is illogical particularly when promoted by blacks albeit unwittingly so, and this illustrates the lack of critical consciousness on their part. Biko's conception of Black Consciousness becomes a requisite tool in this regard. During his Steve Biko Memorial Lecture on the thirtieth anniversary of Biko's death, Mbeki highlighted the significance of *Ubuntu* concerning how it resonated with Biko's thought. Mbeki (2017) asserts that appropriate and relevant education is key in the quest to rediscover the African identity that upholds the values of *Ubuntu*.

This statement illustrates the interconnectedness of Biko's Black Consciousness and the philosophy of *Ubuntu* as both call for the re-humanisation of the oppressed blacks by re-affirming their own value systems. Therefore, his suggestion of incorporating the *Ubuntu* philosophy into the education system is a noble one and must be taken into consideration. Clearly, Mbeki is calling for the re-education of the Africa. Furthermore, one is bound to concede that Biko would have agreed with this proposition as it will surely accentuate the notions of self-awareness and critical consciousness among the learners and as such, serve as a solid foundation of their politics and worldview. Biko rejected the Eurocentric education system as it distorts the true history of Africans by marginalising their indigenous knowledge systems. He laments this denigration of African culture as a result of the Eurocentric education which present African history as constituting a series

of defeats while on the other hand, painting Euro-North American history as valid and benevolent. I maintain that a distorted image of Africa and its cultures is still persistent and as such, dictates for decolonisation endeavours. It is thus crucial to challenge the systemic oppressive nature of coloniality as illustrated by the entrenched Eurocentric education system – this delegitimises the other knowledges emanating from the Global South. Rejecting this dominant Eurocentric narrative, Tamale (2020) suggests that a decolonised education system must counter the said discourses if social transformation is to be attained. For Tamale, the decolonised education system must not only focus on the destructions inflicted by the colonisers but must also emphasise the subjugation that has to do with the other ‘isms’ that were created by colonial encounters and inequities. In this context, Tamale warns against the mask of bad faith tends to contaminate the decolonial and the associated liberatory interventions.

In addition to advancing a decolonial education system, Tamale raises an important aspect of self-criticism in this respect. A proponent of a decolonial system must guard against being complicit in aiding the dominant oppressive system characterised by other related forms of oppression. For instance, proponents of Pan-Africanism and Black Consciousness ideas must be critical of notions of patriarchy, homophobia and other related social injustices. Hence the notion of critical consciousness must be highlighted insofar as it negates the mask of bad faith. The latter is problematic as it allows for the subjugation to be entrenched. This serves to demonstrate the mammoth task of the decolonial agenda because it forces one to be self-reflective on issues of social justice and liberation. An ultimate goal for Black Consciousness is the realisation of a human face free from all kinds of suppression to the extent that the subject can be a true version of herself/himself in society, thus making it an important tool towards decolonisation. Against this background, it is my view that Black Consciousness be incorporated into the school curriculum as a way of conscientising learners about their conditions and the associated historical circumstances involved.

Sankara was also critical of what he termed a neocolonial education, which for him, “pursued the same goals of alienating the children ... and reproducing a society fundamentally serving imperialist interest” (1988:81-82). This highlights a need for a

transformative education system that promotes a critical consciousness and accentuates the positive image of the continent and its cultures. As Nkrumah observed that “we were denied the knowledge of our African past and informed that we had no present” (1963:49). For this reason, a decolonised approach to education is crucial to foster a system of pluriversality characterised by the inclusivity of the othered epistemologies. Seemingly, Chilisa (2012) takes a similar posture to both Biko and Sankara, highlighting the need for a pluriversal orientation towards other knowledges that have been othered and marginalised through a deliberate process of imperial conditioning that came with the Eurocentric education system. As she observes in this regard that the indoctrination of the Euro-Western worldviews and value system stems from the Eurocentric education system that embraces Euro-modernity whilst rejecting anything outside it such as the African cosmology and worldviews. This process occurs throughout the entire research process.

It is clear from Chilisa’s assertion that the transformation of the education system particularly in the formerly colonised societies is not only required, but also urgent. It is thus my view that a transformed *Ubuntu*-centric education system can play a big role in the quest to liberate society. This is bound to evoke a critical consciousness on the part of the formerly colonised to radically transform their social conditions. A neo-colonial education system is bound to perpetuate the problem of bad faith because of the continuation of the same cycle which is signified by a lack of consciousness.

It is therefore important to conscientise the oppressed people so that criticality is encouraged to avoid being entangled in the problem of bad faith. The problem of bad faith is also illustrated in Biko’s rejection of the ideology of liberalism as advanced by some white individuals who co-opted a few black individuals who Biko labelled as ‘intelligent and articulate’ and thus worthy to sit around the table with whites for unhelpful discussions. For Biko, this group of black individuals is acting in bad faith as they are well aware of the lack of commitment to transform from the liberal whites who pretend to care about their subjugated condition. Biko was critical of this particular group of black individuals concerning their intentions. As he writes that “they [liberal whites] vacillate between the two worlds, verbalising all the complaints of the blacks beautifully while

skilfully extracting what suits them from the exclusive white pool of white privileges” (Biko, 1978:23). Although masquerading as allies of black solidarity, they (white liberals) conceal their true identity as proponents of white privilege with no aim of dismantling it. This serves to perpetuate racism as a system and render them active participants in the dehumanisation process of the black society. Biko’s advice to the white liberals is to first, recognise that they too are oppressed and secondly, that they must fight for their own freedom – by also educating their fellow whites about the unjust history of the country (South Africa).

Although whites are the products of the system of apartheid, it is rather ingenuous to consider them as oppressed as black people. That said, I concede that the indoctrination and propaganda of the apartheid machinery had an impact on their worldview to such an extent that they saw nothing wrong with the oppressive system. The consequence of this can be heard through a few voices (white and black) yearning for the good old days of apartheid regardless of its negative impact on the socio-cultural fabric of South African society. This has implications for the contemporary social system with regard to interventions of transformation as these tend to be resisted and sometimes viewed as forms of reverse racism.

This state of affairs tends to negate the degradation of black bodies where their marginalisation is downplayed. Of course, this does not suggest that all whites were complicit in the perpetuation of apartheid atrocities against blacks. However, social change begins with them acknowledging the benefits that came with the system of apartheid, and this will enable them to appreciate that they have to be part of the solution. Furthermore, it must be noted that the system of apartheid disavowed black bodies and only recognised them as servants of that oppressive system, however, their mere existence constituted an act of illegality, thus justifying the violence unleashed on them. Although apartheid as a system was dismantled, its legacy and remnants are still in existence given that the life of an ordinary black individual continues to be undervalued when pitted against that of a white counterpart. The majority of black people are still negatively impacted by many socioeconomic ills and continue to find themselves at the bottom of

the societal hierarchy. It is for this reason that the persistence of antiblackness needs to be repudiated.

The logic of racism is to deny a group of people regarded as inferior their humanity, which is an antithesis of *Ubuntu* philosophy, and this is precisely what Biko and Sankara vehemently resisted. In light of this observation, I wish to quote at length Gordon's assessment of how the inhuman nature of racism operates. Gordon points out that:

Said another way, racism requires a society to deny the humanity of certain human beings through the organisation of them in categories from those intrinsically high to those endemically wretched; via regimes of power, racist society groups human beings under the category of a race in order to limit their social options and then denies them the ascription of being really human. A performative contradiction follows in which a society must first identify the abject race or races as human beings in order to deny their being human (Gordon, 2020:61).

The above assertion highlights the irrationality associated with the logic of racism given that its perpetuation requires the perpetual subjugation of the inferior group prompting the latter to resist its plight. Despite being deep-rooted, its sustenance is illogical as it is based on relegating the victims to a sub-human status and it is thus in bad faith. As we have seen that the vocal voices against the persistence of racism, particularly, the persistence of antiblackness, tend to be suppressed by pointing out other pressing issues such as crime, poverty, corruption and so forth. In this sense, racism is downplayed to mask its violence. Biko was aware of this systematic usurpation and the associated dehumanising practices and how whites became complicit. It is for this reason that Biko was against the insincerity of white liberalism as it perpetuated the status quo reflected in their praxis. Hence, for Biko, those black individuals who buy into this are unwise and lack critical consciousness. Biko is very critical of such white individuals given their promotion as far as the hegemonic machinery operates to keep black people in the perpetual state of servitude. As Biko lamented:

[...] he moves around that his white circles – whites-only hotels, beaches, restaurants and cinemas – with a lighter load, feeling that he is not like the rest of the others. Yet at the back of his mind is a constant reminder that he is quite

comfortable as things stand and therefore should and therefore should not bother about change (Biko, 1978:23).

Here Biko demonstrates that the survival of the hegemonic system is dependent on the naivete of the subjugated individuals as they become victims of false solidarity with white liberals who tend to find comfort in the privileges of the unjust system. For Biko, it is thus shameful for those blacks who fall for this liberal narrative as he viewed this to demonstrate their inferiority and consequently act in bad faith. Biko observes that the *longue durée* of the black subjection has reduced blacks to a place of servitude whereby their only existence serves whites' interests and, in the process, suspending their consciousness. Hence, for Biko (1978:25), "...these dull-witted, self-centred blacks" are complicit in their subjection.

One is inclined to understand Biko's annoyance with this group of black individuals who act in bad faith with implications for their liberation and thus, perpetuating their oppression. This black individual negates his/her identity and assumes that of the oppressor at the expense of his/ her freedom. Sartre observes that this condition signifies the fear of freedom, which has the oppressed opting for the acceptance of his/her subjectivity because the risk involved in anti-hegemonic politics is difficult to ponder. This is in bad faith and undesirable because it legitimises the subjection and usurpation caused by the oppressive system and perpetuates the condition of coloniality. This then leads to complicity and denies one's true freedom with implications for one's liberation. Hence, the notion of liberating the oppressed's mind needs to be explored.

4.5 Biko and the idea of liberating the oppressed mind

Biko was vocal regarding the conditioning of an African mind as he deemed this to be a hindrance to the attainment of Black Consciousness. He regarded the mind as a crucial instrument used by the coloniser to suppress the colonised subjects. For Biko, the conditioning of the black masses by the hegemonic system posed a major danger as it entrenches inferiority among the oppressed. As outlined above, the lack of critical consciousness poses a threat to one's freedom as the polluted mind is undesirable in this regard because it entrenches and perpetuates one's subjection. The effect of colonialism

has instilled a sense of inferiority on the part of the colonised characterised by the domination of “the mental universe of the colonised, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world” (Ngugi wa Thiong’o, 1981:16).

It will then follow that decolonial interventions that focus on the polluted psyche of the oppressed are essential given the alienation imposed by the colonial system. For Biko, this group has been “stripped of the core of their being and estranged from each other” (1978:60). Thus, it becomes imperative to address the aspect of the colonised’s psyche so that one is self-aware of their imposed condition and to remedy that situation. Sankara (1988) also stressed the importance of reconditioning the minds of the oppressed people to embrace their authentic humanness and accept themselves for who they are and brace their cultural identity with pride.

This is linked to the principle of Black Consciousness in that it raises the consciousness of the positivity associated with blackness identity as opposed to its rejection as required by the oppressive system. Black Consciousness as Biko asserted, aims,

[...] to infuse him [black individual] with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth. This is what we mean by an inward-looking process (Biko, 1978:31).

Biko notes that the lack of consciousness on the part of the oppressed is bound to lead to the problem of complicity in that regard. For, a colonised mind cannot challenge the hegemonic system, which leads to the promotion of the myth of the rationality of the Eurocentric perspective as it fails to deny its legitimacy and as such, accepts the myths of its civilising moral obligation. Therefore, this oppressed subject views the world from an externally derived lens because the said subject does not possess the capacity for inward-looking. This poses a major problem and as Biko noted, is bound to allow the evil system to persist. For this reason, the conditions associated with anti-blackness are entrenched. Thus, accepting one’s blackness should be the starting point as a way of denouncing the imposed negative connotations associated with it and in the process, demand the embracement of one’s humanity.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2009) has written elsewhere regarding the aspect of re-membering the continent of Africa as it was dismembered by the impositions of colonialism suggesting that the obliteration of African cultures, values and belief systems constituted violence. This intervention is imperative so that a human-centred experience and reality are forged in the quest for liberation. In this sense, this highlights the fact that African culture must assume its equal and rightful place in the global world and its marginalisation must be resisted. The ability to transcend one's negation is thus crucial and as discussed above, requires one to possess a critical consciousness. In that regard, Biko noted that freedom pertains to one's ability to define oneself based on one's own sense of worth, which is devoid of any paternalistic gaze of the oppressor. As Biko (1978) asserts that freedom is the ability to define oneself and ensure the said freedom becomes a reality by all means necessary.

In this instance, Biko speaks of the freedom *qua* liberation whereby the individual's ability to enact his/her liberty is not hindered by factors of imposed subjectivity. This subject has the potential of transcending his/her subjugation and in the process achieve critical consciousness. This is where Biko's formulation and advancement of Black Consciousness philosophy come to the fore. Biko posits that it must be experienced as a way of life and a state of mind that should permeate the thoughts of the oppressed so that they embody its ethos as they strive for the attainment of their authentic humanity. It follows in this regard that the subject who is in bondage is unfree and should be considered as not being fully human. Hence the significance of the mind-set insofar as consciousness is concerned. As canvassed above, the idea of consciousness is imperative for a liberatory praxis. Biko deals firmly with the aspect of the colonised mind and has made an effort through his writings to alert the oppressed regarding the dangers that come with this situation. Biko writes:

At the heart of this kind of thinking is the realisation by blacks that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed. If one is free at heart, no man-made can bind one to servitude, but if one's mind is so manipulated and controlled by the oppressor as to make the oppressed to believe that he is a liability to the white man, then here will be nothing the oppressed can do to scare

his powerful masters. Hence, thinking along the lines of Black Consciousness makes the black man see himself as a being complete in himself. It makes him less dependent and more free to express his manhood [sic]. At the end of it all he cannot tolerate attempts to dwarf the significance of his manhood [sic] (Biko, 1978:102).

Here Biko makes a case for the adoption of Black Consciousness as a necessary useful tool for the liberation of the mind of the oppressed. This illustrates the fact that the dominant system of oppression infiltrates the mind of its subjects in order to keep them in a state of paralysis characterised by acts of submission. In this sense, the subject is conditioned to accept the dominant system as the *de facto* living condition and reality, notwithstanding its dehumanising effect. For this reason, the body of the polluted mind is unable to escape its imposed conditions of dehumanisation and this amounts bad faith. Of course, systemic manipulation means that the status quo is allowed to continue, and thus become a generational vicious cycle. Biko's analysis of the oppressed is thus crucial insofar as critical consciousness and the embodiment of Black Consciousness are imperative in the quest for true liberation. As such, the significance of Black Consciousness is key as a tool that can be employed to advance self-awareness and ultimately, freedom. Similarly, Cabral concurs with Biko's assertion concerning the manipulation of the mind of the oppressed and the need to re-think this condition.

Cabral (1973) argues that the action of decolonising the mind of the oppressed is indispensable and therefore, significant within liberatory discourses and towards the goal of integration. This is imperative given that the oppressive system has conditioned the subjected individuals to see one's fellow human as an enemy with bad intentions thus instilling mistrust among the oppressed people. This has implications for the unification of the black masses – without unity, liberation cannot be achieved. Unfortunately, due to a lack of critical consciousness, oppressed people tend to shoot down the notion of solidarity as they perceive it to be pointless. Cabral notes that:

A reconversion of minds – of mental set – is thus indispensable to the true integration of people into the liberation movement. Such reconversion – re-Africanisation, in our case—may take place before the struggle, but it is completed

only during the course of the struggle, through daily contact with the popular masses in the communion of sacrifice required by the struggle (Cabral, 1973:45).

Clearly, for Cabral the process of re-Africanisation must be carried out to sensitise the oppressed others. In my view, this process ought to compel the subjected people to de-link from the impositions of coloniality. Therefore, African Renaissance must be employed as a tool in this regard. It follows that one cannot confront and dismantle the hegemonic system without dealing with the polluted mindset given its implication for complicity in its subjection. Biko goes further to highlight the aspect of the mind insofar as freedom is concerned as a polluted mind cannot seek freedom for, it cannot critically discern the conditions associated with its subjugation. Biko (1978) noted that the oppressed's mind is manipulated to such an extent that they cannot think out of bondage to save themselves from the wrath of the oppressor and as a result, become powerless at the hands of the powerful masters. It thus becomes a necessity to begin to think and embrace Black Consciousness as a tool to break those shackles of condemnation.

The oppressive system uses various kinds of apparatuses to instil a sense of self-doubt and inferiority among the oppressed to first, keep them in a state of servitude and second, entrench the notion of dependency. As alluded to above, the capitalist global system requires the existence of subjected black bodies for its sustenance. Sankara highlighted Africa's sad reality emanating from the degradation due to the imposed capitalist global system. Sankara remarked, "a price paid without receiving anything in return, and which no doubt explains the reasons for the current tragedy of our continent" (1988:172). One would argue that the continent of Africa and the rest of the Global South are still experiencing the effects of slavery and colonialism and as a result, their continued struggle against the persistence of the unjust global system is thus a necessity.

The subjected 'Other' is thus forced to confront and navigate the hostile environment that negates her/his Being. It is therefore undesirable and in certain instances, this leads to the eruption of sporadic rebellion in the form of uprisings fuelled by the unbearable conditions resulting from the choking effects of the hegemonic system. Sankara has warned of these kinds of responses concerning the imposed dehumanising conditions that the oppressed masses are confronted with in their daily realities. Addressing the

United Nations (UN) convention on 04 October 1984 in New York, Sankara said that the persistent conditions of poverty and starvation imposed upon the ordinary masses are bound to evoke a revolt and revolution. The imposed conditions are not sustainable and their choking effects demand radical action.

Sankara points out the ‘despicable’ conditions that the oppressed masses are facing, which make their situation untenable to an extent where resorting to violent acts becomes the only viable solution to a system which exerts violence on the said communities. One should concede that the choking conditions are unbearable and are also exacerbated by the lack of transformation, whether economic, social, political, or cultural. Biko notes in this regard that the “ground for a revolution is always fertile in the presence of absolute destruction” (1978:33). Therefore, it is understandable that the revolts are unavoidable as those subjected to those dehumanising conditions become conscious of their situation and see no way out.

For instance, the *FeesMustFall*⁹ movement in South Africa and *EndSARS*¹⁰ movement in Nigeria – the former demanded a free and decolonised higher education in South Africa whilst the latter was borne out of the resistance towards police brutality. Another example is the ongoing persistence of violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) resulting from the legacy of colonialism-including the interest in the country’s natural resources. This is exacerbated by colonial ways of governing indigenous populations leading to ethnic tensions among the citizens (Ntanyoma, 2023). These few examples

⁹ This moment which was characterised by students’ revolts in South Africa in 2015 was regarded by some as denoting a watershed moment in South African politics following the transition to democracy in 1994. The revolt was demonstrated by several activities that took place at South African universities where students demanded free and decolonised education as well as the call for social justice amid the system of neo-colonialism. According to Booyesen (2020), this social revolution by young South Africans illustrates the frustrations perpetuated by what she considered as a liberation myth in light of a new dispensation in South Africa.

¹⁰ In October 2020, a group of Nigerians took to the streets to demonstrate their concerns against Nigeria’s Special Anti-robbery Squad (SARS) following a number of brutal incidents perpetrated by the unit. #EndSARS started as a social media mobilisation on Twitter before spreading across Nigeria. The harassment associated with SARS presented a reminder of the brutality exerted by the state on ordinary citizens thus trampling on their human rights.

serve to demonstrate the socio-political reality that exists on the continent because of the legacy of colonialism – this situation illustrates the state of instability on the continent.

However, it must be mentioned that this does not represent an accurate picture of the continent. Take for instance, the stability maintained in the West African region, which is characterised by among others, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, active cooperation among the neighbouring countries and the promotion of solidarity (Usman, 2023). This then demonstrates that there is a possibility of attaining solidarity among the African countries by working together to bolster the idea of Pan-Africanism, illustrative of how the change of the mindset can serve as a critical tool towards emancipation. Of course, I am in no way suggesting that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) members signify a perfect picture and model for African prosperity as the states concerned are still confronted with similar social, economic and cultural issues faced by many developing nations across the Global South. However, it should be stressed that the problems experienced by many developing countries of the world, particularly Africa, are a result of colonialism and neo-colonialism.

It is for this reason that Shivji (2009:3) notes that “no other continent suffered as much destruction of its social fabric through foreign imperial domination of Africa”. It follows then that the quest for liberation must begin with the change of attitudes and minds of Africans if these shackles of coloniality are to be dismantled because their conditioning is deep-rooted. In this sense, dealing with the problem requires the appreciation of the interconnectedness and the intersectionality associated with the socio-economic aspects of the contemporary situation which continues to entrench the state of coloniality. This is because of the persistent patterns that sustain the state of dependency and thus relegating the continent to the margins of the global society and effectively forcing the continent to be perpetually dependent.

It thus becomes imperative for the continent to re-assert itself as a means to de-link from the colonial matrices of power that continue to define how the world is perceived, which is detrimental to the advancement of the othered cultures and value systems. Of course, this predicament presents an impediment to a harmonious social co-existence with ramifications for the promotion of *Ubuntu* ethics. It is plausible to deduce that Biko’s

thought was moulded by the imposition of oppression and dehumanisation, which in turn, informed his ideas and politics. For Biko, the oppression of black people by a racist apartheid regime constituted an act of violence that needed to be resisted at all costs. He aimed to first invoke the oppressed people to be aware of the suppression and negation that comes with the denigration involved so that they are receptive to the Black Consciousness idea as a tool towards attaining true and full liberation. Biko realised that an oppressed mind serves as a tool to advance the ideas of the oppressive system because it lacks critical consciousness. The oppressed mind will not be receptive to the idea of Black Consciousness; hence it must be liberated first so that it achieves the realisation of self-awakening as Biko suggested. One of the preconditions of Black Consciousness philosophy pertains to the idea of solidarity as promoted in Biko's thought.

4.6 Biko and the promotion of Black solidarity

Before dissecting Biko's idea of black solidarity and unification as a core principle of Black Consciousness, the problematisation of the identity of blackness is required in this context. It must be noted that Biko's main concern was with the fact that black subjection denies the humanity of this group and hence, its sustainability is illogical and should be challenged. For Gordon, the blackness identity is constantly subjected to scrutiny insofar as its humanity is concerned. Gordon reflects on the problems associated with blackness in this manner:

These three problematics relate to theory in black as follows: (1) the black is a site of questioned humanity, (2) the black is a site whose freedom is challenged, and (3) the black is a site without reason or worse—a threat to reason (Gordon, 2010:198).

Accordingly, the negative connotation associated with the term 'non-white' regarding black people prompted the reaffirmation of blackness identity, and this was considered an attitude of mind as opposed to skin colour (Badat, 1999). Self-affirmation of black positivity seeks to re-affirm humanity in the black individual who has to look at himself/herself as adequate, as a human being, a subject with self determination to challenge the negation of the blackness (Tafira, 2013). As such, the task and struggle of anti-racism is necessary as it serves to restore the humanity of these oppressed groups to rally together for a common course given their shared experiences of subjection.

According to the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) (1969) manifesto, Black people in this context pertain to those who were politically, economically and socially discriminated against and are part of the struggle towards the realisation of their aspirations.

Thus, in the context of the apartheid regime in South Africa, the definition included people of Indian descent and those referred to as Coloureds—although this became a contentious issue during that time. Some did not accept the inclusion of Indians and Coloureds as part of the Black Consciousness identity. Biko was of the view that the exclusion of these two groups was illogical as they were also victims of the hegemonic system of apartheid. For that reason, it was conceived that being Black is not a question of skin pigmentation “but a reflection of a mental attitude” (SASO, 1969). Hence, this Black identity became a political tool, which was only reserved for those who were committed to the liberation process (Buthelezi, 1991). Similarly, Sankara also takes the same approach concerning the oppressed masses in the Global South. Speaking at the United Nations General Assembly in October of 1984 Sankara said:

I speak on behalf of the millions of human beings who are in ghettos because they have black skin or because they come from different cultures, and who enjoy a status barely above that of an animal. I suffer on behalf of the Indians who have been massacred, crushed, humiliated, and confined for centuries on reservations in order to prevent them from aspiring to any rights and to prevent them from enriching their culture through joyful union with other cultures, including the culture of the invader (Sankara, 1988:162).

Firstly, Sankara demonstrates the dehumanisation and subjugation of the black race owing to their blackness, thus, highlighting their awful conditions at the hands of the oppressor. He also illustrates how places and spaces, occupied by black people further perpetuate their subjugation and alienation from the attaining freedom. Secondly, like Biko, Sankara seeks to illustrate that the oppression denigrates anyone who is not white albeit in varying degrees and forms thus, dictating for solidarity amongst all the oppressed. Further, Sankara highlights the human aspect of the oppressed amid their subjection to embrace all the cultures including that of the oppressor. Therefore, insofar

as Black Consciousness is concerned, the blackness identity assumes a political posture as opposed to being reduced to the notion of race. This is also reflected in the SASO definition of Blackness as documented in its manifesto:

The term [black] must be seen in the right context. No new category is being created but re-Christening is taking place. We are merely refusing to be regarded as non-persons and claim the right to be called positively. Adopting a collectively positive outlook leads to the creation of broader base which may be useful in time. It helps us to recognise that we have a common enemy. One should grant that the division of races in this country is too entrenched that the Blacks will find it difficult to operate as a combined front. The Black umbrella we are creating for ourselves at least helps to make sure the various units should be working in the same direction, being complimentary to each other (SASO,1969).

Accordingly, the redefinition of the term 'Black' included Indian and Coloured as a way of unifying all the oppressed groups to work together against a common enemy-the apartheid system. Furthermore, the aim was to conscientise all the people identifying as Black of the potential power they wielded as a group (Buthelezi, 1991). The terminological revolution of the utilisation of the word 'black' was influenced by its radicalisation involving black Americans in the United States of America (USA) in the 1960s (Gerhart,1978). This positive movement of the black identity found resonance within the African, Coloured and Indian communities in South Africa. Thus, for Biko, the re-definition of blackness was crucial as a counter-response to the labelling of Black people as 'non-white', which effectively rendered them as a non-identity. He remarked during the SASO trial of 1976 that when probed about the organisation's decision to disassociate from the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS):

I think students in fact took a decision to the effect that they would no longer use the term Non-Whites, nor allow it to be used as a description of them, because they saw it as a negation of their being. They were being stated as "non-something", which implied that the standard was something and they were not that particular standard. They felt that a positive view to life, which is commensurate with the build-up of

one's dignity and confidence, should be contained in a description that you accept, and they sought to replace the term Non-White with the term Black (Biko, 1978:14).

The negation which came with the subjectivity that came with the oppressive system on the blackness identity dictated a radical intervention. Biko and his peers of black students challenged this suppression by formulating a counter-response in the form of a positive redefinition of blackness. Biko (1978) elaborates further on this aspect of black positivity when he writes, 'Black is Beautiful' advocating for the embracement of blackness amid the reality of anti-blackness which negates its existence. For Biko (1978:22), this posture is essential for the oppressed blacks and serves to negate the negation of their blackness and a reminder that "Man [sic], you are okay as you are".

It is crucial to note the use of pronouns 'he', 'his' and 'him' in Biko's language as illustrated in the quotation above by Biko during his testimony. It is my observation that Biko tends to use the 'he' and 'him' pronouns to denote all members of the Black society both male and female and should not be misconstrued as the negation of women in his language. However, this must be viewed contextually given the critique regarding the lack of gender inclusivity associated with Black Consciousness politics – this aspect will also be addressed below. But in the context of the above statement, Black man denotes Black woman as well. For Biko, Black people and women, in particular, must refrain from seeking for materials to enhance their looks because their beauty is already there, and they just need to recognise and affirm it. Biko argues that for black people to recognise themselves as subjects and never to deny their blackness as a result of the entrenched oppressive system and other external factors, conscientisation is thus imperative and necessary. It follows that the quest for liberation begins with one's acceptance of their true Being *qua* ontological essence. This newfound positive radicality associated with the term 'black' galvanised people to be involved in the liberation struggle. Serote (1990) observes that Black Consciousness transformed the word 'black' to be synonymous with freedom and in so doing galvanised the oppressed blacks toward liberation. It is through the idea of Black Consciousness that the black individual was able to envisage a future that affirms his/her ontological existence where their blackness is not associated with barbarism, inferiority and timidity.

One may argue that the embracement of blackness identity as a positive symbol was understandable given the socio-economic realities that the said group was confronted with. Therefore, affirming the ideology of Black Consciousness afforded these marginalised groups hope amid the hostility associated with the violent system. This served to deny the imposed system and in the process reject its legitimacy. However, the problem with this movement pertained to the fact that only a few black individuals, particularly young students at tertiary institutions, formed part of it as the majority of the oppressed blacks were not active participants, consequently diminishing its penetration amongst the disenfranchised blacks. That said, the promotion and advancement of Black Consciousness is crucial as a response to the imposed persistent conditions of coloniality as these are systemic and deep-rooted. The embodiment of Black Consciousness entails that the subjected individual be appropriately armoured to deny her/his negation by reaffirming the positivity of her/his blackness. In this sense, the black subject will be well poised to embrace the aspect of black solidarity in their quest for their liberation.

For Biko, the success of Black Consciousness is based on the unity of black people. As he succinctly puts it, “this means that all Blacks must sit as one unit, and no fragmentation and distraction from the mainstream of events be allowed” (1978:56). This is because of the nature of how the oppressive system operates – it is indiscriminate because the only criterion is the blackness identity. Take, for instance, the treatment of the now-former Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, one of the prestigious universities in South Africa, Mamokgethi Phakeng¹¹. She lamented that her academic stature and class status

¹¹ Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng was appointed the vice chancellor of the University of Cape Town in July 2018. However, her tenure at the institution was marred by controversy involving among others, allegations of maladministration and bullying of staff members, among others. She was the first black female vice-chancellor to take over the reins at that institution and as such, issues of racism and patriarchy seemed to have been the dominant discourses during her tenure. She was viewed by some as disrupting the status quo associated with the so-called previously white institutions that still require transformation. However, her methods of leadership were criticised by mostly white conservatives as being too controversial given her social media presence. But it is my contention that issues pertaining to her leadership, and other concerns would have been handled differently if she was a white male. It is for this reason that challenges faced by black people, in particular black women, as they navigate the historically white spaces, are highlighted to illustrate the deep-rootedness of the persistent systemic racism.

did not shield her from the systemic racism, which she endured during her tenure as the vice chancellor of the university culminating in her departure from the said institution. It can be contented by the detractors, of course, that racism and patriarchy had nothing to do with her treatment, but the situation emanated from the issues of governance.

However, I maintain in this regard that the hegemonic system has a way of concealing its repressive acts to make racist situations appear legitimate. Black Consciousness becomes key in these situations as it equips one with a critical lens to discern the nature of the system and how it operates. Therefore, the idea of black solidarity is relevant and necessary as illustrated by Biko's assertion concerning its significance among black individuals so that they can dismantle systemic racism. As he puts it, "we are oppressed not as individuals [but] ... We are oppressed because we are black" (1978:33). Therefore, thus highlighting the importance of black solidarity given how the systemic oppression functions. Nkrumah (1963) postulates that the only obvious solution for Africans is to strive for unity. Nkrumah states:

All this is inevitable, due to our historical background. Yet in spite of this I am convinced that the forces making for unity far outweigh those which divide us. In meeting fellow Africans from parts of the continent I am constantly impressed by how much we have in common. It is not just our colonial past, or the fact that we have aims in common, it is something which goes far deeper. I can best describe it as a sense of one-ness in that we are *Africans* (Nkrumah, 1963:132).

