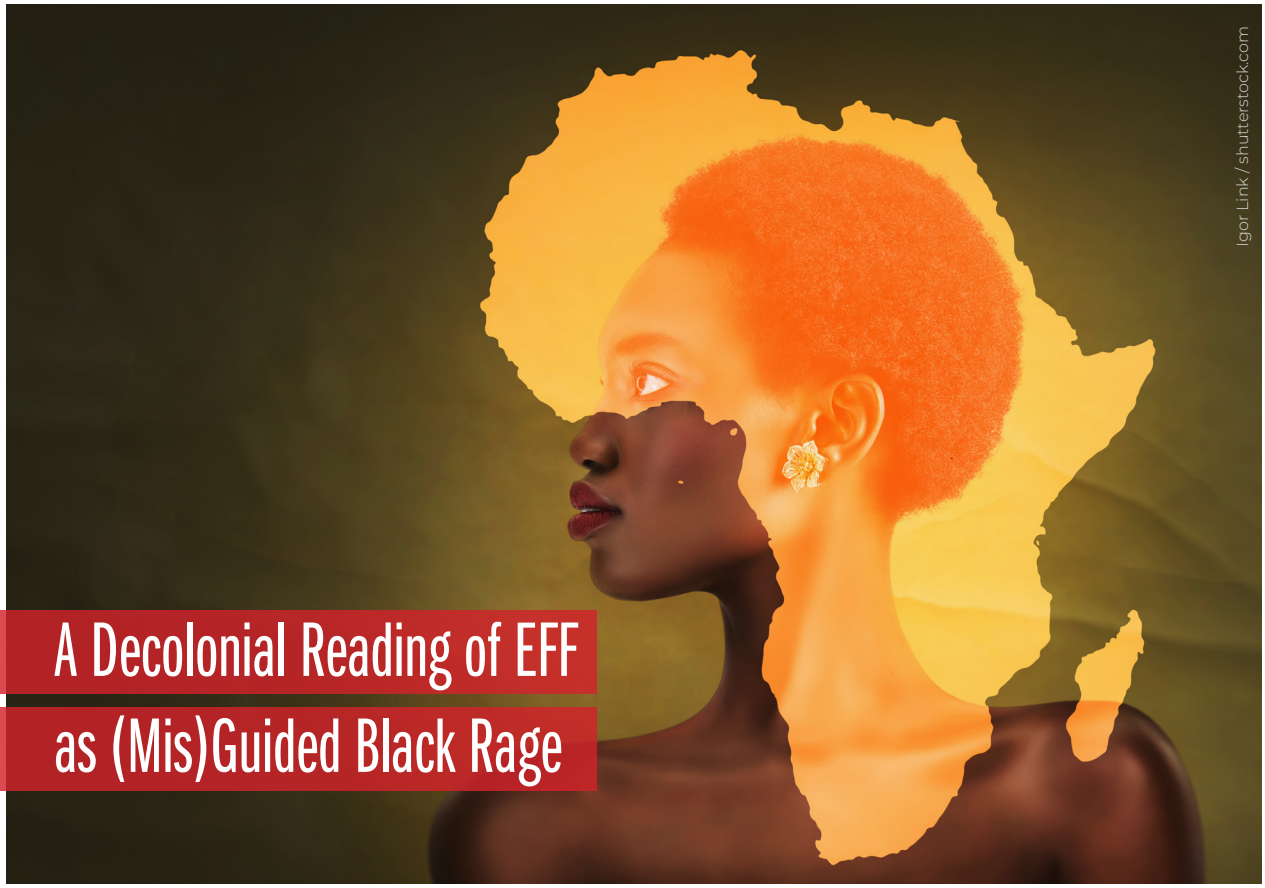

A Decolonial Reading of EFF as (Mis)Guided Black Rage

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Abstract

Examining two sets of protests by the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) between 2018 and 2021 that reflect on the persistent problem of racism in post-apartheid South Africa, this article teases out the operations of Black rage within the EFF and on the Black body more broadly. It applies affect as theory and method to understand the party's rage on the manifestation of racism as simultaneously an expression of what I call 'misguided black rage' and as an expression of self-love. I argue that since its formation in 2013, the EFF, amongst others, has been looking at racism and white-owned South Africa media as the objects of its rage. It must be said, however, that the EFF's rage has been about more than racism and white media ownership as exemplified by the party's powerful rage directed against former President Jacob Zuma through its campaign "Bring Back the Money". Consequently, this article theorises the EFF through Black rage, the lens of affect. In her song, *Black Rage*, Lauren Hill says Black Rage can manifest itself in many forms. Listening to her song is a poignant reminder of the politics of Black rage. This article shows that Black rage in the EFF can be retrogressive and advances violence towards journalists and sexism and misogyny specifically towards women journalists. On the other hand, rage in the party can be perceived as progressive in challenging discriminatory practices such as ways in which black women hair is depicted.

