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Civil Religion in South Africa: Mandela through the Lens of Machiavelli and Rousseau

by

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Abstract

In this thesis, I investigate the possible existence of a civil religion in South Africa through the lens of political philosophers Niccolo Machiavelli and Jean Jacques Rousseau. I began by examining the civil religion ideas of both Machiavelli and Rousseau in order to appropriately set out the theoretical framework for the thesis. Machiavelli had a profound impact on the civil religion ideas of Rousseau, even though the former did not use the term to describe his state-led religion. Machiavelli called for the paganisation of Christianity through his unique yet controversial idea of virtú, a strong military force, and freedom as a result of class tension in a republican state in order to extract its political advantages. Rousseau dismissed paganism and based his civil religion on one in which political society was based on the civil principles of patriotism, good citizenship, a good lawgiver, separation of powers and an elective aristocracy, all directed by a shared understanding of the common good and the general will. I analyse the existence of the Mandela-mythology phenomenon by focusing on importance events and performative displays in Mandela's life during the three phases of the mythology, including the Rivonia Trial, Mandela's imprisonment on Robben Island, his release from prison, his presidential inauguration and the Rugby World Cup in 1995, as well as the proliferation of statues, roads and movies amongst others in his honour. I further investigate whether or not the Mandela-mythology phenomenon discussed in chapter three constitutes a civil religion a lá Machiavelli and Rousseau. I conclude that we are indeed witnessing the existence of a national civil religion in South Africa along Machiavellian and Rousseauian lines, which is embodied by a set of beliefs, rituals and symbols which is used by the ANC government for political gain.

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Introduction

The continued discussion of the status, influence and applicability of religion, even when such debates are supposedly settled, clearly demonstrates that the question of religion, even in a secular state, is not a foregone conclusion. It is precisely because of this that the modern state continues to be engrossed by the status of religion. In fact, the fundamental premise of this thesis is that the institutionalised separation of church and state does not mean that a religious dimension cannot exist in the political sphere. Sacred authority, in my opinion, remains a central political attribute of modern states.

At the forefront of this debate have been political theorists such as Niccolo Machiavelli and Jean Jacques Rousseau. Whilst opposing the theological relevance of mainstream religion, particularly Abrahamic faiths, they both proposed that any potential political usages be extracted so as to benefit the cause of the secular state. Such an understanding may be referred to in Rousseauian terms as a civil religion (it is important to note that Machiavelli never uses such a term). Although scholars of political theory have written about civil religion in the past, contemporary research has focused largely on liberal democracy.

The secular state has not, however, remained stagnant and has largely been characterised by constant evolution in terms of its form as well as the many philosophical interpretations that have accompanied it. South Africa is no exception to this, having evolved from a divisive colonial and apartheid setting in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to one that broadly encompasses the principles of liberal democracy in the twenty-first century. This conflict-ridden past was accompanied by many attempts at overthrowing the brutal and oppressive system that affected the daily lives of the majority.

Undoubtedly, the most famous of these attempts was undertaken by the African National Congress (ANC) under the stewardship of the now iconic Nelson Mandela. It is not my intention here to provide a biography of this period but merely to state that, for reasons to be discussed in this thesis, Mandela was its most famous son and consequently had the most profound impact, an impact that, as I will demonstrate in chapter four, has come to fundamentally define the philosophical nature of post-apartheid South Africa – a potential civil religion along the lines of Machiavelli and Rousseau.

There is therefore enough scope in the area of civil religion to warrant an in-depth study, particularly in the South African context. In this thesis, I will therefore use Machiavelli's and

Rousseau's ideas on civil religion as the theoretical lens through which to analyse whether Mandela's political ideas and the institutionalised beliefs, rituals and symbols (I refer to this as the Mandela mythology) that have been centred around him have evolved into a state-sponsored civil religion in post-apartheid South Africa. This is in line with the quest of states for legitimation and social solidarity in the modern world, which Rousseau believed could be achieved through the creation of a national civil religion capable of binding all individuals to the state (Cristi 1997, 31). This civil religion is clearly distinct from Christianity but is not militantly secular. It feeds on the persona of a political figure that members of all religious, ethnic and racial groupings can relate to.

Much has been theorised about the civil religion ideas of Machiavelli and Rousseau. There is, however, very little on the potential impact and application of their accounts on post-1994 South Africa. Moreover, although several articles and books have been written on the unifying influence of Mandela, as well as the 'rainbow nation' phenomenon as a civil religion in South Africa, no scholar to date has attempted to comprehend the Mandela mythology as a unifying civil religion for South Africans.

Baines (1998) and Habib (1997) for example critically analysed the 'unifying' power of the rainbow nation concept. Van der Merwe (2007) discussed the manner in which the Mandela brand was used as a marketing tool for the rugby, cricket and soccer world cups and also states that although the rainbow nation concept was central to the Mandela presidency, the prominence of the concept has declined in the post-Mandela era with the 'Mandela-mythology' phenomenon becoming the new galvanising agent in South Africa. Dickow (1996) and Dickow, Harris and Moller (1998), on the other hand, state that the rainbow nation concept was the new integrating civil religion in South Africa.

Numerous books have also been written on the life and times of Nelson Mandela, the most renowned of which is Anthony Sampson's biography *Mandela: The Authorised Biography*. Secondary sources include *After Mandela: The Battle for the Soul of South Africa* by Alec Russell (2009), who outlines life and politics after the Mandela presidency, more specifically how Mbeki and briefly President Zuma have attempted to remove themselves from the shadow of the saint and 'sinless' Mandela. Other secondary sources include a book on Mandela's initial revolutionary years in politics, *Young Mandela: The Revolutionary Years* written by David James Smith (2010), and more recently *Mandela and Mbeki: The Hero and the Outsider* by Lucky Mathebe (2012).

Edited works of his most noted and celebrated speeches and quotations have also been published such as *Nelson Mandela in His Own Words: From Freedom to the Future* (2004), which includes an introduction by the late Kader Asmal, and *Nelson Mandela: The Struggle is my Life* (1994) and *Nelson Mandela by Himself* (2011). It is important to note that most of these works, besides the book on the revolutionary Mandela, have attempted to portray him as a saint above all else. However, this literature has been mainly sociological and biographical in nature and not studies in political thought. Thus, this would be my point of entry into the debate.

Before commencing with this philosophical undertaking, it is necessary to set the scene appropriately for this thesis by briefly outlining the complex Mandela narrative which will be elucidated in chapter three. The Mandela narrative is not as straightforward as mainstream analyses of him have made it out to be. Such analyses position his story as one of a heroic individual whose primary attention lay in his ability to build a nation in which non-racialism, non-sexism, unity and reconciliation were possible. This was accompanied by a high sense of morality which is extremely compelling in the sense that it has the quality of charisma and sainthood (Mathebe 2012, 270). Spector Person, in *Knowledge and Authority*, refers to Mandela as South Africa's 'secular version of the godhead' since the authority he commanded consisted of moral power, miracle and legend (2001, 1143).

Writers in the post-1994 context more often than not, put forward Mandela's 'remarkable humanity and waxed lyrical about his legend and charisma' (Mathebe 2012, 232). Mandela exemplified the country's democratic vision and his leadership style was fundamentally shaped by his desire to fulfil the narrative of South Africa as a miracle rainbow nation. Mandela's appeal also lies in part because he commands great respect amongst both black and white communities and the international community at large. Further, what set Mandela apart from his contemporaries was his use of almost every platform to further the ideas of reconciliation and nation-building despite the tremendously difficult and trying twenty-seven years of incarceration he endured. He was at pains to demonstrate after his release that the fight for liberation was not against whites but against a system of oppression.

The predominant narrative during the Mandela presidency was the social construction of South Africa as a miracle nation – the imagining of the country as united, non-racial and non-sexist, not affected by its divisive and treacherous past (Mathebe 2012, 98). For Mathebe, the mainstream media propagated the values of reconciliation, unity and non-racialism and in the

process furthered the narrative of South Africa as a miracle nation. For the most part, Mandela was judged by his contribution to constructing this miracle nation narrative.

The infatuation with Mandela the legend centres on the fact that his leadership style was moulded by historical experiences. Any serious study of Mandela must take cognisance of this fact. Mandela was able to seize the moral high ground in the immediate aftermath of the post-1994 South African landscape and was thus able to shoulder the burden of national expectation. Mandela's legend, Mathebe (2012, 194) argues, was 'obsessively, if not frighteningly, filled with his "Republican" values of national reconciliation, national unity and colour-blindness. Hence, there was always a sense in which his charisma represented us all – for many, his moral style embodied an integrationist tendency'.