Although the shared experience of colonisation calls for the unification of Africans, Nkrumah argues that this need for unity is far deeper given the one-ness of the people, suggesting that the 'Africanness' of the people is what ought to unite them. I wish to bring forth the notion of *Ubuntu* in this regard as the distinguishing characteristic that talks to the true ontological sense of being African thus highlighting the common interests of the people from the continent. In this sense, advancing black solidarity becomes a logical step. Biko noted from the outset that calling for black people to rally together for the advancement of the black agenda, does not connote racism but is propagated on the common goal of attaining their liberation in light of their subjugation. As Asante notes in

this regard that Africans asserting their agency in light of subjection amounts to anti-racism and thus necessary:

While it is true that the cultural and intellectual dislocation of Africans has a lot to do with the fact that Europe colonized and enslaved Africans, it must be understood that for the African to assert his or her own agency is not a racist act, but a profoundly anti-racist act because it liberates the African from the dislocation that may have been created by Europeans and undermines any sense of European hegemony (Asante, 2007:4).

As we noted above that the hegemonic global system is designed to relegate black subjects to the margins and perpetuate their condition of anti-blackness fraught with dehumanising experiences. As such, exercising their agency and demanding that their humanity be recognised, is crucial to challenge the imposed Eurocentric hegemony. It follows that calling for this group to be united against the common enemy of oppression, is reasonable and necessary. Biko outlines the significance of black solidarity in this way:

The importance of black solidarity to the various segments of the black community must not be understated. There have been in the past a lot of suggestions that there can be no viable unity amongst blacks because they hold each other in contempt (Biko, 1978:56).

It must be pointed out that Biko's idea of black solidarity did not only pertain to black Africans, but it also included Coloureds and Indians because these two groups were also oppressed during apartheid albeit in varying degrees with blacks being subjected to the cruellest impact of the system. Biko highlighted the common experience of subjection shared by these groups and, in particular, the deliberate manipulation that served to create mistrust amongst these various groups to suit the hegemonic agenda of perpetuating the status quo. It is my view that this definition of blackness is key as it considers the fact that the system of racism dehumanises everyone who is not white. This is not to nullify the experience of those blacks who are still feeling the brunt of this barbaric act of dehumanisation. For Biko then to attain emancipation, all the subjected groups must mobilise and work as a collective to fight the common enemy – in the form of a system of oppression. Therefore, the notion of solidarity can be expanded to include all

black people in the Global South and Global North who continue to experience the existential crisis imposed by the anti-blackness of the global system. This also relates to the ideology of Pan-Africanism involving efforts of promoting the political, socioeconomic and cultural unity, and emancipation of Africans and people located in the diaspora (Adebajo, 2020).

The main idea behind the unification of black people on the African continent and across the globe comes as a response to the persistence of anti-black racism, which continues to victimise black people from various facets of society. For instance, Black professional athletes such as Raheem Sterling, Lewis Hamilton and Sadio Mane, to mention but a few, continue to be affected by the evil wrath of racism despite their social statuses. It is for this reason that Biko's conception of Black Consciousness highlights the fact that black bodies are oppressed irrespective of their geo-political positionalities hence, the significance of their solidarity in this regard. Given the pervasiveness of anti-black attitudes, Biko's idea of a counter-hegemonic discourse of Black Consciousness remains relevant and imperative. Biko explains its significance insofar as the persistence of white racism is concerned in this manner:

The thesis is in fact a strong white racism and therefore, the antithesis to this must, ipso facto, be a strong solidarity amongst the blacks on whom this white racism seeks to prey. Out of these two situations we can therefore hope to reach some kind of balance – a true humanity where power politics will have no place (Biko, 1978:24).

It is therefore evident that Biko recognised that without black solidarity, it will be difficult to dismantle and confront the evil system of white racism given its entrenchment. Pityana (2008) concurs with Biko in that regard asserting that Black Consciousness emphasises that the oppressed masses, through their common interest and commitment must integrate their life and praxis to mobilise the communities and thus ultimately neutralise the elite class. Accordingly, Sankara (1987:150) also observed that despite the damnation that comes with the oppressive system, blacks have to rely on the strength of their solidarity to fight the system. As he puts it, "As Blacks, we want to teach others how to love each other". This suggests that the positivity of blackness is possible through the embodiment of the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* through the exercise of the principle of

empathy among Africans. This aspect of *Ubuntu*-inspired attitude should be highlighted as Africa's unique contribution to humanity as Sankara advised. However, shifting the mindsets of the already polluted minds is imperative to allow for the authentic embodiment of *Ubuntu* ethics so that the intervention does not risk being employed to further suppress other groups.

Manganyi (2001) notes further in this context that black solidarity should evoke a positive orientation among the oppressed people because by coming together to share their experiences and reinforce their humanity, they will evoke a sense of belonging. This then should foster the values of *Ubuntu* as one is capable of seeing a fellow human in oneself and consequently affirming their humanity through praxis. Mbeki posits that *Ubuntu* fosters the notion of solidarity because it values the humanity of the other by prioritising the importance of community-based interventions in response to any imposed social challenges. As Mbeki puts it:

Ubuntu places a premium on the values of human solidarity, compassion and human dignity. It is a lived philosophy that enables members of the community to achieve higher results through collective efforts. It is firmly based on recognising the humanity in everyone. It emphasises the importance of knowing oneself and accepting the uniqueness and superiority. Indeed, *ubuntu* connects all of humanity, irrespective of ethnicity or racial origins (Mbeki, 2017:107).

What is crucial about Mbeki's view on the philosophy of *Ubuntu* has to do with its ability to evoke empathy towards any human subject. Thus, making *Ubuntu* to be an antithesis of Western individualism as the latter prioritises individual prosperity over that of the community. One may argue in this regard that western orientated worldview allows for the pillaging of the resources of other weaker nations as deemed not to be deserving of those. This was the aim of colonialism and imperialism – to appropriate as many resources as possible from the developing world without any due regard for the consequences thereof. Hence Biko's total rejection of all the dehumanising aspects of the so-called Western civilisation. For Biko, assimilating to the dominant social order is tantamount to the act of bad faith for, this allows one's negation, which is against the embodiment of *Ubuntu* – thus advancing the dehumanisation process. In this sense, one

cannot be a proponent of *Ubuntu* philosophy and still be bonded by the hegemonic system. *Ubuntu* is at the heart of collectivism and as such, is aligned with the principles of Black Consciousness.

Therefore, to be receptive to the notion of black solidarity, the subjected individual has to be ontologically attuned to the principles of *Ubuntu*. It is for this reason that Manganyi notes that only through the embodiment of Black Consciousness can the idea of black solidarity be forged given its ability to evoke “the mutual knowledge about the assault on the sense of community that befell us” (2001:25). It is not only the suffering, which is imposed by coloniality that African people share, Manganyi remarks also about the aspect of ontology. It follows that the anti-black conditions dictate that a conscious unification of blacks be fostered to wage a formidable struggle against the system.

This brings us to Freire’s concept of the oppressed’s pedagogy. This process for Freire, is predicated on dialogical interactions with the people. It involves two stages: firstly, the oppressed unmask the oppressive system and through praxis commit themselves to its transformation. The second stage has to do with what Freire terms ‘permanent liberation’ following the enactment of the transformation process where both the oppressor and the oppressed are liberated. It is my view that Black Consciousness’s main goal relates to the notion of ‘permanent liberation’ of the oppressed for the ultimate quest towards true humanity to be attained, making its adoption a necessity. As Freire (2005) observes that a theory that is propagated on transforming the realities of the oppressed cannot fail to assign these people a fundamental role in the transformation process. In this sense, Black Consciousness should be considered as such a theory, which is committed to the radical transformation of the oppressed people as conceptualised by Biko.

4.7 Biko and the development of the Black Consciousness philosophy

Biko’s conception of Black Consciousness developed during his student days as one of the founding members of the South African Students’ Organisation. SASO was established as a response to the relative political vacuum that existed following the banning of the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) in the 1960s (Buthelezi, 1991). The black youth of the time was not willing to accept white domination and saw it fit to fight the racist hegemonic system of apartheid in South Africa.

Biko played a major role in the formation of the SASO movement following the dissolution of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). He was later elected the Chair of the SASO publications with Pityana as the President at its launch congress in July 1969. The main goal of SASO was to build black solidarity among the students from various campuses around the country and later became a vehicle for disseminating Black Consciousness ideas through its publications. As illustrated in the SASO policy manifesto, Black Consciousness was defined as:

- (i) BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS is an attitude of mind, a way of life.
- (ii) The basic tenet of Black Consciousness is that the Black man must reject all value systems that seek to make him a foreigner in the country of his birth and reduce his basic dignity.
- (iii) The concept of Black Consciousness implies the awareness by the Black people of the power they wield as a group, both economically and politically and hence group cohesion and solidarity are important facets of Black Consciousness.
- (v) BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS will always be enhanced by the totality of involvement of the oppressed people; hence the message of Black Consciousness has to be spread to reach all sections of the Black community. (SASO, 1969)

The first principle of Black Consciousness has to do with the condition of the mind, meaning that it has to be embodied by its proponents so that it occupies their thoughts and infiltrates their being. The notion of consciousness is also crucial as indicated above because it acknowledges that the mind of the oppressed subject has been polluted by the dominant system to an extent that the negation of their ontological sense of being is imposed by the entrenched system. This negation for Biko begins at an early age whereby a child is conditioned through the state apparatuses like the education system to disavow her/himself. Biko laments that “you [black subject] tend to begin to feel that there is something incomplete in your humanity, and that completeness goes with whiteness” (Biko, 1978:111). Of course, this is deeply problematic and has implications for one’s freedom because this suppression compels one to question their ontological existence. This leads to the acceptance of the imposed antiblackness and for Biko, this is deeply

problematic and unsustainable. Hence the significance of Black Consciousness insofar as the provision of the much-needed hope for the subjugated individuals is concerned. Biko illustrates this aspect with this response he provided at the SASO trial:

The purpose behind it really being to provide some kind of hope; I think the central theme about black society is that it has got elements of a defeated society, people often look like they have given up the struggle.... Now this sense of defeat is basically what we are fighting against; people must not just give in to the hardship of life, people must develop hope, people must develop some form of security to be together to look at their problems, and people must in this way build up their humanity. This is the point about conscientisation and Black Consciousness (Biko, 1978:127).

In an analysis made by SASO, the notion of the African's inferiority complex as perpetuated by the persistence of European cultural imperialism was regarded as the main issue confronting the Black majority (Gerhart, 2008). It was for this reason that Africans had to reconstruct a convincing new identity that evoked a sense of pride that could liberate them from the shackles of the oppressive system. Black Consciousness was adopted in the SASO manifesto in July 1971 as an attitude of the mind and a way of life (Gerhart, 2008). SASO managed to bring into the South African political discourse, the notions of black pride and black solidarity through a variety of means, which included, among others, the use of slogans, and struggle songs that emphasised black self-reliance and cultural issues (Badat, 1999). It is for this reason that its influence and significance in shaping Biko's thought cannot be disregarded. During the SASO testimony, Biko (1970) was probed about the essence of Black Consciousness. He illustrated what he referred to as double oppression in South Africa in the form of the institutionalised machinery through laws that condemn the African perpetually. Moreover, this subjection intentionally leads the black subject to deny his/her agency.

This assertion by Biko brings to the fore the notion of anti-blackness which alienates and denigrates the black subject by denying her/his freedom. This condition is problematic and has implications on one's liberty and infiltrates one's consciousness. The body politic of the subjected black is thus compromised. Furthermore, the capitalist machinery

depends on these black bodies for its survival and as such, their suppression is required by the hegemonic system in order to sustain itself. It is, therefore, necessary in this context to articulate a philosophy that conscientise the victims of this anti-blackness to wage a struggle against this oppressive system. Black Consciousness seeks to restore the humanity of those that have been dehumanised by oppression. This is because oppression creates a distortion of being fully human, sooner or later being less of a human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who constructed them as such – because dehumanisation is unsustainable. It must be said that seeking to restore the humanity of the oppressed does not entail the oppression of the oppressor.

Freire observes that for the struggle waged against oppression to have meaning, the oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both (Freire, 2005). Accordingly, one may contend that if enacted through the lens of *Ubuntu*, the politics of liberation are bound to seek to restore the humanity of all human beings including that of the oppressor as its enactment fosters the interconnectedness of all humans and the natural environment. It may be argued in this context that a counter-hegemonic discourse that emphasises the advancement of the humanity of all the people, including the oppressor, diminishes its radicality.

However, Black Consciousness is concerned with the restoration of black people's dignity amid their suppression – it follows that it is not only the oppressed's mind that needs conscientising but the mind of the oppressor equally so. I contend that this illustrates the centrality of the aspect of humanness in the thoughts of both Biko and Sankara. As such, Black Consciousness is predicated on the quest towards “a true humanity where power politics will not place” (Biko, 1978:99). Ultimately, for Biko the end goal is equality premised on the central idea of humanness. He is not apologetic about the fact that it is the black humanity that is perpetually questioned thus, necessitating the rejection of its negation. For Biko (1978), Black Consciousness as a process and a movement envisaged to produce what he regards as ‘real’ black people who assert their identity and demand equal rights and social justice from the oppressors.

Accordingly, Black Consciousness demands that black people be unapologetic for their blackness and rise to exercise their agency to transform their conditions so that a just and free space is created for their rightful existence. Thus, the dehumanisation of black people is problematic and should be vehemently challenged. Black Consciousness appeals to the re-wakening of the oppressed subjects to deny their subjection. It equips them to challenge their imposed state of anti-blackness which is fraught with dehumanising conditions. It calls for radical interventions and militancy in their praxis. Accordingly, this should lead to the re-humanisation of the oppressed and ultimately, achieving social justice. Therefore, the notion of African Renaissance in relation to Black Consciousness is explored.

4.8 Black Consciousness and African Renaissance

Black Consciousness must enable Black people to be reborn into a world created by themselves and not by others for them to define themselves according to their perspective. Makgoba (1999) views African Renaissance as a tool for Africans to redefine themselves and chart their way to improve their realities. As per the discussion above, Black Consciousness provides one with a dialectic framework for assessing one's existential condition so that requisite tools are developed to transcend that situation through their agency. It acknowledges that blackness is a problem in a global society given the pervasiveness of anti-blackness and as such, a critical consciousness is imperative. As Sithole notes, in his conception of Black Consciousness, "Biko confronts oppression with the aim of conscientising blackness and, on the other hand, exposing the impotence of subjection" (2016:6). It is crucial to be self-aware of one's subjection given that its ignorance is undesirable and promotes the notion of complicity. Complicity amounts to bad faith with implications for true freedom. A liberated human being negates her/his dehumanisation and consequently affirms her/his humanity. Tamale encapsulates a comprehensive transformative framework that Africa needs to adopt to address its challenges when she writes:

So, ultimately, for Africans, the agenda for decolonization and decolonial activism must involve re-constructions that focus on the following: reclaiming our humanity; rebuilding our territorial and bodily integrity; reasserting our self-determination;

restoring our spirituality; dismantling the material and symbolic foundations of the colonial-capitalist state; decentering Western hegemonies of knowledge and cultures regarding race, gender, sexuality, etc. (Tamale, 2020:21).

All these aspects mentioned by Tamale are significant in the context of social transformation in the continent and it can be argued that they relate to the promotion of African Renaissance and to a larger extent, Black Consciousness philosophy. Tamale goes on to articulate the importance of *Ubuntu* as underpinning the interconnectedness of all inhabitants of the continent through their Africanness. In this sense, *Ubuntu* should inform how we relate with one another; the environment and the cosmology – this pertains to our ontological sense of being in the world. I have demonstrated in this regard how the thoughts of both Biko and Sankara are anchored on *Ubuntu* cosmology given their centrality concerning the notion of humanness. Therefore, the promotion of African Renaissance should be predicated on *Ubuntu* philosophy but should also take into consideration the conditions of subjection due to the entrenched coloniality.

Thus, the agency of the African ought to be elevated through her/his praxis to escape the distortion of the hegemonic system. For Dussel, the unmasking of the evil deeds of modernity should involve exercising the “denial of the violent, Eurocentric, developmentalist, hegemonic reason” (2000:473). In this sense, a proponent of Black Consciousness is bound to question her/his subjection and its associated conditions. Biko (1978) observes in this regard that a conscious individual needs to evaluate the old values and systems to bring about answers that are suitable for the situation at hand by examining and questioning old and outdated systems. This speaks to the idea of always being conscious and mindful of the norms, approaches and conventions and critiquing their usefulness for certain contexts. Hence, Biko believed that a critically conscious individual’s task is to reflect and question every aspect of their living conditions insofar as the validation of humanness is fostered.

This speaks to the notion of African Renaissance because the promotion of the consciousness in question serves to reformulate suitable strategies to deal with the African situation for the benefit of Africans. This cannot be achieved without the promotion of a consciousness that enhances solidarity among Africans by drawing from their shared

values and the idea of their Africanness as postulated by Nkrumah. African Renaissance is thus a vehicle to re-affirm African principles and values that are fundamental to Africans as advanced by Biko. It is regarded as a tool and framework for constructing new ways of tackling African problems in the context of (post) colonial and (post) apartheid realities (More, 2002). In this context, Black Consciousness philosophy provides a conducive space for confronting the imposed realities of coloniality and the perpetual existential conditions that the subjugated people of the continent continue to grapple with. As canvassed above, the problem of anti-blackness is deep-rooted and denying and challenging is imperative – this can only be achieved if critical consciousness is heightened and advanced.

Furthermore, the subjugated subjects have to accept that their unification is necessary as espoused by Black Consciousness. It is therefore my submission that the advancement of African Renaissance would be impossible if the affected subjects did not embody the principles of Black Consciousness. As Biko remarked Black Consciousness should be viewed as an attitude underpinning African's way of life, and attitude towards himself and his external environment. The mind aspect is crucial as it relates to the rejection of one's subjugation as aided by being self-aware of the imposed conditions of oppression as the result of their blackness. In other words, transcending the oppressive system without critical consciousness is nearly impossible. It is therefore evident that a mind which is not liberated cannot conceive of the reasons for the promotion of African Renaissance due to ignorance. It is for this reason that Black Consciousness appeals to the aspect of consciousness in relation to one's subjection to conscientise the subjected individual about her/his unbearable conditions prompting her/him to take an action of seeking liberation.

Therefore, there is a clear interconnectedness between Pan-Africanism, Black Consciousness and African Renaissance. I contend that both Black Consciousness and Pan-Africanism ideologies assert the humanity of the oppressed subjects through their quest for liberation as they equip the oppressed with tools to confront and deny their negation. Following this process, a de-linking process (see also Chapter 3) ought to be undertaken to escape the entrenched modernity. Inspired by both these ideologies,

African Renaissance must be promoted as a people-centred framework to attain the much-needed socio-economic and political transformation of the continent. Mbeki (2013) argues that African Renaissance should bring about the fundamental social transformation of the continent and it must belong to the African people. The notion of people-centredness is key insofar as the liberation of the masses must happen at the grass-roots level. It is thus imperative that ordinary people are part of the process.

Mbeki (2013) asserts that the required renaissance of Africa belongs to the ordinary African people and must not be left at the hands of the rulers – who tend to sometimes advance interests. Hence, the argument being canvassed in this chapter is that Black Consciousness philosophy advances the promotion of African Renaissance. The adoption of the former is bound to heighten one's consciousness so that the mind escapes the subjection and indoctrination so that the subject is compelled to seek solidarity with fellow Africans for the benefit of the continent and its people. Thus, it follows that the promotion of Black Consciousness is necessary and key if African Renaissance is to be advanced. However, Black Consciousness is not without shortcomings. Its main criticism lies in its emphasis on advancing the total liberation agenda and in the process disregarding other oppressive attitudes such as patriarchy.

4.9 Black Consciousness and issues of gender

The existence of coloniality is characterised by the acts of dehumanisation of the subjected people involving a hierarchy of degradation with black women's bodies being relegated to the bottom. It is for this reason that the recognition of the intersection of race, gender, class and other modes of oppression is undertaken to diagnose the problem holistically. Therefore, the quest for liberation must not overlook other kinds of oppressive negations. It is my view that Biko's political thought is silent on gender issues and thus implicated in the process of relegating women's voices to the margins. This is also the case with other Pan-Africanist activists and scholars such as Nyerere, Senghor, and Kaunda, to mention a few (Tamale, 2020). Therefore, this problem should not be viewed in isolation.

Although it might be argued that Biko's major focus pertained to the total liberation of the oppressed subjects, which is inclusive of women, his use of language can be read as suggesting otherwise. This is demonstrated by this statement: "all in all the black man has become a shell, a shadow of man, completely defeated, drowning in his own, drowning in his misery..." (Biko, 1978:31). This appears to be Biko's criticism on the lack of self-awareness of black men and thus being guilty of entrenching their subjection. However, it must be noted that Biko makes reference to 'black man' throughout his writings to denote black people in general. When referring to liberals and their complicity in black subjection, Biko writes that "these are the people who argue that they are not responsible for white racism and the country's 'inhumanity to the black man'..." (Biko, 1978:69). When problematising the phrase, 'inhumanity to the black man', it is evident that Biko refers to the black society and not just men only. Although Biko does not highlight and amplify the plight of women in his writings, it is evident that he was concerned with the process of liberating and re-humanising all the oppressed people.

As Masenya (2008:np) puts it, "Biko was certainly no advocate of the rights of women per se" but women were part of his broader quest for the humanity of black people. Although Masenya maintains that women's emancipation is yet to be attained in the current context, she fails to critique Biko's silence on this issue given its significance. Thus, one would maintain that had Biko given his attention to the notion of patriarchy and its associated implications on women's rights, perhaps more improvement could have been achieved on that front given his influence.

Seleoane (2008:18) observes that Biko's writing reflected the era of his time and deems it "unfair to apply to his writings language criteria that were not yet common in those days" (2008:5). Duncan (2008) concurs with Seleoane in that regard by noting that Biko's era was not sensitive to gender issues and Biko's referral to 'man' in his writing mostly connotes a phenomenological quality of humanness and must not be read in generic sense. Conversely, Ratele does not fall into this trap of the era involved concerning Biko's lack of gender sensitivity as for him:

To claim that somebody [Biko] is of his or her time is therefore of little use when one wants to understand the times that produced the person and shaped their life and

work. More importantly though, the attempt to use his time, the seventies, to cover Biko's back from a thoroughgoing analysis on this point does more harm than good (Ratele, 2003:245).

To speak of the times that produced and shaped an individual's politics is immaterial for Ratele because it fails to consider the complexity of the individual and ignores their flaws and weaknesses. It is my view that Biko's silence on gender issues provides us with an opportunity to contemporarily problematise his politics, and to bring into the picture his personal life and how this may have impacted his views around gender. Again, it must be stressed that Biko repudiated all types of oppression, but he was also human and susceptible to flaws. Concurring with Ratele, Qola (1999) contends that there are sexist overtones in Black Consciousness ideology that compromise the position of women. This is problematic and might have influenced the tentative participation of women in the movement. Moodley elaborates on the limited participation of women within the Black Consciousness movement as he perceived the 'individualistic' orientation in relation to the division of labour within the formation. In this context, women are relegated to traditionalistic and patriarchal social roles such as childcare and other related domestic responsibilities. Interestingly, entrenching a Eurocentric value system in terms of gender roles is problematic, and perpetuates the subjection of women, and this signifies an indictment of the movement.

In his analysis, Moodley (1991) points out a very crucial aspect of the centrality of the communalistic worldview of Africans. This is ironic as the marginalisation of women has negative implications for their humanness as their dehumanising experiences relegate them to the periphery, further emphasising their double oppression-for being black and for being women in light of the hegemonic oppressive system. Though women's involvement in the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) was largely limited to urban, young and relatively privileged people, the massive crackdown of 1976-79 forced many women who hitherto stayed out of active political life, to reassess their positions in light of the loss of life, detentions and threats of further action (Ramphela, 1991). I contend that the male-dominated movement of Black Consciousness was not receptive to gender equality and did not affirm their agency, thus discouraging their full participation in the

movement. It must also be stated that the condition of patriarchy was prevalent during the era of apartheid, where the condition of subordination was informed by race and class where black women were at the bottom of this oppression. Although the oppressive system of apartheid subjected white women to subordinate roles, it was the black women who suffered the indignity of double oppression due to the fact they were relegated to the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. Despite strides being made in terms of legislation and policies in the post-apartheid era, black women are still subjected to a myriad of injustices as a result of the entrenched system of patriarchy.

Considering the condition of double oppression suffered by women during apartheid, this group needed a refuge where their domination was challenged, and this was not forthcoming. However, Ramphela (1991) argues that black women benefitted from Black Consciousness because they became more liberated as individuals due to the intellectual stimulation emanating from the black liberation discourse. It must be conceded that their participation was limited, and, in most cases, they were not allowed to articulate their concerns.

In stark contrast to Biko's silence concerning the issues of patriarchy and misogyny, Sankara was very vocal about this aspect and took it upon himself to conscientise black men, who are of course the victims of the oppressive hegemony, to champion gender equality. Sankara was able to dissect and problematise the nature and extent of women's oppression:

[A] Woman's fate is bound up with that of the exploited male. This interdependence arises from the exploitation that both men and women suffer, exploitation that binds them together historically. This should not, however, make us lose sight of the specific reality of women's situation. The conditions of their lives are determined by more than economic factors, and they show that women are victims of specific oppression. The specific character of this oppression cannot be explained away by equating different situations through superficial and childish simplifications (Sankara, 1988:343).

Sankara is aware of the intersectionality of the oppressive system and therefore, understands that liberation of the masses cannot be achieved if the emancipation of

women is not bolstered. It is thus necessary to appreciate the fact that women's oppression is exacerbated by the realities of patriarchy and misogyny at the hands of black men. In the context of liberation discourses, this amounts to bad faith and therefore, is problematic. Tamale (2020) highlights this fact as she warns against decolonial interventions that disregard the humanity of other condemned groups such as women as this ill-informed practice only serves to perpetuate the machinations of the oppressive system. In this instance, given that Africans are confronted with all sorts of suppressions including the intersections of gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, disability, religion, age and so forth, decolonial endeavours must strive to eradicate all forms of oppression so that an egalitarian society is fostered.

Again, the notions of critical consciousness and self-reflection are highlighted insofar as the advancement of the humanity of the subjugated people is concerned. Therefore, the social ills of patriarchy, misogyny and other related suppressions should not be afforded the space to thrive. According to Masenya (2008), Biko's thought should be emulated by present-day African women, which suggests that she does not view Biko as sexist and patriarchal given that the articulation of Black Consciousness should lead to the self-affirmation and liberation of women. Against this backdrop, I contend that Biko ought to have articulated the double oppression faced by women in addition to his challenge of the oppressive system to amplify their conditions and to conscientise his fellow men about this problematic condition. However, Biko was an advocate for dialogue with ordinary members of society and there is no evidence of him being a proponent of the system of patriarchy. He believed in debating social issues openly and was bound to modify his politics and language to be inclusive. As he remarked that the point about political philosophy is that it develops over time (Biko, 1978). Biko was more receptive to change suggesting that his politics and political thought were subject to evolution, and this means he would have been more vocal on issues of gender and the emancipation of women had he lived for long.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter posits that Biko should be considered a decolonial thinker as his thought contributed to the discourses around decoloniality in terms of its imperative for a liberatory

praxis. The chapter appraised Biko's thought concerning the significance of the notion of consciousness as part and parcel of the politics surrounding the liberation goal. I have demonstrated by employing Biko's political thought that consciousness is the precondition of liberation and is part of the basic principles of Black Consciousness philosophy. Linked to the notion of consciousness is the aspect of the colonised mind. For Biko, this is the most important tool which the oppressor uses to entrench the suppression and hence, its transformation is imperative. As such, a liberated individual is bound to re-affirm her/his humanity and that of others; for that reason, the subject will challenge her/his subjection in the form of anti-blackness and embrace black solidarity. Furthermore, the chapter also explored the link between Black Consciousness and African Renaissance. Lastly, a critique of Black Consciousness concerning issues of gender was undertaken. The next chapter will examine Sankara's thought concerning its relevance to the contemporary African situation.

CHAPTER FIVE: SANKARA: A REVOLUTIONARY LEADER

“Our revolution in Burkina Faso embraces the misfortunes of all peoples. It also draws inspiration from all of man’s experiences since his first breath. We wish to be the heirs of all the world’s revolutions and all the liberation struggles of the peoples of the Third World.”

Thomas Sankara

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter explored the significance of the notion of conscientisation in relation to liberatory discourses and highlighted why the philosophy of Black Consciousness as conceptualised by Biko is critical in that regard. This process involves the liberation of the colonised mind first and foremost as a requisite step towards attaining critical consciousness and ultimately, true liberation. In this chapter I explore the political thought of Sankara by examining the Burkina Faso revolution, the circumstances that led to its occurrence, and whether the revolution advanced social change concerning the body-politic of the Burkina people. Moreover, the chapter explores factors that signify Sankara as a revolutionary insofar as his leadership is concerned. Further, the chapter examines his people-centric approach to socio-political issues that propelled his politics to be considered a radical humanist and a Pan-Africanist. Finally, the chapter examines whether Sankara’s thoughts and praxis advance the idea of African Renaissance as a de-linking tool. As a point of departure and for contextual purposes, the chapter begins by outlining the problem associated with neo-colonialism.

5.2 The problem of neo-colonialism

Despite its demise, the impact of colonialism continues to shape social cultural, economic, and political relations in contemporary Africa. The post-independence did not signal the end of imperialism as it strengthened the status quo characterised by the external imposition of the linear form of top-down development approach from the West. For

Jenkins (1990), the colonial rule on the continent has weakened the traditional authority structures and created exclusionary regimes but with weak militia and as a result encouraging interventions. The postcolonial elites are far removed from the aspirations of the ordinary citizenry as they perpetuated autocracy. This is due to the persistence of coloniality, given its infiltration on the subjectivity of the former colonised who struggle to think out of its matrices. This has implications on the subject's ontological being as this perpetuates the existence of colonial subjectivities and colonial subjects.

The persistence of imperialism has kept Africa divided by means of the crises of development and insecurity culminating in conflicts, wars, and revolts sponsored by the imperial powers of the West (Tedheke, 2021). Nkrumah provides a picture of how problematic the continuation of imperialism is and its ramifications for the continent.

Imperialism is still a most powerful force to be reckoned with in Africa. It controls our economies. It operates on a world-wide scale in combinations of many different kinds: economic, political, cultural, educational, military; and through intelligence and information services. In the context of the new independence mounting in Africa, it has begun, and will continue, to assume new forms and subtler disguises. ... it will, as it is already doing, fan the fires of sectional interests, of personal greed and ambition among leaders and contesting aspirants to power (Nkrumah, 1963: xvi).

It must be noted that Nkrumah penned this text in 1963—around the time when most of the African states were gaining so-called independence from their colonisers. But he could foresee the dangers of neo-imperialism and how it infiltrated every dimension of the post-colonial society. He warned of its subtle ways of exploitation and subjection following the end of colonisation. Moreover, Nkrumah expresses the issue of complicity insofar as some leaders are guilty of subjecting their people to undesirable conditions associated with the hegemonic system of neo-imperialism. This reality remained Sankara's concern and led him to undertake an anti-imperialism struggle, which ultimately led to the Burkina Faso revolution. Sankara shares similar sentiments to that of Nkrumah concerning the problem of neo-imperialism:

Imperialism tries to dominate us from both inside and outside our country. Through its multinationals, its big capital, its economic power, imperialism tries to control us

by influencing our discussions, influencing national life, and creating difficulties. It tries to strangle us with an economic blockade. At the same time, it tries to plot against us, against our internal security. To fight imperialism, we still have many battles to wage (Sankara, 1988:178).

As reflected by Sankara's observation, the problem of neo-imperialism is pervasive given that the ex-colonised must deal with both its internal and external forces. Sankara's political philosophy is foremost predicated on anti-imperialism as he regarded the system as inhumane, oppressive and exploitative. He was of the view that the post-independence Burkinabé regime was advancing a neo-colonialist agenda that perpetually relegated the Burkinabé people to the margins and a state of perpetual poverty.