Keywords: EFF, Black rage, double consciousness, misguided black rage, self-love, potentiated Black rage

“In the context of South Africa, Black bodies have been the site of rage for centuries from the regimes of slavery, colonialism, racism and apartheid.”

Introduction

This is an affective and decolonial reading of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) as (mis) guided Black rage. There has been a notable large body of scholarly work conducted on the EFF and the impact it has had in the South African polity since its formation in 2013 (see Mbete, 2015; Nieftagodien, 2015; Satgar, 2019; Yende, 2021). Yet there exists an opportunity in understanding and theorising the party as through the affective tool of Black rage. According to Canham (2018), rage is under-theorised in South Africa. I contend that this absence of rage in the analysis of political parties, social movements and organisations is more pervasive in the South African academy. For Canham, this is remarkable oversight since the country has a reputation of being the world's epicentre of protest action. In the context of South Africa, Black bodies have been the site of rage for centuries from the regimes of slavery, colonialism, racism and apartheid. According to Mpofu (2021), to be Black in South Africa is to be a problem and in a state of rage. Here Black rage is seen through W.E.B. Du Bois's (1904) concept of double consciousness in order to reveal the double dimension of rage, which can be both destructive and liberatory. The strength of such a view lies in channelling Black rage and 'render it discursively legible' (Canham, 2017: 427). Describing it as a peculiar sensation, Du Bois says double consciousness is "this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (2009: 9). In order to foreground the duality of Black rage in-depth, I first scrutinise how the EFF deployed misguided black rage to harass and violently attack women journalists in their line of duty (*Mail & Guardian*, 2018; Boswell, 2020; News24, 2021). Second, I investigate how the party deployed what is termed here 'potentiated Black rage' as an expression of self-love when thousands of its members took to Clicks stores countrywide in 2020 in protests spurred on by the beauty chain outlet's racist advert against black women hair.

The year 2015 has been touted as the year of significant rage (Canham, 2018). For Canham, "this period has witnessed the greatest intensity of protest action within the post-apartheid period" (2018: 319). That year witnessed two of the biggest protest marches in post-apartheid South Africa's history, namely, the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall. Although it might be debatable to what extent students aligned to the EFF influenced both campaigns; clearly, the party played a significant role. Mbete argues that the EFF has since used protests by poor communities, students, and workers to 'establish itself as a revolutionary party' (2020: 249). There is consensus, among commentators and critics alike, that the EFF has significantly altered the political landscape in the post-1994 period. Authors like Sagtar (2019) have argued that the EFF is a 'black neofascist party' or 'a case of hype over substance' (Friedman, 2014) and or 'an empty rhetoric captured in the politics of spectacle' (Fakir, 2014). While such an analysis has been concerned about the character of the party, I posit that Black rage has the potential to advance a richer and critical understanding of the EFF. I argue that by centering racism struggles, the party offers Black people 'emancipatory potential' (McCann, 2013). Black rage, a tool used by African existential philosopher, Steve Bantu Biko (1987) against the oppressive system of apartheid, often revolves around the association between left politics and the agency of rage. Writing on the subject of Black rage, Biko contends that for a long time Black people had been 'looking at the governing party and not so much at the whole power structure as

the object of their rage' (1987: 63). Canham explains that anti-apartheid activists used rage as a weapon to channel their anger against an oppressive racial system of apartheid. It is my contention that the EFF deploys rage as a political tool to fight against present and current forms of oppression and dehumanisation. Furthermore, the party also employs rage as a weapon against those the party perceives as its opponents or enemies, especially against the media. In doing so, this article seeks to recentre the concept of Black rage as an analytical lens to understand the post-apartheid South Africa democratic settlement as an 'unfinished project of decolonisation' (Maldonado-Torres, 2008: 244).

The EFF in Post-apartheid South Africa

The EFF was established in 2013 after Julius Sello Malema, the former president of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) and his deputy, Floyd Nyiko Shivambu, were expelled from the African National Congress (ANC) and its youth wing. It can be argued that the genealogy of the EFF can be traced directly to the ANCYL and can be said to be the extension of it, outside the ANC. Yende (2021) notes that EFF manifestos are always centred around their commitment to "economic freedom in our lifetime" – something, Yende argues, is not different from what Malema and Shivambu advocated for while they were still in the ANCYL. Even the posture adopted by the EFF in doing politics cannot be easily divorced from the radicalised and militantized ANCYL of the early 1940s and the subsequent generations that included Peter Mokaba and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. The EFF under Malema has claimed the legacies of these two mentors when they were alive and also in death. The political discourse in the post-apartheid South Africa has dramatically changed since the arrival of the EFF onto the political scene in 2013 (Nieftagodien, 2015). This article maintains that the party has brought with it an unsettling, radical black political voice in the country's body polity. It contends that the EFF or its leader Malema may never be able to shake off the 'populist' label, however, I argue that the contribution of the party to our political discourse is much broader than that. According to Mabogo (2017), there is a stark resurgence of interest in Frantz Fanon in what he terms the 'post-apartheid, apartheid South Africa'. The formation of the EFF also marked the relaunching of Madikizela-Mandela, Malema's mentor, into active politics and a rekindling of the politics of Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko among the party's student ranks.