Roux (2014, 220) posits that the above interpretation of the Mandela narrative 'hampers our ability to reach more complex understandings of the genealogy of the present'. Further, many attempts to demythologise Mandela end up re-mythologising him and other attempts to bring out his flawed and human side frequently end up making him more exceptional. Demythologising the complex mythology of Mandela may be an impossible task precisely because the self-preservation of Mandela anticipated such attempts and subsequently incorporated them into the mythology (Roux 2014, 221). To counter this predominant narrative, I contend that the Mandela mythology is not a total mythical construction. Although there is no doubting his iconic status, I postulate that the Mandela narrative has been, in many respects, a deliberate construction with the aim of building a united South Africa to which all South Africa could feel a sense of belonging. Sontag (1987, 27) agrees with my contention and states that

it is often said that this man is a 'symbol'. But no one is inherently a symbol. Someone is made a symbol, as this man has been. The few moral heroes – and this man is a moral hero – who become celebrated (as distinct from the many heroes who do not) do so under the pressure of historical need. The practice of singling out as exemplary one person – specifically, one prisoner or victim – illustrates the way in which all affections and attachments must inevitably become institutionalised, acquire titles, engender hierarchies, in order to have historical weight: in order to be political ... When the struggle is just and the behaviour of the prisoner really exemplary, such singling out is not only ineluctable but positive. It is right that this man has been made a symbol.

As such, this study is of tremendous significance as it affords the reader a theoretically rigorous interpretation of the Mandela mythology and the manner in which this has expressed itself in determining a certain form of civil religion in post-apartheid South Africa with the expressed aim of serving as its principal unifying force. Although I propose a novel

interpretation of the Mandela mythology, I aim to position it as interrogating and interrupting the linear narrative of the Mandela story. It is an attempt to provide a unique understanding of the ‘shape-shifting’ (Barnard 2014, 9) quality of Mandela which allowed him to bridge the gap and appeal to the different worlds he inhabited.

The galvanising and patriotic power of Mandela finds its roots in his political thought both in the anti-apartheid movement and after the advent of democracy. Mandela was, however, a politician and not a political scientist, scholar or theorist. To ascertain his thoughts requires a careful and thorough exploration of his voluminous speeches, his autobiography, the abundance of books written about him and his symbolic actions. We moreover need to interrogate the philosophical, conceptual and cultural frameworks in which he operated. His thoughts on the various elements of liberal democracy such as freedom, diversity, non-racialism, equality, reconciliation and so on, are well documented and have swayed political thought in and the possibility of unifying post-apartheid South Africa.

His influence may be found in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) and the Freedom Charter (1955). His autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom* (1995), and numerous speeches he made during and after the liberation struggle will be important to analyse in order to attain a holistic understanding of his thinking. As Barnard (2014, 14) states, we need to consider ‘aspects of Mandela’s life not just in their immediate historical context, but in the *longue durée* of the vernacular literature of the Eastern Cape, colonial and apartheid jurisprudence, the political traditions of the ANC since its inception in 1912 and the evolution of modern warfare’. As such, I posit that Nelson Mandela has assumed iconic status in post-democratic South Africa. It is important, nevertheless, to acknowledge that the assumed iconic status of Nelson Mandela is a debated point amongst different scholars.

Building up towards the main argument in chapter four requires a thorough and detailed account of all the important elements of the topic. I start in chapter one by critically analysing Machiavelli’s conceptualisation of a state-initiated and led religion since these thoughts later came to have a deep influence on Rousseau. Here, I shall focus on the primary texts of Machiavelli, *The Prince* and *The Discourses*. I use the term state-led religion to describe Machiavelli’s thoughts since the term ‘civil religion’ originated with Rousseau, even though it was the former who first considered the possible existence of an alternative state-led religion and had a profound influence on the latter. This will become evident as the thesis progresses. His views on the potential role of religion in a secular state will therefore be

imperative to interrogate in order to properly theorise the Mandela mythology as a civil religion in South Africa.

The substance of Machiavelli's religious considerations originates in *The Prince* where he advances the idea that good arms must complement good laws. He posits that the core value of good laws is, first, that freedom is saved from the control of a country's rulers and, second, it permits the legislating of establishments designed to inspire secular religious belief and practices. Machiavelli takes such an approach since he contends in *The Discourses* that good arms and good laws are inadequate for the political welfare of a state and, as a consequence, must be accompanied by a religion. Machiavelli is nonetheless critical of Christianity since believing that it was parasitic to the well-being of the modern state and, consequently, would be responsive to ground-breaking explanations that would extract political advantages from it. Machiavelli, for all intents and purposes, demands the paganisation of Christianity, which after extracting any political advantages from it, would permit it to become an appropriate state-led religion (Beiner 1993, 624).

Chapter two constitutes the heart of the theoretical framework of this thesis and discusses Rousseau's arguments on civil religion. In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau sets out to explore whether human beings can achieve an unbiased and impartial state. In Rousseauian terms, this would effectively entail a relationship whereby the secular state is administered by a religion encompassing civil principles, which he refers to as a civil religion. Even though Rousseau posits that religion is unequivocally imperative to the creation of any state, he strongly opposed both the pagan religious suggestions of Machiavelli and the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam for reasons that will be outlined in chapter two. His understanding of a civil religion is predominantly a determination to go back to the ancient idea of strengthening good citizenship with religion.

Rousseau's civil religion is rather straightforward. It does not entail much dogma and is primarily envisioned to guarantee that individuals remain productive and obedient. Nevertheless, in an era in which religion has been effectively removed from the mainstream of the state, the attempt to unite them once again might not sit comfortably with pure secularists. Further, the perceived notion that such an arrangement involves revering the state also appears ominously authoritarian.

Chapter two will also entail a detailed exploration of Rousseau's broader political philosophy since it forms the backbone of his civil religion ideas. This chapter will investigate how the

important elements of his political philosophy – namely, the necessity for a good lawgiver, patriotism, citizenship, elective aristocracies and the doctrine of separation of powers – are crucial for the effective functioning of his civil religion. These elements are not specifically referred to by Rousseau as fully comprising his political thoughts but follow from my detailed exegesis of his political thought. Rousseau's civil religion also necessitates the belief in a higher being. It is plausible, however, that Rousseau meant God or at the very least a state or quality of being divine. Chapter two will attempt to make this exposition clearer. In the South African context, we witness many references and inferences to belief in a higher being though the constitution and national anthem as well as in the speeches of the various presidents of post-apartheid South Africa. These, however, are more explicit and mention God.

It should be noted from the outset that chapters one and two are of immense significance to this thesis since they are the theoretical pillars upon which it rests. The influence of Machiavelli on Rousseau is laid out in these chapters. Although chapter three might come across as a stand-alone chapter, it is imperative that I properly outline the various elements of the Mandela mythology before I analyse it in relation to the thoughts on civil religion of both Machiavelli and Rousseau.

I should also state at this juncture that although I have used Machiavelli and Rousseau as primary thinkers on civil religion, this does not in any way exhaust the many political philosophers and thinkers who have theorised about the subject. However, Machiavelli and Rousseau were the foremost thinkers of civil religion in Enlightenment Europe. I will take the civil religion thoughts of Rousseau as its foundation but the tremendous influence of Machiavelli on Rousseau, as will be outlined in chapter one, should be taken into consideration even though his conceptualisation does not appear to be a dominant force in thought on contemporary civil religion.

Chapter three provides a detailed account of the ever-developing Mandela mythology from his birth in Qunu in 1918 up until his passing in December 2013. This is broken down into three distinct yet related phases. Phase one entails an analysis of the important events from 1918 until his release from prison in 1990. Included here is his upbringing in Qunu, his move to Johannesburg, his role in the formation of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) and the drafting of the Freedom Charter, his life as a fugitive (popularly known as the Black Pimpernel), the Treason and Rivonia Trials, as well as his incarceration on Robben

Island. All the aforementioned events played an instrumental role in shaping the Mandela mythology during this period, but I posit, for reasons to be discussed in chapter three, that chief amongst these was the Rivonia Trial and his incarceration on Robben Island.

Phase two of the Mandela-mythology involves the period from his release from Robben Island in 1990 until the end of his presidency in 1999. Here, I focus on key performative displays by Mandela which include his release from prison, his presidential inauguration in 1994 and the 1995 Rugby World Cup. I posit that the Mandela mythology uncovered during the first phase was not only sustained but prospered as a direct result of these performative displays. In fact, the prevailing narrative of the past became the endorsed narrative of the present. Many of the criticisms levelled against Mandela and his presidency, both in phase one and two of the mythology, did not manage to dent his increasing iconic and saint-like image. In chapter three, Mathebe (2012) uses Vera Dika and George de Stefano's theme of exculpation to investigate the reasons for this.

Given Mandela's saint-like image, the immediate aftermath of the post-Mandela presidency was naturally characterised by a great deal of fear and uneasiness. The African National Congress (ANC) government attempted to allay these fears by enhancing the Mandela mythology through the use of a sophisticated network of beliefs, rituals and symbols à la Rousseau. I refer to this third phase of the Mandela mythology as the Mandela-mania phenomenon in view of the abundant statues, artworks, road names and the annual charitable Mandela Day, amongst things that have come to characterise contemporary South Africa. These were mostly conscious political undertakings by the ANC government aimed at uniting all South Africans behind the post-1994 state.

It is important to note that the Mandela-mania phenomenon is a component of the larger Mandela mythology and should not be confused as being a separate mythology in itself. I contend that these components consolidate the dominant narrative of the Mandela mythology, as outlined in phase one and two, which has in effect become the official narrative of the Mandela mythology. I end of this chapter by situating the Mandela mythology within the two dominant streams of contemporary civil religion debates.