In their complicity, the African elite act as imperial proxies that enable its entrenchment to an extent that it appears normative and logical. It is for this reason that the complicity of some of the African rulers must be challenged as it perpetuates the problem of neo-colonialism. As Ani (2021:258) observes "citizens are continually robbed of their legitimate right to change leaderships that do not address their needs". This then implies that the legitimacy of this leadership is perpetually contested resulting in distrust between the rulers and the ruled. The former is bound to make use of the state machinery to ensure their grip on political power is secured. Gordon (2013) explains the ramifications involving the complicity of the African elite in aiding the neo-colonial agenda through corrupt dealings when he argues that the rent-seeking elite hindered the cause of development by serving their interests of self-enrichment. This state of affairs is signified by aspects of inefficiency, mismanagement and corruption culminating in the misuse of state resources. Moreover, in most cases, the foreign financial resources that are meant for developmental purposes are not utilised appropriately by some of the neo-colonial elites.

Although not all African elites are corrupt, those implicated are problematic given the implications of their actions on the lives of the people they govern. The implications of this reality are the creation and maintenance of instability on the continent. The persistence of coloniality has created and maintains the problem of ungoverned spaces that are susceptible to conflicts and this project has continued in post-independence as many governments have perpetuated the development of inequity created by the colonial

administrators (Suleiman, Onapajo and Mustapha, 2021). As Rufus (2021:190) puts it, “the original intention of the colonialists in the balkanization of Africa was not to create a boundary per se, but to create a sphere of influence driven by political and economic motives”. It follows that the existence of the status quo serves to keep Africans in a perpetual state of chaos so that its scramble continues unabated.

This ongoing persistence of a neo-colonial agenda on the continent has ensured the continuation of foreign influence regarding political, economic, and military affairs (Mbara & Graham, 2022). Mbara and Graham (2022:10) think that the “the continued weakening of the political stability seen through violent military activities “shows that Africa only has political independence and not economic freedom to manage the resources within their territories”. The situation then requires a great effort from all parties if liberation is to be achieved given that this persistence is unsustainable with ramifications for the economic development of the continent.

As such, the situation of instability on the continent presents a fertile environment for conflicts and insurrections. For Amoateng (2022), Africa’s problem of military coups must be understood through the lens of neo-colonialism because, for him, post-independence Africa did not signal detachment from the coloniser and as such, the persistent foreign control presented challenges. Although the political power was transferred to the first generation of political leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere—the latter were confronted with contradictions of not controlling the economy of their so-called independent states. It is for this reason that Sankara noted the similarities between the colonial and neo-colonial societies in that the change of administration is cosmetic as most of the state apparatus remains the same. Sankara (1988) explains in this regard that neo-colonial society is essentially similar to colonial society because it involves an undertaking of merely replacing the colonial administration with a neo-colonial one. In essence, the post-colonial epoch is fraught with the aspects of neo-colonialism where the same functions and characteristics of colonialism are persistent.

Thus, the entrenched neo-colonial relations present challenges for the continent and its people because they hinder social transformation which in turn exacerbates the undesirable conditions that continue to marginalise the citizenry. Although some African

elites are blamed for their complicity concerning the prevailing situation, Fanon (1967) puts the complexity of the neo-colonial reality into perspective by reminding us of the inhumane nature of colonialism in that it desensitised and polluted the psyche of its victims. This has ramifications and explains its adversarial consequences on the ex-colonised:

In the course of the struggle for liberation, things are not clear in the consciousness of the fighting people. Since it is a refusal, at one and the same time, of political non-existence, of wretchedness, of illiteracy, of the inferiority complex so subtly instilled by oppression, its battle is for a long time undifferentiated. Neo-colonialism takes advantage of this indetermination. Armed with a revolutionary and spectacular good will, it grants the former colony everything. But in so doing, it wrings from it an economic dependence which becomes an aid and assistance program (Fanon, 1967:121).

Against this background, the significance of the process of conscientisation as argued in the previous chapter, is key insofar as it provides a synthetic framework to critically deconstruct the nature and the extent of the exploitative system. This is bound to equip the subjects with the necessary mechanisms to detach from the entrenched system. Fanon notes that the current neo-colonial system perpetuates the condition of dependency which then impacts the existential state of marginality for the colonised bodies. Moreover, neo-colonialism benefits only a small group of elites in the colonised state and renders most citizens into perpetual exclusion concerning the politics and economic activities of the countries in question. This is unsustainable and is bound to evoke an uprising from the condemned subjects. It is this group of elites who tend to advance the neo-colonial cause so that they can continue to hold on to their unwarranted privileges and power. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2009) concurs with Fanon insofar as post-dependence not signalling the liberation of the colonised in the sense that for most African people, independence did not bring about fundamental changes. In contrast, the new epoch of independence produced a new class of leadership which was not different from the one that preceded it. In my view, this presents a problem for the continent insofar as the promotion of the projects of African Renaissance, and Pan-Africanism, are key.

One would then argue that the advent of post-independence presents a paradox in the sense that it signalled the end of the exploitative colonial rule but at the same time entrenched subtly the systemic subjection of the previously colonised. As comprehensively articulated by Tamale (2020), the pervasiveness of the conditions of neo-colonialism infiltrated every fabric of the colonised society so that it is kept in the state of the perpetual status of what is referred to as a colonial zone of non-being. Tamale (2020) observes that the dominant influence of global multinational institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) continues to entrench the neo-colonial machinery. The colonial disposition of extracting minerals, oils, and cheap labour from the ex-colonised states is still ubiquitous with ramifications for the existence of the African people and the environment. All of this is plundering in the name of a global capitalist hegemonic system, which has no regard for life in the periphery but to pocket as many financial benefits as possible.

As much as the phase of colonialism, which was characterised by violence, slavery and the plundering of natural resources is purported to be over, the neo-colonial patterns of exploitation albeit subtle, dictate that a concerted effort be exercised to dismantle the colonial matrices associated with the system. Given that the idea of development tends to be externally derived and dictated by multi-global organisations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the implication is that Africa does not follow its terms. The World Bank and IMF as development apparatuses dictate the nature, form and content of development, and African development is forced to operate under this undesirable condition (Sithole, 2022).

In a study using a sample of 81 developing African countries from 1986 to 2016, it was found that IMF loan arrangements with structural reforms, contribute to more people getting trapped in the poverty cycle (Biglaiser and McGauvran, 2022). Furthermore, the same researchers point out that “the reforms involve deep and comprehensive changes that tend to raise unemployment, lower government revenue, increase costs of basic services, and restructure tax collection, pensions, and social security programmes” (Biglaiser and McGauvran, 2022:820) Therefore, African states found themselves constrained by the conditions imposed by the IMF, the World Bank, western governments

and the private banks (Kongo and Zeilig, 2017). These are the conditions that Sankara opposed given that by design, they are meant to trap the continent of Africa and the rest of the Global South in the state of dependency.

Ironically, following Sankara's assassination, Blaise Compaoré who took over the reins following a military coup of 15 October 1987, decided to reverse some of the policy positions of his predecessor. Compaoré's regime was often praised for its posture on economic liberalisation as advanced by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Interestingly, that praise came from the Western world. However, this process undertaken by Compaoré, as Harsch (1998) noted, has been uneven and had contradictory effects. Furthermore, the conditions that accompanied the loans from the IMF, World Bank, and European Union were stringent and at most not beneficial to the ordinary people of Burkina Faso. The list of conditions included, among others, widening the tax base, the rationalisation of direct taxes and reform of customs duties and the containment of public sector wage costs (Harsch, 1998)

The said conditions had implications for the government's role as it promoted the privatisation of most of the key entities and sectors. Clearly, the dependency paradox suggests that weak states find themselves in a predicament involving neoliberal globalisation and structural adjustments imposed by the dominant international political-economic realities despite the implications thereof for socio-economic advancement by the said countries (McGowan, 2005). This situation perpetuates the entrenchment of the neo-colonial agenda by continually trapping the formerly colonised states of which the majority are located in Africa, in a constant state of dependency. This in turn, has implications for the problems of insecurity, instability, poverty and underdevelopment that the continent is grappling with.

For instance, some of the imposed conditions included currency devaluation, privatisation of economies, inflation and interest rates raising and the deregulation of the economy (Oloruntoba and Falola, 2022). Clearly, these conditions are not beneficial for the economic development of the continent and as such, tend to perpetuate dependency. The said conditions force African economies to deviate from their policies because of their dependence on financial aid. Therefore, the persistence of the neo-colonial condition is

undesirable and unsustainable. Its repudiation thereof becomes logical and waging a political revolution can be considered justifiable under these circumstances. Sankara contends that he was only able to appreciate the enormity of the problem of neo-colonialism following his assumption of power. Its entrenchment made him realise the importance of the need to repudiate it. To this end, he declared neo-colonialism the enemy of the people implying that it ought to be dismantled by waging a 'war' against it.

It is thus necessary to raise consciousness insofar as the pervasiveness of dependency keeps Africa poor despite its rich mineral and natural resources. Raising consciousness, Sankara explained, should be key in dealing with the pervasive problem. It must be said that the imposed conditions have kept Africa divided as reflected in the crises of underdevelopment and insecurity on the continent culminating in conflicts, wars, and revolts sponsored by the imperial powers of the West. Dependency on foreign aid can be seen as one of the drivers of conflicts in Africa. Furthermore, the former colonial powers ensured that their ex-colonies remained dependent on them so that their peripherality was entrenched.

As argued below, the emancipation of the continent must begin with the promotion of Pan-Africanism consciousness insofar as the social, political and economic development of the continent can foster the advancement of the African Renaissance. As a starting point, it is thus fitting to examine the concept of revolution to provide context to Sankara's August Burkina revolution.

5.3 Revolution defined.

According to Olutola (2013), revolution entails a process of development that all realms of historical existence are subject to and according to the context involved, it is affected by a variety of factors. Based on this definition, a revolution is unavoidable, considering the fact all global domains are subjected to its influence. One would argue this to not the case given that there ought to be prevailing conditions that lead to its occurrence as reflected below concerning the Burkina revolution. For Araoye (2018), a revolution is a process that seeks to violently overthrow an established socio-political order to create a new set of principles and ideas. One is inclined to concur with this view in that a revolution is undertaken to bring about the transformation of an undesirable system. However,

revolutions do not have to be necessarily violent as was the case with the August fourth revolution in Burkina Faso. Revolutions endeavour to dismantle the established order to bring about a fundamental change in society. When the coercive state fails to meet its expectations, it loses its legitimacy in the eyes of the citizens who resort to challenging the state and its authority (Tar, 2021). This was one of the conditions that led to the Burkina revolution in 1983.

This change in a power dynamic between groups does not happen as the result of a gradual adaptation, rather it comes as the symptom of conflict between the groups involved. It is a sudden societal transformation that constitutes the process of radical transformation at all levels (Sankara, 1988). Importantly, a revolution is waged to dismantle a hegemonic system as Araoye indicates:

A revolution is a rebellion in extreme dedicated to the complete overthrow of a hegemonic order, which may include armed struggle for independence by colonial peoples from a colonising regime or secession by a people who seek to free themselves from an oppressive authority (Araoye, 2015:20).

I am inclined to agree with Araoye in his characterisation of the Burkinabé August fourth military intervention as being revolutionary. A revolution is mostly sparked by the disillusionment with a political elite given that this group tend to replicate the repression and inequities of colonialism and as such, their forced removal becomes the only solution (Kongo and Zeilig, 2017). This was the case with the Burkina revolution in that it aimed to democratise the country by removing from power the undemocratic military regime. Ironically, the Burkina revolution was brought about through a military insurrection. However, for Sankara, the military takeover should be characterised as being different given that it had the support of the people. As he puts it, “for the first time, too, we see the people coming forward in massive numbers to stretch out their hands to the army” (Sankara, 1988:55). This suggests that the Burkinabé people were in favour of the takeover as demonstrated by the mass participation in support of the new regime. This is in line with Wamba dia Wamba’s conception of a revolution as an anti-despotic practice:

Revolution can be defined as practices of breaking away from any despotic community endangering the integrity of life process by destroying the basis of life

and promoting the autonomation of power, individual, value-capital process, etc, then anti-despotic community cultural elements enhance such a revolution (Wamba dia Wamba, 1991:220).

As such the mobilisation of people toward the goal of dismantling an anti-humanistic regime can be justifiable given the dehumanisation exerted by those despotic rulers. In this situation, a revolution will effectively liberate the masses and in the process foster its legitimacy. According to Otayek (1986) the Burkina Faso revolution was one of its kind on the African continent as it was brought to power with the support of the political parties and the trade unions, which can be deemed as the people's revolution. Therefore, one may contend that the fact that the military intervention of August the fourth was relatively peaceful attests to this observation.

For Sankara (1988:404) "the revolution is invincible" given the conditions and the situation at the time. Biko also concedes that if exploitative conditions are perpetually imposed on the people to the extent that the hegemonic system chokes them, there is bound to be a revolution. In this sense, revolutions denote a last resort and plausible action if undertaken to liberate the people from the dominant system that perpetuates their subjection. As with the August revolution in Burkina Faso, the conditions dictated its occurrence as Sankara (1988) explains that it represented the culmination and logical outcome of the Burkinabe struggle toward true liberation and signalled an act of defiance against the domination and exploitation,

This implies that the August Revolution was necessary and served as a logical step towards the attainment of liberation due to the imposed neocolonial conditions. However, whether the true liberation that was envisaged by that event was ultimately attained, is debatable given the deep-rooted challenges of Burkina Faso. As indicated below, the social, political and economic challenges faced by the country at the time were enormous in that it became practically impossible to address them accordingly with the limited resources at the regime's disposal. However, it must be conceded that Sankara's regime brought about tangible social change during the time of his tenure; from the immunisation campaign to ensuring that girl children are educated. This will be illuminated below in this chapter. In this sense, the Burkina revolution was people-centric in its disposition.

Olutola (2013) speaks of total revolutions that affect all facets of life by transforming it with varying degrees of permanency and completeness. In this sense, a revolution constitutes a total overhaul of the systems within a particular polity. This is what Sankara envisioned concerning the Burkina revolution where every aspect of society is transformed so that it detaches from the edifices of the preceding regime, which he characterised as pro-imperialist. To this end, Sankara maintained that “each citizen should work to revolutionize his [sic] sector of activity, wherever he finds himself” (1987:104). Thus, reinforcing the notion of a people-centred revolution, which in turn legitimises the regime.

Sankara further posits that the August revolution occurred because the popular masses in Upper Volta gained political consciousness that propelled them to a process of what he calls political clarification. His analysis suggests that the event of August the fourth signalled a peoples’ revolution as opposed to an insurrection by a particular descending group or faction. This reinforces the legitimacy of the revolution in the sense that ordinary people were involved in the decision toward self-determination. It must be pointed out that the fourth of August revolution cannot be equated to both the coups instituted by Saye Zerbo and Simeon Yoryan that took place in Burkina Faso in 1980 and 1982 respectively. As mentioned above, the August the fourth was different to the preceding insurrections in that it involved the participation of ordinary masses. However, they still formed part of the events that ultimately led to the 1983 August revolution which saw Sankara become the head of state.

5.3.1 The August revolution

To fully understand the events that led to the Burkinabé revolution, it is crucial to put into context the socio-economic state of that country before the advent of the revolution. The significance of the revolution in Burkina Faso can only be appreciated by considering the country’s social and economic conditions of the time (Harsch, 2013). The radicalism of the revolution of August fourth, is nonetheless confined within certain limits deriving everyone from several economic constraints that stem in turn from structural and conjunctural factors. Again, the problem of economic dependency comes to the fore.

Burkina Faso is well and truly situated among the less developed countries on the continent and its per capita Gross National Product hardly exceeds 200 dollars a year. It is a land-locked country, dependent on its regional environment for its external trade. Having no exploitable mining resources (except for the manganese of Tambao) it derives most of its budgetary income from customs duties and the sale of certain agro-industrial crops. These crops include an estimation of 40-50% of registered exported cotton, oleaginous products, such as peanuts and karite, and 30% of livestock export. Upper Volta, as it was known before 1983, was less developed and this included a lack of infrastructure development as the colonial administration never took interest to invest in developmental projects besides a few towns. Thus, the conditions were undesirable and presented an opportunity for revolt. Otayek sums up the reasons behind the August fourth revolution and those include:

(1) The discrediting of the civilian elites. One of the reasons that explains the coming of power of the army in a country that had a reputation for its stability, governed as it had been for over fourteen years by the same man – General Lamizana... (2) The end of unity in the army. The military profession has always enjoyed an unrivalled prestige there, embarking on a military career is a valuable means towards social advancement... (3) the deepening economic crisis and the end of the dialogue with the trade unions. When the army decided to put an end to Lamizana's regime the national economy was in a parlous state... Popular discontent coincided with a continued drop in the standard of living... (4) The power vacuum of the CSP period (Otayek, 2007:85-86).

Although Otayek acknowledges that the August fourth revolution was a military coup d'état conducted following the usual techniques of staging a coup, he concedes that it had the characteristics that distinguished it from other coups on the continent. These types of coups he argues, involve the "disintegration of the traditional political and social systems, inefficiency of the administrative apparatus, incompetence (supposed or real), of the civilian elites, ethnic and regional tensions, instability ..." (Otayek, 1986:97). Therefore, for Otayek, the takeover of August the fourth, presented a rupture from the other coups orchestrated on the continent given that it proclaimed the transferring of

power from the elite bourgeoisie to the hands of the popular masses. One may contend that this legitimises the military insurrection and further make a case for its necessity and sincerity. Sankara characterises the Burkina revolution as having to counter the realities of domination and exploitation. Sankara says:

It is a revolution in a country that, because of imperialism's domination and exploitation of our people, has evolved from a colony into a neocolony. It is a revolution occurring in a country still characterised by the lack of an organised working-class conscious of its historic mission, and which therefore possesses no traditional revolutionary struggle. ... The August revolution exhibits a dual character: it is a democratic and a popular revolution. Its primary tasks are to eliminate imperialist domination and exploitation; and to purge the countryside of all the social, economic, and cultural obstacles that keep it in a backward state. Its democratic character flows from this. It draws its character from the full participation of the Voltaic masses in the revolution, and their consistent mobilisation around democratic and revolutionary slogans that concretely express their interests in opposition to those of the reactionary classes allied with imperialism (Sankara, 1988:90-91).

Sankara deemed the August revolution as democratic given that it involved the participation of ordinary people. Indeed, it cannot be equated to other forms of coup d'états on the continent. Most of the coup d'états on the continent tend to be about the contestation of political power where the conflict is about who governs and ultimately gains control of the state. It would appear from Sankara's assertion that the August revolution was enacted authentically and thus, could be deemed as transformative and liberatory. Here the influence of Marxist ideology is evident concerning Sankara's dialectical analysis involving the two contradictory sides, namely, the oppressed group and the petty bourgeoisie. For him, the situation was compounded by the lack of working-class consciousness insofar as Burkina Faso was concerned. For Marx (2016), revolutionary energy must be enhanced so that the working-class stands out in their struggle by representing the whole of society. Although Sankara acknowledges the absence of organised working-class consciousness at the time of the takeover, the

revolution endeavoured to represent the realisation of the people's needs—in this context to dismantle the neo-imperial conditions.

Conversely, military interventions that purport to be revolutionary but at the same time harm humanity are undesirable as they negate the existence of the human and thus serve as the antithesis of the ethics of *Ubuntu*. A revolution should be premised on transforming the condition of bondage and to give rise to a liberated society. It does not entail the replacement of the conqueror with the conquered. Admittedly, the August revolution can be deemed as a people's revolution as per Sankara's proclamation. As Fanon (1964) posits that fighting for a just world demands that the violated group fight for their re-humanisation considering that violence inflicted by the exploitative system negates one's humanity through all its forms of degradation.

It is worth mentioning that the factors that led to the August revolution appear to paint a picture of a regime in crisis and sufficient to justify the military takeover, albeit a different form of a coup d'état insofar as it enjoyed support from the masses. Accordingly, in his address at the United Nations General Assembly on 4 October 1984, Sankara provided a dire picture of the level of poverty in Burkina Faso "whose seven million [in 1984] children, women, and men refuse to die of ignorance, hunger, and thirst any longer" (1987:154). This situation presented a challenge to most of the citizens and as such, presented a breeding ground for conflicts and unrest. As Sankara further explains:

Just a few images to describe the former Upper Volta: 7 million inhabitants, with over 6 million peasants; an infant mortality rate estimated at 180 per 1000; an average life expectancy limited to 40 years; an illiteracy rate of up to 98 per cent, if we define as literate anyone who can read, write, and speak a language; 1 doctor for 50 000 inhabitants; 16 per cent of school-age youth attending school; and, finally, a per capita Gross Domestic Product of 53, 356 CFA francs, or barely more than 100 U.S. dollars (Sankara, 1988:159-160).

He articulated that the country found itself in that predicament because of some of the decisions made by the pro-imperialist leadership, which advanced a neo-colonial agenda at the expense of the people. Of course, this had to be an indictment on the post-colonial regime given its failure to uplift the lives of the majority in Burkina Faso. In that regard,

the revolution was inevitable. Sankara further depicts a dehumanising condition of poverty in Burkina Faso wherein the survival of a child is dependent on their relatively better socio-economic status. Sankara (1988) elaborated on his own fortunate circumstances as being one of the sixteen children out of a hundred who had the privilege of attending school. Moreover, he was also one of eighteen out of a hundred who completed a high school diploma, and one of the three hundred who went abroad to further their studies. This illustration by Sankara explains the dire conditions that poor Burkinabes were grappling with under the neo-colonial regime. These people had no hope for the future as their experience was predicated on a constant mode of survival.

Confronted with these conditions, it was inevitable that the potential for a revolt was high given their dehumanising effect. The quest for social justice was thus justified and as such, any person preaching a better socio-economic plan was bound to receive a favourable response from the masses. Therefore, given these conditions, Sankara's revolution appears in hindsight to be the logical and fateful conclusion of a sequence of events that had been taking place over several years (Otayek, 1986). The series of events that occurred between November 1980 and August 1983 culminated in the contention for power that saw the Military Committee for Redressment and National Progress (MRCNP) taking over, which Sankara deemed a people's revolution.

Indeed, a people-centred revolution is significant as it is bound to avoid instability and insurrections from detractors although he was unfortunately assassinated in 1987 during a coup that was said to be orchestrated by his comrade and confidante Blaise Compaoré (Skinner, 1987). Sankara maintained that the popular demonstrations that preceded the August fourth revolution, were proof that the entire population of Burkina Faso supported the toppling of the then government. He regarded the regime as imperialist and oppressive towards the people. This aspect solidifies his commitment to advancing the voice of the people in political matters as he considered them to possess agency. Hence, I contend that the revolution was people-centric and did not exhibit characteristics of a self-serving group. It must be stressed that, unlike the violent revolutions that were taking place on the African continent, Sankara's led revolution was the least violent.

Following General Sangoulé Lamizana's military rule since 1966, a *coup de tat* led by Colonel Saye Zerbo was instituted in 1980 culminating in his dethronement. Zerbo and the Military Committee of Recovery for National Progress (CMRPN) took over on 26 November 1980. This regime suspended the constitution, banned trade unions and established a one-party government. However, Zerbo's rule was short-lived as he was to be later deposed in a military coup on 7 November 1982, which claimed the lives of twenty individuals. The coup was led by Yoryan Somé and the Council of Popular Salvation (CSP) and installed Jean-Baptiste Ouédraogo as the head of state. This sparked the problem of instability in Burkina Faso as civilians and ordinary masses became restless by the failures of this regime (Otayek, 2007). The socio-political instability which arose as a result of the preceding coups gave rise to the August revolution.

Sankara puts into perspective the rationale behind the 1983 military revolution which was orchestrated by the (National Council of the Revolution) CNR. For Sankara, the entrenchment of the elements of neo-colonialism necessitated the military intervention to rid the country of the problem particularly, the bourgeoisie elite which he characterised as parasitic. This group is driven by selfish interests due to their willingness to engage in massive corruption, embezzlement of public funds, and many other problematic activities that further relegate and alienate the poor masses to the margins (Sankara, 1988).

These conditions as outlined by Sankara are thus, a breeding ground for the popular uprisings given that the masses are left with no choice but to act to transform the undesirable situation imposed on them. The problem of the advent of neo-colonialism continues to be a factor in the entrenchment of the patterns of exploitation. These conditions are perpetuated by the pro-imperialist elite as Sankara remarks. For Sankara, this kind of leadership works against the interests of the people and this is problematic. The neo-colonial leadership continue to dehumanise the people they rule and disregard their plight thus, forcing them to retaliate. It is for this reason that the military insurrection was justified. Sankara (1988) posits that the neo-liberal elite does not respond to a call for negotiations because the only language they understand is that of combative disposition which includes, if need be, people taking arms to wage to fight for what is rightfully theirs and, in the process, engaging in the revolution.

It follows therefore that the oppressive conditions are likely to push the people who are perpetually condemned by them to escape them by any means necessary. This is because the conditions of poverty, and hopelessness are by design violent and dehumanising. The dismemberment of the colonised as reflected in their dehumanisation is undesirable and its rejection is necessary. Unlike the country's previous military interventions, however, the 1983 takeover was conducted with the direct collaboration of several leftist civilian groups, whose leaders also filled prominent government posts (Harsch, 2011). The revolution of August fourth was one of the rare cases in Africa of a military government brought to power with the support of the political parties and trade unions and cannot be regarded as a simple coup d'état. The Burkinabé revolution should be characterised as more than a rebellion phenomenon, but a strategic plan aimed at improving the lives of the citizenry. Sankara observes that the revolution should not be a senseless rebellious outburst, but it must be steadfast with a scientific, rigorous framework so that it can accurately chart a well-informed way forward. This proves that this action requires a well-thought-out plan that should respond to the needs of the people—not a selfish hunger for political power.

This suggests, on the one hand, that Sankara understood the importance of critically analysing the revolution to strengthen it so that its objectives are achieved. On the other hand, he was not naïve about the potential resistance from the pro-imperialist forces that could potentially derail the movement. It follows that revolutions in their nature are never stable as they are contested by other interest groups thus, rendering them fragile. When interviewed about his ascendancy to power following the coup of 1983, Sankara had this to say:

There are events, moments in life, that are like an encounter, a rendezvous, with the people. To understand them you have to go back a long way into the past, the background, of each individual. You decide to put an end to this or that form of bullying or humiliation, this or that type of exploitation or domination. That's all. It's a bit like someone who has suffered from a serious illness, malaria say, and then decides to devote all his energies to vaccine research—even if it means along the

way that he becomes an eminent scientist in charge of a laboratory or the head of a cutting-edge medical team (Sankara, 1988:190).

It follows from this analogy which Sankara provides here that domination and exploitation compel one to devise mechanisms of escaping them as they dehumanise the self and the nation. He equates the undesirable conditions to a disease which needs to be cured because the body suffers if left unattended. Therefore, the discomfort imposed by the imperialist system must be dealt with to negate the humiliation and exploitation. Sankara further argues that one does not wage a struggle based on becoming a leader but to serve the marginalised masses. It is for this reason that Nkrumah (1968) asserts that leaders who exhibit genuine revolutionary qualities are capable of repudiating neo-colonial machinery for the benefit of the masses. Therefore, the people-centred revolutions endeavour to bring about social justice for the marginalised.

5.3.2 Revolution as a social change

Revolution can be regarded as a weapon of social change and as such, revolutionary leaders should be seen as agents that ignite and set in motion the transformation process. Social change pertains to a process of significant transformation of social structures and cultural patterns over time and can affect everything including education, population, politics, culture, law and administration of the economy (Umar and David, 2021). In recognition of the undesirable conditions which exploit and dehumanise the victims, a social change proponent strives to transform those lives for the benefit of humanity. Authentic African revolutionary movements ought to promote humanistic tenets as core to the integrity of the ultimate transformation of society (Araoye, 2015). The changes involved may over time lead to the rise or fall of political systems; the impact may be positive or negative. In the case of Sankara's political thought, revolution for him denotes a conscious policy oriented towards fighting corruption, promoting reforestation, averting famine and prioritisation of education and health care for the masses (Kongo and Zeilig, 2017).

Above all, Sankara's revolution was about the restoration of dignity and social justice to the Burkina Faso people and to serve as a model for the African continent in waging a

war against neo-colonialism. As Sankara (1988:90) put it, the revolution came about “because of imperialism’s domination and exploitation of our people”. It became the only solution towards the repudiation of imperialism and its exploitative domination.

During his speech at the launch of the People’s Revolutionary Courts (TPRs)¹², he reaffirmed the revolution’s commitment to social justice and the restoration of the dignity of the exploited. Sankara remarked that:

Our popular justice system is different from the system of justice in a society where the exploiters and oppressors control the state apparatus, in that it will strive to bring to light and publicly expose all hidden social and political sides to the crimes perpetrated against the people, and to help them understand the consequences of these in order to draw lessons of social morality and practical politics (Sankara, 1988:113).

It is evident from this extract that the revolution for Sankara, ought to promote social justice and give voice to the voiceless and thus, protect the ordinary people, especially the less privileged from powerful actors. In this sense, the said courts are established to promote equality among the citizens. This then proves his commitment to cultivating a transformative project. Moreover, the courts were also meant to be an instrument to fight corruption. However, although the courts were meant to bring justice, they were not without criticism as indicated below.

When reflecting on the achievements of the revolution following a year and a half after his National Council of the Revolution (NCR) took over, Sankara (1988) took pride in building schools, clinics, dams, and also in the provision of housing for the communities. He conceded that despite these achievements, more work was still required. Despite all these achievements in a short space of time (a year and a half), Sankara was still determined to do more for the people given the state of the socio-economic affairs they were faced with in 1983. It must be said that the predecessor could not attain the said achievements. Therefore, I maintain that given his assessment of the revolution’s

¹² The people’s revolutionary courts were established following the takeover with the aim of putting to trial people alleged to be the enemy of the revolution. One of the accused who was brought to the court was Sangoule Lamizana—for misappropriating public funds.

achievements, and his commitment to more work that was required, he illustrated his commitment to effect social justice for the people of Burkina Faso.

Another aspect of the revolution as a social change pertains to the notion of cultural revolution—that is to transform the culture of a social formation towards that of a critically conscious society. As Sankara notes every revolution must result in a cultural revolution. This is because for him “culture is totally linked with society in the sense that there is no human society without culture, and no culture without correspondence to society” (Sankara, 1988:243). Dussel’s philosophy of liberation stresses the significance of re-affirming cultural values in the face of the entrenched condition of modernity. The affirmation of one’s own values requires time, study, reflection, and a return to the *texts* or symbols and constitutive myths of one’s culture (Dussel, 2012). Those traditional values ignored by modernity should be a point of departure for an internal critique, from within the culture’s hermeneutical possibilities (Dussel, 2012).

The significance of cultural transformation is key given that colonialism has condemned African cultural value systems to an extent that Africans choose to disassociate themselves from them. This has implications for their authentic sense of being as they continue to embrace foreign cultural systems, which alienate their ontological self. Here the dimension of the coloniality of being which perpetuates their subjection is evident. Similarly, Biko regards authentic cultural values as significant to the notion of being African, as it were. He argues that, “a sincere attempt should be made at emphasising the authentic cultural aspects of African people by Africans themselves” (Biko, 1978:44). Biko notes that by re-affirming the authentic cultural values, Africans will be consciously negating the imposed cultural imperialism imposed by Euro-modernity. However, in his avowal of the African cultural systems, Sankara avoided a blind promotion of the said values, particularly, if such are purposively used for nefarious reasons. For instance, the promotion of patriarchy as an African cultural principle at the expense of women’s agency. Sankara’s politics embraced the agency of women, made it clear about their significance in building a just society.

Sankara sought to actively transform the lives of the Burkina Faso people who were negatively impacted by the persistence of the neo-colonial system fraught with

dehumanising factors. The system was choking the peasants who were “expropriated, robbed, mistreated, imprisoned, scoffed at, and humiliated every day, and yet are among those whose labour creates wealth” (Sankara, 1988:83). The liberation of the exploited was therefore closer to Sankara’s heart given that the system denies social justice to those it oppresses. To wage a just negation of the oppressive system became a necessity, and he made this struggle his mission.