Both Fanon and Biko directly and indirectly influenced the 2015 Rhodes Must Fall and Fees Must Fall movements respectively. Fanon's ideas have found expression in EFF's founding manifesto. In similar fashion to the EFF, Biko also grounded his Black Consciousness (BC) philosophy in the 1970s on Fanon's ideas (Gibson, 2011). Consequently, the party's 'generative potential of embodied Black rage' (Canham, 2014: 442) has been the turning point in the South African political landscape whenever it appears wherever conditions of racism, oppression and socioeconomic inequality prevail in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. I argue in this article that a close reading of the EFF reveals its intense concerns 'about and engagement with the South African situation: a concern expressed through a classical and most lucid phenomenological description of apartheid qua colonial and racist situation par excellence' (Mabogo, 2017: 128). Other commentators, including Mbete (2020), have observed that the EFF has successfully challenged the post-apartheid South African democratic settlement and increasingly sets the agenda of national and local politics. Batsane-Ncube goes further arguing that there's evidence of the influence of the EFF's 'direct casual contribution' on the ANC policy shift on land reform and 'indirect influence' on ANC policy on higher education (Batsane-Ncube, 2021: 199).

Theoretical Framing: Double Consciousness and Black rage

Black rage must be understood historically in the sense that to be Black is to be in a state of rage (Baldwin, 1962). As human beings we all have our own lived experiences of rage. However, Black rage operates in a unique and specific manner as a response to continued forms of humiliation, dehumanisation and degradation. In similar vein, Stoute states

> Black rage exists in a specific dynamic equilibrium as a compromise formation that is a functional adaptation of the oppressed people of colour who suffer racial trauma and racial degradation, an adaptation that can be mobilized for the purpose of defense or psychic growth. (Stoute, 2021: 259).

According to Stoute, it is not possible for a politicised Black rage to exist without linking it to forms of oppression and dehumanisation that are socially embedded in it. To understand Stoute's theoretical formulation of Black rage as the 'psychic force', one also needs to bring into conversation issues of race, culture, ethnicity, gender, class, the social surround, and historical context. In this article, I emphasise W.E.B. Du Bois's (1904) concept of double consciousness and its relevance in theorising rage. I focus specifically on the significance of Du Bois's concept in striving to locate the double dimension of rage in the EFF that is both destructive and liberatory. I argue that the EFF has articulated Black rage in a manner that is unprecedented in South African politics. Before turning to explore each gaze of Black rage, it is important to make a note on the concept of double consciousness. Du Bois defines double consciousness as, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others' (1989: 7). I argue that it is Black political subjects who can articulate Du Bois' double consciousness and Anna Jane Gordon's rearticulated notion of 'potentiated double consciousness'. J. Gordon insists that double consciousness is more than a 'vivid description of the existential predicament of disenfranchisement' (2007: 144). It is argued here that double consciousness moves us closer to an understanding that Black rage has both a negative and a positive (or potentiated) dimension within it: the doubling of an affect in ways that bring the image of the Black subjects into better focus. Both an understanding of negative dimension of Black rage and its more redemptive other half, which I call "potentiated Black rage," are useful in this study in order to elucidate how the EFF has deployed rage to "chart possible avenues of liberation from the yoke of dehumanisation" (Melonas, 2016: 5). Just like double consciousness, I suggest that Black rage can be read in two ways. It can function as a negative moment. The ontological problem of misguided black rage is that knowing who we are may also require an understanding on how the white gaze sees black rage and generally anger from the people who are oppressed. However, Black rage can also function as response to the first, negative formulation of rage that is yoked in destruction. This kind of potentiated Black rage is dialectical and transformational. The positive as a synthesis advances an epistemic and ontological agenda of EFF that claims a space of agency, "an ontology and epistemology of giving voice to those who still live on the other side of the abyssal lives" (de Sousa Santos and Meneses, 2020: xxix). The theoretical contribution advanced by this study is that there is a dialectical relationship between Black rage, Biko's BC and Du Boisian double consciousness, which when properly harnessed, results in potentiated Black rage. The study also seeks to foreground that it would be dangerous to romanticise or fetishise Black rage, hence, the thesis makes a clear distinction between negative and positive aspects of Black rage. McCann provides cogent insights on the double dimension of Black rage and posits that an affective politics of Black rage "should include both a healthy scepticism of the norms of democratic culture, as well as a sober recognition that the deployment of rage is fraught with danger" (2013: 415). McCann argues that theorising Black rage this way by seeking to highlight both its negative and positive effects "avoid many of the essentialist entanglements associated with earlier scholarship on the concept" (2018: 408). In addition to advancing a richer critical understanding of Black rage through the lens of BC and Du Boisian Double Consciousness, this study also centres EFF's misogynistic and racial tendencies towards some journalists and certain media houses, as the negative side of rage, that is, what is disguised as legitimate rage can be articulated in misogynistic and racial unimaginable ways. Also, through BC and 'potentiated double consciousness' (Jane Anna Gordon, 2007), the restoration of rage as a form of radical love is, in this conceptual frame, deployed to understand EFF's rage as a form of political action and responsibility towards continued forms of discrimination, injustice and dehumanisation that still continue to define black life in post-apartheid South Africa.