I argue in chapter four that the deliberate political hand in the creation of many aspects of the Mandela mythology was aimed at creating a national civil religion along Machiavellian and Rousseauian lines, as laid out in chapters one and two. I begin by highlighting the presence of two previous civil religions, namely, the Afrikaner civil religion of the apartheid era and the

rainbow nation civil religion that existed during the Mandela presidency. However, I argue that these encompass the Durkheimian sociological conceptualisation which states that the existence of a civil religion is an inherent part of a society and is distinct from the Machiavellian/Rousseauian political understanding.

The Mandela mythology of chapter three is then analysed through the lens of Machiavelli and Rousseau, but predominantly the latter and in the process becomes known as the Mandela-mythology civil religion. The Mandela mythology analysed through these lenses indeed points to the presence of a civil religion in South Africa in which political elites, represented by the ruling ANC government, use it to advance predetermined political programmes. This is done for the preservation of stability and the propagation of the notion of a common good of society, an end envisioned by Rousseau.

I argue that the Mandela mythology is being used by the state to instil a sense of patriotism amongst South Africans. Dickow et al. (1999, 249) argue that a civil religion uses beliefs, rituals and symbols 'to maintain and strengthen a group's sense of community'. In the context of this study, the minting of Mandela gold coins, the commencing in 2009 of celebrating an annual philanthropic Mandela Day on 18 July and the fact that an image of Mandela has now appeared on all official bank notes, amongst other things, is clear evidence of the rituals and symbols that have become associated with this civil religion. Rituals and symbols are used to mobilise people towards support of the post-1994 state. For all intents and purposes, the civil religion is used to accomplish political goals (Dickow et al. 1999, 249).

I will moreover attempt to argue that the Mandela mythology is also the lawgiver (a superior being) whom Rousseau considers essential to the success of a civil religion, since it helps create the necessary patriotism and citizenship and produces individuals who aspire to make duty to their country their primary business.

Methodology

This thesis is a combination of genealogy and discourse analysis, the former inspired by the works of Foucault and Nietzsche. It is an attempt to comprehend and analyse an idea (civil religion) in relation to contemporary South Africa.

Whilst I am fully cognisant that the predominant intellectual history methodology (associated with the so-called 'Cambridge school') does not fit this study perfectly, I briefly discuss it

here because I will draw from it in order to appropriately frame the discussion of genealogy. A genealogical study in addition to a discourse analysis, which will be discussed later on in the introduction, is the best fit for this study.

The Cambridge school of intellectual history has become prominent in understanding texts in their context. Chief amongst them, Quentin Skinner, sets out to find the appropriate manner in which to analyse ancient texts. Skinner is the main theorist to criticise the dominant methods of understanding classic texts. He begins by attacking those who argue that these are timeless classics or ideas that are of universal relevance. On the contrary, Skinner argues that:

The belief that classical theorists can be expected to comment on a determinant set of fundamental concepts has given rise, it seems to me, to a series of confusions and exegetical absurdities that have bedevilled the history of ideas for too long (2002, 57–58).

Some of these confusions arise from the fact that intellectual historians argue that it is impossible to study classical texts only in light of the texts since we always bring into the equation our own pre-judgements concerning their possible meanings. The ensuing predicament is that pre-judgements and perceptions may cloud our decisions when approaching classical texts since they will act as the determining factors of what we think and observe (Skinner 2002, 58–59). Hamilton (2014, 341) agrees and states that it is a common mistake to presuppose that current solutions to our socio-economic and political challenges lie wholly formed in the history of ideas. We can, however, learn from the past that ‘the distinction between what is necessary and what is contingently the product of our own local arrangements’ (Skinner 2002, 89).

Instead, the intellectual history approach claims that theorists of the past and their respective texts can best be understood if we interpret them as part of ‘individual textual and argumentative interventions within a series of past and existing discursive and institutional disputes. These interventions are forms of action and are best understood as having been performed with the intention to communicate a particular meaning or set of meanings to an audience or set of audiences’ (Hamilton 2014, 338). Hamilton (2014, 338) further contends that in our search to obtain a strong understanding and intention of a text, we are not required to proverbially place ourselves in the minds of the authors but rather to interpret these texts as types of interventions in the world.

It would nevertheless be inappropriate to follow the Cambridge school method outlined by Skinner and Hamilton above, as this will undermine the very logic of what I am trying to do

since an intellectual history method is primarily about understanding texts in their historical context. While this is very important and I am mindful of not taking texts out of their intended contexts, this study is not just concerned with an analysis of Machiavelli and Rousseau per se but an analysis of Machiavelli and Rousseau that speaks to the way in which the state is conceived in South Africa and the way in which the study of civil religion, as an important component of the way in which the state functions, has been lost to us in political theory.

This thesis, therefore, is an exercise in retrieval. Nonetheless, because my concern is not the just the context of Machiavelli and Rousseau but mainly the context of post-apartheid South Africa, the most significant methodology is one that shares a great deal with the intellectual historical tradition but which is simultaneously distinct from it.

It is thus necessary that I employ a genealogical approach. Such an approach speaks to the relevance of both Machiavelli and Rousseau as being foundational to the manner in which the modern state is conceived. Machiavelli and Rousseau, and the Western intellectual tradition they espouse, are central to contemporary South Africa. As a result of colonialism, post-colonialism and apartheid, the state structure and much of the intellectual history that underpins this, is Western in origin and both Machiavelli and Rousseau are central to this Western intellectual tradition of concepts and institutions.

Hence, although the Western intellectual tradition is not the only intellectual tradition important to the post-colonial South African state, it is undeniably critical to it since it was founded on it. The intellectual history approach does not provide us with the tools with which to analyse sets of ideas and important concepts such as civil religion, which may have not been at the forefront of political theory for a long time but which does not mean that they should disappear. This study therefore goes back to Rousseau and Machiavelli because it is these thinkers that are so foundational, both for the way we think about the modern state and for the way in which we think about civil religion, as well as an optic through which to understand the Mandela mythology.

A genealogy helps function as the necessary optic since it is a method of doing a critical analysis that peels back the layers of history and the history of institutions. We do not necessarily need to know the true intentions of both Machiavelli and Rousseau, but rather to understand them as part of a larger intellectual and institutional history.

In light of the above discussion, genealogy must therefore have as its focal point the possible intentions of the given author. After this, it is necessary to conduct an analysis of the social context in which the text occurs within the linguistic enterprise mentioned above. This social context is of the utmost importance since it assists in deciding ‘what conventionally recognisable meanings it might in principal have been possible for someone to have intended to communicate’ (Skinner 2002, 87). Although the linguistic focus of the study is important, this study is also institutional and practice based. The settings of the various discourses will also assist in gaining a holistic understanding of the respective authors’ ideas. Skinner believes that even though classic texts may have their own particular historical context, this does not make them irrelevant for our own analysis. Conversely, they can assist us in revealing the variety of ‘moral assumptions and political commitments’ that we may make in numerous ways and contexts today (Skinner 2002, 88).

The task of providing a genealogy is concentrated in the direction of narrating this history as completely as possible (Geuss 1999, 158–159). Foucault argues that genealogy ‘operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times’ (1984, 76). The genealogical task will require a tremendous amount of patience, perseverance, knowledge and attention to detail. Genealogy does not aim to fix or finish unfinished business of the past, it does not hope to show that the present has elements of the past in it, it does not hope to demonstrate the gradual evolution of a doctrine such as the separation of powers nor does it hope to predict the future because of the analysis of past events (Foucault 1984, 81). On the contrary, the genealogical task hopes to

follow the complex course of descent which is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that the truth or being does not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents (Foucault 1984, 81).

We should, for example, read Rousseau in the context of his time as well as in the context of his interpretations of Machiavelli, Hobbes and Spinoza, and so on. The starting point is the nature of present institutions. In this instance we need to start from the conceptualisation of a state-led religion by Machiavelli. Nietzsche provides an example of Christianity for his genealogy. He starts from the present by outlining the bipartite structure of Christianity: ‘a set of antecedently existing practices, modes of behaviour, perception, and feeling which at a

certain time are given an interpretation, which imposes on them a meaning, they did not have before' (Geuss 1999, 9).

With reference to Christianity, Nietzsche differentiates between the teachings of Jesus Christ and a particular understanding placed on his teachings that have ultimately turned out to be the content of Christianity. Central to Nietzsche's critique, is an attempt at genealogy that identifies the tortuous and directionless route our different moral concepts have taken to attain their present form. Morality is typically treated as untouchable since we assume that there is some transcendental ground for our morals, be it God, reason, tradition etcetera. Nevertheless, contrary to our belief that 'good', 'bad,' or 'evil' have forever had unchanged connotations, Nietzsche's genealogical method reveals how these moral concepts have evolved, smashing our mistaken belief as to their stamina or absolute truth. As Nietzsche states, 'for this purpose a knowledge is necessary of the conditions and circumstances out of which these values grew, and under which they experienced their evolution and their distortion' (Nietzsche [1887] 2014, 76).