Accordingly, Araoye (2018) accedes that his mobilisation of the masses at the grassroots level exhibits a commitment to social change. Moreover, establishing ambitious programmes for social and economic change set him apart in terms of actively uplifting the lives of the poor. For Sankara, the Burkina revolution needed to transform the livelihoods of all members of society, particularly the marginalised groups. In his articulation of the new society for the Burkinabé people he outlined the following socio-economic aspects:

- Making health care available to everyone.
- Setting up maternal and infant assistance and care.
- A policy of immunisation against communicable diseases by increasing the number of vaccination campaigns.
- Raising the masses’ awareness of the need to acquire good habits of hygiene (Sankara, 1987:107).

Sankara goes further to address the problem of housing, which was a concern when his regime took over in 1983. He argued the need for:

- Setting reasonable rents.
- Rapidly dividing neighbourhoods
- Undertaking large -scale construction of modern residential homes, in sufficient numbers and accessible for workers (Sankara, 1988:107).

Although Sankara’s proclamations were labelled as utopian without pragmatic interventions, by some of his critics, in the four years of his presidency, he demonstrated that the proposed ideas could be actualised (Harsch, 2013). One example is the 1984 vaccination programme for children in just two weeks. Furthermore, four years after his

being in power, Burkina Faso began to show signs of economic growth as it became able to meet the demand for basic food (Davis, 2013). This is evident that Sankara was not only making promises, but he was also committed to implementing the initiatives. This illustrates the fact that Sankara as a doer as opposed to Biko who was more of a thinker as demonstrated in his conception of Black Consciousness philosophy.

These initiatives were well received by most citizens, the youth in particular, who were hopeless before the regime takeover. As argued above, in an environment where people feel neglected, marginalised and condemned, they are bound to be receptive to the messages that provide hope concerning the transformation of their material existential conditions. The response in the streets indicated that major sectors of the public – especially young people – had high expectations that finally something would be done to fundamentally refashion their country (Harsch, 2014). Accordingly, this explains Sankara's popularity among the youth as his ideas spoke to their conditions and the associated plans to transform them.

Furthermore, almost thirty-seven (37) years following his assassination, Sankara's ideas continue to resonate with young people across the continent because their liberation is yet to be attained. For this reason, meditating on his revolutionary vision, philosophy and praxis gives them hope under the circumstances of the persistent neo-colonial reality. Understandably so, the trend of youth-led movements in the name of anti-imperialist revolutionary struggles has spread across sub-Saharan Africa. As Harsch (2013) pointed out that radical intellectuals and young activists from across Africa, Europe America gather from time to time to discuss Sankara's ideas and the lessons of the revolutionary effort that he led. For that reason, it is fitting to characterise Sankara as a radical humanist, based on his political thought and praxis.

5.4 Sankara: a radical humanist

A common thread evident in Sankara's political thoughts and praxis must be his people-centred approach to all aspects of society. He exerted a commitment to give voice to the voiceless and to re-affirm their humanity. This means that his ideas and politics were not removed from the realities of the ordinary people, thus, making him a trusted figure among the leaders of the revolution. Moreover, Sankara demonstrated his people-centric attitude

not only towards the Burkinabé people, but also to all disenfranchised people around the globe. This passion for humanity reverberated in his speech at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1984. Sankara confidently and sternly articulated his concerns regarding the state of humanity in the Global South of the marginalised, exploited and oppressed subjects in those parts of the global system. This was reflected in most of his speeches where he would outline his passion for humanity, particularly the downtrodden and the condemned. His politics and praxis reflected a sense of empathy for the marginalised groups as he took it upon himself to bring about social change justice and liberation to the said people. In other words, he lived with the people on the ground by experiencing their reality to fully understand their conditions. Hence, his quest for a people-centric revolution was reflected in his praxis.

This demonstrates the centrality of human-centredness in his thoughts through this expression of solidarity with the dehumanised, exploited and marginalised. He was seen as sensitive and sympathetic to the needs and aspirations of the African masses (Martin, 1987). These attributes speak to his embodiment of *Maat* and *Ubuntu* principles, thus, anchoring his revolution on the centrality of the people. This further speaks to the notion of the conception of the human as encapsulated in *Ubuntu* ethics. Here the saying, *I am because you are*, comes to fruition as opposed to the individuality associated with Western thought. The misfortune of the next individual ought to be my concern since we are interconnected and there must exist a conscious effort to ensure that harmony is maintained at all times. Biko also demonstrates this fundamental principle of being African when he says, “ours has always been a Man-centred [sic] society” (1978:45). In this sense, the survival of the revolution was premised on the people’s buy-in and their inclusion in the struggle for emancipation. Furthermore, his commitment to re-affirm women’s agency by rejecting patriarchy in all aspects of life confirms his ethics of humanness (McFadden, 2018).

Accordingly, it is my view that Sankara embraced the philosophy of *Ubuntu* and the concept of *Maat*. *Maat* embraces equilibrium and equality amongst the people, the environment and the entire universe. Sankara showed environmental foresight given his initiative of planting trees in Burkina Faso—he resuscitated the tree-planting tradition of

the country from a precolonial era (Leshoele, 2019). This initiative speaks to Sankara's expression and embodiment of the spirit of *Ubuntu* as he recognised the significance of nature concerning African cosmology as it forms an integral part of cosmology and the notion of humanness. Sankara rejected the entrenchment of coloniality concerning the environment as he emphasised the importance of ecological harmony given its centrality to African cosmology. The environmental coloniality that this writer refers to here pertains to the pillaging of the continent's resources without any due regard for the environment. Of course, the imperial forces were not concerned about the sustainability of the continent. It must be said that African people had their own worldview that dictated how they responded to their environment before the imposition of colonialism.

For these reasons, it is imperative to regain a sense of place – a location of centredness given the condition of our existence (Asante, 2007). This reinvigoration of the cultures, traditions and values ought to be pursued in response to the contemporary African conditions. One principle which is culturally anterior to Africa's authentic sense of ontological Being and related to *Ubuntu* ethics is the principle of *Maat*. The principle of *Maat* entails an order of the cosmos and humanity and serves as a moral compass of what is right in nature and society and encapsulates the aspects of law, order, justice and truth (Dussel, 2013). As Asante asserts, *Maat* was the ultimate justification for human life. He elaborates further on this principle and its significance to the African ethical-epistemological perspective in this way:

We do need some greater insight, some deeper thought, some mystical *endarkenment* to understand the creation of this will to *Maat*. The Egyptians left for us a legacy of achievement that speaks to *Maat* in all of its characteristics. Whether we speak of language, architecture, art, politics, religion, or mathematics, we are speaking of the majesty of the search for *Maat* in society (Asante, 2007:82).

Clearly, for Asante, the idea of *Maat* is central to African life as it influences all facets of the human experience – its link to the ethics of *Ubuntu* is evident given that they both promote harmony between humanity, the cosmos, and the environment. Ramose (2015) observes that *Ubuntu* entails the condition of permanent, multi-directional movement of entities—and does not signify chaos (for more on this aspect, see Chapter 2). Sankara

demonstrated this principle of *Maat* as illustrated in his actions and praxis, confirming his people-centric approach to politics. This was also demonstrated in his advocacy for solidarity amongst the colonised people.

For Sankara then, solidarity among the colonised peoples was imperative irrespective of their geographical boundaries given that their collective agency is crucial in imagining a just world. Thus, making his revolution an internationally inspired intervention. Of course, he sought to liberate first and foremost the Burkinabé people and the rest of the African continent. Most importantly, for him, the brunt of imperialism ought to be dismantled. The need to dismantle this system comes from a realisation of its pervasiveness involving the spreading of misinformation and its manoeuvring to entrench the status quo and as such, Sankara advises that people must counter-attack it.

It must be pointed out that any implementation of radical reform that seek to expropriate and distribute resources to the deserving disposed people, is bound to be met with resistance. Furthermore, there are bound to be elements of sabotage to the revolutionary project thus frustrating it to ensure that it fails. For this reason, the aspect of instilling political consciousness as he noted, is imperative in ensuring that the masses become conscious political actors in their corners. For Sankara, people must take ownership of the revolution through their actions.

Another dimension of Sankara's political thoughts, as articulated above, pertains to his advocacy for the emancipation of the exploited, marginalised and the condemned is constitutive of his political praxis. It is for this reason that he was preoccupied with the struggle for social justice and to combat any form of dehumanisation. Hence, I posit that his revolution was people-centric in the sense that it propagated the idea of inclusivity and the denouncement of any unjust social exclusion. He frequently reminded everyone who that there is no revolution without the masses. It is on this basis that his call for the emancipation of women is unsurprising given the conditions that this particular group is subjected to. To this end, he made efforts to educate men and boys about the subjection of women by stressing the importance of gender equality. However, he acknowledges the enormity of the work required from both men and women to dismantle the system of

patriarchy. Addressing the score of women at the event marking International Women's Day which took place on the eighth of March in 1987, Sankara said:

These are vital and essential questions, because nothing whole, nothing definitive or lasting can be accomplished in our country as long as a crucial part of ourselves is kept in this condition—a condition imposed over the course of centuries by various systems of exploitation. Starting now, the men and women of Burkina Faso should profoundly change their image of themselves. For they are part of society that is not only establishing new social relations but also provoking a cultural transformation, upsetting the relations of authority between men and women and forcing both to rethink the nature of each (Sankara, 1988:337).

It is evident that attaining liberation is premised on the active and conscious inclusion of all the exploited people, particularly women. It does not make logical sense to exclude a group that forms a significant part of the continent given that women slightly outnumber men demographically. For Sankara, waging a struggle against neo-colonialism that excludes a significant portion of the society is key in the sense that the exploited in their quest for liberation, cannot mimic the exploiter in the process. This amounts to bad faith and perpetuates the subjection of the excluded group at the expense of their humanity. Hence, it follows that the process of conscientisation is key in this regard. Therefore, to rethink the modes of social relations between men and women calls for the establishment of a “new society” given the radicality of that process. As Sankara further pointed out that given the cycle of violence that perpetuates the subjection of women calls for the formulation of a society where men and women enjoy equal rights. He had a strong belief that the status of women will likely improve if the system that exploits them is dismantled.

Given that the entrenched system of exploitation is deeply engrained in the psyches of the members of society, its repudiation requires that a critical introspection be carried out by all involved. This is so because the condition of patriarchy is ideologically deep-rooted and considered normative, and thus its perpetuation goes on. It is, for this reason, that Sankara highlighted issues of gender and accordingly saw it fit to amplify it given the fact that his political praxis not only preached about social justice but practised it through his people-centred approach. In this sense, the liberation of women ought to form part of the

greater struggle. For Sankara (1988), an authentic revolution must include women as he asserted that there is no social revolution without women, and he advocated for their agency and political consciousness. Thus, Sankara saw women as being equal to men in that they possessed the necessary capabilities to wage their struggle against their oppression.

Sankara recognised that the women's struggle was valid, and their silenced fury is bound to explode given that the dehumanisation that comes with their subjection necessitates the revolt. It must be said that Sankara was overly optimistic with this projection as women continue to be subjected in all aspects of their lives and in the process seemingly erased from society. As Tamale (2020) reminds us in this regard that the system of colonialism reconfigured how men and women relate to each other with the latter being diminished or erased from important areas of social and public life. Thus, every emancipatory project must take cognisance of this injustice by deliberately ensuring that the marginalised sections of society are included as equal participants in social, economic and political activities.

Sankara poignantly points out how the entrenched neo-colonial framework of subjection affects both men and women dictating that a collaborative enterprise to combat its exploitative nature be undertaken by both groups. Sankara elaborates in this regard that it remains a woman's fate to suffer exploitation at the hands of men and this interdependence is predicated on how the hegemonic system exploits both parties. However, notwithstanding the systemic subjection of women and men, it is the latter extends that the condemnation of the former. This then entrenches the conditions of women as determined by multiple factors that are economic, social, political, and sexual relegating women to the periphery of a given society. Sankara believed through exercising self-awareness and critical consciousness men will realise the urgency pertaining to women's rights within the context of the colonial experience.

This analysis speaks to the nature of the colonial experience that both men and women in the Global South are subjected to daily. Moreover, it further highlights the different forms of exploitation that women experience based firstly on their race (black) and secondly, gender. This constitutes double oppression in a way. Tamale characterises this

form of subjection concerning black women as being “Othered on two fronts, while he [black men] is Othered on only one” (2020:82). It is thus crucial that the women’s agency be affirmed and legitimised to allow them to become equal agents in waging the struggle against the oppressive system in solidarity with men.

Notwithstanding, black women residing both on the continent and the diaspora were not silent insofar as the struggle against oppression was concerned. Often their contribution toward liberation is diminished and erased from society. Unfortunately, the post-independence era did not usher in better opportunities for women as Gordon points out:

Despite women’s contributions to the struggle for independence and rhetoric in favour of equality for all, the new African states and social institutions became Africanised replicas of their colonial predecessors. The advantages men had gained in access to education, jobs, and leadership positions in newly independent African countries (Gordon, 2013:311).

Despite the persistence of coloniality, characterised by modes of subjection of the former colonised, it is women who are more subjected to its wrath as opposed to men. This suppresses their agency and perpetuates their objectification through the negation of their existence which then signifies them as the subjected ‘other’. However, this is not to downplay its severity insofar as the male bodies are concerned but to highlight the plight of women amid the entrenched hegemonic system. This constitutes bad faith and therefore, problematic insofar as the discursivity surrounding decoloniality calls for social justice of every condemned subject.

That said, I wish to direct the reader to the previous chapter where the problem of antiblackness was explored concerning its systemic nature. The entrenched antiblackness is reflected in the asymmetrical nature of the global system which exerts negative bias against black bodies globally. As Grosfoguel (2017) points out that nobody escapes the class, sexual, gender, spiritual, linguistic, geographical, and racial hierarchies of the modern/colonial/capitalist/patriarchal world-system. He posits further that anti-capitalist decolonisation and liberation cannot be reduced to only one dimension of social life. It requires a broader transformation of the sexual, gender, spiritual,

epistemic, economic, political, linguistic and racial hierarchies of the modern/colonial world system (Grosfoguel, 2017). Thus, it is my view that subjecting another vulnerable group does not align with the values and principles of *Ubuntu* insofar as the affirmation of the human is key from an African lens. Thus, the subjection whether inadvertently so, serves as an antithesis of a decolonial project, which calls for the liberation of every dehumanised body.

Therefore, one is inclined to accept the proposition by Tamale (2020) on the need to solidify various sectors of society to fight back at a system that is itself solidified. Tamale (2020) argues that given the intersectionality of the oppressive system involving among others, patriarchy, capitalism and so forth; alliances and coalitions with various social groups, unity of the marginalised and subjugated becomes key in dismantling systems of domination. Therefore, the subjection of one social group is counter-productive and detrimental to the liberation cause. This is of course over and above the fact that any form of suppression and exploitation is evil and must be rightfully challenged given its dehumanising impact. Hence, Sankara's project of appealing to men to become allies of women's emancipation is plausible as it promotes social justice. It is for this reason that one contends that Sankara's political thought set him as revolutionary.

5.5 Sankara: a revolutionary leader

The African predicament of dependency following the abolition of physical colonial administration continues to be of concern on the continent insofar as leadership is concerned. The problem stems from contemporary African leaders facing historical and inherited models of leadership that perpetuate poverty and dependency mindsets (Arguello, 2017). A true leader is someone who possesses the ability to inspire and mobilise people to take a particular action. In the context of African leadership, it must be appreciated that the African situation demands the kind of leadership which is rightly suited to confront the socio-economic challenges and the predicament of the continent. As Arguello (2017:28) succinctly puts it, "leaders who grow confidence both individually as well as within a group context may increase their ability to overcome unhealthy mindsets of dependency". This type of leadership was demonstrated by Sankara in the

sense that he took on the responsibility of fighting for a common goal on behalf of the people. Sankara (1988: 190) believed that “you can’t wage a struggle as a pretext, a lever, to acquire power, because generally the mask cracks very fast”. In this sense, a true leader ought to be inspired by the needs and interests of the people as opposed to advancing her/his self-interest. A self-serving leader will always be marred by the mask of bad faith given the implications of their actions on the people.

This African must traverse and navigate a very complex terrain fraught with several obstacles: among them, the legacy of colonialism, neo-colonialism and underdevelopment. It is thus significant that African leadership should take a human-centred approach characterised by the promotion of human well-being, which is anchored on the notion of interdependence among individuals. Sankara was able to galvanise ordinary people to take conscious action such as encouraging communities to build new schools, clinics and other essential facilities (Harsch, 2013). Although Sankara later realised that it would take more than the act of persuasion to get the people to do as he instructed them—this demands a resolute leader capable of manoeuvring any challenge he/she is presented with.

Sankara pursued a radical revolutionary agenda that addressed mental emancipation as well as the affirmation of people’s agency and thus, should be considered as a figure of promise for contemporary politics (Murrey, 2018). Similar to Biko’s thought, Sankara ensured that he advocated for the decolonisation of the mind so that the people appreciate the work that needs to be done to attain critical consciousness and ultimately, liberation. As Sankara (1988:197) puts it, “we have to recondition our people to accept themselves as they are...”. Mental liberation is crucial as it offers a precondition for critical consciousness. Similarly, Biko notes that the philosophy of Black Consciousness has the requisite capability of liberating the mind of the oppressed by amplifying critical consciousness:

Hence thinking along the lines of Black Consciousness makes the black man [sic] see himself as a being, entirely in himself, and not as an extension of a broom or additional leverage to some machine. At the end of it all, he [sic] cannot tolerate attempts by anybody to dwarf the significance of his manhood [sic] (Biko, 1978:74).

This speaks to one's affirmation of her/his humanity in that raising one's critical consciousness is bound to lead to mental liberation. A liberatory attitude and consciousness compels the agent in this respect to resist any form of subjugation. Radical action of shifting the existing ways of thinking and doing things is crucial in terms of decolonial thinking and the future of the development of the African continent. This project requires the enactment of epistemic disobedience, critical consciousness and mental liberation and both Biko and Sankara are the proponents of this radical action.

The kind of revolutionary leadership that foregrounds the interest of the people is also reflected in Sankara's thought. When asked about the creation of a single party following the CDR's takeover in 1983, Sankara asserted that "it can become too restrictive, overly selective in relation to the masses who are mobilised" (1988:221). In this instance, Sankara suggests that the establishment of a single party cannot take priority over the issues of significance to the masses. Sankara remarked that if that party was to be instituted, it ought to be in the interest of the people because it has to be an integral part of the masses. Sankara believed that the masses should struggle without a party, perhaps this view is based on the fact that politics tend to mobilise around a powerful individual/s and in the process, discount the views and interests of the people.

Hence, his assertion that the masses are integral to every decision that involves the revolution as the revolution is anchored on the mobilisation of every individual. Leshoele (2017) also characterises this as a human-centered revolution. Therefore, one is inclined to accept Leshoele's characterisation of his leadership. In his own words, Leshoele (2017:41) characterises this leadership in this way:

- (a) a servant style that was informed by *Maat*, that is, consciousness that nature, environment, the universe and humans must coexist harmoniously;
- (b) an insistence on the agency of people to lead through an engaged political consciousness and awareness;
- (c) an exceptional organisational capacity rooted in 'thought leadership', and
- (d) resistance against personality cults and idolatry.

To Sankara, one must be innovative insofar as dealing with the situation as dictated by the context and circumstances. Radical thinking is thus crucial when faced with dehumanising conditions as per Sankara's analogy that one has to act like a madman.

For Sankara, “it took the madmen of yesterday for us to be able to act with extreme clarity today” (1988:232). Thus, it can be argued that Sankara dared to disrupt the status quo and took it upon himself to conscientise the masses. To be characterised as a revolutionary one has to live as one and embody its attributes and Sankara demonstrated this by leading by example, including leading a modest life. Sankara denounced self-enrichment.

Some of the actions that Sankara took after assuming power in 1984 included, among others, land distribution to the landless; reduction of urban slums through large-scale housing projects and the launching of a mass vaccination programme to eradicate polio, meningitis and measles culminating in a half million Burkinabé children being vaccinated in just two weeks (Harsch 2013). Moreover, Sankara’s regime embarked on a mass literacy campaign involving 35,000 Burkina people in February 1986. These interventions are a testament to Sankara’s commitment to uplifting the lives of ordinary Burkinabé people. Perhaps his controversial decision pertained to the reduction of the salaries of public servants, including himself but putting a stop to the use of government chauffeurs and first-class flights when travelling, should be commendable.

It must be noted that these achievements were attained within a short period, and this was in contrast with the previous pro-imperialist regimes, in the sense that they failed to uplift the Burkina nation out of the misery of underdevelopment since post-independence. Furthermore, in addition to these achievements, Sankara understood the impact of climate change particularly in the vulnerable Sahel region which is marked by a plethora of climate-related challenge events such as drought and deforestation. To this end, he launched a mass reforestation campaign aimed at mitigating the impact of this situation. For Sankara, the campaign should aim to protect the Sahel region for the contemporary population and the future ones. Sankara’s concern regarding the rapid deforestation of the Sahel region demonstrated his awareness regarding ecological conservation and its link to the notion of harmony and African cosmology. This signifies the importance of the natural environment on people’s lives and highlighting this aspect serves to create an awareness.

Thus, in this sense, Sankara inculcated the culture of planting trees in Burkina Faso to mark every important event as it occurs in every family unit. This campaign culminated in ten million trees being planted over fifteen months. In this way, community members were conscientised about the importance of trees in society and about the significance of ensuring harmony between nature, the environment, and humanity. Stressing the interconnectedness of these entities is embedded in *Ubuntu* philosophy of which its values and principles need to be embraced. In this regard, Sankara (1988) stressed in this regard that the problem posed by the cutting of trees is the creation of imbalance and disharmony between the individual, society and nature and as such, it must be redressed for the sake of the living and those yet to be born. In other words, the future will be bleak without the conservation of the nature and the environment.

It is evident from the excerpt regarding Sankara's politics of people-centredness in the sense that the establishment of harmony between nature, the environment and the people is beneficial for the latter. This harmony is now more than ever critical considering the problems associated with the consequences of climate change. Moreover, the foresight to think beyond his immediate situation is key given the fact that people are interconnected due to the advent of globalisation. To this Ramose (2015: 70) posits that "to care for one another, therefore, implies caring for physical nature as well" . It follows that humans are duty-bound to preserve and conserve the environment for, their existence is predicated on the attainment of harmonious relationship with it.

Ramose (2015) reminds us further that the technological advancement that came with the advent of modernity has meant that people have disavowed the values of *Ubuntu*, which for him is detrimental. Ironically, the era of technological advancement has heightened the need and significance of *Ubuntu* principles given the threat of the catastrophic ecological disaster faced by humanity. For Ramose, "this is exemplified by the widespread air pollution, global warming, the destruction of the ozone layer and the ever-constant threat of the nuclear omnicide" (2015:71). Ramose suggests, in this regard that *Ubuntu* philosophy can make a significant contribution towards global peace. One would agree with Ramose that the embracement of *Ubuntu* philosophy should serve to conscientise humanity about the value of practising humanness through one's praxis. As

noted in Chapter 2, one needs to consciously practice *Ubuntu* in the ontological sense, meaning one has to be *umuntu/motho* through authentic enactment of *Ubuntu*. This has implications for the one who practices *Ubuntu* insofar as her/his fellow humans, the environment and the physical nature are key towards the notion of harmony between various entities. Although Sankara has not explicitly referred to *Ubuntu* in his politics, however, I contend that his philosophy and praxis reflect its values and principles, proving the pervasiveness of the idea of collectivism among Africans.

A people-centric approach to socio-political issues means that a revolutionary leader must have the ability to persuade the people he leads so to adopt a specific cause given that the legitimacy is not questioned. Sankara possesses that ability given that most of the members of society heeded his call to volunteer to rebuild the country. The revolutionary government (CNR) initiated several infrastructural projects that included, among others, the construction of railway lines and irrigation dams, the reforestation projects and the housing project in Ouagadougou. These projects attracted hundreds of volunteers. This implies that the people demonstrated a buy-in insofar as Sankara's vision of rebuilding the country was concerned. This then speaks to his type of leadership as characterised by a commitment to uplifting the lives of ordinary people and importantly, the people concerned believed in his leadership capabilities.

Although insofar as the economic policies are concerned, the new regime was criticised for lacking clarity in articulating the plans besides detaching the economic ties with the French coloniser (Otayek, 1985). However, the strength of that regime as led by Sankara relied upon the mobilisation of human resources by relying on the labour-power of the peasant masses, which entailed the taxation of the labour force (Otayek, 1985). The sustainability of this approach was always going to be questioned by the detractors. It must be said that the pragmatic solution approach adopted by Sankara's regime mainly focussed on the immediate results given the situation at that time. Despite this, a considerable effort was made to boost the ailing infrastructure by building schools, dams and agricultural reforms. All these projects improved the socio-economic status of the Burkinabé people, particularly the vulnerable and the poor. This is what distinguishes Sankara from Biko in that the former not only expressed his vision and ideas through

speeches but also had an opportunity to implement some of those plans. Martin (1987) concurs that Sankara was both a thinker and a doer as he not only articulated his vision, but also put his thoughts into practice with some various degrees of success. Moreover, in his expression of praxis and political thought, Sankara promoted the notion of Pan-Africanism as it is articulated below.

5.6 Sankara: The Pan-Africanist

For this thesis, Pan-Africanism is approached from a prism of a liberatory discourse aimed at mobilising Africans on the continent and the diaspora to work towards the on-going project of decolonising the continent in thoughts and practise. In this sense, Ndlovu-Gatsheni asserts that Pan-Africanism should be regarded as a “counter-force to the hegemonic global designs in place since the time of conquest” (2013:47). It is this persistent condition of marginality that hinders Africa’s economic development and unification given that neo-imperialism impeded any foresight to unify the continent. Hence the continued debates on the continent concerning the liberation struggle. It is the said liberation that Africa is yet to attain, and which prompted both Biko and Sankara to dedicate their lives in a quest to combat the imposed system of exploitation. It follows then that the struggle for liberation needs to be re-imagined and reinforced if its end goal is to be realised.

It is this crisis which is associated with the entrenched neo-liberal capitalist system as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) argues, that dictates the intensification of the institutionalisation of Pan-Africanism. In his interview with the Cameroonian author, Mongo Beti, Sankara lamented the failure of the project of Pan-Africanism to attain true liberation of the continent but at the same time stressed that it should be re-invigorated. For him, Pan-Africanism is a counter-hegemonic framework towards the liberation of the continent as the need to mobilise against the common enemy of imperialism remains crucial. Therefore, the advancement of African unity is key in that regard. As Nkrumah (1963) pointed out that the significance of African unity is key for the sake of safeguarding the continent’s natural resources. For Nkrumah, Africans must unite to foster and forge a plan to take full defence and exploitation of the material and human resources in the interest

of all African people. Evidently, without political and economic unification, and a clear plan to attain these, the continent is bound to imperialist pressure and a doomed future.

Furthermore, Nkrumah's thesis is predicated on the fact that without African unity, Western powers will continue to exploit the natural resources from the continent without the benefit of the people. It is through a unified front that the protection against exploitation from the external actors who have been extracting the continent's resources at the expense of the ordinary citizens can be achieved. Such exploiters use the conflicts and revolts that tend to periodically erupt on the continent to their advantage and for their selfish interests. To a larger extent, they incite these and fund their continuation. Take the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan as a practical examples.¹³ Perhaps Araoye's (2018) characterisation of the stagnation of the continent to become a global player accentuates the failure to attain African unity. He suggests that failure to advance the notion of Pan-Africanism is to be blamed for the current predicament faced by the continent wherein the possibility of being an equal global player as a bloc cannot be envisaged (Araoye, 2018).

However, it is unclear from this assertion the key role Africa can play on the global scene given that the global system is, by design, capitalist which of course, is to be blamed for the undesirable situation of the continent. Therefore, one may contend that Africa must participate in the global system on its terms, and this implies that it must first and foremost, detach from the global neo-colonial system and demand for a pluriversal framework, which recognises the uniqueness of every participant in the global arena. In this sense, a unified continent is bound to leverage its amplified voice to assert its agency within a global system.

¹³ The Democratic Republic of Congo has been involved in conflicts involving militant groups over territory and natural resources. The persistent political violence has led to killings and displacement of civilians. According to the Center for Preventative Action (2023), since 1996, conflict in eastern DRC contributed to the killing of approximately six million people and it appears that no solution seems to be forthcoming, which is unfortunate. Similarly, South Sudan has been grappling from civil war since gaining its independence from the Republic of Sudan in 2011. As of 2021, there has been persistent conflicts leading to displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians leading to a humanitarian crisis.

Sankara regards the idea of African unity as conceptualised by Nkrumah as Africa's hope in achieving socio-economic and cultural emancipation. In this regard, Sankara posits that Nkrumah's hope for African unity served as a way of responding to the ravages of imperialism and given the persistent conditions, this idea is more relevant to the contemporary situation. Its realisation falls to all Pan-Africanist people to give Africa hope by taking up the torch of Nkrumah (Sankara, 1988).

Sankara believed in Nkrumah's idea of African unity as pertinent and worth embracing by all Pan-Africanism proponents towards the realisation of true liberation. As reflected in his assertion there is only one colour on the continent and that is African unity. Sankara's conception of African unity is based on the conviction that such unity will be brought about ultimately by the *people*, not by the governments.

For Sankara the 'people' are constituted by a coalition of popular classes who have been perpetually ignored and marginalised politically and exploited economically by successive colonial and neo-colonial regimes (Martin, 1987). This aspect reinforces Sankara's commitment to people-centred socio-economic justice, which should ultimately restore their humanity. For Sankara, the agency of the exploited classes is bound to bring about a true revolution. However, this cannot happen without critical consciousness as noted in the previous chapter concerning its significance insofar as the negation of bad faith is key. Hence, Murithi (2020) advocates for the notion of Pan-African consciousness which forges a collective commitment to advancing solidarity among Africans (please see Chapter 2 for more on this aspect). That said, advancing the idea of African solidarity capable of yielding tangible impact, requires the active participation of African leadership.

However, it would take a transformative leadership that embodies critical consciousness to realise the urgency of African unity that centres the interests of the masses. As noted by Sankara, the current leadership or any person who believes in the notion of Pan-Africanism as a counter-hegemonic discourse must take up the torch from pioneers such as Nkrumah who were pathfinders towards a united Africa. In this sense, Gumede (2008) proposes that the notion of development in Africa should be predicated on thought leadership, thought liberation and critical consciousness of both the political elites and the citizens. This pertains to the kind of leadership that Sankara labels as revolutionary in its

actions as it is beneficial to the people it leads. One of the principles of revolutionary leadership as Sankara noted, is the possession of revolutionary moral values, which dictate how leaders conduct themselves in society so that they build trust and rapport with the people they lead.

Thus, the revolutionary leadership as Sankara pointed out must be exemplary in their thoughts and practice. The need for transformative leadership is evident given the realities of the African condition. I contend that this is the kind of leadership that Sankara and Biko embodied through their thoughts and praxis. To this end, a revolutionary leader must evoke a critical consciousness to conscientise the masses about the significance of espousing a Pan-Africanist consciousness.

Biko reminds us of the importance of one's consciousness insofar as one's emancipation is concerned. He argues that "the interrelationship between the consciousness of the self and the emancipatory programme is of paramount importance" (Biko, 1978:53). As he notes further that the dominated subject ought to seek liberation by transforming the system through the embracement of the philosophy of Black Consciousness. A conscious self is bound to seek an escape from the shackles of exploitation, and this can be augmented through the embodiment of a Pan-Africanist consciousness. Therefore, Black Consciousness implores the oppressed to come to realisation regarding the undesirable imposed system insofar as her true ontological self is condemned; and as such, detaching from the hegemonic system becomes imperative in such a predicament.