Tracing rage in the EFF through Fanon and Biko

Canham (2018) laments the fact that Black rage is under-theorised in South Africa. Canham says rage is intimately tied to discourses of decolonisation. He argues that Black rage has had a "dual influence" within the working-class communities as well as the "conscientisation that they [protests] obtain within the university" (p. 321). Communities and student protesters resort to the deployment of

rage since "efforts at using formal structures to be heard have not yielded positive results" (Ibid). I argue that the lack of theorising Black rage is more pronounced in political scholarship, which has broad implications for political theory. Among them is the advancement of Black rage as a form of political theory, or one in which it is brought as better attuned to addressing salient political problems in Post-apartheid South Africa thrown open by the complexity of human institutions of power. Canham rightly observed that this is a "remarkable oversight since we have gained infamy as the world's epicentre of protest action" (2018: 319). In its founding manifesto, the EFF states that it "draws inspiration from the broad Marxist-Leninist tradition and Fanonian schools of thought in their analyses of the state, imperialism, culture and class contradictions in every society" (EFF Founding Manifesto, 2013: 7). It is Fanon's connection to the EFF which is the concern of this section. Fanon opens *Black Skin, White Masks* with a confession that there was "fire" or rage in him. His brother Jobi, in Isaac Julien's *Frantz Fanon: "Black Skin, White Masks"* (1997), mentions how a faculty member at Lyon described Fanon as "Fireworks on the outside, fireworks on the inside!" This motif of fiery can be found in EFF leader Malema, including his mentors, Peter Mokaba and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. Throughout his speeches, Malema struggles to hold "fire" at bay, the result of which are ongoing court battles that Malema, and his party, have had to face on allegations of hate speech. The student protest actions which took place in 2015 and onwards remind us that there are certain unsettled matters in the Post-apartheid South Africa. African existential philosopher More (2018) rightly observed the relevance of Fanon in Post-apartheid South Africa. It is compelling to quote him at length:

> There is a noticeable re-emergence and an upsurge of interest in Frantz Fanon in post-apartheid, apartheid South Africa, and this for good reasons. The resurgence is not accidental at all but a consequence of the events and the shape and form which the country has assumed and followed since the installation of Nelson Mandela as first black president in 1994. No philosopher, political theorist, or radical and revolutionary thinker could have approximated Fanon's insightful and prophetic vision of South Africa as a post-colonial state. Indeed, most observers of post-apartheid, apartheid South Africa are agreed on the prescience, preciseness and relevance of Fanon's work in the country. (2018: 127)

In *The Wretched of the Earth* (2004), Fanon used expressions such as "rage in the mouth" to describe life in the colonial world. For Fanon, living in the colonial world meant a situation that "keeps the colonized in a state of rage" (2004: 17). Today the affinity between the EFF and rage is generally called into question, however, Fanon's "fire" seems to have found a home in the party. More (2018) maintains that Fanon's impacted the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and through it the 1976 Soweto High School students' revolution, marking a turning point in history of political events in the 70s. Gibson (2011) attests to Fanon's influence: "The aim here is...to recreate Fanon's philosophy of liberation in a new situation [post-apartheid South Africa]. This is exactly what Steve Biko did in the early 1970s when he found in Fanon's philosophy the ground for Black Consciousness" (2011: x-xi). Fanon, therefore, has not only been a major player in the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid formations in South Africa but also influenced the formation of EFF in 2013 and inspired the 2015 student protests in South African universities. Hence, it is not surprising that in contemporary South African politics, the EFF uses rage to bring and locate Fanon within Post-apartheid South African identity. For the EFF, as it was for Fanon and Biko, Black rage is a necessary political tool for embodied and dehumanised voices all fighting to be heard.

Political speech as EFF's existential articulation of Black rage

This section critically examines why speech or voice is essential to politics. It does so by revisiting contemporary discussions of political speech in the writings of Biko (1978), Fanon (1952/1967) and Lewis Gordon (2008, 2021), among others, to illuminate what it means for the EFF to speak politically and how the party uses rage in its speech or voice as the requirement for it to be heard. This is in the light of the many individuals and various groups of civil society organisations who brought hate speech court cases against the EFF since its formation in 2013 (Sanef v. EFF: Setting the record