Geuss (1999, 12) puts this succinctly and states 'the history of Christianity is a history of successive attempts on the part of a variety of "wills" to take control of and reinterpret a complex of habits, feelings, ways of perceiving and acting, thereby imposing on this complex a "meaning". In short, genealogy aims to argue that institutions, religions, doctrines and so on are not necessarily the unified and coherent entities they are sometimes made out to be. As Nietzsche notes, 'all concepts in which an entire process is semiotically concentrated elude definition; only that which has no history is definable' (Nietzsche [1887] 2014, 78). To summarise how genealogy can be used to analyse texts, Geuss (1999, 14) states:

starting from the present day of, say, Christianity (or of whatever else is the object of genealogical analysis), the genealogy works its way backward in time, recounting the episodes of struggle between different wills, each trying to impose its interpretation or meaning on the Christianity that existed at the time, and thereby disentangling the separate strands of meaning that have come together in a unity in the present. Each such episode is, as it were, the branching node of a genealogical tree.

In the context of this thesis, I need to start with Machiavelli's and Rousseau's conception of civil religion and how it has been transferred through history and is being enacted in the modern South African context to understand the Mandela mythology.

In keeping with Nietzsche's example of Christianity, genealogy is not interested in investigating whether an individual is remorseful for his transgressions but rather with asking

the important question of how these terms such as sin, remorse, punishment and so on have become acknowledged as unanimously compulsory to all (Geuss 2005, 158). In essence, genealogy is not interested in justification but rather with explanation or, as Geuss (1999, 3) puts it, ‘genealogy is certainly not undertaken with the intention of legitimising any present institution, practice, or institution, and won’t in general have the effect of enhancing the standard of any contemporary item’.

I will thus take special care not to legitimise any institutions, doctrines and thoughts of Machiavelli, Rousseau or even Mandela for that matter. Rather, I will focus on peeling away the complex layers of their works to gain a holistic and appropriate understanding. For example, I will read Rousseau in the context of his time (eighteenth century) as well as in the context of his readings of Hobbes, Locke and Spinoza etcetera, trying to figure out the true nature and intentions of his thoughts.

The genealogical approach will also allow me to ensure that I do not only take information in the context in which it was intended since I am concerned about two contexts. First, although I am concerned with the original contexts of the writers, given the scope of the thesis I will not be able to meet the strong demands of intellectual historians. Second, I am also very concerned with the way these ideas have remained relevant over time and have force in helping to explain contemporary phenomena.

Genealogy is therefore the way in which I am going to deal with these texts in their context, as well as in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. However, the question that now arises relates to the manner in which I hope to get to grips with the ‘texts’ of Mandela, since there is no coherent text or set of texts of Mandela’s thoughts, as is the case with Machiavelli or Rousseau. Mandela’s political thought is contained in a broad series of texts, pamphlets, speeches, an autobiography, biographies, newspaper articles and suchlike, and the best methodology I can apply for their analysis is a discourse analysis.

Consensus eludes the definition of discourse analysis since it is a multifaceted and highly questioned methodology. Connolly (1993, 10–44) states that its connotation, scope and application largely depends on the respective theoretical systems in which it is found and which are burdened with certain conventions about the make-up of the social world and the manner in which we obtain understanding of it. Nevertheless, it generally involves the study of language (written, spoken or signed), and investigation into the potential links between language and other forms of communication such as media, clothing, symbols and so on

(Johnstone 2002, 2). This is because not all modes of communication are spoken, written or signed. This is important since Mandela's philosophy is not encapsulated in documented philosophical thought, but rather based on his political actions, ideas and decisions. Parker (1992, 28) agrees and argues that a discourse focuses on 'language as a structured system in its own right' and that the mission of a discourse analysis is to disentangle the 'conceptual illusions and confusions by which language enjoys its power'.

It is important to note the difference between discourse analysis and language analysis. By utilising discourse analysis, I highlight the fact that I will not predominantly emphasise language as an abstract system of rules. Language analysis draws on the knowledge people 'have about language, knowledge based on their memories of things they have said, heard, seen or written before, to do things in the world' (Johnstone 2008, 3). This type of knowledge refers to a set of generalisations which is occasionally stated as the rules of language (where words should go in a particular sentence or what they normally mean). Rather, discourse analysis, according to Johnstone (2008, 3), is both the 'source of this knowledge (people's generalisations about language are made on the basis of the discourse they participate in) and the result of it (people apply what they already know in creating and interpreting new discourse)'.

What separates discourse analysis from other forms of linguistic or communication studies is that discourse analysts attempt to study characteristics of the structure and the language being utilised (Johnstone 2008, 3). Foucault (1972, 27) also comments on this differentiation and states that discourse analysis aims to unearth the 'pure description of discursive events'. Howarth (2000, 51) further states that in opposition to a linguistic analysis, discourse analysis aims to 'unearth and describe the rules of formation that structure the production of discourses'. In other words, what are the intricate components of the discourse analysis and by extension are there any hidden agendas?

Scholars influenced by the work of Foucault, such as Wooffitt's (2005) *Conversation Analysis and Discourse Analysis: A Comparative and Critical Introduction* and Kendall and Wickham's (1999) *Using Foucault's Methods*, have, however, used discourse analysis in a pluralistic manner. Doing a discourse analysis through Foucault's lenses also includes patterns of habitual actions, beliefs and language. Moreover, discourse analysis involves the study of texts and their contexts. This is done to attain the reasons texts are arranged in a particular way and no other. For this to be adequately done, the author requires a broad set of

questions that he wants to ask about a particular text, offering a variety of perspectives which have not been adequately explored in previous studies within Western political philosophy (Johnstone 2002, 2).

This is important since the focus on Mandela mythology is potentially one aspect of a broader civil religion of liberation heroes which the study hopes to determine using Machiavelli's and Rousseau's conceptions of civil religion. Additionally, discourse analysis will be used to understand the use of various symbols, rituals and beliefs alluded to earlier, that have become associated with the Mandela mythology. Howarth (2000, 5) states that in 'these perspectives, discourses constitute symbolic systems and social orders, and the task of discourse analysis is to examine their historical and political construction and functioning'. Whether the Mandela mythology is a political construct used for political ends will be analysed in chapter four. This falls into the ambit of Foucault's archaeology of 'political knowledge' which aims to demonstrate 'whether the political behaviour of a society, a group, or a class is not shot through a particular, describable discursive practice' (Foucault 1972, 194).

I will also include a partial empirical component to the discourse analysis. This will include analyses of newspaper articles from some of South Africa's most prominent newspapers such as, inter alia, the *Mail & Guardian*, *Daily News*, *Sowetan*, *Sunday Independent*, *Sunday Times* and *The Star* on the topic, which largely describes the life of Nelson Mandela in an iconic, saintly and god-like manner and, hence, embeds the Mandela mythology in the psyche of many South Africans. These articles are therefore important to analyse when attempting to ascertain the extent, reach and influence of the Mandela mythology.

Chapter One

Machiavelli on religion and state relations

Introduction

The Enlightenment era was characterised by intense debate regarding the appropriate relationship between religion and the state. On the one hand, radical secular theorists argued that mainstream religions should not play a part in society because of the tremendous pain and suffering that it had brought to Europe during the religious wars. Other more moderate thinkers believed that leaders could seek an amicable solution so that religion and secularity could peacefully co-exist. Modern society has over the course of the last few centuries subsequently evolved into what we today term 'the Western secular state'. Secular principles and doctrines, such as democracy, human rights and the separation of powers, now govern the majority of states.

The establishment of international organisations such as the United Nations and the International Criminal Court is aimed at ensuring that the international society of states deeply entrenches the values of democracy, human rights and equality. Politics and mainstream religions have thus come to be separated, with each considered to have its own spheres of influence or even no influence at all. Religion is now assumed to be a matter of inward concern (in other words, an aspect of an individual's personal life) and politics is given to form part of an individual's outward being, that of his relationship with the state and society. Most theorists assume this to be the ideal relationship for the peaceful co-existence of these two important spheres of society. The Western secular state has had its phases of success and difficulty but, in general, we can consider its eventual success and formation an exceptional accomplishment. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that the subject of religion has become irrelevant and devoid of any philosophical analysis in the twenty-first century.

Machiavelli was one such theorist who vehemently opposed the influence of traditional religion in political affairs. However, like Rousseau, he conceived of an alternative religion, initiated and led by the state (maybe referred to as a state-led or secular religion since it does not encompass the principles as mainstream religions particularly Abrahamic faiths), with the purpose of acting as the social glue binding citizens to the state. Additionally, his influence on Rousseau's work is marked and thus his thoughts on the role of religion in a secular state

will be important to analyse in the hope of properly conceptualising the Mandela mythology as a civil religion in South Africa.

Machiavelli aimed to vindicate the total independence of the state from the church and to stigmatise further the Papacy's efforts to dominate and control the state's affairs. He argued that anyone who aspired to be a defender of peace in Italy must above all be a sworn enemy of the alleged jurisdictional powers of the church (Skinner 1997, 22). Hence, we can ascertain that even though Machiavelli died over 470 years ago, his work is still extremely relevant and influential to political thought in the contemporary era since this debate regarding church and state relations is still unsettled.