It is evident that Sankara's thinking was not only confined to the politics of Burkina Faso but also understood the importance of advancing collaborative endeavours on the African continent for the betterment of its people. His politics extended beyond the continent of Africa given his views concerning the exploited and dominated subjects irrespective of their localities as demonstrated in the speech he delivered at the United Nations General Assembly in October of 1984. Sankara expressed solidarity with the people of Palestine who at the time were confronted with suffering at the hands of Zionist Israel. Detrimentially,

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is still ongoing in 2023.¹⁴ Above all, he regarded himself as a Pan-Africanist who sought to restore the dignity of the Africans and the well-being and progress of the African continent (Martin, 1987). In an interview with Mongo Beti which took place in November 1985, Sankara remarked that Pan-Africanism as a political idea needs to be adopted by all Africans who would like to see the continent advance and prosper. He regarded Nkrumah's call for African unity as noble albeit not gaining traction on the continent due to the imposition of neo-imperialism. Sankara (1988) remarked that the idea of African unity needs the Pan-Africanist proponents to attain its realisation to give hope and take up Nkrumah's torch.

In suggesting that the Pan-Africanism ideal provides hope to the African citizenry, Sankara vehemently believed that it should serve as a response to the imposed neo-imperialism. His Pan-Africanist thinking advocated for a fundamental delinking from epistemic, and economic dependency from the West (Biney, 2018:128). His visionary ideas according to Biney, for a better Africa included, among others:

Interrogation of the meaning of development in Africa in which he called for a rupture from existing models of development: an end to aid dependency; the elimination of the intellectual bankruptcy of Africa's ruling class: and a fundamental restructuring and democratising of the UN (Biney, 2018:128).

It must be appreciated that there were no substantial socio-economic changes in postcolonial Africa following the departure of the coloniser and as such, some form of radical transformation is long overdue. As Eke (1996) writes, the postcolonial African state continued to be totalistic in scope with a statist economy. One may argue in this case that the situation of economic dependency arose by design to further perpetuate and entrenched the conditions of Africa. Eke aptly demonstrates the nature and the

¹⁴ Although the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been ongoing since the end of the nineteenth century as reflected in Sankara's observation, it was on 7 October 2023 where a fresh outbreak of the tension ensued. According to the Center for the Preventative Action (2023), in the first of month of fighting between the Israeli state and the Hamas group, approximately 1300 Israelis and 10 000 Palestinians were killed. Unlike conflicts in Africa and other places in the Global South (Iraq, Afghanistan, etc.), the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has sparked outrage in the Global North.

circumstances that entrench the problem of dependency on the continent when he/she writes:

Thus while African leaders talked about the fragility of political independence and the need to buttress it by self-reliant development, they eagerly embraced economic dependence in time, this frame of mind led to the conception of development as something to be achieved through changes in the vertical relations between Africa and the wealthy countries: a greater flow of technical assistance to Africa, more loans on better terms, more foreign investment in Africa, accelerated transfer of technology, better prices for primary commodities, greater access to Western markets, and so forth (Eke, 1996:8).

This state of affairs as articulated here by Eke, is problematic in that it fosters the condition of dependency and in the process limits any effort of self-reliance. This is detrimental to the advancement of Pan-Africanism in the sense that, reliance on Western financial assistance comes with terms that in most cases, dictate undesirable structural adjustments. Accordingly, this challenge is reflected in the African Union (AU), which is supposed to foster the idea of African unity because the bulk of the funds are provided by non-African donors. To this on-going threat to the decolonial projects Mbeki argues that:

Practically this means that our preeminent Continental organisation, the AU, cannot properly implement the transformation programmes contained in the agreed all-Africa policies unless external donors agree to finance these programmes. This is unsustainable! The conscious masses are committed to the vision and strategic objective—*Africa must unite!* (Emphasis in the original) (Mbeki, 2013:17).

Mbeki suggests that African unity is hindered by the reliance on external funders as this is undesirable and is bound to keep the continent dependent on external forces. In these conditions, African leaders are forced to disregard their endogenous policies, which often puts Africans at a disadvantage. Ultimately, attaining social and economic transformation becomes impossible. That said, Sankara understood the importance of the development of the continent insofar as social transformation entails a positive trajectory for the

advancement of Pan-Africanism. Therefore, he envisioned a new paradigm of social, political, economic and ecological justice that would steer the continent to a new path and ultimately detach from neo-imperial patterns of exploitation.

Indeed, Sankara saw the advancement of Pan-Africanism as crucial in the struggle against neo-colonialism and to ultimately develop the continent. It is the idea of Pan-Africanism that Nkrumah touted as a vessel for attaining political unity. For Nkrumah, the economic development that Africa needs is predicated on the unification of the continent. Nkrumah maintains that:

Without political unity, African states can never commit themselves to full economic integration, which is the only productive form of integration able to develop our great resources fully for the well-being of the African people as a whole. Furthermore, the lack of political unity places inter-African economic institutions at the mercy of powerful, foreign commercial interests, and sooner or later these will use such institutions as funnels through which to pour money for the continued exploitation of Africa (Nkrumah, 1968:40).

Viewed in the context of persistent conflicts and insurgencies on the continent, particularly in West Africa, the promotion of political unity is significant. However, it does not follow that its attainment will necessarily get rid of those conflicts, but it is bound to bring some form of stability in the affected regions. Sankara expressed his concern regarding the persistence of conflicts and insurrections on the continent and their negative impact on economic development. Speaking at the United Nations assembly, Sankara (1988) articulated the situation as a continuing struggle notwithstanding the progress made, the continent continues to reflect the basic reality of the conflicts between major powers with dire consequences for the ordinary citizenry.

It must be pointed out that conflicts have negative implications on the lives of ordinary people in that they destabilise economies; negatively impact the livelihoods of civilians and bring about instability in the countries involved. Highlighting the impact of conflicts in West Africa, McGowan paints a grim picture regarding their negative impact on humanitarian and developmental endeavours. According to McGowan (2005), 238 million

people in West Africa have been negatively affected by coups, leaving 2 million dead and millions of other people as refugees and others displaced. These statistics pertain to a period ranging from the beginning of independence until 2004 and point to the fact that an unstable Africa is undesirable. It follows that a great and conscious effort is needed from the African leadership, which can draw valuable lessons from Sankara's political thought and praxis.

Similarly, Chigozie and Oyinmiebi (2022) have noted a noticeable increase in military coups on the continent during the period between 2010 and 2022, which is a cause for concern. West Africa is regarded as the epicentre of military coups on the continent. Therefore, this illustrates the humanitarian crisis because of these insurgencies explains the continued conditions of poverty and economic instability in the affected countries. This is undesirable and unsustainable for these countries' citizens. Against this background, Africa needs a transformative leadership which is conscious about the realities of the continent and their implications for its citizenry of whom the majority are the youth. I contend that Sankara espoused these values and principles in light of attaining social justice. That said, I explore his thought and praxis in relation to the promotion of African Renaissance.

5.7 Sankara's thought and African Renaissance

Having established that Sankara's politics place him as a proponent of the idea of Pan-Africanism, it is necessary to determine whether his thought advances the notion of African Renaissance when viewed as a de-linking tool. The notion of de-linking is key within the decolonial scholarship as it attempts to envisage a pluriversal world where multitudes of epistemic realities co-exist towards a liberated society. To de-link from the matrices of coloniality entails a process of inward-looking. This process according to Biko (1978) involves Africans determining their social, political, cultural and economic strategies for the betterment of the continent and its people. The African Renaissance project recognises that the continued subjection of the continent in the hands of the former coloniser is problematic and unsustainable. The inability of post-independence Africa to transcend the neo-colonial patterns of exploitation has been a point of discussion by a variety of voices from within and outside the continent. In this sense, the realisation of

social, economic and political integration should be the solution for the current African realities. As pointed out above, regional integration cannot happen without forging and advancing the ideology of Pan-Africanism. Therefore, it follows that it is only through the Pan-Africanist consciousness that the idea of African Renaissance is to be achieved.

Accordingly, More (2002) posits that African Renaissance signals how Africans perceive themselves within modernity and proclaims the emergence of a new perception and redefinition of African problems within the context of (post) colonial and (post) apartheid realities. In this sense, having experienced exploitation in various forms throughout centuries, Africans are beginning to realise that they need to determine their liberation by demanding a pluriversal world, which affirms their humanity. For Araoye (2013) then, African Renaissance should serve as a compass in navigating the interaction of black humanity in relating to the historically hostile global universe that had exploited Africans in the service of the strategic interests of dominant foreign powers. The hostile realities of the colonial forces dictate a counter-hegemonic discourse to dismantle the imposed conditions of coloniality.

It is against this backdrop that I argue that Sankara's thoughts and praxis advance the idea of African Renaissance. Firstly, Sankara embodied the principle of Pan-Africanist consciousness, and this is reflected in his speeches and actions. However, he acknowledges the shortcomings concerning Nkrumah's proposition of the economic and political unification of the continent. He nonetheless advocates for its reinforcement in light of the persistent challenges imposed by the neo-imperial patterns of exploitation. Secondly, Sankara's revolutionary mission is propagated on the idea of detaching from the Western way of doing things given its perpetuation of neo-imperialism. Here the notion of conscientisation as per Biko's thought of Black Consciousness is evident in the sense that the aspect of mental liberation and emancipation are key. A conscious being is bound to negate the imposed condition which suppresses her/him and in the process avoids being trapped in the mask of bad faith.

Finally, Sankara's people-centred approach to social, political, and economic issues, reflects his commitment to liberation and ultimately, social justice. This speaks to the significance of *Ubuntu* insofar as the humanisation of the condemned and exploited is

imperative. Besides, there will not be African Renaissance without the people's agency. Furthermore, African Renaissance can only be advanced if it is inclusive of everyone on the continent irrespective of gender, race, religion or geographic location. Accordingly, Sankara demonstrated this inclusivity by advocating for the emancipation of women and affirming their agency for equal opportunities to participate in the economic development of the continent. This is crucial, particularly against the background of the entrenched system of patriarchy on the continent. It is for these reasons that I contend that Sankara's thoughts, and praxis are humanistic and liberatory and offer a lens to carve a path towards the socio-economic development of the continent and to ultimately, attain and fulfil the ideals of African Renaissance.

5.8 Sankara's revolution: a critique

According to Davis (2013), Sankara's rule was by no means unimpeachable and had an authoritarian bite. Perhaps this could be attributed to his military training. Nevertheless, as Kendah (2004) observes, of all the subaltern leaders, Sankara can be regarded as sincere in his commitment to advance the lives of the marginalised classes. This assertion is valid as proven by his political thoughts, but it must be pointed out that no human being is perfect and the quality of one in leadership should be based on how one is prepared to self-reflect to become better leaders. One part of his leadership which is contested is his replacement of political parties with 'committees', which he saw as a more direct form of public participation. As indicated above, Sankara was of the view that the country was not ready for party politics which can be considered as stifling the modes of democracy given the importance of political participation in a democratic system. Seemingly, the complexity of taking over a government that was almost bankrupt with a plethora of issues resulting from rampant corruption and ineptitude must not be overlooked. The challenges that Sankara's regime faced should be read in that context. The regime was faced with a magnitude of social and economic issues as articulated by Skinner:

His country was too poor and too small for the revolution which he launched to have been taken seriously. He tried to accomplish a great deal, and he devoted too much time to foreign affairs. But power itself is a school, and Sankara learned quickly. The pity is that he had so little time to prove himself (Skinner, 1987:438).

Admittedly, Sankara and his colleagues had to come up with innovative ways of dealing with the situation which appeared to be dire despite their limited resources, and lack of governance experience. Notwithstanding his commitment and sincerity, Sankara had to learn on the job about the complexities and adversarial challenges of leading a state such as Burkina Faso, which was struggling with underdevelopment amongst other problems.

Another contentious aspect of his presidency involved Sankara's rocky relations with the unions. The implication of this saw several unionists and army officers executed for allegedly plotting a coup and the imprisonment of 1000 teachers who went on strike in 1985 (Kendah, 2004). The situation became volatile as Sankara believed that labour unions were influenced by either local or external reactionary forces of imperialism (Skinner, 1987). Sankara did not hold unions in high regard, and after a general strike in 1985, he fired 1,300 civil servants and replaced them with underqualified loyalists. One of the reasons that led to the strike was Sankara's decision to cut the salaries of civil servants. According to Sankara, it was necessary to make sacrifices of salary cuts and other austerity measures to support the cause of the revolution. Sankara defended that decision when he argued that sacrifices were made for the sake of the communal good as the funds were used for the upliftment of the Burkinabe people, the less privileged.

Although debatable on whether it is advisable to dock wages of the few working class for the benefit of the majority, Sankara viewed this decision as viable in the sense that it promotes self-reliance. He argues that the configuration of the economic global system is skewed against most of the countries of the Global South, which forces countries like Burkina Faso to resort to these types of stringent measures. However, this top-down decision was bound to evoke resistance from the affected parties. Notwithstanding the valid reasons given by Sankara, the absence of consultative processes, particularly concerning people's financial matters undermines the democratic principles and amounts to some form of dictatorship.

In his quest to promote justice among the people, Sankara's regime launched what he termed the People's Revolutionary Courts (TPRs). He instituted a type of public justice in the form of "revolutionary tribunals", where people were punished for corruption but also for vaguer crimes like being a lazy worker, or a 'counter-revolutionary' (Sankara,

1988:116). This is clearly problematic and reflects some semblance of an autocratic rule. This is what Sankara had to say regarding the TPRs at their launch function:

Today, to achieve its deepest long-standing aspirations, the Voltaic people themselves have forged an appropriate instrument—the People’s Revolutionary Courts. We have made our choice, and from now on, nothing can prevent the people from rendering their verdict. From now on, nothing will be able to prevent the people from meting out exemplary punishment to all the political scum who have fed off famine, and to all the criminals who have always scorned and humiliated the people by inflicting a thousand and one indignities (Sankara, 1988:116).

Sankara characterised the said courts as belonging to the people wherein the ordinary people get to be involved in handling legal matters that may sometimes require deliberations from individuals who possess the requisite legal skills. This poses a problem given the risk of the rise incorrect verdicts. Moreover, it was unclear as to whether the ‘people’ tasked with handling these cases received any sort of legal training to carry out this activity.

Similarly, the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) were also criticised for some of their activities that were deemed to be unlawful through their abuse of power and suppression of ordinary citizens. Some CDR leaders operated in a commandist fashion. Although credited for unmasking corruption, some CDR activists embezzled funds and were involved in other undesirable activities such as extortion and armed robbery (Harsch, 2013). It must be acknowledged, however, that the CDRs themselves had a popular character. They involved many people, especially among the poor, who previously had never taken part in any political or associational activity thus, affording the power to the ordinary citizens. Notwithstanding, possessing power comes with some sense of responsibility to be exercised responsively by the actors. However, the possibility of it being abused remains as reflected in some of the unlawful acts inflicted by some elements of the CDRs. Accordingly, Sankara viewed the CDRs as serving the people by ensuring that their immediate needs are met, and that they support the initiatives of the masses, not impose their ideas on them.

Therefore, theoretically, the CDRs were meant to advance the needs of the people and improve their lives. They were supposed to be a link between the people at the grassroots level and the government, which is a good initiative if enacted in good faith. However, as posited above, some elements within the CDRs fell short on this aspect. Sankara was aware of the abuse of power by the CDRs, and attempted to address the matter:

Militarily, we know too that during patrols, some CDRs have committed atrocities, unspeakable things. But since unspeakable is not a revolutionary concept, we must speak of everything. In fact, some CDRs took advantage of the patrol to engage in looting. Well, we will pursue them like thieves from now on and we'll shoot them down, pure and simple. Let this be clear: if we have arms, it's to defend the people. All those who steal from the people and loot will be shot down (Sankara, 1988:284).

Ironically Sankara regard the abuse of power as counterrevolutionary, and thus undesirable. It must be said that Sankara took action to deal with the rogue elements within the CDRs when he addressed the National Conference of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) in 1986. Sankara denounced the actions of those members of the CDRs involved in unlawful activities by deeming the involved parties as not deserving to be associated with revolutionaries. Revolutionaries for him must lead by example and exercise critical consciousness all the time. However, there is no evidence to suggest that the members in question heeded his call—the ones guilty of atrocious acts.

It must be borne in mind that every social phenomenon is complex and a product of the social system within which an actor operates. There is no such phenomenon as a perfect human being. Everyone has flaws. Thus, in interrogating Sankara's politics and some of the associated actions that were influenced by circumstances and situations surrounding that era, one needs to use a critical lens. However, treating an individual as a messiah is not helpful as it is bound to deprive one of an opportunity to ascertain the nuances involved and as such, run the risk of the objectivity of the argument canvassed to be delegitimised. As Stalin (1975) posits, phenomena should be considered not only from the standpoint of their interconnection and interdependence but also from the standpoint of their movement, their change, their development, their coming into being and going out

of being. This suggests the complexity of social politics insofar as social formations are not static but always in a state of movement and dictating a holistic approach. Social phenomena are dependent on the conditions, time, and place.

In this regard, the stance which this writer holds relates to a dialectical critical engagement with both of these leaders' (Biko and Sankara) politics and thoughts concerning the contemporary African context. It is thus my argument that although their shortcomings cannot be overlooked, it is their contribution insofar as politics of liberation are key in dismantling the persistent condition of coloniality. It is my view that Sankara did not shy away from self-criticism and self-reflection and as such, he would have addressed the shortcomings of his regime if he had more time to lead his people.

5.9 Conclusion

The entrenched conditions of marginality and dehumanisation of the African people dictates that a liberatory struggle be undertaken in order to confront the said conditions. Sankara's mission was to purge the people of Burkina Faso and to a large extent, Africa from the shackles of neo-colonialism, and the entrenched ills of coloniality. Given the nature and extent of the exploitative patterns of neo-colonialism, it will take a revolutionary leadership capable of mobilising the masses by instilling in them the critical consciousness necessary to achieve liberation. As argued in this chapter, Sankara possessed these qualities and as such, his leadership was revolutionary. It must be acknowledged that the continent of Africa needs this kind of leadership to expedite and advance the idea of Pan-Africanism to achieve social and economic development and, ultimately embrace the notion of African Renaissance. Accordingly, the next chapter will further explore the thoughts of both Biko and Sankara on their advancement of African Renaissance.

CHAPTER SIX: TOWARDS AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

Yes, the regeneration of Africa belongs to this new and powerful period! By this term, regeneration, I wish to be understood to mean the entrance into a new life, embracing the diverse phases of a higher, complex existence. The basic factor, which assures their regeneration, resides in the awakened race consciousness.

Pixley ka Isaka Seme (1904)

An essential and necessary element of the African Renaissance is that we all must take it as our task to encourage she, who carries this leaden weight, to rebel, to assert the principality of her humanity -- the fact that she, in the first instance, is not a beast of burden, but a human and African being.

Thabo Mbeki

6.1 Introduction

The two preceding chapters of this thesis examined in-depth the political thoughts of both Biko and Sankara. This chapter will attempt to illustrate how both their political thoughts advance the idea of African Renaissance when viewed as a de-linking tool. The first task herein is to grapple with the idea of the notion of return, and renewal as encapsulated in the notion of African Renaissance before presenting an argument on how it can be employed as a decolonial de-linking tool. Thus, advocating for the reconfiguration of the modes of economic, social, cultural and political relations insofar as these entrench the dependency on the West. The idea of African Renaissance in this context is viewed as emancipatory. The chapter briefly provides a critique of African leadership. I postulate that it tends to facilitate the Westphalian system and dependency before presenting an argument for revolutionary leadership as advocated by Biko and Sankara. As elicited in their thoughts, a revolutionary praxis espoused by critical consciousness is a prerequisite. In this regard, the idea of African Renaissance as a critical discourse is, therefore, highlighted, which in turn advances Pan-Africanism. Against this background, I further make a case for a people-centric discourse of African Renaissance as inspired by *Ubuntu* philosophy.

6.2 Rebirth of the continent?

The contention of re-imagining the continent of Africa stems from the fact that the existence of the continent as a post-colony and its associated economic, political, cultural and social relations is predicated on its dependency on the West. The African post-colonial state is constructed in such a manner that its dependency on the West is inevitable (Muiu and Martin, 2008). This configuration has placed the continent at the bottom of the ladder as far as economic development is concerned. This situation has meant that many of its citizens found themselves in a state of hopelessness given the *longue durée* of the undesirable existential conditions. The imposition of colonialism, imperialism and slavery have had a lasting impact on the state of post-colonial Africa. It is for this reason that some form of social reform and transformation must be undertaken to attain social transformation to negate the imposed state of dependency. It is for this reason that calls are made to re-evaluate some of the systems and policies that are put in place. Moreover, the shift to endogenous ideas and knowledge systems is proposed as a way of addressing the African condition.

Although the viewpoint of revisiting and foregrounding the African knowledge systems is being canvassed, it should not be misconstrued with what More (2002) characterises as the Hobbesian narrative inspired by the notion of Afro-pessimism. The Afro-pessimists equate the idea of a return to the notion of Africa reinscribing barbaric tendencies of savagery, corruption, abuse of human rights and other forms of dehumanisation. This implies that Western perception of returning as signifying the adoption of everything that was pre-colonial connoting “uncivilised, uncultured, undisciplined pagans whose souls needed to be saved and whose bodies needed to be thrashed” (Shivji, 2009:2). This logic holds that Africa benefitted from colonisation and that re-turning to pre-colonial Africa will certainly reverse these so-called gains. Returning to the source represents a moment of re-affirming everything pre-colonial that is equivalent to the state of nature and constitutes the threat of an African takeover (More, 2002). Thus, the discomfort about this moment emanates from the misconception about Africa as ‘the heart of darkness’ needing to be rescued and ‘civilised’.

Similarly, Biko refutes this notion of returning to what the colonial gaze perceives to be what was previously uncivilised and lacking rationality. Biko (1978) maintains that the dominant discourses that regard African culture as static need repudiation because the colonial conquest has bastardised and labelled it as barbaric. The idea that the African culture was static before its encounter with the coloniser has no merit and seeks to justify the denigration of indigenous cultures by the imposed dominant culture. Thus, the notion of invoking fear on the idea of embracing the true cultures of the colonised should be rejected. The advent of colonialism has bastardised African cultures to a point where Africans promote self-hate. This logic, therefore, entails that the current status quo of dependency and neo-colonialism should be maintained. This is unsustainable and problematic given the contemporary conditions that Africa is grappling with. Notwithstanding, the challenges that Africa is grappling with, the call for regeneration stems precisely from the dislocation which came to be from colonialism, slavery and neo-colonialism. The damage is, therefore, enormous.

This call for a rebirth or rediscovery is, therefore, a call to bracket and transcend the entire epoch of apartheid, colonialism, imperialism, slavery, and racism which preceded the present (More, 2002). Zondi (2022) postulates that the current Euro-North American world system constructs discourses about Africa by erasing African voices to suit the dominant narratives of dependency. It is for this reason that Zondi argues for the de-linking from the “monologue of Western discourses about us in the absence of our authentic voices” (2022:586). This pertains to the idea of the emancipation of thought which is characterised by freeing oneself from the shackles of polluted thinking toward the return of free thinking. This emancipated thought speaks to the significance of critical consciousness so that the attainment of transcendence is achieved. It is through the emancipated thought that rebirth occurs, which solidifies a new African way of thinking through self-consciousness and self-knowledge (More, 2002). This then serves as a manifestation of African Renaissance.

More (2002) argues in this regard that the idea of African Renaissance has always existed on the continent as reflected in the struggle for liberation. He mentions thinkers such as Nkrumah, Du Bois, Pixie ka Seme, Fanon, Cabral, Mandela, Sobukwe, Biko and Mbeki

as some of the proponents of the idea of African Renaissance. I would also include Sankara in this list of great thinkers in so far as the struggle for liberation is concerned. This means that thinkers from this continent have been struggling with this regeneration of the continent for several decades.

One of the errors associated with African historiography has to do with the fact that the continent tends to be perceived from the Western viewpoint implying that the West rescued the continent from the problems of barbarism and the lack of civilisation. This aspect as argued by Muiu and Martin (2008:5) highlights a misleading picture of the continent's history as "African history is taught as a chronology of the triumph of Western agencies over African leaders in most schools (2008:5). The dominant perspective tends to downplay Africa's contribution to world history as reflected in the civilisation that predates the colonial era such as that of Egypt, Kush and the Mapungubwe empires. For Biko, this is deliberate as it sought to keep the Africans trapped and alienated by erasing their true historiography, which then ultimately, relegate them to non-entities. Biko (1978) notes that a positive history is key in every society because it is bound to propel people towards the right direction. It must be noted that Biko does not suggest the distortion of history, but strives for accuracy, calling for the narration of the continent to be told truthfully as Africans discern it.

In my view, this speaks to the idea of African Renaissance as it emphasises the centrality of telling Africans' authentic history and truth. Hence the plausible proposition that African history ought to be told from the perspective of Africans so that it represents a true reflection of African reality and experience. Nkrumah (1970) was also the main advocate of re-writing African history reflect accurate social reality as told by Africans and this should involve a critical assessment of European involvement.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the persistent conditions of coloniality and neo-colonialism on those located in the margins of the modern global system, of which Africa and Africans are at the receiving end, necessitates that the process of de-linking be carried out. In this sense, promoting a united front among Africans to tackle the pervasive problem at hand, is imperative and necessary for social transformation to become a reality. Both Biko and

Sankara's political thoughts promote this discourse of revolution by emphasising the role of critical consciousness in this regard.

In this context, de-linking process as discussed in Chapter three is premised on the idea that the system of coloniality is pervasive to an extent that the advancement of emancipatory discourses is hindered leading to a cul-de-sac, as it were. The attainment of true liberation becomes illusive with implications to the perpetuation of neo-colonialism and dependency. This maintains the status quo and consequently, the entrenchment of coloniality. This is what Biko's Black Consciousness is concerned with, and its posture is unashamedly anti-colonial and anti-imperialistic as it is predicated on repudiating the shackles that engender the hegemonic system. Biko explains this process and the *raison d'être* behind the necessity of epistemic de-linking:

Further implications of Black Consciousness are to do with correcting false images of ourselves in terms of Culture, Education, Religion, and Economics. The importance of this also must not be understated. There is always an interplay between the history of a people i.e. the past, and their faith in themselves and hopes for the future. We are aware of the terrible role played by our education and religion in creating amongst us a false understanding of ourselves. We must therefore work out schemes not only to correct this, but further to be our own authorities rather than wait to be interpreted by others (Biko, 1978:57).

Black Consciousness for Biko pertains to the idea of rectifying that which was imposed by the hegemonic system of coloniality upon the oppressed subjects. This is illustrated by the annihilation of the social fabric of the dominated societies through the systemic process of indoctrination which encompasses the pollution of their psyche with falsehoods concerning their authentic beings. This implies that in this condition the world is understood and interpreted from an imposed lens because the oppressed's thinking is invalid and accordingly so is their culture, philosophy and consequently, humanity. Black Consciousness therefore signals the promotion of self-awareness predicated on critical evaluation of the situation and to, therefore, act accordingly. Therefore, I contend that Black Consciousness is about de-linking from the systemic machinations and

manipulations of coloniality and as such, it complements the idea of African Renaissance as a de-linking tool.

The notion of African Renaissance being canvassed in this text is perceived from the dimension of emancipation, and hence, it is argued that it can only serve to liberate the oppressed when it is employed as a de-linking tool. The de-linking process is viewed as a tool “that leads to de-colonial epistemic shift and brings to the foreground other epistemologies, other principles of knowledge and understanding and, consequently, other economy, other politics, other ethics” (Mignolo, 2008:453). In this sense, de-linking from the matrices of coloniality speaks to the conception and the re-imagining of a society which is removed from the condition of dependency by foregrounding its own epistemic, socio-politico-cultural, and economic dimensions. Clearly, decoloniality conceives the world system as a pluriversal entity in which there exists a space for the equal existence of a multitude of realities and their associated knowledge systems.

As such, the use of *Ubuntu* philosophy as a philosophical lens is aimed at foregrounding a paradigm that is rooted in African thought. As proven by the two preceding chapters, the examination of both Biko and Sankara’s thoughts elicited a need to amplify the idea of returning to authentic African modes of thinking by sensitising the oppressed people about the importance of exercising their criticality in every facet of their political and social relations. This authentic praxis should be reflected through the promotion of people-centred politics and their defence of African cultures. As explained above the notion of return in this context must not be associated with embracing everything pre-colonial but seeks to rectify the problem of dislocation and the associated conditions. Nkrumah (1970) posits in this context that true independence must forge new harmony that constitutes a combination of traditional Africa, Islamic Africa and Euro-Christian Africa in a manner that is in tune with the humanist principles of African society. It must be said that Nkrumah does not call for Africa that is removed from its cultural principles but to elicit the former as a foundation of renewed harmony that encapsulates African contemporary existence.

As described in Chapter 3, a de-linking option allows for “border thinking” which entails thinking from localities deemed to be in the margins (Mignolo, 2006:33). In other words, a de-linking process is a conscious decision that involves thought and action of

repudiating the entrenched colonial matrices of power. African Renaissance, in this context, can serve as a conduit through which a decolonial process can be attained. The reason for this possibility is predicated on the notion that the project of African Renaissance is premised on the paradigm of Afrocentricity. The Afrocentric perspective holds that reality should be explained from the vantage point of an African within a global context. Hence, the need to put into context the African reality in forging authentic responses to the African situation. For this reason, a point of departure should be the interpretation of phenomena from an African perspective and as such, the rejection of Eurocentric rationality is crucial. The latter alienated Africans from their worldviews, cosmology and historical realities.

The project of African Renaissance therefore seeks to repudiate the Eurocentric and other external ideational structures that constitute the foundations of the dominant order that has always defined the peripheral locus and irrelevance of the black world in the universe (Araoye, 2013). As elucidated in Chapter 4, restoration of blackness identity should serve to embrace one's authentic being by negating the Othering trope of inferiority imposed by Eurocentrism. The erasure of blackness has led to its subjection because it justifies the sub-human character of a black individual. It is for this reason that Biko advocated for a counter-hegemonic discourse of blackness which is characterised by defiance and the validation of the notion of black pride. This aspect is also reflected in Biko's (1978) conception of what he termed Black Theology, which for him, serves as a situational interpretation of Christianity as it seeks to relate the suffering of blacks and employ its tools to resist the oppression and as such, restore meaning and direction concerning their understanding of God.

Here Biko acknowledges the spirituality of Africans, and having noticed how Christianity has penetrated African communities, he argues for it to be employed as a tool of liberation. This is a paradox given that religion was one of the weapons utilised by the coloniser indoctrinate Africans. It was in the name of religion that Africans were forced to abandon their so-called 'barbaric' belief systems to be closer to God. Therefore, Biko asserts that their spirituality is authentic and should be infused in their devotion to Christianity so that their understanding of the concept of deity will find expression. In this

sense, their devotion will be meaningful and at the same time address key issues of their oppression. In this sense, Black Theology must be used as a tool for resistance. Thus, the negation of one's oppression is occasioned through the embracement of that which oppresses your being.

I am reminded of Hall's (1996) model of articulation which entails a process of linking different problematics such as culture, and politics to contextually deconstruct and re-inscribe so that a new reality is envisaged. Articulation in this sense, makes possible the advancement of a counter-hegemonic discourse as reflected in Hall's anecdote of the extent by which the Rastafarian movement in the Caribbean re-articulated the message of Bible to suit their own existential experience (Lechaba, 2019). In the same vein, Biko calls for the re-articulation of the Christian message to best suit the African spiritual reality to make it contextually meaningful to the people practising it. In this way, religion is no longer imposed but it is suitably appropriated by the recipients on their own terms. This relates to the notion of Sartre's anguish as directed toward the attainment of transcendence – of which the radicality defies the modes of oppression.