straight, *Daily Maverick*, 2019). However, it is this article's contention that a legalistic definition of hate speech does not help us fully grasp the importance of political speech or voice in politics. Therefore, I contend that the intersection between political speech and hate speech deserves further research and interrogation through the lens of political theory. For the purposes of this section, the focus is on how the EFF creatively uses speech to challenge existing hegemonic and colonised forms of politics and how it creates a space for the articulation of its own ways of speaking in the South African political world. This should be hardly surprising as Gordon (2021) informs us that the "Left" (I add, the EFF) tends to focus on protest and other activities of speech. In this paper, the focus is on the importance of speech and how the EFF uses it "for a Black existential articulation of a liberatory social world" (Chevannes, 2018: 5). Specifically, it is suggested here that the party uses political speech to articulate a "humanistic voice that occasions an agential philosophical anthropology, one that is attuned to hearing the existential cries of who Frantz Fanon dubs *Les Damnés de la Terre (The Damned of the Earth)"*(Ibid). The central aim of this article is to build my own theoretical exposition upon Biko, Fanon and Gordon's work: that is, to map political speech on Black rage episteme. It is also to further theorise EFF speech as 'coerced speech' because "we know we have to speak to make the world anew for the benefit of all who live in it" (Seti, 2019: xiv). By using the so-called "hate speech", the EFF is engaged in a political form of epistemic disobedience, doing politics from the position of what Fanon would call the "damned".

Disruptive speech against all forms of silencing

It is contended here that EFF's speech can be characterised as disruptive speech whose locus of enunciation is thinking from, within and beyond blackness. In the writings of Biko, there

is a thorough going message that grounds political speech as a key feature of what it means to be political or what Fanon calls being *actional*. Anti-apartheid revolutionary Biko creatively deployed political speeches through his *nom de plume*, Frank Talk, and used his writings, according to Chevannes, as "a signature of his ontological orientation and epistemic anchor" (2019: 12). In

> "…to illuminate what it means for the EFF to speak politically and how the party uses rage in its speech or voice as the requirement for it to be heard."

this study, I advance the notion that speech is a crucial feature of doing politics in post-apartheid South Africa. It is what facilitates political voice and political appearance and also enables rage without war (Gordon, 2021). Accordingly, Biko understood that apartheid was fundamentally against political speech, hence, the banning of all liberation parties and movements in the early 60s in South Africa. For the EFF, "the power of speech in the production of power through which human beings are able to govern their existence" (Gordon, 2021: 21). Through court action, EFF's political speech "is muted and what would be required to make it audible"? (Chevannes, 2019: 18). I argue that Black rage facilitates the conditions to make EFF speech audible. For Fanon, "to speak means … above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (Fanon 2008, 1). But what ensues when speech itself becomes co- opted into registers of hate speech? Here it is argued that the EFF's fight against hate speech court cases mounted against it signifies a refusal by the party to hold political speech hostage. My argument in this line of inquiry is whether a case can be made that losses accrue in doing politics when political speech is reduced to hate speech. Biko, and in extension the EFF, understand that "to speak politically is to turn away from voicelessness and in so doing, to challenge prevailing discursive boundaries which are also political boundaries" (Chevannes, 2019: 12). Gordon asks: "Why was the response to [Biko], as the embodiment of speech, the brutal assertion

of the state"? (Gordon, 2002: 88). Gordon believes that Biko's assassination was part of efforts to silence him, "to muzzle Black speech" (Chevannes, 2019: 13) so to speak. I argue that it is not possible to agree on what constitutes hate speech, especially for different ideologies. The question, as posed by Biko, is the role of political speech in doing politics. In other words, what should one do when political speech is policed through our courts? I have argued here that the EFF exemplifies the radical rejection of post-apartheid political settlement in South Africa and uses political speech, if necessary, as a violent confrontation with the prevailing status quo. In that way, it justifies the deployment of Black rage in an unfinished political project such as South Africa. I conclude this section by stressing that a legalistic definition of speech does not fully grapple with politics since speech silencing through court actions becomes "a war on politics" (Gordon, 2002: 88).

Misguided Black rage: the EFF and the media

However, the treatment of journalists with intimidation and harassment by the EFF leaders and party supporters has a long history dating back to the days when its leader, Julius Malema, was still the president of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL). The connection between *City Press* newspaper and Malema can be traced back to an incident in 2011 when former Sowetan columnist Eric Miyeni published a column titled "Haffajee does it for white masters", which was written in the wake of a number of stories published in the *City Press* newspaper questioning Malema's lifestyle and finances. Since then, the relationship between the EFF and the media has been fraught with conflict (News24, 2018). The *City Press* had published a series of stories on Malema and his lavish lifestyle allegedly bankrolled by his Ratanang Family Trust (News24, 2011). Haffajee was then the editor-in-chief at *City Press*. Miyeni had described Haffajee as a "black snake in the grass," a comment that led to his column being discontinued. However, the point of this article is not to focus on that incident but on how the Eff has generally treated the media in lieu of several allegations of intimidation, harassment and physical violence committed by party leaders and supporters against some journalists. This study, therefore, seeks to theorise some of the EFF's actions against some journalists as narcistic rage or what I call "misguided black rage". It will do this by highlighting three incidences in which EFF leaders and supporters were allegedly involved in mistreating some journalists. In 2020, eNCA journalist Nobesuthu Hejana was covering EFF protests outside Clicks stores when a group of party supporters, mostly men, manhandled her and "put their hands on her" (Boswell, 2020). Tellingly, women journalists have overwhelmingly become the face of EFF's intimidation and harassment as they are among the most affected. A tweet by the former party spokesperson Mbuyiseni Ndlozi reacting to Hejana's alleged intimidation and harassment drew outrage from the South African National Editors Forum (Sanef) and certain sections of the South Africa society (EWN, 2020). Ndlozi had tweeted, "I really do not see harassment here. Merely touching her is not harassment. The touch has to be violent, invasive, or harmful to become harassment." (*@MbuyiseniNdlozi*