Through his foremost texts, *The Prince* and *The Discourses*, it will be important to analyse his thoughts on a state-led religion in order to provide the foundation for understanding the Mandela mythology as a civil religion in South Africa. Further, it is essential to contextualise Machiavelli's political thought in terms of *The Prince* and *The Discourses*. Strauss (1958, 16–17) argues that Machiavelli treats all subjects in *The Prince* from the vantage point of a prince, whilst in the *Discourses* he uses both a princely and a republican lens. Another way of looking at the two books is that Machiavelli hastily wrote *The Prince* in an attempt to secure a job with the new Medici rulers in Italy, whereas *The Discourses* is his serious and holistic political tract.

Machiavelli's thoughts on a state-led religion have their foundations in *The Prince*. Further, he argues in *The Discourses* that a state-led religion is essential for the well-being of a state and provides numerous prudent examples in *Discourses I, XI–XV*, regarding the benefits of a state accompanied by a religion. Machiavelli believed that in such a state, rulers would find it easier to make their subjects obey them. He understood that it was important that any ruler recognise and appreciate the power and strategic potential of a state-led religion. Nevertheless, I will not take Machiavelli's conception of religion and state relations at face value and hence this requires comprehensive critical analysis.

As stated by Beiner (1993, 622), the idea of a state-led religion lies at the centre of Machiavellian politics even though readers of *The Prince* alone might not obtain this impression. Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* as a practical guide for ruling. This objective is evident from the very outset, seeing that he clearly states that the book is dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici, the ruler of Florence. *The Prince* is not particularly theoretical or

abstract; its writing style is simple and its logic straightforward. These qualities give emphasis to his desire to provide practical and easily comprehensible advice to the ruler of Florence.

It is important to note that Machiavelli never uses the term ‘civil religion’ in any of his works. This chapter will therefore attempt to construct a state-led religion by undertaking a detailed and specific exegesis of his political philosophy. Following a detailed exegesis of his political philosophy, it becomes apparent that there are four fundamental components to Machiavelli’s state even though he may not have explicitly conceptualised his thoughts in this manner. These are religion, class tension between the rulers and the people as the foundation of republican liberty, a strong military force, and virtù¹. It is important that I discuss his shocking and unique conception of virtù, since it forms an integral component of his political philosophy and in developing the state-led religion argument for this chapter. He believed that any state that did not possess these characteristics was doomed to fail and provided his native Italy as a case in point.

Religion

The specific usage of religion by Machiavelli is distinct from traditional understandings of the term and requires close analysis as it sets the tone for the remainder of this chapter and his thoughts in general. This entails a radical conceptualisation of the type of religion - more specifically the idea, belief in and power of the Gods - needed in a state and how it may further the goals of a well-ordered state. In *Discourses I, XI–XV*, Machiavelli discusses the importance of religion to such a state. He begins with the example of Numa, the second ruler of Rome, who used religion to attain civil obedience. Machiavelli states that Numa inherited a hostile populace and, in order to make them a peaceful people,

had recourse to religion as the most necessary and assured support of any civil society; and he established it upon such foundations that for many centuries there was nowhere more fear of the Gods than in the republic, which greatly facilitated all the enterprises which the senate or its great men attempted (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 146).

Machiavelli claims that the people of Rome under Numa’s rule were more afraid to break an oath than to break a law since they believed more in the power of the ‘Gods’ (polytheism characterised many ancient societies hence the use of Gods instead of God) than in fallible men. This fear of the Gods, which was based on the people’s fear of punishment if they did

¹ When referring to Machiavelli’s conception of ‘virtue’, the word is going to be spelt throughout as virtù. This is done to separate it from the traditional understanding of the term.

not follow the Gods' commands, is a central theme in Machiavellian political thought. All great leaders, Machiavelli says, derive their authority from God or a number of Gods. All states (albeit republics, religious states, monarchies), according to Machiavelli, need constant renewal to bring them back to their original founding principles, and the founding principle of Rome was paganism. This is because, if these principles were good enough to create a state, they are most probably good enough to sustain it. Further, Numa used religion to introduce armies and to instil discipline in those armies. Beiner (1993, 621) argues that the manner in which Rome used religion to attain civic needs is the standard by which a civil religion needs to be judged. Viroli (1998, 23) expands on Machiavelli's radical conceptualisation of God alluded to above. He posits that it is different to the Christian God and is a

God of captains, princes, lawgivers; or perhaps, more precisely, a rhetorical God, to be used to persuade princes to commit themselves to grand enterprises of innovation, reform, and redemption. Machiavelli resorts to God particularly in exhortation; he promises God's help and God's reward to assure that that the enterprise he is urging to undertake is feasible, and shall bring glory.

Machiavelli posits that, in Roman history there has never been a ruler who did not use religion. This is because the people would not have otherwise accepted the laws even if they were good laws. According to Brown (2010, 166), Roman leaders instilled fear into the populace for the purpose of furthering the aims of civil society by engaging in blood-curdling rituals, oath-taking, employing the services of witch doctors and soothsayers and interpreting their outcomes as they saw fit. There was no other method that would otherwise be able to persuade people to submit to the laws of the land and therefore, according to Machiavelli, 'do wise men, for the purpose of removing this difficulty, resort to divine authority' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 147). Cole and Hammond (1974, 614) maintain that Machiavelli believed that Italian rulers did not know the correct relationship between religion and politics. Instead of using religion to foster political *virtù*, political vitality and territorial expansion, they used politics to serve religious ends.

Religion is an important component of a state but not its ultimate component. Hence, Machiavelli argues that religion brings greatness to states and to disregard it would bring about the ruin of the state. Although a fear of the ruler can overcome the fear of religion, this will only be temporary since the '*virtù* of one man endure but for a brief time' (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 148). From this, we can ascertain that Machiavelli understood that the success of all states does not depend on how wise its ruler may or may not be, but rather on how it

will maintain itself after the ruler's death and this is best achieved through religion as the basis of the state.

Machiavelli held that the best indication that a state is in ruin is when religion is condemned. The people, in order to remain free from corruption, must safeguard the purity of their faith. He vehemently argues that the Roman Catholic Church is the root cause of Italy's troubles because it diverged from the principles of its founder and that the corruption and ruin of Rome at the time is a prime example of the evil that has accompanied it.

Beiner (1993, 622) argues that the Roman court preached a doctrine that was 'blatantly unchristian, spreads contempt for its own religion' as opposed to it 'using Christian piety for political purposes'. Here Beiner is referring to *Discourses II*, where Machiavelli argues that 'our religion teaches us the truth and the true way of life, it causes us to attach less value to the honours and possessions of this world' (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 285). Machiavelli argues in *Discourses III, I* that this makes citizens passive since they are less inclined to challenge the evil they might see in their leaders, which in turn results in their leaders thinking they can act with impunity. In Machiavelli's words, 'thus these wicked rulers do as much evil as they please, because they do not fear a punishment which they do not see nor believe' (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 401). Further, Barthas (2010, 267) argues that Machiavelli understood Christianity to be a religion of slaves that weakened the political virtù of citizens needed to attain a well-ordered republic.

Machiavelli's political thought on religion is indicative of this belief that religion, although traditionally a negative aspect of society, can be transformed by a ruler to have positive influences. He argues that if the opposite were to occur, civil society would descend into disunity and fragmentation. Machiavelli thus believed it was not a matter of debating whether or not religion should be used in civil society but rather how it should best be used to demonstrate that the Gods were in favour of a specific decision. As an advocate for a republican form of government, Machiavelli believed that religion was crucial to the proper functioning of states. He reasoned that this was more so for monarchies, since in the latter, a king can replace the fear of religion with a fear of the ruler but in the former, religion keeps civil society from being corrupted by the private interests of the aristocracy (Mansfield 1996, 26).

Machiavelli maintains that the fundamental problem is that Christians have interpreted their religion in terms of indolence as opposed to virtù. This education, Machiavelli says, falsely

interprets religion, and is the result of there being too few republics during his time as opposed to ancient times. This incorrect understanding is also a result of people not valuing liberty as they previously did. This later destroyed the piety and belief of the Roman people. If citizens were to interpret Christianity correctly, it would teach men to 'love and honour our country, and prepare ourselves so as to be capable of defending her' (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 285). Machiavelli was of the belief that political distress was a direct consequence of religious fragmentation and both needed urgent attention in order to achieve the well-ordered state he advocated (Brown 2010, 167).

Machiavelli therefore argues that it is the ruler's duty to ensure he provides impetus to any practice that will result in religion being entrenched in the state. This will result in a united people and ultimately a stronger state. As Machiavelli argues, 'it is therefore the duty of the princes and heads of republics to uphold the foundations of the religion of their countries, for then it is easy to keep the people religious and consequently well conducted and united' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 150). Skinner (1992, 70) contends that Machiavelli was impressed with the way Romans used religion to instil terror in the populace, thus making them behave with a high degree of virtù. This, he states, would not have been achievable without the aid of religion. This idea of a God-fearing community being better suited to the attainment of civic virtù was a familiar one amongst his contemporaries.

No analysis of political reality could therefore afford to neglect religion. Machiavelli had tremendous respect for the psychological power that religious belief can have in affecting the behaviour of citizens (Preus 1979, 175). He substantiates his point regarding the paganisation of Christianity by narrating a story regarding the manner in which captains of the Roman army used religion to motivate its soldiers, after the long siege of Veii, to end the siege and take over the city. Moreover, some soldiers would go out voluntarily into the battlefield if the auguries had promised them victory. However, the rulers would sometimes skilfully interpret the auguries to make the soldiers believe that they have issued a positive outcome, even when the opposite were true.