It follows that the modalities of renewal speak to the appreciation of the ontological understanding of Africanness in the context of the hegemonic system of alienation. The embracement of African values and principles dictates a re-inscribed articulation of the Africanness identity which is conscious of the socio-economic context in which he/she is interpellated. Against this background, an African renewal should be sought in restoring the dignity, identity, humanity, consciousness, and agency of an African who is constantly confronted by the hostile world. The latter, through the othering of a black individual, sustains the narrative of a sub-human.

As such, the unification of Africans is central to achieving the ideals of African Renaissance. My contention is perhaps the lack of unity of voices wherein a single vision is shared by the proponents of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. Another challenge pertains to the legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism that fragmented the continent into pockets of the former colonial powers. For instance, Africa tends to be compartmentalised into Northern regions consisting mostly of Arab influence and the so-called Sub-Saharan made up of mostly black countries. Moreover, there is a problem with

what I term a 'multitude of Africas', constituting of the Francophone, Anglophone, and Lusophone parts of the African continent. These divisions pose a challenge to the economic integration of the continent, further dividing it, leaving it vulnerable to Western influence. However, it must be acknowledged that some strides have been made regarding the political integration of the continent. This has culminated in the African continent experiencing economic growth and development in the last two decades. Through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA), the creation of the largest free trade area in the world has been achieved (Abrahamsen and Chimhandamba, 2023). This is a significant step toward the attainment of the Pan-Africanist goal of economic integration. If implemented properly, the AFCTA project may enhance the economic growth of the continent for the benefit of the citizenry. This highlights the significance of African political and economic integration.

African unity becomes essential given centuries of oppression that involved in most instances, the tactics of 'divide and rule'. Mbeki's (2013) assertion enunciates the centrality of African unity in the context of African Renaissance. Mbeki concludes that the attainment of liberation is predicated on the integration and unification of Africa and this proposition is well recognised by the Pan-Africanists on the continent and the diaspora. Therefore, true liberation and emancipation should be attainable if the unity of Africans could be forged and advanced. As I have contended in Chapter 4, the notion of solidarity is essential given that the embodiment of Black Consciousness is first and foremost, a group action and praxis. It follows, then, that given the richness of this continent in terms of natural resources; a united front would leverage this position by protecting these resources for the benefit of all Africans. However, one obstacle to attaining the renewal of the continent lies at the hands of the African leadership.

6.3 The problem of leadership

The idea of true liberation is premised on the proposition that Africans be their own liberators as Mbeki asserted. This is because the independence of the continent was conceptualised by the coloniser with a plethora of permeations and conditionalities. As such, Africans did not define their own liberation since the said independence perpetuated the system of neo-colonialism. This notion is significant in as far as the liberatory

discourses advocate for an independent Africa *qua* liberated. It is not a coincidence that African thinkers have been grappling with this discourse for decades. I contend that both Biko and Sankara were preoccupied with this idea of Africa redefining herself amid the constraints of neo-colonialism.

Araoye (2018) observes that most African leaders are still influenced by Western forces and as such render the authenticity of their leadership questionable. This implies that these leaders promote Western economic interests and, in the process, maintains the status quo wherein in some instances, intelligence and security are deployed to eliminate revolutionary nationalism (Muiu and Martin, 2008). This is predicated on the African leadership's failure to prioritise the people in their decisions. As Gumede explains that this failure by some of the leaders serves as a betrayal to the people they are supposed to serve. Gumede (2015) observes that the post-colonial African leaders have betrayed the hopes and aspirations of the people but remain amenable to the demands of foreign powers thus entrenching the exploitation, subjugation and peripheralization of the continent and its people.

One is persuaded by Gumede's observation because of the persistence of the current conditions faced by the citizenry because of some of the ill-informed policies and lack of urgency as they tend to disregard the material needs of the people. Indeed, neo-imperialism still plays a part in the propagation of ill-informed policies because as Shivji posits, "Africans are told they have no capacity to think, and African states are told they have no capacity to make correct policy" (2009:12). This is the predicament that African leaders are faced with amid the pressures from the populace because of developmental stagnation. However, given the conditions under which the post-colonial leadership operates, their situation ought to be analysed holistically.

That said, Sankara (1988) is of the view that revolutionary leadership must be people-oriented in all its endeavours, meaning decisions ought to be in the interest of the people regardless of the situation. It follows that the type of leadership which do not appraise the interest of the people ought to be condemned. Sankara asserts in this regard that leaders ought to immerse themselves in the daily lives of the people so that they can adequately solve the problems and come up with relevant and well-thought-out solutions. This type

of leader is bound to prioritise the needs of his/her people because he/she is one with the people and that has to be reflected in praxis. This speaks to the embodiment of *Ubuntu* as a praxis through one's lived experience wherein one's life and well-being are dependent on the well-being of the next individual. For Sankara, a leader who is disconnected from the people cannot be a revolutionary given that their intentions are usually self-serving. Hence, I am reminded of Sankara's response in the interview with Rapp¹⁵ concerning the prioritisation of the budget in the context of the socio-economic situation in Burkina Faso in 1985 during his tenure. Sankara said:

Out of a budget of 58 billion, 30,000 government employees monopolise 30 billion, and that leaves nothing for everyone else. This is not normal. If we want greater justice, each of us must recognize the real situation of the people and accept the sacrifice that each individual must make for justice to be done. Who are these 30,000 government employees? People like me. ... We are part of the international complicity of men of good conscience... (Sankara, 1988:197-198).

Making sacrifices for the good of the people signifies the importance of collective responsibility in advancing social justice. As *Ubuntu* philosophy dictates that one's humanness is predicated on advancing the well-being of fellow human beings. As such, one should be conscious of the living conditions of the people in his/her community and make an informed decision based on the situation at hand. Invariably, the right decision should always be about the affirmation of their humanity. A revolutionary leader must think with the people and act with and on their behalf. In this situation, the notion of individualism negates one's active participation within a social formation and thus limits one's commitment to liberation.

A revolutionary leader is bound to be amenable to sacrifices that aims towards the attainment of social justice as necessitated by the material conditions of those he/she leads. Sankara (1988) noted that a revolutionary must be willing to undergo some form of stoicism and sacrifice because his/her endeavours should be aimed toward the common good of the people. This kind of leader is oriented toward the people in his/her

¹⁵ The interview was conducted by Jean-Philippe Rapp, a Swiss journalist in 1985.

praxis as embodied in both Biko and Sankara's political thoughts. Their conviction and passion for the people were evident throughout their lives—this came with the ultimate cost of their lives. Thus, to be a revolutionary leader carries with it a huge responsibility for those who elect to undertake this route because they must be cognizant of the enormity of the task at hand. It is for this reason that Freire (2005) conceptualised the concept of conscientisation as encapsulated by his notion of the oppressed pedagogy. Given their condemnation and suppression, the oppressed are forced to assume a subjected identity of objects – fraught with a multitude of lacks including among others, the lack of soul, rationality, consciousness and so forth. It is thus necessary for the oppressed to negate this condition.

Freire (2005) posits that a revolutionary leader must employ a method of dialogue with the oppressed masses so that the latter's conviction and sensitisation emanate from their own reflection. In this instance, the leader assumes the role of a teacher who does not only impart knowledge to the recipient but receives knowledge from the people by exercising a problem-solving pedagogy which is solution-driven. In this process, a leader must be willing to be transformed at the same time as the people. This means that a revolutionary will not exhibit a paternalistic mentality associated with the oppressor's tactics. In this sense, the participation of the masses in their liberation will stem from their true commitment to self-determination. As argued in Chapter 4, the reality of the oppressed subjects is undesirable and requires that the said group mobilise towards a common cause of negating their subjection. Biko (1978) posits that following their awareness of their domination, the oppressed individuals ought to forge solidarity to collectively respond to their subjection.

The aspect of thoughtless leadership explains Africa's persistent political, social, and economic issues that stifle its development and consequently its Pan-Africanist agenda. Granted, African leadership is also influenced by the ramifications and effects of colonialism. Rodney (1992) reminds us of the context that African leaders tend to navigate through suggesting that the dynamics involved should be taken into consideration when critiquing them. Rodney awakens us to the fact that post-colonial leaders are faced with

a conundrum because besides having to mobilise the masses, they have to create new state apparatuses in addition to the existing neo-imperial relations.

This situation presents a paradox to the African elites because of the need to liberate the masses whilst at the same time faced with the task of governance, the latter, in most cases, means the continuation of the neo-colonial administration. The latter perpetuates the condition of dependency as brought about by inheriting the economies of the colonial masters. Arguably, most of these colonial economies were not fit for purpose given that they only served and functioned to benefit the metropole countries. As such, the idea of independence did not signal freedom *qua* liberation by the former colonised. To this effect Muiu and Martin (2009:57) elucidate that:

In Africa, the formal independence was given by the colonial powers, but it was devoid of content and had very strong strings attached. First, independence was only nominal because of exploitative multinational corporations, and underpriced commodities. World Bank/IMF loan conditionalities, and permanent foreign military bases replaced the old form of colonialism and made genuine independence difficult. Second, in the former British colonies (the new nations), intelligence and security organizations were entrenched in order to eliminate revolutionary nationalism.

A similar trend is also observable in French former colonies. The independence only served to entrench dependency, which Sankara was vocal about as he regarded the multinational agencies as proxies for imperial interests. It is thus apparent that the departure of the coloniser was not done in good faith, but it served to facilitate the continuation of the neo-imperialist agenda. As a result, with the absence of an economic system which is conceptualised from the ground up, issues of opportunistic bourgeoisie class characterised by a rent-seeking mentality crept in. This situation is succinctly encapsulated by Amin in this way:

In ideological terms, this situation results in the triumph of individual interests or those of clans and their patronage systems, the absence of a sense of solidarity (class or national), and the restriction of political struggle to vulgar opportunist

practices—which in turn depoliticize the people and retard the function of responsible citizens, an essential condition for democratisation (Amin, 2019:106).

This explains the nature of disinterest in social politics by the ordinary masses because of the disillusionment with the endemic socio-economic stagnation as illustrated by Amin's observation. Amin (2011) further argues elsewhere that the contemporary world system is configured in such a way that the oligopolies maintain the status quo of the imperialist rent which entrenches the condemnation of the people located in the peripheries. Mafeje sums up this aspect well and highlights the problems of the neo-colonial configuration.

The emergence of military dictatorships and self-styled presidents for life, which got entrenched in the last two decades all over Africa, and the concomitant suppression of people's organisations are not simply a problem of liberal democracy. That is fundamentally a problem of *social reproduction* in a situation in which African petit-bourgeois regimes cannot reproduce themselves, unless they abandon the neo-colonial model which they have sought to implement with such persistence to the peril of their people, of their national economies, and of themselves ultimately (Mafeje, 1992:36). *Emphasis original.*

Evidently, the Westphalian post-colonial state is undesirable and does not serve to uplift the lives of the ordinary citizenry. It is for this reason that Biko lamented the condition of marginality when he said, "at the end of it all, the blacks have nothing to lean on, nothing to cheer them up at the present moment [the 1970s] and very much to be in the future" (1978:76). What is crucial about this assertion is that Biko's analysis of the situation then bears relevance to the current socio-economic context. In the same vein, Ani (2021:258) observes that "citizens are continually robbed of their legitimate right to change leaderships that do not address their needs". The lack of development hopes lingers in the contemporary context. However, despite the situation of hopelessness, it does not follow that there is a lack of activism from the populace as reflected in the social activist movements. That said, despite its penetrative effect, the constraints of the imperialist logic must not be used as excuses for the lack of transformatory leadership.

Furthermore, it is problematic that following more than five decades of independence, except for South Africa of course, lessons from the preceding leadership are not drawn.

It is rather a concern that South Africa which attained its independence from the apartheid regime in 1994, failed to transform its institutions as the means of economic production are still under the hands of the settler minority. One would have believed that the South African elite would have drawn post-independence lessons from elsewhere on the continent. This is not to say that the problem is omnipresent on the entire continent as there exist pockets of improvement such as Rwanda's positive trajectory following the atrocities of the 1994 genocide.

Nevertheless, it must be said that the challenges facing the continent which are both internal and external, remain apparent. This is where the concept of de-linking comes into the fray, which is characterised by the coming together of the Global South, for a negotiated globalisation without hegemonies (Amin, 2011). Interestingly, Amin has modified his notion of de-linking as compared to his previous viewpoint. Amin refers to this activism as a contemporary form of de-linking. In my view, this form of de-linking is not radical enough as it still advocates for a negotiated mode of de-hegemonising the global system, and this runs a risk of instilling the status quo of neo-colonial domination. It is my view that Sankara envisaged a radical revolution across the continent, as demonstrated in his August revolution of Burkina Faso – which ultimately led to his assassination in October of 1987. As such, to de-link from the imperialistic machinery, Africa needs conscious revolutionary leaders *qua* liberators.

Therefore, revolutionary leaders must exercise critical consciousness so that they become true agents of social transformation. In this sense, a true leader ought to be cognizant of the environment and situation at hand to be better equipped to positively transform the lives of the people he/she leads. Hence, the notion of thought leadership highlights the significance of a critically conscious leadership that emphasises and advances social justice (Leshoele, 2018; Gumede, 2015). It follows that the prosperity of the continent is yet to be attained. As advocated by Mbeki, the neo-colonial relation with the oppressor presents a predicament for the continent since it brings a façade given that "...rather than genuine independence, affirmed the point that the peoples of our continent had not abandoned the determination to be their own liberators" (Mbeki, 1998:np).

Furthermore, a people-centred approach should inform every decision that involves the lives of the people of Africa. Hence, the call for *Ubuntu* as a people-oriented initiative that is anchored on the principle of humanness – the appreciation and acknowledgement of everyone’s humanity. Hence, a justifiable critique of the self-enriching, corrupt and power-hungry African leaders; some of them have presided over gruesome genocides and internal wars with ravaging consequences for the prosperity of the continent. These types of leaders are complicit in the oppression and dispossession of Africans as they collude with neo-colonial forces to advance their malicious interests at the expense of Africans who remain destitute. The leaders in question are thus not different from their colonial masters. Freire reminds us that “to simply think *about* the people, as the dominators do, without any self-giving in that thought, to fail to think *with* the people, is a sure way to cease being *revolutionary* leaders” (2005:132 emphasis in original). Therefore, critical consciousness becomes imperative in this context.

6.4 Critical consciousness and African Renaissance

Despite the concept of critical consciousness being dealt with at length in the preceding chapters, this writer is of the view that it remained a key aspect in the thoughts of both Biko and Sankara. Given that the argument being presented here pertains to the idea of African Renaissance as a de-linking tool, the notion of critical consciousness is thus, imperative. Critical consciousness is key in shaping the thought of an agent to be self-aware in his/her praxis as noted by Nkrumah (1970:78) that “practice without thought is blind: thought without practice is empty”. Thus, consciousness is bound to influence the thought which in turn determine the practice. It is my view that de-linking from the configured global order requires that hard work be performed on the part of the oppressed who were indoctrinated to take their status quo as normative. Undeniably, when the oppressed is submerged in the dehumanising system, he/she is consequently unable to discern the reality which is configured to serve the interests of the oppressor (Freire, 2005). This then brings to the fore the need for self-reflection and action, which is bound to be a difficult undertaking on the part of the oppressed. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that the process delves into the unknown territory which brings uncertainty for the oppressed subjects.

For Gumede (2015), the low levels of critical consciousness or lack thereof, keeps Africa in a perpetual state of dependency. It is the lack of critical consciousness that the oppressor relies on because it serves the purpose of non-thinking. Lack of thinking on the part of the oppressed means a lack of critical reflection and consequently, no action. The ignorance will keep them in a state of perpetual oppression as determined by the oppressor through the entrenchment of the hegemonic system. This reality is exacerbated by the fact that oppressive machinations take the form of social conditioning as its entrenchment is forged to the extent of being normalised. In this instance, the oppressed subject has internalised their subjection with no prospects of escaping that reality. This is in bad faith because it intensifies their dehumanisation. As Sankara (1988) noted in this regard that a reconditioning process is needed, and this requires a qualitative process of advancing a revolution.

Thus, one cannot advance a revolutionary stance without doing qualitative work of critically analysing their situation and exercising a critical reflection, which is necessary for action. In this sense, the relevant action which is based on the condition should be taken—a dehumanised subject must affirm her/his humanity by rightfully demanding liberation. This explains Biko's (1978) stern stance regarding the notion of self-awareness as it relates to one's bondage by the hegemonic system of oppression. He asserts the importance of self-awareness as the foundational step towards seeking liberation. It is, for this reason, that Nkrumah's conception of conscientism points out the element of positive action as a lever towards independence following the mobilisation and education of the masses—his conception of consciousness is predicated on the embracement of socialism which is an antithesis of capitalism. The latter failed to uplift the African majority given its emphasis on amassing capital by the few at the expense of the majority.

The implication of critical consciousness bears significance on true liberation. One cannot seek liberation if one lacks self-awareness of their undesirable condition. This aspect is key as far as Biko's conception of Black Consciousness serves to provide tools for liberation. Hence, Biko regards the notion of conscientisation as imperative given the effects of systemic indoctrination imposed on the oppressed subjects. Freire (2005) posits that the process of conscientisation must be accrued out so that the oppressed can

transform their condition. Freire further believes that conscientisation is a process “by means of which the people, through a true praxis, leave behind the status of objects to assume the status of historical Subjects—is necessary” (Freire, 2005:160).

The idea of conscientisation is key as it provides a transcendental thought to the seeker of liberation whilst on the other hand heightening their conscious Being. The struggle toward one’s humanisation is thus predicated on the idea of conscientisation. The idea of conscientisation must be accentuated through discursive practices of the oppressed to deconstruct and reconstruct their authentic sense of being divorced from the shackles of coloniality, which negates one’s sense of Being fraught with acts of negation. For Biko, the lack of critical consciousness is thus futile for the oppressed. The oppressed individual is forced to accept the imposed situation and as a result, becomes complicit in the acts of subjection and subjectivity. It is for these reasons that development on the continent has failed to take off when compared to other regions such as South America and Asia – of course, these regions have their share of challenges but there seems to be progress as compared to Africa.

Within the discursivity of conscientisation, concepts such as deideologization and dealienation are key (Montero, 2009). Deideologization for Montero (2009) is a process through which one is made aware of the conscious construction and the reconstruction of one’s living conditions and circumstances that form part of one’s totality. In this way, self-awareness of one’s condition should propel one to act by negating one’s subjectivity. On the other hand, dealienation is a process wherein the relation between consciousness and the historical living conditions of a person and his or her role in them are established (Montero, 2009). This stems from the fact that the goal of oppression is to alienate the oppressed subject from his/her ontological self with false reality concerning the historical circumstances that led to their marginalisation.

Asante (2007) posits that Africans residing on the continent and in the diaspora must view themselves as centred in their own history for them to be agents, actors and participants rather than from a position of marginality. To achieve this political action, critical consciousness is thus imperative because self-awareness is required in this regard. Thus, an African agent who is critically conscious of their condition is bound to seek a

revolutionary liberation because the condition of marginality is unbearable and the only response in this sense is to escape that condition. It is thus suggested that African Renaissance must propagate a sense of criticality.

6.5 African Renaissance as a critical discourse

As previously elucidated, the analysis of the African condition and reality must stem from the position of dislocation because of the remnants of colonialism and the persistence of coloniality. The persistence of coloniality and its pervasiveness has a bearing on the fulfilment of the power of Western discourses on the othered human race (Mudimbe, 1988). These dominant discourses produce and reproduce hegemonic ideologies through the systemic alienation associated with the logic of Being, power and knowledge. The othered subject is thus, transformed into an object which lacks rationality. Because this othered subject lacks the capacity to think, thinking ought to be done on her/his behalf. This logic has forced Africans to adopt a different historical dimension which constitutes them as beings without a history before their contact with the coloniser. Hence, the regeneration narrative is based on the idea that the continent was stripped of its soul, humanity and consciousness, and its history erased from the global system as perpetuated by colonial education and cultural indoctrination.

It must be noted in this sense that the idea of 'renaissance' in this context cannot be equated with the European version that marked the major epochs involving the civilisation of Europe. The continent of Africa does not share similar characteristics of civilisation with Europe. The starting point has to do with the fact that Africa was invented and was not given a space to go through her own process of attaining her own version of modernisation. As highlighted by Muiu and Martin (2009) both colonialism and slavery fundamentally transformed and altered the fabric of African communities and consequently, violence and moral decay became the order of the day. This sentiment is shared by Shivji when he posits that "no other continent suffered as much destruction of its social fabric through foreign imperial domination as did Africa" (2009:3).

I am convinced to concur with this assertion given that the continent is still grappling with a plethora of socio-economic factors affecting its prosperity and development. Furthermore, the pollution of the social fabric had implications on their authentic

ontological existence where their worldviews are altered by systemic marginalisation. The latter was imposed on the continent from the position of paternalism which perpetuates a state of dependency. It is for this reason that Shivji (2009) argues for a revolutionary transformation of the economy and African society—a sentiment shared by both Biko and Sankara.

As argued by Mudimbe (1988), the notion of dependency, be it economic or cultural lacks the structural capacity for autonomy and sustained growth of the continent as it puts the fate of economic development solely in the hands of dominant forces. This had to do with the fact that a Westphalian state system is entrenched despite the so-called ‘independence’ of the previously colonised states. Their post-colonial existence is predicated on the economic reliance of the former colonial powers resulting in a dependent and unequal relationship given that the post-colonial African state could not follow its own path toward independence (Muiu and Martin, 2009). Sankara succinctly demonstrated this at the United Nations convention in 1984, concerning the unequal global configuration and the disadvantages it poses for the formerly colonised states such as Burkina Faso:

The new international economic order should simply be inscribed alongside all the other rights of the people—the right to independence, to free choice of governmental forms and structures—like the right to development. And like all the people’s rights, it is conquered in struggle and by the struggle of the people. ... I personally maintain unshakable confidence ... that, under the pounding blows of the howling anguish of our peoples, our group will maintain its cohesion, strengthen its collective bargaining power, find allies among all nations, and begin, together with those who can still hear us, to organize a genuinely new international system of economic relations (Sankara, 1988:174).

Sankara is calling for a ‘new international economic order’ based on the state of the global economic system which is skewed in favour of the dominant states – that mostly happen to be colonial powers. This suggests that the situation is undesirable and unsustainable, particularly for the former colonised states. It is a plausible proposition that the condemned masses resist the status quo and exercise anguish in demanding their right

towards a more just economic system and for Sankara, this can only be achieved when tackled as a collective. A radical revolution is, therefore, necessary.

It thus, follows that a radical framework of development is predicated on the reversal of modalities involved. The argument is that one cannot employ similar imperialist strategies to deal with the problem of underdevelopment and other related dehumanising conditions. As Asante (2007) notes that the agency of Africans must be a key feature in their quest for their liberation and the commitment should encompass the economic, cultural, political and social aspects. As articulated above, a critically conscious agent would in this sense, practice the self-reflection/action mode of analysis concerning his/her situation.

This critical work is necessary because of the dehumanising effect that came with the dismemberment of the continent. To re-imagine Africa as a continent imbued with a sense of pride as well as possessing the requisite modalities of self-determination, the notion of critical consciousness is imperative. This critically conscious agent is bound to be a revolutionary participant who is committed to the cause in this situation and as remarked by Biko (1978) this should be propagated by the process of inward-looking. This process for Biko, dictates that the subject liberates the mind to negates the dehumanisation, and social and economic denigration associated with the oppressive logics. Hence my contention regarding the relevance and the significance of the Black Consciousness philosophy in heightening the oppressed subject's consciousness regarding their dehumanised condition. Thus, the idea of the liberated mind becomes essential.

Similarly, Sankara appealed for the reconditioning of the minds in this regard. I contend that the advancement of African Renaissance as a de-linking tool must be thought of and propagated from a critically conscious perspective as the lack thereof is bound to reinforce the condition of dependency. It follows that one cannot challenge the systems of oppression without exercising critical consciousness. Sankara (1988) posits in this regard that a revolutionary individual ought to be self-aware and conscientised about the enormity of the task at hand for the analysis of the problem at hand be it social, cultural, economic, or political, yields the rational solutions that are well suited. In this sense, the promotion of African Renaissance should address the problem of dependency fraught with the dehumanising factors of modernity, which serves to keep Africa in a perpetual

state of lack despite her rich mineral and natural resources. It is thus imperative to interrogate the failure of the externally derived interventions that are mostly top-down and expose the undesirable nature of the centre-periphery dialectics as most of these expose their superficiality concerning the African conditions.

Born out of the persistent condition of neo-colonialism fraught with disillusionment and resentment of domination, a new radical awakening must emerge (Mafeje, 1992). However, the question of the authenticity of the movement amid the continued condition of neo-colonialism and its associated characteristics of dependency remains. Hence, I maintain that embodying the idea of Black Consciousness allows for self-reflection to be practised by the dominated and for the realisation of the dehumanisation that comes with the condition. This will pave the way for the re-awakening, which is informed by critical consciousness and as such, its embodiment is bound to be revolutionary. As such, the promotion of African Renaissance thought must also highlight the significance of criticality as a requisite if the transcendence and transformation of the status is to be achieved. A critically conscious agent, as Biko (1978) asserts, must be in a continuous struggle for truth in the process while seeking the right answers to respond to the situation at hand.

Sankara proposed an idea of qualitative transformation which is informed by an action where “our actions match our words and social behaviour” (1988:102). This should translate into the transformatory praxis reflective of a critically conscious individual. For, an oppressed mind cannot think *qua* radical thinking, which is free from the ideological impositions of the dominant Western discourses. Sankara (1988:55) reminds us that the pervasiveness of imperialism “through its misinformation, [as] it gets to think like it does, it gets us to submit to it, and to go along with all its manoeuvres”. Therefore, the idea of conscientisation is essential because it reminds one of their oppressive conditions to act accordingly by denouncing it and seeking true liberation. This praxis is necessary in this context and applies to other emancipatory movements of which Pan-Africanism is one of them.

6.6 Pan-Africanist African Renaissance

There is evidence to suggest that both Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance share some commonalities and overlaps. In its broad objective, Pan-Africanism holds that

because of their shared experiences of colonialism, slavery and imperialism, black people in the diaspora and on the continent must seek to attain unity to advance a transformative liberation. The idea also emphasises the importance of the preservation and recovery of authentic African cultural contributions given their distortion by the hegemonic narratives. The latter resonates with the idea of African Renaissance as its focus has to do with the re-affirmation of what is authentically African in responding to the imposed notions of being as manifest in the quality of humanness. The preceding chapters elucidated the significance of these aspects in relation to both Biko and Sankara's political thoughts and praxis, which can be summed up by the Black Consciousness and authentic revolution. The former invokes that the African subject attains a critical consciousness to repudiate his/her subjection. The latter posits that a critically conscious subject is bound to seek radical change to escape his/her conditionality.

My contestation throughout the thesis evidently suggests the link between Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. In fact, I maintain that the idea that African Renaissance is predicated on the promotion of Pan-Africanism as an ideology that informs ideas of African emancipation concerning aspects of social transformation. Of course, this assertion is informed by Afro-optimistic view, which holds that Africa is capable of transcending its current situation by constructing and implementing relevant policies that are responsive to its situation – albeit the task is enormous but achievable. Thus, the successful advancement of African Renaissance is dependent on the promotion and advancement of the idea of Pan-Africanism. Gumede succinctly illuminates this assertion by suggesting that it is the responsibility of African leadership to espouse Pan-Africanist philosophy to advance African Renaissance. To this end, African thought leadership must be fostered. For Gumede (2015), African thought leadership must produce a conscious African citizenry that is rooted in Pan-Africanist philosophies driven by the desires of the African Renaissance agenda.

I concur with this view by Gumede because it highlights the importance of critical consciousness in relation to the advancement of self-determination discourses of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. It follows that African leaders ought to illustrate their

commitment to true liberation by being conscious of the conditionalities that hinder the promotion of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance.

It must be highlighted in this regard that both Biko and Sankara's thoughts embrace the idea of Pan-Africanism as presenting the only plausible way towards the attainment of the true unity of the continent given that its self-determination is hinged on it. But it must be said that interventions aimed at transforming the continent tend to be met with resistance and obstacles. This is reflected in the audit report of the AU, positing that:

In a continent where the establishment of strong ethical and moral values in the conduct of public affairs at the national level is proving extremely difficult, establishing strong ethical moral values in pursuit of pan-African transformational goals is the only way of promoting solidarity and the acceptance of African humanity. Instead of the pursuit of hegemonistic policies, no part of Africa and no group of African societies or individuals should be marginalised or rendered incapable of effective participation (The Audit of the AU, 2023).

It is conceded in this report that the conduct of those who are in a position of power on the continent is problematic and not people oriented. This has implications for the promotion of African Renaissance in the sense that it hinders efforts of dismantling the entrenched dependency. Hence the critique that African leadership tend to be removed from the realities of the people. One would maintain that one of the problems stagnating the continent has to do with the persistence of neo-colonialism as reflected in the Westphalian state of post-colonial Africa. Indeed, its repudiation needs to be carried out.

It is my contention that the attainment of African Renaissance is predicated on re-evaluating some of the economic policies that put Africans in a perpetual state of dependency. Given that the problem of dependency is endemic, it makes sense to find ways of addressing it. I maintain that African leaders are still grappling with this aspect as reflected in the current situation and the imposed conditionalities, which, in my view, explains the enormity of the task involved. It is thus comprehensible that Sankara (1988) recognised the urgency of the situation as far as three decades ago when he argued that the OAU has a tendency not to address the problems timeously, and for him, the urgency of the matter requires immediate attention.

Sankara was voicing out his opinion regarding the crisis of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU)¹⁶ as observed in 1984 following his visitation to Ethiopia, Angola, Congo (Brazzaville), Mozambique, Gabon, and Madagascar. The criticism stems from the fact the OAU (now AU) did not display an appetite to resolve the crisis of the continent. Sankara lamented then that the OAU did not have a clear plan regarding the promotion of African unity as members were not in agreement on the path of integration. Sadly, the organisation is still experiencing challenges even after its reformation in 2002.

The AU was formed in 2002 to replace the Organisation of African Unity and its institutions include the AU Commission, the Pan-African Parliament, and the African Court of Human and People's Rights. However, none of these institutions possess any tangible power to effect policy change. For instance, the AU Commission does not have binding powers to compel members to comply with the human rights courts (Staeger and Fagbayibo, 2024). Given this, the AU is incapable of achieving its goals which include among others, the unification of the continent rendering the body weak and toothless. Rupiya (2012) argues, for instance, that AU's diplomacy, mediatory efforts and sanctions on member states are negligible and incapable of achieving desired effects due to the AU's lack of economic and military power to back up its stance. This situation is also highlighted by the AU chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat during the AU's seventh ordinary session of the Assembly at the African Union on 23 February 2024:

Unconstitutional changes of government have multiplied in total defiance of the entire political-legal order that founded our Organisation. Never since the establishment of the AU has such a number of transitions, following unconstitutional change taken place in Africa. Our failure to counter such a phenomenon is obvious. Instead of being joyful modes of peaceful transfer or maintenance of power,

¹⁶ The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was established in May 1963. This continental body consists of 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent. The main object of the OAU was to rid the continent of the persistent remnants of colonialism and apartheid and to promote unity and solidarity amongst African states (AU, 2024). The OAU came to existence following the culmination of the pan-African vision for a unified Africa. The OAU changed to the African Union (AU) in 2002.

elections have become, through the extent of their irregularities, factors for deepening crises (Mahamat, 2024:np).

What is striking about this statement is the acknowledgement of the failure to react to the proliferation of insurrections on the continent which begs the question concerning the exigency of the organisation. The AU's peace and security operations have often come under criticism based on the resource capacity and political will of AU member states. Williams (2011) notes that despite the impressive, but grandiose normative and institutional frameworks of the regional body, the AU is faced with incapacitating shortcomings such as poor resources, a small number of bureaucrats and the divide between member states on how to respond to conflict. To this MØller (2009) argues there is a huge gap between the ambitions and accomplishments of the AU. The problem is compounded by the fact that Africa needs radical interventions given how critical the situation is as illuminated by Sankara.