Reflecting on Ndlozi's misogynistic statement, Boswell (2020) observed that the "EFF has been one of the main harassers of women journalists and public figures with voices who dare to speak out against them." Sanef and other commentators have cogent reasons to challenge EFF's misguided rage against some journalists and certain media houses, including its (and Ndlozi's) troubling framing of the problems confronting women in South Africa through gender-based violence. The second incident that exemplifies the party's

> "Tellingly, women journalists have overwhelmingly become the face of EFF's intimidation and harassment as they are among the most affected."

misguided rageoccurred in 2018 when EFF deputy president and Member of Parliament, Floyd Shivambu manhandled Netwerk24's journalist, Adrian de Kock outside parliament (TimesLive, 2018). Adopting an agonistic orientation towards the media in a democratic South Africa may be a strategy adopted by the EFF, however, violence against journalists when doing their work is an aberration that must be condemned as misguided and narcissistic rage. Perhaps most importantly, the party must be exposed in order to explode the fiction that journalists working in white-owned media houses are agents of the so-called white monopoly capital. Lastly, in 2021 a group of party supporters harassed and threatened two eNCA journalists, Ayesha Ismail and Mario Pedro, during the party's anti-racism protest in Cape Town (*Daily Maverick*, 2021). According to media reports, one party supporter, brandishing a stick, tells the journalists: "We are going to teach you a lesson; come forward here, I am going to teach you a lesson." I contend that the South African media has become the object of EFF's violence or a mixture of hatred and fear, and violence is unacceptable in a country that guarantees freedom of speech, including media freedom. There is a romantic representation of the way the EFF treats some journalists and media houses with misguided rage. As these examples attest, a nuanced reading of EFF's misguided rage reveals a party with a story of ongoing violence against the media. The EFF's abuse against journalists requires a society committed to safeguarding media freedom.

Research Methodology

The methodological approach adopted in this paper is a combination of the empirical evidence obtained through the discourse analysis of Twitter feeds of EFF members and leaders over the Clicks' debacle and a conceptual one through the concept of Black rage. The 2020 Clicks debacle followed after a Black South African woman, Zozibini Tunzi, won the Miss Universe in her natural black hair and its Afro-textual hair. Instead, Clicks post adverts of hair products that depicted black natural hair as "Dry & Damaged Hair" and white, blonde hair as "Fine & Flat Hair". People and leaders of the EFF took to Twitter to bemoan the racist and discriminatory depiction of natural black hair. The EFF organised nationwide protests against the racist advert which resulted in the closing down of almost 500 Clicks stores. This study uses media articles from various media outlets and feeds from Twitter on how the EFF mistreated some journalists during the Clicks protests and also how it deployed Black rage to violently fight against all forms of racism and discrimination against natural black hair. This multi-methodological approach worked well to flesh out the different dimensions of the research question pertaining to the notion of how black voices have been politicised in the post-apartheid South Africa. The tweets were purposively selected based on their engagement with the question of Black rage as radical love in post-apartheid South Africa's dehumanising and discriminatory struggles against black women hair. The tweets were extracted and analysed based on whether they articulated Black rage as a form of radical love. Six Twitter accounts of EFF activists and supporters were chosen to analyse. While this research cannot make a claim to be completely representative of the views, opinions and comments that emanated from the EFF vis-à-vis Clicks debacle on Black Twitter, it provides indications and pointers on how discrimination against black women hair still forms an important political struggle for many black women in post-apartheid South Africa. The following Twitter handles were chosen and their tweets analysed:

@Sebenzi47745801
@lolacele
@SneKhumaloSA
@Tshepiso_Sa
@SixolileGcilishe

Rage as self-love: EFF and black hair struggles

Let us now focus on how the EFF deployed rage as a symbol of radical love or what Chela Sandoval calls "decolonial love" against racial and discriminatory practices with regard to the portrayal of black women hair in South Africa. Moore argues that iterations of Black love must be grounded in some form of collective ethical care and observes that "love continue to be unacknowledged, under-theorized, and understood as less than radical potentials" (2018: 327). Moore thus defines radical love as a collective of care:

> Collective care and radical love are strategies: they shape our political orientations, and

> they bring life to our organizing approaches. The way we treat people; our willingness or unwillingness to engage others; our care; our love is as crucial and political as anything else, because Black radical love not only anticipates liberatory Black futures, but also leans into such futures, after all. We seize Black futures now and forever. (2018: 328)

I argue that the EFF harnesses Black radical love as a collective ethic of care as "crucial and political as anything else" (Moore, 2018: 328) and uses it as a political subjectivity to fight all forms of dehumanisation and oppression directed towards black people. The theoretical explication of radical love provided here has interesting connections to Freire's notion of love as "an act of courage, not fear .... a commitment to others....to the total cause of 'liberation' (1970: 64, 78).