In *The Prince VI*, Machiavelli mentions four great rulers who went beyond merely founding new states: Moses, the founder of the Hebrew civilisation, Cyrus, founder of the Persian civilisation, Romulus, who founded the Roman Empire, and Theseus, who founded the Greek civilisation (Beiner 1993, 623). Machiavelli is adamant that the leader of a great state will need to do something extraordinary as along the lines of these rulers. He held that

Christianity did not serve the interests of the modern state and, thus, was open to new interpretations that would secure political advantages out of it. Machiavelli in essence is calling for the paganisation of Christianity, which would allow it to become a suitable civil religion (Beiner 1993, 624). Machiavelli thus demonstrates a yearning for paganism and its associated belief systems since it only glorifies men who have achieved greatness as leaders of armies and republics. Taking into consideration the evil-minded nature of men, Machiavelli considers any religious practice that is contrary to pagan practices will result in rulers becoming easy prey to their wickedness. This in turn will cause the ruin of the state. In short, the ruler will need to radically interpret Christianity and form a new civil religion if he hopes for his state to be powerful and successful.

I posit that Machiavelli places religion in such high regard to the maintenance of a state that it is permissible for a ruler to resort to the manipulation of religious beliefs and practices if it results in a favourable outcome. He believed that this would bind citizens' loyalty to the state, facilitate the worldly attainment of true freedom, and assist in implanting 'the quality of virtù in the whole body of the citizens' (Skinner 1992, 69). Skinner further claims that Machiavelli was never concerned with religious truth but only with how rulers may use it to advance the stated goals of the state (Skinner 1992, 69). It is perhaps correct to argue, according to Skinner, that evil means may be applied to justify good ends. Machiavelli's views on the usefulness of religion to a state can thus be summarised by Preus (1979, 4), who states that 'religion was something that demanded scrupulous attention, but its importance derived from its impact on the causes of men's actions, not from its truth'. In short, political considerations were ultimate in determining its usefulness.

Overall, Machiavelli did believe that civil society could reverse the situation. In *Discourses II, V*, he states that the founding of new religions is because of 'acts of men' and not 'of heaven' (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 296–297). As such, Beiner (1993, 623) argues that 'just as paganism succeeded in "wiping out" its predecessor, and was (nearly) wiped out by Christianity, so presumably Christianity too is vulnerable to being supplanted by a post-Christian religion) or perhaps a resumption of paganism, or neo-paganism'. Brown (2010, 164) contends that Machiavelli's point is that Christianity is merely one religion in the line of many and thus has a limited life cycle.

The aforementioned discussion demonstrates the immense importance that Machiavelli placed on religion as a binding component of states. This, however, only provides the

foundation to his civil religion argument. This chapter will now discuss the next component, that is, liberty and republicanism

Class tension as the foundation of liberty within republicanism

In his discussion of republicanism, Machiavelli assesses the advantages and disadvantages of the different forms of government from the angle that the best government is one that has good laws and tends in the direction of the common good. His discussion of this topic in *The Prince* primarily concerns itself with autocratic and not republican regimes. In the first chapter, Machiavelli defines the various types of principalities and princes, and in doing so, constructs an outline for the remainder of the book. Although he prefers hereditary monarchies ‘because the difficulty in maintaining hereditary states accustomed to a reigning family is far less than in new monarchies; for it is sufficient not to transgress ancestral usages, and to adapt one’s self to unforeseen circumstances’ (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 5), he nevertheless provides practical advice for rulers of mixed governments; that is, principalities that rulers have recently created or which they have annexed from another power. It is in chapter three that he also introduces, in an encapsulated form, the book’s foremost concerns, which are power politics, warcraft and popular goodwill. He argues that ‘men must be either be caressed or annihilated; they will revenge themselves for small injuries but cannot do so for great ones; the injury we therefore do to a man must be such that we do not fear his vengeance’ (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 9).

In the *Discourses*, Machiavelli expands on the types of government discussed above. In *Discourses I, II*, he states that there are three good and three bad types of government, with the bad degenerating from the good. Firstly, there is a monarchy that has the potential to become tyranny, aristocracy, which can become an oligarchy, and finally, democracy, which he argues can result in licentiousness. Advocating for a system of checks and balances, Machiavelli states that the most advantageous scenario would be a state that manages to successfully merge all three good forms. He argues that,

thus sagacious legislators, knowing the vices of each of these systems of government by themselves, have chosen one that should partake of all of them, judging that to be the most stable and solid. In fact, when there is combined under the same constitution a prince, a nobility, and the power of the people, then these three powers will watch and keep each other in check (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 114–115).

In short, Machiavelli is arguing that a mixed form of republicanism is the best solution for Italy (Skinner 1987, 187). He believes that it is only a republican form of government that

allows citizens to fully enjoy their liberty as opposed to a monarchy or principality that precludes it. The liberty Machiavelli refers to here is ‘equal liberty to participate in public deliberations and be called to sit in office and even to attain the highest honours’ (Viroli 1998, 129).

Machiavelli believes that the children of a republican state will have an opportunity to become rulers themselves if they display the virtuous character he calls for. He says that this cannot happen in a monarchy because the king does not view his subjects as equals and that it is only a republic that honours honest and virtuous men, whilst a monarch may bestow honours to corrupt and tyrannical men.

Further, Machiavelli reasons that only a republic allows for the drafting of good laws that contribute to liberty for the people. He describes free men as men who do not depend on others and a free state as a territory ‘accustomed to live at liberty under their own laws’ (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 18). He believed that a state where the people fear their ruler cannot be said to be free. In *Discourses I, XXV*, Machiavelli questions whether it is more advantageous for the custodians of liberty to be the people or the aristocratic class, that is, the nobles. In essence, he is debating whether a people’s republic or an elitist republic is better suited to Italy. He claims that the people have only the desire for their rulers not to dominate them and to enjoy their freedom, whilst the nobles have an immense desire to dominate. Hence, he posits that since the people have less desire to encroach upon liberty, they will necessarily preserve it better.

The advantage of allowing liberty to be guarded by the aristocratic class is that they have the time and knowledge to fully dedicate themselves to public affairs. Machiavelli points to Sparta and Venice as cases in point. This helps guard against ‘the restless spirit of the masses of an authority calculated from its very nature to produce trouble and dissensions ... which in time may cause great misfortunes’ (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 122). After considering the above, Machiavelli believes that if a state wishes to expand its empire such as was the case with Rome, then the people should be the custodians of liberty. On the other hand, if a state merely wishes to concern itself with its own preservation, then the aristocratic class should be the ones to take care of liberty.

Viroli states that, in the *Florentine Histories*, Machiavelli clarifies that good laws and good orders are necessary in order to restrain the ambitions of both the aristocracy and the people. A free republic, according to Viroli, is able to limit the desires of its citizens in such a manner

that they do not transgress the boundaries of civil society as set out in its laws (1998, 128). Machiavelli provides the example of Germany in *Discourses I, LV* to illustrate his point. Free cities in Germany, according to Machiavelli, enjoy full liberty by ‘observing their laws in such a manner that no one from within or without could venture upon an attempt to master them’ (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 253). Machiavelli also demonstrates his fundamental connection between law and liberty in *Discourses I, XXXIII*, where he states that the dissolution of a state commences when citizens acquire more authority than they really need or when the laws that are at the very centre of liberty are changed.

According to Viroli (1998, 128), a ruler can satisfy his citizens desire for secure living if he introduces laws that are aimed at protecting both his power and his citizens’ desire for security. Further, it is imperative that the ruler himself remain steadfast in the adherence to these laws and does not allow his citizens to violate them. Here, in *Discourses I, XVII*, Machiavelli uses the example of France to illustrate his point and states that ‘this is the kingdom of France, where there would be no security but for the fact that the king there has bound himself by a number of laws that provide for the security of the people’ (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 164).

Machiavelli believes that good examples of this are the result of good education. Good laws are important to the proper functioning of civil society. Good laws subsequently bring good fortune to all aspects of civil society. To demonstrate his emphasis on good laws being important for attaining good men in society, Machiavelli argues that ‘whoever desires to found a state and give it laws, must start by assuming that all men are bad and ever ready to display their vicious nature’ and that the ‘law makes men good; and if fortunate circumstances cause good to be done without constraint, the law may be dispensed with’ (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 122). Viroli contends that Machiavelli’s emphasis on good laws results from his adherence to the principle of legality, that is, the principle upon which rulers judge the actions of men (irrespective of their status and rank in society) (1998, 122). A well-ordered state, guided by good laws, rewards citizens for good actions and punishes them for bad actions despite any good actions they might have done. These are laws that tend towards the common good and which form the basis of civil society and freedom in a well-ordered state.

The above passage is a good example of logical reasoning applied by Machiavelli but which is noticeably devoid of any ethical considerations. A prince must realise, according to

Machiavelli, that he has two options: benevolence or destruction. Because the latter option will cause bitterness among the people, he should choose it only if he were certain there would be no adverse effects; that is, the destruction suffered will only eliminate anyone that might seek to revenge themselves against him. Feelings of pity or compassion are meaningless in Machiavellian thought. In essence, self-interest and self-protection are in this case the motivating factors and the ruler should mercilessly pursue them.