The problem of instability on the continent is of serious concern as it has humanitarian ramifications given that it displaces ordinary civilians of which the majority are women and children. This explains the continued undesirable conditions of poverty and socio-economic instability in the affected countries. Some of the challenges identified by Staeger and Fagbayibo (2024) include the problem of leadership, which has ramifications for the atrocities committed by several rebel groups operating on the continent, which negatively affect ordinary civilians. As elucidated above, the challenge of conscious leadership remains one of the obstacles facing the continent. Furthermore, the divisions that are evident among various stakeholders and actors are not helpful and will only lead to further entrenchment of dependency. The most worrying aspect of the AU's resource limitation is the dependence on external support – a donor syndrome – which has debilitating implications for the regional body's aim to provide African solutions. This donor support is mainly from the European Union, and it is estimated to be sixty per cent of the entire AU budget. This situation has consequential implications on the AU's capacity to implement policies and, hence, its legitimacy among African citizens is questioned (Abrahamsen and Chimhandamba, 2023).

Although institutions such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and Agenda 2063 are strategies that seek to redress the unequal power relations between the West and Africa, they are neither efficient nor sufficient. These are meant to promote the idea of African Renaissance. According to Matthews and Solomon, 2003, the failure of NEPAD to transform the continent lies in the fact that its idea of Africa's renewal is dependent on Western assistance. Similarly, the Agenda 2063, for instance, though a step in the right direction, falls short because of Africa's hopes for assistance from others in advancing the well-being of its people. This then, is an antithesis of what African Renaissance discourse seeks to achieve, that is, to de-link from the western ties associated with the perpetuation of neo-colonialism. These are some of the concerns that hinder true self-determination and ultimately, the course of de-linking.

Against this background, it is evident that the factors elucidated here are bound to hinder the advancement of the Pan-Africanism agenda and ultimately, African Renaissance. I contend, therefore, that the notion of critical consciousness is imperative as it will inform the promotion of thought leadership which will put the interests of the people above everything else. Hence, the failure of African leaders to attain African unity is of great concern and has implications for self-determination insofar as the liberation of an African is concerned. An authentic African leadership that is rooted in Afrocentric perspective is needed. Therefore, it becomes imperative to promote the values of a Pan-African consciousness, and this should inform the drafting and implementation of the relevant policies, which will in turn promote the values of *Ubuntu* by centring the humanity of the African people.

6.7 Towards a people-centric African Renaissance

The preceding chapters highlighted the importance of involving the people in all endeavours associated with the advancement of the continent. It follows that the success of discourse of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance is hinged on the inclusion of the ordinary people. The mobilisation of the ordinary citizens accepts that their agency is taken into consideration concerning their situation and conditions. Besides, any radical intervention which is meant to uplift and positively transform the lives of the African people should put forth their needs at the forefront. As Sankara posited that a meaningful

revolution must be directed towards the people. Sankara (1988) asserts that the August revolution should be characterised as a people's revolution because it was rooted in the interests of the people and was mandated by them. In other words, it was inspired by them. (see also Chapter 5).

In this context I contend that this assertion illuminates the values and principles of *Ubuntu* philosophy as underpinning all courses of radical interventions. A common thread explicit in Sankara's thought pertains to his advocacy of people's agency insofar as their liberation is concerned and this was not in any way superficial. This is demonstrated in his praxis as it espoused a deep-rooted philosophy of a sense of humanity which exhibits the values of *Ubuntu* or as Leshoele (2018) views it as espousing the principles of *Maat*. Moreover, Sankara's unapologetic posture of affirming the rights of women by recognising and affirming their humanity despite the colonial damage of marginality was also significant. It is about understanding the machinations of the colonial matrices of power and their damaging impact on the social fabric of the African society by their process of hierarchical marginalisation with women being at the bottom of that pyramid.

For Sankara, the repudiation of neo-colonialism lies in the unity of the African people and this unification ought to be organic following a process of conscientisation. This demonstrates the significance of the masses in liberatory discourses and illustrates that the interventions should be people centred. This is significant because "the African subject's valuable life is the entity that is akin to nothingness—a lifeless form" (Sithole, 2022:178). This is because the entrenched coloniality relegates the oppressed's ontological existence to a lifeless object which possesses no rationality as his/her subjection is configured in such a manner that it appears normal. Thus, the subjection becomes intensified due to a lack of critical consciousness. The dehumanisation of black individuals is solidified by their own marginality—which means their subjection becomes normalised.

Thus, the notions of self-awareness, critical consciousness and conscientisation are critical as engendered by the Black Consciousness philosophy. In a sense, Black Consciousness is predicated on the re-humanisation of the oppressed individual by highlighting the importance of self-awareness and self-reflection. It compels one to

embody his/her humanness fully so that one can reject that which negates one's being. In this consciousness, the subject's true humanity is attainable in Biko's view. In this sense, one ought to embody the praxis of *Ubuntu* and having realised his/her authentic ontological existence as a being *qua* liberated, exerts his/her rightful positionality. Hence for Sankara, there is no revolution without the people as demonstrated in the August Revolution where ordinary civilians were at the forefront (together with the army led by Compaoré) of toppling the neocolonial regime of Jean Baptiste Ouédraogo. Through his CNR formation Sankara, managed to mobilise the Voltaic people to gain political consciousness which ultimately, led to the August Revolution.

It is thus, disingenuous for some African elites who perpetuate patterns of coloniality with paternalistic attitudes toward ordinary people. In my view, one of the criticisms of African Renaissance as a liberatory discourse has to do with its exclusion of ordinary citizens as it remained exclusively intellectual and theoretical—which needs to be addressed for it to be effective and useful to the masses. Furthermore, Sithole (2022) argues that the modes of Africa's self-definition such as Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance have been muted suggesting their insufficiency to deal with Africa's predicament. Sithole remarks that owing to the lack of continental support due to colonial border divisions, the discourse of self-definition tends not to gain traction. Furthermore, as illuminated above, most of the institutions that are meant to advance the Pan-African idea such as the AU, Agenda 2063, NEPAD and others, are failing to attain their objectives. The problem lies with the entrenched condition of dependency given that they still rely on externally derived support. This is not what African Renaissance envisages as the aim is about Africans dealing with their own issues and defining their interventions. It is for this reason that the call for a Pan-Africanist consciousness is advocated as its realisation is predicated on the unification of the continent. I contend that Africans need to realise that until such time that unity is forged, true self-determination cannot be attained.

In this condition, the advancement of African Renaissance will be fruitless if it does not address and make an impact on the lives of ordinary citizens. I have demonstrated the predicament faced by the African citizenry as a result of dependency, and how this requires first: that a self-reflection be carried out, and secondly, developing a critical

consciousness to adequately respond to that situation is of paramount importance. It follows that true liberation should start with the reconditioning of the mind of the African. Both Biko and Sankara understood this radical intervention proving that any emancipatory discourse ought to engender one's re-humanisation through the re-affirmation of one's humanity. It is therefore my contention that both Biko and Sankara's political thoughts foreground the voices and agency of ordinary people and through their praxis, they became one with the people as it is the latter that inspired their activism. Thus, the philosophy of *Ubuntu* espouses that interventions such as Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance must be unapologetically people-centric in their endeavours of advancing the existential living conditions of the African people.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter explored the notions of 'return', 'renewal' and other related terms associated with the concept of African Renaissance and argued that they espouse the reconfiguration of Africa's response to the entrenched dependency and coloniality. It is this invocation that could advance the notion of *Ubuntu* and other Afrocentric approaches to phenomena in their authentic form. The chapter further demonstrated the pervasiveness of dependency and neo-colonial agendas, which in turn presents the problem of leadership on the continent. It is for this reason that critically conscious leadership is needed to confront contemporary conditionalities. Hence, Sankara asserts that Africa needs a leadership that is revolutionary in the context of the imposed conditions. Thus, a conscientised individual is bound to advance the ideas of African Renaissance and Pan-Africanism with clarity because of their significance in so far as true liberation is concerned. In this sense, the affirmation of *Ubuntu* is key as it will lead to radical interventions that are people-centric in their affirmation of humanity.

The next chapter concludes the study and propose some recommendations.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This thesis has examined the political thoughts of Biko and Sankara elucidating where and how they advance the idea of African Renaissance as a de-linking project, and their shortcoming to this effect. It is evident from this project that Biko and Sankara advanced and espoused a liberatory praxis characterised by a people-centric perspective, which was aimed at championing a free Africa for all Africans at home, and the diaspora. Furthermore, they highlight the significance of conscientisation as paramount if true, and absolute liberation is to be attained. Biko and Sankara's thoughts and praxis, as argued provide valuable lessons concerning the hard work required to achieve true liberation. This concluding chapter summarises the key findings from this thesis. It further highlights the study's contribution to the body of knowledge, and responds to the research problem, and questions. I also acknowledge some limitations to the study and devote a section of this chapter to address these. Moreover, the chapter makes recommendations for future research.

7.2 The idea of conscientisation

As elucidated in the preceding chapters, true liberation is significant for the socio-economic and socio-political stability and advancement of the continent to be championed. This is clearly reflected in both Biko and Sankara's political thoughts and praxis. Both Sankara and Biko, have endured the brunt of colonial oppression, with Biko also confronted with a critical need to respond to the apartheid regime, ultimately meeting his demise in the process. While Biko confronted through thought and praxis, the cruelty of the apartheid system in South Africa, which he wanted to overthrow to liberate South Africans, Sankara was confronted with the instability associated with neo-imperialism in Burkina Faso. Sankara saw neo-colonialism in Africa, particularly in Burkina Faso as a continuation of the colonial state and not signifying the establishment of an independent post-colonial autonomous society. It is against this background that, I postulate that both these thinkers set out to analyse and critically understand the machinations and indoctrination of the hegemonic systems withing which they had to ascertain their Being. It is through this critical analysis that they came to understand the power of the mind as

a double-edged sword insofar as it is employed as a tool for manipulation, and for true liberation. Hence, their devotion to the process of conscientisation in this regard (Freire, 2005).

Both Biko and Sankara were very vocal on the aspect of conscientisation due to the ingrained indoctrination imposed by the systemic hegemonic system of colonialism, neo-colonialism, neo-imperialism and coloniality. As I have pointed out in Chapter 4, the lack of critical consciousness on the part of the oppressed subject is bound to amount to the mask of bad faith. The mask of bad faith has implications for the quest for liberation because it entrenches the status quo, and the perpetual condition of subjection. Biko's conception of Black Consciousness is a response to the negation of the bondage through self-awareness. Black Consciousness is concerned with the process of conscientisation as a mode of negating the ingrained shackles of oppression and the inferiority that come with it. Hence, psychological liberation is significant in Biko and Sankara's political thoughts. Sankara stressed the importance of re-conditioning people's minds to accept themselves as fully human and embrace all aspects that make them uniquely Africans. Biko speaks of inward-looking as a way of dealing with inferiority instilled by the hegemonic machinery. The actualisation of true liberation is predicated on critical consciousness. For Biko transcending the condition of subjection requires the subject to work on his/her indoctrinated mind.

Accordingly, Biko advocates for the embracement of Black Consciousness as a way of life because he recognised the magnitude of the burden of the psychological impact inflicted on the oppressed subject. In this sense, entrenching Black Consciousness in one's praxis implies a constant reminder that the inflicted oppression is systemic, violent and manipulative. Thus, in this context, Black Consciousness must serve to propagate self-awareness concerning the oppressed subject given the systemic anti-blackness, which dehumanises this subject. Biko (1978) asserts that black people are oppressed because of their blackness. The problem of anti-blackness is pervasive and continually questions the validity regarding the humanness of the black subject wherein his/her ontological self is perpetually subjected to unsolicited scrutiny.

Hence, for Biko the promotion of black solidarity is imperative. This can only be achieved through the concerted conscientisation of the subjected and 'othered' black individuals. This self-awareness is propagated on the confrontation of the fear of radical freedom (Sartre, 1965). As such, the oppressed black must consciously challenge the negation of his/her blackness. Despite Africa's attainment of political independence, antiblackness is still persistent and needs a closer examination. The fact that there still exist pockets of Afrophobia, tribalism and ultra-nationalist rhetoric, is a testament that Biko's concern remains an issue in the contemporary era. It is for this reason that Biko and Sankara's thoughts be read as alive, with possibilities to ignite a revolution for liberation. Thus, highlighting the significance of conscientisation. One may argue that this was the fundamental message stemming from Biko's political thought as he was concerned about the timidity of the subjected individual as a result of the subjection. As such, negating and transcending the oppression becomes valid and significant in this context.

Sankara advances a radical posture insofar as the conscientisation process is concerned—a revolution ought to be undertaken. The revolution for Sankara (1988) must be people-driven. For Sankara people need to take responsibility for their liberation as no messiah can save them. Besides, any revolution that is not enacted for and through the people is in bad faith as Sankara asserts. He was adamant that a people-driven revolutionary action is pertinent and suitable to resist the imperialistic impositions. However, the revolution concerned must be enacted in good faith. This is where the notion of critical consciousness is imperative given that a revolutionary who is self-aware of the implications of their action is bound to conduct the project authentically. As Sankara (1988) observes that the revolution must engender what he calls qualitative transformation. It follows that there is a synergy in Biko and Sankara's thoughts as the former advances psychological liberation and the latter calls for a revolutionary praxis, which must be inspired by the interests of the people.

It is thus clear from my reading of the political thought and praxis of Biko and Sankara that the fundamental message conveyed herein is that, firstly, the idea of conscientisation is paramount as one has to be critically conscious to embark on the journey of liberation. For both these thinkers, this process includes among others, mental decolonisation, self-

awareness of the imposed colonial conditions and the ability to discern the existence of the existential crisis. Secondly, a critically conscious individual is bound to appreciate and embrace the philosophy of *Ubuntu* as a moral, ethical and authentic African lens or framework through which the world is to be made sense of. Following this process, this critically conscious agent will then appreciate the pressing need to advance African Renaissance insofar as it must call for the mobilisation of African people to work toward a common goal of advancing the continent for the benefit of all her people. Moreover, this agent should seek to unlearn and learn the true African history, philosophy and African culture and identity.

This agent is bound to be amenable to the ideals of Pan-Africanism as advanced by Biko and Sankara towards the prosperity of the continent. It is against this background that I maintain that their political thoughts and praxis are still relevant for present-day African condition given that the perpetual condition of coloniality is still persistent and continues to inflict violence upon those impacted by its systemic marginalisation. It is for this reason that the ethics of *Ubuntu* as embodied by both Biko and Sankara is significant as a liberatory discourse.

7.3 Toward *Ubuntu*-centric liberation

I have argued in this thesis that *Ubuntu* encapsulates the fundamental values and principles of Africanness in an ontological sense—which speaks to the essence of being an African. It is through the *Ubuntu* praxis that the validity of one's humanness is affirmed and crystallised. In this praxis, the centrality of a person is imperative, and is also predicated on the acknowledgement, and embodiment of the community at large. Hence, Dladla (2017) regards *Ubuntu* as a philo-praxis in that one ought to embrace it dually—as a principle and in practise. Furthermore, *Ubuntu* is endogenous and encompasses humanity, nature, the cosmos and the environment. This illustrates the ecological perspective of *Ubuntu* ethics given that the absence or the disturbance of one element disturbs the existence of harmony. Thus, *Ubuntu* is predicated on the promotion and the maintenance of the harmonious relations among these entities. Thus, *Ubuntu* praxis requires one to be conscious of how they relate with fellow humans, the environment and nature. This is significant because one who is practising *Ubuntu* praxis is bound to

engender critical consciousness so as to strive to entrench harmony insofar as the humanisation of the other is paramount.

The principles and values of *Ubuntu* were embedded in Biko and Sankara's political thoughts and praxis. *Ubuntu* was fundamental in shaping their political thought, which is reflected in their people-centric attitudes. In his testimony at the SASO trial, Biko (1978:147) articulated this aspect arguing that "a culture that accepts the humanity of a black man [sic]". Biko's lamented the imposition of Eurocentric culture and its implications on the psyche of Africans. Furthermore, in his rejection of white supremacy and hegemony, Biko advocates that the black subject embraces his/her authentic cultural value system and uses it as a weapon to negate their dehumanisation and bolster a liberatory praxis. The notion of collectivism and communitarianism is evident in his idea of black solidarity against the evil of antiblackness. Black Consciousness is predicated on the idea of the unification and mobilisation of black subjects in that they have to function as one voice and espouse solidarity as a unit (Biko, 1978). However, as highlighted above, Biko also acknowledges that this subjected group must undergo the process of conscientisation first in order to embrace the idea of a collective voice against the dehumanising system. In this mobilisation, the spirit of *Ubuntu* is realised and the actualisation of true liberation that foregrounds the humanity of others becomes a possibility. This aspect espouses the positivity of the blackness amid the constant attempts of degradation, deprivation and dehumanisation.

The promotion of the authentic cultural value system and the concomitant endogenous way of living is also prominent in Sankara's thought. He understood the significance of environmental preservation as reflected in his campaign for the plantation of trees and the reforestation drive because he understood the significance of preserving the environment to benefit the people. This illustrates how Sankara's thought is predicated on people-centric praxis in all his endeavours. He believed that any revolutionary process must be undertaken with the people and for the people. Furthermore, his people-centric praxis acknowledged and recognised the unfortunate marginalisation of women as a result of the entrenched patriarchy. He sought to conscientise men and boys to embrace women as equal counterparts and in the process embracing their true humanity. This

assertion is accentuated by his own words when he said, during the 1987 International Women's Day that "women – source of life yet object. Mother, yet servile domestic. Nurturer, yet trophy. Exploited in the fields and at home, yet playing the role of a faceless, voiceless extra. The pivot, the link, yet in chains. Female, shadow of the male shadow" (Sankara, 1988: 276-277).

Thus, advancing the true spirit of collectivism that is predicated on the equality and inclusivity of all the people. This is what the principle of *Ubuntu* entails—affirmation of another person's humanness. This is a noticeable difference between Biko and Sankara's political praxis given that the latter was unapologetic about affirming and emancipating women amid the entrenched patriarchy. Although there has been a considerable improvement concerning the issues of gender equality and women's rights on the African continent, women and other vulnerable groups remain marginalised. This is one valuable lesson to be drawn from Sankara's people-centric political praxis, particularly insofar as decolonial interventions are concerned.

7.4 African Renaissance: a de-linking project?

Given the perpetual state of neo-colonialism and its associated exploitation of the colonised in different forms, the need for radical interventions becomes imperative and as such, Biko and Sankara are examples of revolutionary leaders that negated coloniality, through their political praxis. Radical action of shifting the existing ways of thinking and doing things is crucial in terms of decolonial thinking and the future of the development of the African continent. This project requires the enactment of epistemic disobedience, critical consciousness and mental liberation. Both Biko and Sankara are the proponents of this radical action. As already elucidated in this thesis, the notion of critical consciousness is imperative and a requisite for any radical intervention. Thus, it is evident that for African Renaissance to be considered a de-linking project (see Chapter 3), its proponents must be conscientised accordingly.

Essentially, given the nature of a radical intervention insofar as the persistent coloniality demands the subjectivity of the oppressed, it is only a critical conscious agent that can negate this subjection. As argued Biko and Sankara's political praxis are predicated on critical consciousness as a significant dimension of their political thoughts. A de-linking

dimension requires that the subject disassociates from all the aspects of oppression and dependency that keep him/her in the state of perpetual servitude. Sankara (1988) observed in that regard that the problem of dependency is undesirable for the African continent because it disorganises, subjugates and deny the people the responsibility for their own economic, political, and cultural affairs.

Thus, the idea of an African Renaissance was borne of the realisation that even with political independence, Africa continues to be stuck in the perpetual condition of neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism. The exploitation of its natural resources continues unabated because of the perpetual dependency—60 years following the independence of the continent. This necessitates that a radical intervention be carried out. Although the idea of African Renaissance is not overt in Biko and Sankara's political thoughts, I contend that their political thought and praxis advance its ideals—however, the two leaders did not explicitly call for its promotion. However, their political thought advances its principles, particularly when it is regarded as a framework that strives to re-imagine the continent free from the shackles of neo-colonialism. A continent reconfigured through the values of *Ubuntu*, Pan-Africanism and African political and economic unification.

Biko (1978) articulates what he terms a culture of defiance, self-assertion and group pride and solidarity. As such, it is plausible to deduce that African Renaissance is closely tied to Biko's Black Consciousness in that it also appeals to the solidarity of Africans in order to negate the condition of coloniality and embrace their African identity. It is thus sensible to conclude that the promotion of African Renaissance is key insofar as it appeals to the re-telling of authentic African history, and the regeneration of its cultural values and principles such as *Ubuntu* is concerned. This is further enunciated by Biko (1978:57) concerning Black Consciousness as a framework for “correcting false images of ourselves in terms of Culture, Education, and Economics”. The social transformation must encompass three elements, namely, the cultural, educational, and economic aspects. Furthermore, it must instil a sense of self-affirmation propelling Africans to foster and forge their own socio-economic developmental path by affirming Pan-Africanist ideals and ridding the continent of the condition of dependency. This speaks to the idea of de-linking given that the actualisation of self-determination must be concrete and radical.

7.5 Lessons drawn from Biko and Sankara's political thoughts

As the preceding chapters have alluded, Biko and Sankara should be regarded as revolutionaries. It is worth reiterating that both thinkers exhibited moral, ethical and people-centric leadership capabilities. The latter is the overarching theme prevalent in their political praxis. I contend and reiterate in that regard that *Ubuntu* ethics was embedded in their thought as demonstrated in their praxis. Biko and Sankara thought with and about the people in the quest for their liberation. The only difference between them has to do with the fact that Sankara had the opportunity to lead Burkina Faso and actualise some of his revolutionary visions. On the other hand, Biko did not get that opportunity, but his ideas remain relevant within the contemporary context, particularly the Black Consciousness philosophy. As alluded to above and in Chapter 4, Black Consciousness is about the mobilisation of black people to come to terms with their oppression by negating it through self-awareness.

To highlight the significance of their political praxis, Biko and Sankara were despised by the agents of the hegemonic system as they advanced the principle of self-awareness among the oppressed by alerting the colonised to take radical action. Amid the resistance, they remained resolute as their commitment was beyond their pursuit of liberation but stemmed from the people-centric attitude. This is one valuable lesson for contemporary African leadership as the said leadership latter tends to pander to the neo-colonial agenda and is sometimes self-serving. This problematic aspect of African leadership was addressed in detail in Chapter 6 and speaks to the reasons behind the stagnation of the continent with concomitant challenges. Of course, this is not to say that all African leaders are problematic, but the leadership challenge must be addressed.

Biko and Sankara demonstrated a conviction to liberate the people and in the process, strove to actualise social transformation. It is for this reason that the agents of the imperialist system murdered Biko and Sankara. The coup which was launched to topple Sankara was sponsored by the Western imperialists. Similarly, Biko died mysteriously at the hands of the apartheid regime authorities. This was aimed at silencing their voices; however, their ideas did not die as proven in this thesis. In this sense, I contend that the entrenched African conditions of marginality and peripherality, necessitate for a critically

conscious thought leadership. As illustrated throughout the thesis, the phenomenon of critical consciousness is imperative in liberatory discourse, and it was espoused by Biko and Sankara. For Sankara, any leader who purports to advance the interests and needs of the people ought to possess the characteristics of a true revolutionary (see Chapter 5). Notwithstanding the fact that contemporary African leaders have inherited the postcolonial predicament involving the perpetuation of neo-colonial economic and political agendas.

Furthermore, a people-centred revolution must not only be demonstrated through thought but also action. For Sankara (1988), a revolution need not be a destructive anarchy but a radical intervention. This is because people need to see radical change through tangible socio-economic transformation. Sankara demonstrated this by embarking upon large-scale social projects in Burkina Faso that saw the lives of the ordinary most of them hopeless, transform for the better. For instance, housing projects, vaccination programmes, mass literacy campaign, and the reforestation projects among others (see Chapter 5). Thus, it follows that revolutionary leaders must focus on transforming their polity, economies, and societies for the benefit of their people and as such, they must be doers rather than just theorists.

7.6 Recommendations

The contribution to the body of knowledge insofar as this study is concerned pertains to the crystallisation of Biko and Sankara's thought and praxis in relation to African Renaissance as a de-linking project. At the conception of the study, there was little research that examined the political and praxis of Biko and Sankara concerning the promotion of African Renaissance as reflected in their thought. I am of the view that the study has filled that gap contributing significantly to the body of knowledge of these African leaders. The study foregrounds endogenous epistemological as well as philosophical foundations in an attempt to re-appropriate and draw from African heritage and to reinforce their usefulness and relevance in addressing the African realities. To this end, this study employed *Ubuntu* as a philosophical lens to explore matters of liberation and thus, dissecting this phenomenon from an endogenous theoretical perspective. However, more research needs to be undertaken on the idea of African Renaissance,

particularly on aspects of re-telling authentic African history. Another aspect that needs attention relates to interviewing ordinary citizens to get their insights on matters of conscientisation, critical consciousness and their implications to the attainment of liberation.

Another key takeaway from this project is that theory and thought must be tied to action as the latter translates the ideas into tangible results. Hence, the importance of the notion of praxis in that regard. As such, the recommendations proposed herein speak to concrete actions required. One aspect relates to the transformation of the education system to conscientise Africans to repudiate the entrenched Western-oriented thought, which is ingrained in their psyches. Thus, the transformation of the school curriculum (this aspect was dealt with in Chapter 4) must be undertaken to infuse the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* from an early age to foster a culture of collectivism, human-centredness and solidarity among learners. This relates to what I term an *Ubuntu-centric* pedagogy. I propose the following concerning the adoption of this *Ubuntu-oriented* education:

- It must be humanistic, meaning it must validate the humanity of all people including all the other vulnerable members of society such as women, people living with disabilities and the LGBTQI+ communities. This proposed education system should espouse the principles of communitarianism, solidarity and interdependence.
- Efforts should be made to incorporate the indigenous knowledge (IKS) systems starting at the basic education level until the postschool level and IKS experts must be roped in to construct transformed curricula that embody the principles of *Ubuntu* by recognising the interconnectedness of nature, environment, and the people.
- The education system must highlight and amplify the significance of harmony insofar as the people and nature are interrelated to safeguard the future of our environment and the lives of those currently living and those still yet to be born.

Insofar as African Renaissance is concerned, promoting and advancing authentic African history becomes paramount. The correct history must be taught, and this requires an investment of resources towards research on African knowledge systems concerning the

phenomena of ecology, environment, cosmologies and astrology to gain a deeper understanding of climate change issues from an Afrocentric perspective. This is where the continent of Africa may contribute to global affairs on climate change and environmental preservation. Future research on authentic African historicity, and cultural systems ought to be undertaken to advance the idea of African Renaissance.

Lastly, the policy implications of an *Ubuntu*-centric approach must respond to the current African situation by infusing the indigenous knowledge systems drafting policies – this means that they have to de-link from Eurocentric attitudes and values. For instance, regional organisations such as the AU, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) must infuse people-centric values that are inspired by *Ubuntu* philosophy and ethics in their social policies and other programmes. A people-centric approach is also crucial in strategies and mechanisms employed to deal with African situations such as the ongoing conflicts that hinder the advancement of the Pan-Africanism project on the continent. Furthermore, the African political elites must endeavour to institute strategies that will enable them to be economically independent from the West as this keeps them in a state of dependency. It is evident that this method is unsustainable even more than three decades following the assassination of Sankara, the predicament persists. For instance, the Western-oriented development perspective, which is predicated on capitalist ideas should be transformed as it failed to enhance the lives of the African people.

7.7 Limitations of the study

The approach taken in this study was textual analysis. Therefore, the data sought was limited to texts only. The main texts, Biko's *I write what I like* (1978) and *Towards true humanity in South Africa* (1978), and Sankara's *Thomas Sankara speaks: The Burkina Faso revolution 1983-1987* (1988), and *We are heirs of the world's revolutions: speeches from the Burkina Faso revolution* (2007) were read through an *ubuntu* philosophical lens to decipher, both Sankara and Biko's political thoughts and praxis. Extensive literature review was also done to interpret these leaders' thoughts. There was a plethora of writings about Biko, particularly from his contemporaries such as Pityana, Khoapa and Ramphela, to mention a few, which in my view strengthened the argument put forth. This is so

because some of the writers knew Biko personally and were writing from first-hand experience with him. Furthermore, most of these writings are in English, which makes it easier to examine and analyse them closely. It is my view that the texts concerned have illuminated insights into Biko's life, politics and praxis. Insofar as the writings on Sankara are concerned, I was only able to access the material written in English (some translated). However, the text *Thomas Sankara speaks: The Burkina Faso revolution 1983-1987* (1988), is a collection of his speeches as a leader of the Burkina Faso revolution and encapsulates his political activities during his tenure. Therefore, the readings and the associated conclusions drawn are limited to the texts concerned.

7.8 Conclusion

This last chapter of the thesis has provided a summary of the main findings from this study. The chapter has highlighted the notion of conscientisation as a key feature in Biko and Sankara's thought and praxis. A critically conscious subject is bound to advance and embrace the principles of *Ubuntu*, Black Consciousness and other related revolutionary ideals to repudiate the entrenched condition of subjection. Having been conscientised accordingly, this subject will thus promote the liberatory discourses of African Renaissance and Pan-Africanism to advance social transformation, and in the process promote people-centric discourse for the benefit of the African citizenry. This praxis will ensure that the legacy of both Biko and Sankara lives on.

REFERENCES

Abbas, H, & Mama, A. 2014. Feminism and Pan-Africanism. *Feminist Africa 19 Pan-Africanism and Feminism*, (19(1):1-6.

Abraham, R & Chimhandamba, B. 2023. Introduction: The African Union, Pan-Africanism, and the liberal world (dis) order. *Global Quarterly*. 3: 1-10.

Adebajo, A. 2020. Pan-Africanism: from the twin plagues of European locusts in Africa's triple quest for emancipation, in A. Adebajo (ed). *The Pan-African pantheon: prophets, poets, and philosophers*. Johannesburg: Jacana Media.

African Union audit report. 2023. Available at:

<https://africanlii.org/akn/aa-au/doc/report/2023-05-26/the-2022-au-consolidated-final-audit-report-and-financial-statements/eng@2023-05-26#page-1>

[Accessed 15 September 2024]

Ahluwalia, P & Zegeye, A. 2010. Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko: towards liberation. *Social identities*, 3(3): 455-469.

Althusser, L. 1971. Lenin, philosophy, and other essays. London: New Left Books.

Amin, S. 2011. *Global history: a view from the south*. Cape Town: Pambazuka Press.

Amin, S. 2019. *The long revolution of the global south: toward a new anti-imperialist international*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Amoateng, E.N. 2022. Military coups in Africa: A continuation of politics by other means? *Conflict trends*.

Available at:

https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-accordc_v2022_n1_a2 [Accessed 10 August 2024]

Ani, N.C. 2021. Coup or not coup: the African Union and the dilemma of “popular uprisings” in Africa. *Democracy and Security*. 17: 257-277.

Araoye, A. 2012. Hegemonic agendas, intermesticity and conflicts in the postcolonial state. *African Journal on conflict resolution*, 12(1): 33-60.

Araoye, A. 2013. A new type of leadership. *The Thinker*, 51.

Araoye, A. 2018. African politics since independence. In: Shanguhya, M., Falola, T. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of African Colonial and Postcolonial History*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Asante, M.K. 1998. *The Afrocentric idea*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Asante, M.K. 2007. *An Afrocentric manifesto: toward an African Renaissance*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Asante, M.K. 2020. Afrocentricity, in Rabaka, R. (ed). *Routledge Handbook of Pan-Africanism*. Abington: Routledge.

Badat, M.S. 1999. *Black student politics, higher education, and apartheid: from SASO to SANSCO, 1968 – 1990*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

Biglaiser, G & McGauvran, R.J. 2022. The effects of IMF loan conditions on poverty in the developing world. *Journal of international relations and development*, 25(3):806.