In 2016, young black women at Pretoria Girls High School stoked outrage when they protested against their school for its racist practices towards black girls' natural hair (*Mail & Guardian*, 2016).

"The EFF protests against the racist Clicks advert, in a Bikonian sense, was a demonstration that being alive had to be accomplished with love. In his own words, Biko stated that as a black person, "you are either alive and proud or you are dead" (2004: 173).

Black girls in that school were not allowed to wear their natural hair and were, in effect, forced to straighten their hair. According to Lekgotla laga Ramoupi (2016), the protest at Pretoria Girls High School was not just about black, natural hair but about making a point about "our humanness: for them to be accepted, they do not have to mimic their white peers". The EFF immediately issued a statement after the Pretoria Girls High School protest condemning the incident as "suppressing blackness" (EFF Statement, 2016). The Pretoria Girls High School is a salutary example of how the struggle against black hair can transform into collective rage, which is emancipatory and positive symbolising what I call "potentiated Black rage". In 2020, thousands of EFF members and supporters took to Clicks stores nationwide after health and beauty chain outlet had posted a racist advertisement on its website. The Clicks advert contained images of African hair labelled as "dry, dull and damaged," while white hairwas portrayed as "fine and flat" (BBC, 2020). According to Canham (2017), Biko understood that black people under the system of apartheid had no option but to rage against the system if they truly loved themselves. The EFF protests against the racist Clicks advert, in a Bikonian sense, was a demonstration that being alive had to be accomplished with love. In his own words, Biko stated that as a black person, "you are either alive and proud or you are dead" (2004: 173). The party's rage against the discrimination of black women hair raised a pertinent question: can we see the feverish protests against the discrimination of black hair in some South African schools as "produced in the cocktail of dread and rage in the context of pervasive anti-blackness"? (Canham, 2021: 300). It also raises the question whether we might see the EFF protests against the discrimination of black hair as a humanising pathway. The protests were accompanied by acts of violence and vandalism in some of the Clicks stores. However, Canham (2017) points out that when critics condemn violence, they do so to portray those who commit violent acts as "unthinking instruments." For these critics and proponents of peaceful protests and appropriate forms of protesting, rage is not a legitimate and necessary response to ongoing racism and discrimination. Feminist scholar Rachel Flowers (2015) observed that decolonial rage, or what I call "potentiated

Black rage," must not be viewed as irrational or as all-encompassing but through the vectors that brought that rage into being in the first place. Flowers is instructive here:

> to disregard anger and resentment as destructive emotions is an uncritical move to absolve the unforgiven, whereby blame is placed on the injured party, who is seen as an irrational 'blockage' blinded by their rage compared to the 'reasonable' apologist (2015: 42).

Fanon's instructive anecdote below is the clearest example of reading double consciousness through rage and the arrival at self-affirmation:

> What! When it was I who had every reason to hate, to despise, I was rejected? When I should have been begged, implored, I was denied the slightest recognition? I resolved, since it was impossible for me to get away from an inborn complex, to assert myself as a BLACK MAN. Since the other hesitated to recognize me, there remained only one solution: to make myself known (Fanon, 1986: 87).

The need for violence without valorizing it

For Fanon, to disregard violence in fighting violence serves no purpose in the context of the struggle against all forms of oppression and dehumanisation. Fanon was clear on the question of violence without valorising it. As Fanon puts it:

> Violence alone, violence committed by the people, violence organised and educated by its leaders, makes it possible for the masses to understand social truths and gives the key to them. Without that struggle, without that knowledge of the practice of action, there's nothing but a fancy-dress parade and the blare of trumpets. (1967: 118)

In some way, Fanon located the birthplace or conceptions of Black rage in many forms of the dehumanisation of the African body. In a study titled, *Black Hair Politics: The Representation of African Women on True Love Magazine Front Covers and Hair Advertisements*, Madlela (2018) found that women attached different meanings to their hair and embraced both the Western-centric and Afrocentric styles. Madlela argues that African hair struggles must be viewed in the context that "African hair holds political power because it shapes black people's consciousness about broader social, cultural, religious, and economic issues" (2018: 3). In similar vein, Zimitri Erasmus (1997) appreciates the importance of hair and its complex politics. In the article, "*Oe! My Hare Gaan Huis Toe": Hair-styling as Black Cultural Practice*, Erasmus pays attention to the ways in which natural black hair is stigmatised through Eurocentric understandings and standards of beauty. She draws on her lived experience as a Coloured woman growing up in apartheid South Africa, concluding that the "racial hierarchies and values of colonial racism have left a deep mark on our conceptions of beauty" (1997: 12). Erasmus states that straightening one's hair should not be simply read as "aspiring towards whiteness" because this has the potential of denying black hair "the complexity of cultural practice".