The Discourses are Machiavelli's more serious political tract. As such, it is here that he expresses his preference for a republican form of government over a monarchy. He believed that the best way to attain the common good in a state is if general matters are entrusted to the majority. In *Discourses I, LVIII*, he states that,

as regards prudence and stability, I say that the people are more prudent and stable, and have better judgment than a prince; and it is not without good reason that it is said, 'The voice of people is the voice of God'; for we see popular opinion prognosticate events in such a wonderful manner that it would almost seem as if the people had some occult virtù, which enables them to foresee the good and the evil (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 263).

Viroli states that *Discourses II, II*, repeats the above understanding. Here Machiavelli claims that republics provide the best possible environment for discussions around the common good to occur. On the other hand, when a ruler of a monarchical state tries to act in accordance with the common good of the people, he is harmed, and when he tries to act in his own interests, he harms his state (1998, 124).

According to Viroli (1998, 124), Machiavelli's preference for a republican form of government demonstrates his commitment to a well-ordered state. A well-ordered state refers to a republic where all its necessary components have their rightful place. In advocating for a mixed form of republicanism, Machiavelli argues in *Discourses I, II*, that Lycurgus, ruler of Sparta, who divided his republic in such a way that the monarchy, aristocracy and the people were all given a portion of authority and duties and, in doing so, this resulted in the government peacefully maintaining itself for over 800 years. On the other hand, he regards Florence as a republic with weak order, since it did not have a constitution that divided authority and duties in the manner that Sparta did.

From the preceding argument, it is clear that Machiavelli thought that the people are the best guardians of liberty and that good laws are necessary for the realisation of this liberty. However, what is still unclear at this stage is the manner in which Machiavelli envisaged

liberty being achieved. I posit that Machiavelli believed that the disunity and tension between the rulers and the people would result in good laws and ultimately liberty for the people.

McCormick (2011) expands on this largely ignored yet critically important aspect of Machiavellian republicanism and argues that class tension (the disunity alluded to above) as a conflict between the most privileged and powerful classes in society, the Nobili (nobles), ottimati (aristocrats) and grandi (great) (he used these terms interchangeably) and the popolo (people), is the eventual foundation of republican liberty. In essence, he provides a critique of the traditional understanding of Machiavellian republicanism as espoused by scholars of the Cambridge school such as Skinner and Pocock and offers a more populist understanding. McCormick argues that the aforementioned scholars have distorted Machiavelli's thought by theorising him as the spokesperson of republicanism. He is adamant that one cannot relegate the importance of class division and conflict to a minor issue when discussing Machiavelli's version of republicanism (McCormick 2011, 2–8).

McCormick summarises his criticisms of Cambridge scholars' understanding of Machiavellian republicanism into six points. First, he points out that they do not pay much attention to class conflict. Second, these scholars refer to the power of the people merely in terms of military service and elections, as opposed to their involvement in domestic politics. Third, he argues that they sometimes associate the role of the nobility with that of the plebeians thereby undermining the people's role as guardians of their liberty. In the fourth instance, McCormick believes that they spend too much time on analysing Machiavelli's definition of liberty as opposed to analysing how best it may be obtained and preserved. Fifth, he states that they do not use the Machiavellian notion of liberty to attack other forms of oppression such as slavery, and finally, he argues that they do not comment on domestic domination (McCormick 2011, 9). In essence, McCormick believes that the traditional understanding of Machiavelli simply reinforces the elitist aspects of modern representative democracy. This positions McCormick as a radical interpreter of traditional republicanism.

Conversely, popular discontent is favourable in the view of Machiavelli. He argues in *Discourses I, IV* that

I maintain that those who blame the quarrels of the Senate and the people of Rome condemn that which was the very origin of liberty, and that they were probably more impressed by the cries and noise which these disturbances occasioned in the public places, than by the good effect they produced; and that they do not consider that in every republic there are two parties, that of the nobles and that of the people; and all the laws that favourable to liberty result from the opposition of these parties to each other (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 119).

Machiavelli argues that the insatiable oppressive appetite of grandi for money, political power and prestige is invariably a threat to the common good of the republic, since these are members of society who value material wealth more than they do honour, dignity and prestige. Machiavelli believed that the people resent the grandi because the latter use their wealth not for their own private enjoyment but to oppress poorer citizens. As such, the popolo intend to defend themselves from the grandi by aiming to attain the very same wealth and power that they believe the grandi has inappropriately wielded. This however, McCormick argues, is merely a means to defend themselves (2011, 15). ‘The demands of free people’, Machiavelli argues, ‘are rarely pernicious to their liberty; they are generally inspired by oppressions, experienced or apprehended; and if their fears are ill-founded, resort is had to public assemblies where the mere eloquence of a single good and respectable man will make them sensible of their error’ ([1531] 1940, 120). The reason why the grandi hold the upper hand in republics is that their wealth allows them to be better equipped to secure political advantages over their poorer counterparts.

This interaction between the popolo and the grandi epitomises the dynamics in popular governments, which is essential for republican governments. Machiavelli argues that the problem with popular participation in electoral democracies is that the elites exercise dangerous discretion and act unconstrained in terms of power. According to McCormick, *Machiavellian Democracy* hopes to fill this void. He asserts that it is only through broader popular participation via institutions such as the tribunes of the plebs that the popolo can hold the grandi to account (McCormick 2011, 17). In effect, Machiavelli is advocating for freedom of speech. In the *Discourses I, XVIII*, he contends ‘everyone should be allowed to express his opinion in relation to it (the matter up for public debate), so that the people, having heard both sides, may decide in favour of the best’ (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 170). Viroli argues that Machiavelli is of the opinion that a republic allows the enjoyment of liberty in its fullest sense and opposes the tyranny of a monarchy. Further, I have has quoted numerous passages from *The Prince* and *The Discourses* that clearly demonstrate what it means to be free, that is, to have the power to freely express one’s own opinion, play a role in the appointment of magistrates and not to be dependent on the will of a ruler, as is the case in a monarchy (1998, 130). This populist reading of Machiavelli brings his civil religion argument central to the thesis. This is because in order for civil religion to be effective and act as the social glue he envisages it to be, the popolo need to actively check and balance the power of the grandi.

As mentioned earlier in the discussion on liberty, Machiavelli argues in *The Prince* that the difference between the political motives of the popolo and grandi is that the popolo simply wish not to be oppressed by the grandi. This theme of elite accountability is central to Machiavellian democracy according to McCormick. Modern democracy has largely reduced popular participation to voting in elections. According to McCormick, Machiavelli understood that elite accountability could best be achieved through an institution such as the tribune of the plebs. This institution excludes the wealthiest and most powerful citizens and the people communicate via the plebeian assemblies. As mentioned above, although this scholarship is controversial, Cambridge republican scholars such as Skinner, Viroli and Pocock have largely ignored it, Machiavelli believed that the formation of the tribune of the plebs is almost perfect and allows the popolo to be the guardians of Rome's liberty. He states in *Discourses I, III* that in order to achieve the security and liberty of the people, the tribune of the plebs was created and this institution was 'endowed with so many prerogatives, and surrounded with so much respect, that they formed a powerful barrier between the Senate and the people, which curbed the insolence of the former' (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 118). In short, McCormick argues that

Machiavellian Democracy is characterised by class-specific, popularly empowering, and elite-constraining institutions that accomplish two tasks: they raise the class-consciousness of common citizens and formally enable them to patrol more exalted citizens with vigour that electoral politics in and of itself does not provide (2011, 16).

Although Machiavelli asserts that the popolo express superior judgement, this seems at odds with his earlier argument that a less-aggressive section of the population can serve as a check and balance on the astute and aggressive grandi in their quest for socioeconomic and political power. Nevertheless, he argues that this can be realised by arming the popolo militarily with weapons and training, and politically, through the tribunes of the plebs. This will allow them to prevent the grandi from becoming tyrants. Furthermore, the tribune of the plebs serves as a constant reminder for the popolo regarding the oppressive agenda of the grandi and is the institution that they can constantly use to subvert this agenda (McCormick 2011, 26). As such, it would be correct to argue that the most appropriate political arrangement, according to Machiavelli, is one where elites continue to hold political power over the popolo but where the tribunes of the plebs act as a restraint on their insatiable oppressive nature. In short, this institute allows elite power to be checked whilst giving the popolo a share of political power. This also simultaneously saves the republic from being destroyed (McCormick 2011, 30).

In chapter three of *Machiavellian Democracy*, McCormick attempts to counter criticisms of the popolo's ability to fulfil their duties. He outlines two criticisms surrounding the popolo's ability to participate effectively in political matters. First, oligarchs argue that the popolo are incapable of making good decisions, are sexually promiscuous and ignorant, and may display aggression towards the grandi. Second, they arbitrarily argue that the popolo lack the necessary political capacities in the sense that they are passive and lack initiative. The first criticism, according to McCormick, may be easily countered by the fact that Machiavelli argues that the popolo merely wish not to be oppressed. In countering the second criticism, McCormick argues that Machiavellian republicanism affords all citizens the right to initiate political proceedings by, for instance, proposing new laws and bringing accusations against the grandi, to which they need to answer (McCormick 2011, 66–67). Further, in *Discourses III, XXV*, Machiavelli argues that poor inhabitants of a republic also have the same opportunity as their affluent compatriots to attain public office. He says that 'poverty never was allowed to stand in the way of the achievement of any rank or honour and that virtù and merit were sought for under whatever roof they dwelt; it was this system that made riches naturally less desirable' (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 486). Thus, Machiavelli is arguing that a popolo empowered through the law acts according to reason and not, to put things simply, as a violent mob.