Biko, S.B. 1978. *I Write What I Like*. London: Bowerdean.

Biko, S.B. 1978. Towards true humanity in South Africa. *The Ecumenical Review* 30(4): 355-368.

Biney, A. 2018. Madmen, Thomas Sankara and Decoloniality in Africa, in A. Murrey (ed). *A certain amount of madness: the life and legacies of Thomas Sankara*. London: Pluto Press.

Blain, K.N, Leeds, N., & Taylor U.Y. 2016. Guest Editor Introduction. *Women, Gender, and Families of Color* 4. 2: 139-145.

Bongmba, E.K. 2004. Reflections on Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance. *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 30(2): 291-316.

Booyesen, S. 2016. Introduction. In S. Booyesen (ed), *Fees must fall: student revolt, decolonisation and governance in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Botchway, D.N.Y.M & Traore, M. 2018. Military Coup, Popular Revolution or Militarised Revolution?: Contextualising the Revolutionary Ideological Courses of Thomas Sankara and the National Council of the Revolution, in A. Murrey (ed). *A certain amount of madness: the life and legacies of Thomas Sankara*. London: Pluto Press.

Buthelezi, S. 1991. The emergence of Black Consciousness: an appraisal, in N.B. Pitso, M. Ramphela, M. Mpumwana & L. Wilson (eds). *Bounds of possibility: the legacy of Steve Biko & Black Consciousness*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.

Boyce-Davies, C. 2014. Pan-Africanism, transnational black feminism and the limits of culturalist analyses in African gender discourses. *Feminist Africa*, 19:78-94.

Cabral, A. 1973. *Return to the Source*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Campbell, H.G. 2018a. Foreword: the life and legacy of Thomas Sankara, in A. Murrey (ed). *A certain amount of madness: the life and legacies of Thomas Sankara*. London: Pluto Press.

Campbell, H.G. 2018b. The Pan-African experience: from the Organization of African Unity to the African Union, in M. Shanguhya and T. Falola (eds) *The Palgrave handbook of African colonial and postcolonial history*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cheru, F. 2009. Development in Africa: the imperial project versus the Nationalist project and the need for policy space. *Review of African political economy*, 36(120): 275-278.

Chigozie, C.F & Oyinmiebi, P.T. 2022. Military coups in West Africa: Implications for ECOWAS *African Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research* 5: 52-64.

Chilisa, B & Kawulich, B.B. 2012. Selecting a research approach: paradigm, methodology and methods, in B.B. Kawulich and M. Garner (eds). *Doing Social Research: A Global Context*. London: McGraw-Hill.

Chilisa, B. 2012. *Indigenous research methodologies*. London: SAGE Publications.

Chuwa, L.T. 2014. *African ethics in global bioethics*. London: Springer.

Cossa, J. 2009. African Renaissance and Globalization: a conceptual analysis. *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*. 36(1): 1-25.

- Daley, P. 2008. Thomas Sankara and Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem: The Untimely Deaths of Two New Generation African Visionaries, in A. Murrey (ed). *A certain amount of madness: the life and legacies of Thomas Sankara*. London: Pluto Press.
- Davey, N. 2016. Word, image, and concept, in N. Keane & C. Lawn (eds). *The Blackwell companion to hermeneutics*. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.
- Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. 2003. *Social research: the basics*. London: Sage Publications.
- Diawara, M. 1996. Pan-Africanism and pedagogy. *Black Renaissance*, 1(1):178.
- Dladla, N. 2017. Towards an African critical philosophy of race: Ubuntu as philo-praxis of liberation. *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy of Culture and Religions*. 6(1): 39-68.
- Duncan, G. 2008. An African-conscious female's reading of Steve Biko, in C.W. Du Toit (ed). *The Legacy of Stephen Bantu Biko: Theological challenges*. Pretoria: Unisa Press.
- Dussel, E. 1985. *Philosophy of liberation*, translated by A Martinez and C Morkovsky. New York: Orbis Books.
- Dussel, E. 1996. *The underside of modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor, and the philosophy of liberation*, translated by E. Mendieta. New Jersey: Humanities Press International, Inc.
- Dussel, E. 2000. Europe, modernity, and Eurocentrism. *Nepantla: views from the South*, 1 (3): 465-478.
- Dussel, E. 2013. *The ethics of liberation in the age of globalization and exclusion*. London: Duke University Press.
- du Toit, C. 2009. Black consciousness as an expression of radical responsibility: Biko an African Bonhoeffer, in C.W. Du Toit (ed). *The Legacy of Stephen Bantu Biko: Theological challenges*. Pretoria: Unisa Press.
- Egudu, R.N. 1978. *Modern African poetry and the African predicament*. London: Macmillan Press.

Ekine, S. 2012. I can hear the roar of women's silence.

Available at: <https://www.redpepper.org.uk/i-can-hear-the-roar-of-womens-silence/>

[Accessed 15 September 2022]

Esedebe, P.O. 1977. What is Africanism? *Journal of African Studies*. 4(2):167-187.

Eze, M.O. 2013. Pan Africanism: a brief intellectual history. *History compass*, 11(19): 663-674.

Falola, T & Agbo, C. 2018. Colonial Administrations and the Africans, in M.S. Shanguhya and T. Falola (eds). *The Palgrave Handbook of African Colonial and Postcolonial History*. New York: Springer Nature.

Falola, T. 2003. *The power of African cultures*. Rochester. University of Rochester Press.

Fanon, F. 1963. *The wretched of the earth*. New York: Grove Publishers.

Fanon, F. 1964. *Toward the African revolution: political essays*. New York: Grove.

Fanon, F. 1967. *The wretched of the earth*. New York: Grove Publishers.

Ferraris, M. 1996. *History of hermeneutics*. New York: Humanities Press.

Fratton, R. 1986. *Black Consciousness in South Africa: The Dialectics of Ideological Resistance to White Supremacy*. New York: State University of New York.

Freire, P. 1993. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group.

Freire, P. 2005. *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. by M. Bergman Ramos. London: Continuum.

Gardiner, M. 1999. Bakhtin and the metaphors of perception, in I. Heywood & B. Sandywell (eds). *Interpreting visual culture: explorations in the hermeneutics of the visual*. London: Routledge.

Garvey, M. 1977. *Philosophy and opinions of Marcus Garvey*. s.l.:s.n.

Gerhart, G.M. 1978. *Black power in South Africa*. London: University of California Press.

Gerhart, G.M. 2008. Interview with Steve Biko, in A. Mngxitama, A. Alexander & N. Gibson (eds). *Biko lives! Contesting the Legacies of Steve Biko*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gibrill, H.T. 2014. Methodological matters in the study of Africa: An appreciation of WEB Du Bois' Africanist scholarship. *Phylon*. 51(1): 158-177.

Gordon, L.R. 2006. Africana thought and African-Diasporic studies, in J. Gordon and L. Gordon (eds), *A companion to African-American studies*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Gordon, L.R. 2008. Biko: Africana existentialist philosopher, in A. Mngxitama, A. Alexander & N. Gibson (eds). *Biko lives! Contesting the Legacies of Steve Biko*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gordon, L.R. 2010. Theory in black: teleological suspensions in philosophy of culture, *Que Parle: Critical humanities and social sciences* 18(2): 193-214.

Gordon, L.R. 2011. Shifting the Geography of Reason in an Age of Disciplinary Decadence. *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1(2): 96–104.

<https://doi.org/10.5070/T412011810>

Gordon, L.R. 2013. *Existencia Africana: Understanding Africana existential thought*. London: Routledge.

Gordon, L.R. 2014. Justice Otherwise: Thoughts on Ubuntu, in L. Praeg and S. Magadla (eds). *Ubuntu: Curating the Archive*, Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Gordon, L.R. 2017. Thoughts on two recent decades of studying race and racism. *Social identities*.

Grosfoguel, R. 2007. The epistemic decolonial turn. *Cultural studies*, 21(2):211-223.

Gumede, V. 2015. Exploring thought leadership, thought liberation and critical consciousness for Africa's development. *Africa Development*. 40(4): 91-111.

Gumede, V. 2018. Social policy for inclusive development in Africa. *Third World Quarterly*. 39(1): 122-139.

- Hall, S. 1996. Cultural studies and its theoretical legacies, in D. Morley & K. Chen (eds). *Stuart Hall: critical dialogues in cultural studies*. London: Routledge.
- Harsch, E. 1998. Burkina Faso in the winds of liberalisation, *Review of African political economy*, 25(78): 625-641.
- Harsch, E. 2013. The legacies of Thomas Sankara: a revolutionary experience in retrospect. *Review of African Political Economy*. 40(137): 358-374.
- Harsch, E. 2014. *Thomas Sankara: an African revolutionary*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Harsch, E. 2018. With the People: Sankara's Humanist Marxism, in A. Murrey (ed). *A certain amount of madness: the life and legacies of Thomas Sankara*. London: Pluto Press.
- Ibrahim, A.A. 2016. African Union and the challenges of underdevelopment in contemporary Africa. *British Journal of Education, Society & Behavioural Science*. 14 (4): 1-10.
- Ijeoma, E.O. 2007. Re-thinking Pan-Africanism Dilemmas and Efforts Towards African Integration. *Journal of Public Administration* 42(3): 179-194.
- Irele, A. 1964. A defence of Negritude. *Transition*, 13: 9 -11.
- Irele, F.A. 2002. Negritude: literature and ideology, in P.H. Coetzee and P.J. Roux (eds). *The African philosophy reader*, 2nd edition. London: Routledge.
- Jackson, N. 2018. 'Incentivized' Self-Adjustment: Reclaiming Sankara's Revolutionary Austerity from Corporate Geographies of Neoliberal Erasure, in A. Murrey (ed). *A certain amount of madness: the life and legacies of Thomas Sankara*. London: Pluto Press.
- Jenkins, C. 1990. Explaining military coups d'état: Black Africa, 1957-1984. *American sociological review*, 55(6):861-875.
- Ka Isaka Seme, P. 1906. The regeneration of Africa. *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 5(6): 404-408.

- Kandeh, J.D. 2002. *Coups from below: armed subalterns and state power in West Africa*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Khoapa, B. 2008. *African Diaspora: Intellectual Influences on Steve Biko*. Pretoria: Unisa.
- Kinsella, E.A. 2006. Hermeneutics and critical hermeneutics: exploring possibilities within the art of interpretation. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 7(3).
- Kongo, J & Zeilig, L. 2017. *Voices of liberation: Thomas Sankara*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Lamola, J. 2013. Mbeki redefines African Renaissance. *The Thinker*, 55: 34-35.
- Lechaba, L.T. 2019. *Textual analysis of selected articles from "The Thinker" magazine (2010-2016)*. University of South Africa (unpublished MA Dissertation).
- Lechaba, L.T. 2021. Sartre, Bad Faith and Authentic Decolonial Interventions. *Sartre Studies International* 27:(2) 65-75.
- Lemelle, S.J & Kelley, D.G. 1994. Introduction: imagining home: Pan-Africanism revisited, in S.J. Lemelle & D.G. Kelley (eds). *Imagining home: class, culture and nationalism in the African diaspora*. London: Verso.
- Leshoele, M. 2017. Thomas Sankara's revolutionary leadership: meditations on an African statesman. *Africa Insight*, 47(2):40-53.
- Leshoele, M. 2019. *Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance in contemporary Africa: lessons from Burkina Faso's Thomas Sankara*. University of South Africa, Pretoria (unpublished Ph.D. thesis).
- M'Bayo, T.E. 2004. W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, and Pan-Africanism in Liberia, 1919-1924. *The Historian*. 66(1): 19-44.
- Madlingozi, T. 2018. *Mayibuye iAfrika?: disjunctive inclusions and black strivings for constitution and belonging in 'South Africa'*. University of London, London (unpublished Ph.D. thesis).

Mafeje, A. 1992. *In search of an alternative: a collection of essays on revolutionary theory and politics*. Harare: SAPES Books.

Mafeje, A. 2008. Africanity: a combative ontology. *Bulletin du CODESRIA*, 3&4: 106-110.

Magubane, B.M. 2000. *African sociology towards a critical perspective: the collected essays of Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane*. Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press.

Mahamat, M.F. 2024. AU Commission thirty-seventh ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union. Available at:

<https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20240217/speech-he-moussa-faki-mahamat-chairperson-african-union-commission-thirty>

[Accessed on 15 July 2024.]

Makgoba, M.W. 1999. *African Renaissance: the new struggle*. Johannesburg: Tafelberg Publishers.

Maldonado-Torres, N. 2006. Césaire's Gift and the Decolonial Turn. *Radical Philosophy Review*. 9(2): 111-138.

Maldonado-Torres, N. 2010. On the coloniality of being: contributions to the development of a concept, in W.D. Mignolo and A. Escobar (eds). *Globalization and the decolonial option*. London: Routledge.

Maldonado-Torres, N. 2012. Decoloniality at large: towards a trans-Americas and global transmodern paradigm. *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*,1 (3): 1-10.

Malisa, M & Missedja T.Q. 2020. The Origins and evolution of Pan-Africanism, in R. Rabaka (ed). *Routledge Handbook of Pan-Africanism*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Mama, A. 2005. Gender studies for Africa's transformation, in *African intellectuals rethinking politics, language, gender and development*.

Manganyi, C. 2019. *Being black in the world*. Johannesburg. Wits University Press.

Mangcu, X. 2014. *Biko a life*. London: I.B. Tauris.

- Mangena, M. 1989. *Own Your Own Evolution of Black Consciousness in South Africa*. Braamfontein: Skotaville Publishers.
- Mangu, A.M.B. 2006. Democracy, African intellectuals and African Renaissance. *International journal of African Renaissance studies-multi-, inter-and transdisciplinarity*, 1(1):147-163.
- Martin, G. 1987. Ideology and praxis in Thomas Sankara's populist revolution of 4 August 1983 in Burkina Faso. *A Journal of opinion*, 15: 77-90.
- Martin, G. 2012. *African Political Thought*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Marx, K. *Collected works of Karl Marx*. East Sussex: Delphi Publishing.
- Masenya, M. 2007. *An African-conscious female's reading of Steve Biko*. Pretoria: Unisa.
- Masolo, D. A. 2002. Rethinking communities in a global context, in P.H. Coetzee & P.J. Roux (eds). *The African philosophy reader*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- Matthews, S & Solomon, H. 2003. The necessity of a challenge to western discourses by the African renaissance. *Acta Academica*, 35(2): 148-168.
- Mayanja, N.E. 2018. 'Revolution and Women's Liberation Go Together': Thomas Sankara, Gender and the Burkina Faso Revolution, in A. Murrey (ed). *A Certain Amount of Madness: The Life, Politics and Legacies of Thomas Sankara*. London: Pluto Press.
- Mazrui, A.A. 1995. The nature of displacements and forced population movements in Africa. *International journal of refugee law*. Special issue.
- Mazrui, A.A. 2007. Pan-Africanism and the intellectuals: rise, decline and revival, in Mkandawire, T. (ed). *African intellectuals: rethinking politics, language, gender and development*. London: Codesria Books.
- Mbara, G.C. & Graham, S. 2022. Dissecting the impact of recent coups in Africa on democracy and good governance *African Renaissance* 20:1-16
- Mbeki, T.M. 2017. 30TH Commemoration of Steve Biko's death, in *The Steve Biko memorial lectures (2000-2008)*. The Steve Biko Foundation: Bloemfontein.

Mbeki, T. 2009. 30th commemoration of Steve Biko's death, in *The Steve Biko memorial lectures 2000-2008*. Johannesburg. Steve Biko Foundation and Macmillan.

Mbeki, T. 2012. The African Union at 10 Years Old: a Dream Deferred!. *The Thinker*, 43: 8-15.

Mbeki, T. 2013. Tasks of the African Progressive Movement. *The Thinker*, 59: 12-20.

Mbembe, A. 2001. *On the postcolony*. Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

McFadden, P. 2018. Women's Freedoms are the Heartbeat of Africa's Future: A Sankarian Imperative, in A. Murrey (ed). *A certain amount of madness: the life and legacies of Thomas Sankara*. London: Pluto Press.

McGowan, P.J. 2005. Coups and conflict in West Africa, 1955-2004 *Armed Forces & Society* 32:5-23.

Mignolo, W.D. 2000. *Local Histories/Global designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border thinking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Mignolo, W.D. 2006. De-linking: don Quixote, globalization and the colonies. *Macalester international*, 17(10): 3-35.

Mignolo, W.D. 2007. Introduction: Coloniality of Power and De-colonial Thinking. *Cultural Studies*, 21(2-3): 155-167.

Mignolo, W.D. 2008. Racism as we sense it today. *PMLA*. 123: 1737-1742.

Mignolo, W.D. 2009. Cosmopolitan and the de-colonial option. *Studies in philosophy and education*, 29:111-127.

Mignolo, W.D. 2013. Introduction: Coloniality of Power and De-colonial thinking, in, W.D. Mignolo W.D. & A. Escobar (eds). *Globalization and the Decolonial option*. London: Routledge.

Mignolo, W.D & Walsh, C.E. 2018. *On Decoloniality: concepts, analytics, praxis*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Mngxitama, A., Alexander, A & Gibson, N.C. 2008 (eds). *Biko lives!: Contesting the Legacies of Steve Biko*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Modiri, J. 2017. *The jurisprudence of Steve Biko: a study in race, law and power in the "afterlife" of colonial-apartheid*. University of Pretoria, Pretoria (unpublished Ph.D. thesis).

Moges, A.G. & Muchie, M. 2020. The political economy of Pan-Africanism: imagination and renaissance, in R. Rabaka (ed). *Routledge Handbook of Pan-Africanism*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Møller, B. 2009. *The African Union as a security actor: African solutions to African problems?* Crisis States Research Centre working papers series 2 (57). Crisis States Research Centre, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK.

Montero, M. 2009. Methods for liberation: critical consciousness in action, in M. Montero & C.C. Sonn(eds). *Psychology of Liberation: Theory and Applications*. New York: Springer.

Montesperelli, P. 1998. *The Hermeneutic Interview*. Milan: Frank Angels.

Moodley, K. 1991. The continued impact of Black Consciousness, in N.B. Pityana, M. Ramphela, M. Mpumwana & L. Wilson (eds). *Bounds of possibility: the legacy of Steve Biko & Black Consciousness*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.

More, M.P. 2002. African Renaissance: the politics of return. *African Journal of Political Science*, 7(2): 61-80.

More, M.P. 2004. Albert Luthuli, Steve Biko, and Nelson Mandela: The Philosophical Basis of their Thought and Practice. In K. Wiredu (ed). *A Companion to African Philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

More, M.P. 2008. Self-consciousness as force and reason of revolution, in Mngxitama, A., Alexander, A. & Gibson, N (eds). *Biko lives! Contesting the Legacies of Steve Biko*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

More, M.P. 2014. The intellectual foundations of the Black Consciousness Movement. Intellectual traditions in South Africa: *Ideas, individuals and institutions*, 173-196.

- More, M.P. 2017. *Biko: philosophy, identity and liberation*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Mudimbe, V.Y. 1988. *The invention of Africa: gnosis, philosophy, and the order of knowledge*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Muiu, M & Martin, G. 2009. *A New paradigm of the African state*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Murithi, T. 2020. The African Union and the Institutionalisation of Pan-Africanism. In R. Rabaka (ed). *Routledge Handbook of Pan-Africanism*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Murobe, M.F. 2000. Globalization and African Renaissance: an ethical reflection, in E. Maloka & E. Le Roux (eds). *Problematising the African Renaissance*. Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa.
- Murrey, A. 2018. Africa's Sankara: On Pan-African Leadership, in A. Murrey (ed). *A Certain Amount of Madness: The Life, Politics and Legacies of Thomas Sankara*. London: Pluto Press.
- Ncube, L.B. 2010. Ubuntu; a transformative leadership philosophy. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 4(3): 12-31.
- Ndaba, B & Smith, J. 2019. Steve Biko and the rise of Black Consciousness, in B. Ndaba, T. Owen, M. Panyane, R. Serumula, J. Smith & P. Thekiso (eds). *The Black Consciousness reader*. London: OR Books.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J. 2013. *Empire, global coloniality and African subjectivity*. Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S.J. 2018. *Epistemic freedom in Africa: deprovincialization and decolonization*. London: Routledge.
- Neuman, W.L. 1997. *Social research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Nkrumah, K. 1963. *Africa must unite*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers.
- Nkrumah, K. 1968. *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare*. New York: International Publishers.

- Nkrumah, K. 1970. *Consciencism: philosophy and ideology for de-colonization*.
- Ntuli, P. 2012. Who's afraid of the African Renaissance? *Indicator SA*, 15(2):15-18.
- Ochwada, H. 2005. Historians, nationalism and pan-Africanism: myths and realities, in *African intellectuals rethinking politics, language, gender and development*. Pretoria: Unisa Press.
- Odamtten, H. 2014. Pan-Africanism in new millennium, in T. Falola & T. Essien (eds). *Pan-Africanism, and the politics of African citizenship and identity*. London: Routledge.
- Ollman, B. 2003. *Dance of the dialectic: steps in Marx's method*. University of Illinois: Illinois.
- Oloruntoba, S.O & Falola, T. 2022. Africa in the changing global order: the past, the present, and the future, in S.O. Oloruntoba & T. Falola (eds). *The Palgrave handbook of Africa and the changing global order*. Gewerbestrasse, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Olutola, A. 2013. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o 's *Petals of Blood* as a mirror of the African revolution. *An International Journal in English*, 4(2): 1-10.
- Oruka, H.O. 2002. Ideology and culture: the African experience, in P.H. Coetzee & P.J. Roux (eds). *The African Philosophy Reader*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- Osorio, J.M. 2009. Praxis and Liberation in the Context of Latin American Theory. In M. Montero & C.C. Sonn (eds). *Psychology of Liberation: Theory and Applications*. New York: Springer.
- Otayek, R. 1985. The revolutionary process in Burkina Faso: Breaks and continuities. *Journal of Communist Studies* 1: 82-100
- Pityana, N.B. 2008. Reflections on 30 years since the death of Steve Biko: a legacy revised, in C.W. Du Toit (ed). *The Legacy of Stephen Bantu Biko: Theological challenges*. Pretoria: Unisa Press.
- Pocock, J. G. A. 2009. *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method*. Cape Town: Cambridge University Press.

- Prairie, M. 1988. Introduction, in Prairie, M. (ed). *Thomas Sankara: the African revolution*. Pathfinder: Pathfinder Press.
- Qola, P.D. 1999. *Black woman, you are on your own: images of black women in Staffrider short stories*. University of Cape Town. (Unpublished MA dissertation).
- Quijano, A. 2007. Coloniality and modernity. *Cultural Studies*, 21: 168-178.
- Quijano, A. 2010. Coloniality and modernity/rationality. In W.D. Mignolo & A. Escobar (eds). *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Rabaka, R. 2020 (ed). *Routledge Handbook of Pan-Africanism*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Ramose, M. B. 1999. *African philosophy through ubuntu*. Harare: Mond Book Publishers.
- Ramose, M. B. 2002a. The Philosophy of Ubuntu and Ubuntu Philosophy, *The African Philosophy reader*, 2nd edition, edited by P.H. Coetzee & P.J. Roux. London: Routledge.
- Ramose, M.B. 2002b. The struggle for reason in Africa, in Coetzee, P.H. & Roux P.J. (eds). *The African Philosophy Reader*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge.
- Ramose, M.B. 2015. Ecology through Ubuntu, in R. Meinhold (ed). *Environmental values: emerging from cultures and religions of the ASEAN region*. Bangkok: Guna Chakra Research Center.
- Ramose, M. B. 2017. Wiping away the tears of the ocean. *Theoria*, 153(64): 22-57.
- Ramphela, M. 1991. The dynamics of gender within Black Consciousness organisations: a personal view, in N.B. Pityana, M. Ramphela, M. Mpumlwana & L. Wilson (eds). *Bounds of possibility: the legacy of Steve Biko & Black Consciousness*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.
- Ratele, K. 2003. We black men. *International journal of intercultural relations*, 27: 237-249.
- Ricoeur, P. 1976. *Interpretation theory: discourse and the surplus of meaning*. Fort Worth, Texas: Texas Christian University Press.

- Rodney, W. 1992. *Walter Rodney speaks: the making of an African intellectual*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press.
- Rufus, A.I. 2021. Borderland security and proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Africa. in U.A. Tar and C.P. Onwurah (eds), *The Palgrave handbook of small arms and conflicts in Africa*. Gewerbestrasse: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sankara, T. 1985. The 'political orientation' of Burkina Faso. *Review of African Political Economy*, 12(32): 48-55.
- Sankara, T. 1988. *Thomas Sankara speaks: the Burkina Faso revolution 1983-1987*. New York: Pathfinders.
- Sankara, T. 1990. *Women's liberation and the African freedom struggle*. Toronto: Pathfinder Press.
- Sartre, J. 1958. *Being and Nothingness*. Translated by H.E. Barnes. London: Methuen.
- Sartre, J. 1964. *Colonialism and neocolonialism*. London: Routledge.
- Schittecatte, C. 2012. From Nkrumah to NEPAD and beyond: has anything changed?. *The Journal of Pan-African Studies*, 4(10): 58-77.
- Seleoane, M. 2008. The development of black consciousness as a cultural and political movement (1967–2007). *The legacy of Stephen Bantu Biko*. 15-56.
- Senghor, L.S. 1974. Negritude. *Indian literature*, 17(1/2): 269-273.
- Serequeberhan, T. 1995. *The hermeneutics of African philosophy: Horizon and Discourse*. London: Routledge.
- Serequeberhan, T. 2004. Theory and the actuality of existence: Fanon and Cabral, In K. Wiredu (ed). *A Companion to African Philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Serote, M.W. 2012. Indigenous knowledge systems: verification and validation. *The Thinker*, 36: 18-22.
- Serote, M.W. 1990. Resistance Culture, Transformation and the Expression of Freedom. *Sechaba*, 24:12.

Sherman, R.R. & Webb, R.B. 2005. *Qualitative research in education: focus and methods*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Shivji, I.G. 2009. *Accumulation in an African periphery: a theoretical framework*. Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers.

Sitas, A. 2006. The African Renaissance challenge and sociological reclamations in the South. *Current Sociology*, 54(3):357-380.

Sithole, T. 2016. *Steve Biko: decolonial meditations of black consciousness*. Maryland: Lexington Books.

Sithole, T. 2022. Coloniality of being, imperial reason, and the myth of African futures, in S.O. Oloruntoba & T. Falola (eds). *The Palgrave handbook of Africa and the changing global order*. Gewerbestrasse, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Skinner, E.P. 1988. Sankara and the Burkinabe revolution: charisma and power, local and external dimensions. *The Journal of modern African Studies*, 26(3): 437- 455.

Sogiba, Z.S. 1996. *Steve Bantu Biko: Politician, 'Historian' and 'Proponent' of African Traditional Religion*. University of Cape Town (unpublished Ph.D. thesis).

Souaré, I.K. 2006. Thomas Sankara: the quest for justice 19 years after his assassination. *African Renaissance*, 3(6): 113-118.

Stalin, J. 1975. *Dialectical and historical materialism*. Calcutta: Mass Publications.

Suleiman, M.D., Onapajo, H. & Mustapha, A.B. 2021. External influence, failed states, ungoverned spaces and small arms proliferation in Africa, in U.A. Tar & C.P.O. Onwurah (eds). *The Palgrave handbook of small arms and conflicts in Africa*. Gewerbestrasse, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tafira, K.M. 2013. *Steve Biko: the persistence of Black Consciousness in Azania (South Africa)*. University of the Witwatersrand (unpublished Ph.D. thesis).

Tamale, S. 2020. *Decolonization and Afro-feminism*. Ottawa: Daraja Press.

Tar, U.A. 2021. The frontiers of small arms proliferation in Africa—a fatal combination, in U.A. Tar and C.P. Onwurah (eds), *The Palgrave handbook of small arms and conflicts in Africa*. Gewerbestrasse: Palgrave Macmillan.

Touré, S. 1962. Africa's Future and the World." *Foreign Affairs*. 41: 141.

Tsikata, D. 2014. Being pan-African: a continental research agenda. *Feminist Africa*, 19:94-87.

Turner, L. 2008. Self-consciousness as force and reason of revolution, in A. Mngxitama, A. Alexander & N. Gibson (eds). *Biko lives! Contesting the Legacies of Steve Biko*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Umar, A. & David, A. 2021. Socialization, culture of violence and small arms and light weapons proliferation in Africa, in U.A. Tar & C.P. Onwurah (eds), *The Palgrave handbook of small arms and conflicts in Africa*. Gewerbestrasse: Palgrave Macmillan.

Vale, P & Maseko, S. 1998. South Africa and the African Renaissance. *International Affairs*. 74(92): 271-287.

Wa Thiong'o, N. 1981. *Decolonising the mind: the politics of language in African literature*. Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House Ltd.

Wa Thiong'o, N. 1993. *Moving the centre: the struggle for cultural freedoms*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Ltd.

Wa Thiong'o, N. 2009. *Something torn and new: an African Renaissance*. New York: Basic Civitas.

Walsh, C. 2010. Shifting the geopolitics of critical knowledge: decolonial thought and cultural studies. In W.D. Mignolo and A. Escobar (eds). *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Wamba-dia-Wamba, E. 1996. Pan Africanism, democracy, social movements and mass struggles. *African Journal of Political Science* 1:9-20.

Williams, P.D. 2011. *The African Union's conflict management capabilities*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations.

Wyatt, T. D. 2019. *Steve Biko: the radical gospel of Black Consciousness*. Howard University. (unpublished Ph.D. thesis)

Wynter, S. 2003. Unsettling coloniality of being/power/truth/freedom: towards man, its overrepresentation—an argument. *The New Centennial Review*, 3(3): 257-337.

Yilmaz, K. 2013. Comparison of quantitative and qualitative research traditions: epistemological, theoretical, and methodological differences. *European Journal of Education*, 48(2): 312-324.

Young, K.P. 2010. Towards a Holistic Review of Pan-Africanism: Linking the Idea and the Movement. *Nationalism and the Ethnic Politics*. 16(2):141-163.

Zeilig, L. 2018. Thomas Sankara and the elusive revolution, in A. Murrey (ed) *A certain amount of madness: the life, politics and legacies of Thomas Sankara*. London: Pluto Press.

Zondi, S. 2022. The monologue on liberal democracy: Africa in a neocolonialized world, in S.O. Oloruntoba & T. Falola (eds). *The Palgrave handbook of Africa and the changing global order*. Gewerbestrasse, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

APPENDICES

Turnitin originality report



Proof of language editing



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Faculty of Law
Tel: 0182852267
Email: ditshego.masete@nwu.ac.za

05 November 2024

Editing and Proofreading Report

05 November 2024

This letter serves to confirm that I, Mr Ditshego Masete, have proofread and edited a PhD Thesis titled *Exploration of Biko and Sankara's Political Thoughts and Praxis In Relation To African Renaissance as A Decolonial Project* by Mr. Leshaba Tony Lechaba, student number 2019876339, a student in the Faculty of Humanities, Centre for Gender and African Studies- University of the Free State.

Yours Sincerely

Mr D. Masete: MA English Studies
Lecturer-Language Skills in the Legal Context
Building F5-108
Faculty of law: Undergraduate Studies
University of North-West, Potchefstroom campus
Tel.: +27 732430828
E-mail: Ditshego.masete@nwu.ac.za

Ethics approval letter

GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

17-Oct-2022

Dear Mr Leshaba Lechaba

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

Exploration of Biko and Sankara's political thoughts and praxis in relation to African Renaissance as a decolonial project

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2022/1352/22

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

Adri
Du
Plessis

Digitally signed
by Adri Du
Plessis
Date: 2022.10.17
19:03:56 +02'00'

205 Nelson Mandela
Drive
Park West
Bloemfontein 9301
South Africa

P.O. Box 339
Bloemfontein 9300
Tel: +27 (0)51 401
9337
duplessisA@ufs.ac.za
www.ufs.ac.za