Black Body is Political

In *Race Otherwise: Forging a New Humanism for South Africa,* Erasmus (2017) reveals that the black body and its categories such as 'looks' is a marker for racial classification or "knowing" race. She goes on to argue that the appearance of the black body in the social world is not sufficient to affirm and legitimise its humanity, instead, it was "dependent on routine judgement of class, social standing and culture" (Erasmus, 2017: 89). In this way, "race actively worked as the reorganizing principle" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018: 104). The Clicks advert shows that black women's hair continues to face unfair discrimination in Post-apartheid South Africa. Black women are awakened to the truth that their position in society has remained unchanged due to systemic exclusion, racism and disenfranchisement. This awakening is closely tied to their being attuned to Black Consciousness philosophy and renewed desire to express decolonial love and justified potentiated Black rage.

> @SneKhumaloSA
> *"Racism make people believe we have "hard, strong unruly" hair when we actually have delicate, fragile, sensitive Afro hair that needs to be babied. So sensitive we have to wrap it in silk at night, and leave it untouched for it to grow. Black hair is political.*

Signaling some fragility at play, @SneKhumaloSA's tweet points out the amount of care needed to nurture natural black hair. Then she hones-in on a Black Consciousness explication when she says 'Black hair is political'. There is some truth in this but there is something more. The topic of black hair lends itself to so much to the core of Black Consciousness thought. Biko's Black Consciousness project was always political. Realising the contradictions produced by a racist society that make black natural hair into a problem, @SneKhumaloSA's critical reflection challenges the presupposition of black hair as "hard, strong and unruly" and the result is the subversion of false universality of black women hair. She does this by unmasking its actual particularity by painting a descriptive picture of black natural hair as "delicate, fragile and sensitive". Her statement does not only challenge the epistemic claims about black natural hair, but also the normative claims of whiteness.

In his recent book, *Fear of Black Consciousness*, Lewis Gordon (2022) points out that in settler societies there is always a fear of Blackness rising. In fact, the fear of black hair rising as pointed out by @lolacele in the tweet above is a very real concern in white communities.

> *@lolacele*
> *"I can"t believe that big companies like Clicks (a beauty store) do not think Black is beautiful, let alone black hair! I wear my crown with pride. Black hair must rise!*

Gordon asks, "So what happened to Black people under the weight of Black bodies"? (2022: 36). We must equally ask, so what happened to black people under the weight of black hair? Gordon's question points us to the historical fact that black bodies and their hair have been in conflict because they have been constructed by the first negative stage of double consciousness, that is, as an obstacle to the possibility of full personhood. @ lolacele's assertion, "I wear my crown with pride," points to a liberatory moment of understanding that black people can creatively affirm their beauty. It is a critical consciousness but also a decolonial love and life affirming one. According to Dougan (2016), the fear of black hair rising and the policing thereof begins at a very young age long before schooling. Below she narrates her own struggles of black, natural hair:

> The thickness and texture of my black hair was under constant scrutiny when I was a child. My aunt used to call me *bossiekop* (from the Afrikaans, meaning bushy head). The kids at school would use terms like *Goema hare* (candyfloss hair) and *kroeskop* (fuzzy head). My cousin would joke: "You can't even put a comb through your hair." (Dougan, 2016)

Dougan posits that every black woman has their own racist struggles about their natural hair, "their curls and societies endless need to tame, manage and straighten whether at school, in the home, or both". She argues that the Pretoria Girls High School protest sent a clear message that this generation will no longer tolerate the "racist frameworks, formal and informal, that teach them self-hate".

Concluding Reflections

By theorising the EFF through the lens of Black rage and analysing instances where the party justifiable deployed rage, this study has demonstrated that Black rage has a Du-Boisian Double Consciousness dimension, which reveals bot negative and positive effects. The negative dimension of EFF's Black rage has thus been conceptualised herein as "misguided black rage" whilst the positive element of it has thus been theorised as "potentiated Black rage" and as "decolonial love". It has been found that the EFF simultaneously deploys rage both in a destructive and liberatory manner. Here, Black rage is seen as misguided or narcissistic rage whenever EFF leaders and supporters harass and intimidate, and sometimes use violence, against journalists when doing their work. The EFF is also theorised as potentiated Black rage whenever the party fights against continued forms of racism, discrimination and oppression as exemplified by its use of Black rage to fight against racism, discrimination and the dehumanisation of the black body and black hair. By theorising Black rage as self-love, this study adopts a drive towards Black Consciousness in order to surface the productive potential of rage. The duality/dialectic conceptualisation of Black rage as both negative and positive has been explained further to foreground the ontological problem of the negative (read misguided black rage) and the political transformation potential and political subjectivity of the positive (read potentiated Black rage) and how issues of radical love and collective ethics of care and responsibility intersects with these.

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