The reason Machiavelli believes that the popolo are able to come up with better policies in comparison to the grandi is the correlation between their desire not to be dominated and the common good. It is abundantly clear that Machiavelli's popular understanding of democracy was a radical departure from traditional Roman practice, which premised deliberation on voting. Although this situation is imperfect, Machiavelli believes that it is closer to the common good (McCormick 2011, 80). The fact that he favoured deliberative assemblies, as opposed to the tribunes merely being an institution for simply accepting or rejecting a policy proposal, went against the conventional wisdom of his time. Everyone should be allowed not only to attend but also to air his or her opinions (McCormick 2011, 99).

This conflict between the grandi and the popolo results in positive laws and liberty. Machiavelli points to historical examples of Venice and Sparta to demonstrate how Rome can end the enmities between the grandi and the popolo, which will ultimately lead to the preservation of liberty. These two states, Machiavelli argues, have preserved their liberty by deliberately adopting a policy of restraint. Although these states remained small and internally quiet, they were unable to survive the advances of larger external enemies. Rome,

on the other hand, pursued a policy of expansion that resulted in internal disturbance because giving too much power to the people may also cause infinite problems to the well-being of a state. Thus, Machiavelli argues that you cannot avoid one difficulty without incurring another. The wise ruler will choose the route that has the least possible inconveniences.

Machiavelli believed that the art of accusing inhabitants of endangering freedom may also maintain it because the 'apprehension of being accused prevents the citizens from attempting anything against the state, and should they nevertheless attempt, they are immediately punished, without regards to persons' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 130). The second advantage of this method is that it affords citizens the opportunity for legal recourse to vent their frustrations. If the state does not allow this recourse, citizens might then resort to extra-judicial means that might have adverse consequences for the well-being of the state. Whilst states should allow legal means for accusations, they should guard against calumnies (gossip). After the state follows proper process, this legal right, given to all citizens, will allow a ruler to punish gossipers.

Despite the fact that the popolo are better judges of the common good, they sometimes err or are manipulated by the grandi. As such, Machiavelli provides ways in which to check the potential aggression of the popolo. For instance, to distinguish formal accusations from malicious rumours appropriate institutional arrangements should be enacted that can mitigate this tendency. For example, the 'Florentines had employed, as did the Romans, readily accessible and widely participatory institutions for distinguishing formal accusations from spurious rumours' (McCormick 2011, 69). Machiavelli argues that despite the problem of malicious rumours, the benefits of popular participation outweigh the negatives and, as such, lead to enlightened and knowledgeable citizens. The manner in which the tribunes act as arbitrators of conflicts amongst elites happens in two ways. First, they act as mediators in conflicts between the elite and the people, and second between the elite themselves (McCormick 2011, 94).

However, the fundamental appetite of the grandi to oppress the popolo leads to a situation where they attempt to satisfy this urge through imperial expansion since the tribunes are a domestic institution whose jurisdiction cannot extend to foreign matters. This is a victory for the well-being of a republic, according to Machiavelli (McCormick 2011, 96–97).

Machiavelli's preference for the constitutional arrangements of Rome as opposed to those of Florence is premised on the line of reasoning that they are more stable and less likely to fall

prey to the military prowess of foreign states. Machiavelli's idea of specific spheres of influence for the popolo and the grandi respectively avoids two common mistakes repeatedly made by the leaders of Florence. First, it avoids losing the support of the popolo and, second, avoids making the enemies of the wealthy classes (McCormick 2011, 102).

Machiavelli, in essence, attempted to ensure broader public participation in democracy in order to constrain the negative influences of the grandi. Whilst conceding that grandi will wield considerable socioeconomic and political power in any democratic society, Machiavelli aimed to constrain this insatiable power through an institution such as the tribune of the plebs. He did not believe that minimalist versions of democracy served the common good since this predominantly served the interests of the elite (McCormick 2011, 142). Taking this line of thinking into consideration, theorists such as Emmanuel Petit falsely suggest that Machiavelli advocated negative liberty. They point to passages in Machiavellian thought, which argue that the popolo wish to be free from interference. However, a populist understanding of republican democracy as advocated by McCormick clearly discredits this assertion. McCormick summarises Machiavelli's formula for public participation into five points. First, the popolo should compete for public office with members of the grandi; second, he argues that Machiavelli advocated for the establishment of institutions based on class divisions in a republic; third, processes should be formulated whereby the elite may be held to account for their actions by ordinary citizens; fourth, the popolo should directly deliberate legislation and political trials, and finally, the popolo should claim their share of the country's wealth (2011, 142).

Viroli states that although Machiavelli believed that the masses should be the guardians of liberty in a well-ordered republic, he chastises them for not being content with their place in the republic. This, he argues, caused the end of the Roman Empire although he does concede that this ruin would have come about earlier had it been in the hands of the aristocratic class. As mentioned earlier, Machiavelli favoured social conflict between the aforementioned classes since he believed that this would result in public liberty. He nonetheless opposed social conflict that results in armed conflict since he regards this as a death sentence for the republic. Hence, social conflict only helps uphold liberty so long as it does not violate the laws and common good of the people (Viroli 1998, 126). The discussion of Machiavelli's civil religion will now move on to an important analysis of his views on military strength for a well-ordered republican state.

Military strength

A well-armed, well-trained, and well-led military force is the next component of Machiavelli's political thought. Here, Machiavelli begins by offering practical advice on an assortment of matters, including the advantages and disadvantages that accompany the different routes to power, the manner in which to acquire and retain new states, how to tackle internal rebellion, how to form alliances, and the importance of forming and subsequently maintaining a strong military. Machiavelli's thoughts on free will, human nature and ethics are inherent in these chapters, but these ideas do not manifest themselves explicitly as topics of discussion until later.

Machiavelli begins this theme in *The Prince* by stating that it is more beneficial to govern a kingdom by means of a prince and his servants, as opposed to a prince and his barons, since in the former the prince holds more authority given that no one is regarded as superior to the prince. In a kingdom of a prince and barons, barons have territories and subjects of their own and these subjects show more affection to them than to the prince. Hence, the prince does not enjoy the supreme authority he needs to govern and maintain his state properly. To substantiate his viewpoint, Machiavelli points to the example in *The Prince, IV*, of the Turkish monarchy and the king of France. He argues that 'all the Turkish monarchy is governed by one ruler, the others are his servants, and dividing his kingdom into "sangiaccates," he sends them to various administrators and changes or re-calls them at his pleasure' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 15–16). However, in the instance of France, the king is 'surrounded by a large number of nobles, recognised as such by their subjects, and loved by them; they have their own prerogatives, of which he king cannot deprive them without danger to himself' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 16). In terms of acquiring these states, it is easier to enter the French kingdom since the king does not hold absolute power because the barons hold sway over their subjects. As such, they can be easily influenced and subsequently open the space for invaders to facilitate victory. By contrast, it is difficult to occupy the Turkish kingdom because all subjects are dependent on the king, who has supreme and absolute power. Hence, they are not easily corruptible.

In *The Prince V*, Machiavelli discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the three ways in which to govern territories that, before being conquered, lived under their own laws. He outlines that a newly acquired state may firstly be ruled by force, in the second instance by going and living there in person, or lastly, by allowing the people to live under their

previously constituted laws but under a government that is friendly to the supreme ruler. In terms of the last method, Machiavelli argues that cities already used to liberty are more likely to be maintained by their own citizens. Nevertheless, he provides the example of Sparta, which used a friendly government to maintain the cities of Athens and Thebes but which eventually lost them. All things considered, Machiavelli believed that there is no 'sure way of holding them (states) except by despoiling them' since he believed that 'whoever becomes the ruler of a free city and does not destroy it, can be expected to be destroyed by it, for it can always find a motive for rebellion in the name of liberty' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 18).

Machiavelli writes about his preference concerning the acquisition of power through ability as opposed to fortune in *The Prince VI and VII*. Here he argues that princes will find it difficult to hold on to power if the latter method is used. He uses the examples of Francesco Sforza and Cesare Borgia. The former acquired power 'by appropriate means and through great abilities, from citizen became Duke of Milan, and what he attained after a thousand difficulties he maintained with little trouble', whilst Cesare Borgia acquired power through 'the influence of his father and lost it when that influence failed' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 24), even though he tried all possible means to retain it. In terms of retaining newly acquired territories, he believed that it was of paramount importance that a ruler, like Alexander the Great, be able to

secure himself against enemies, to gain friends, to conquer by force or by fraud, to make himself beloved and feared by the people, followed and revered by the soldiers, to destroy those who can and may injure him, introduce innovations into old customs, to be severe and to be kind, magnanimous and liberal, suppress the old militia, create a new one, maintain the friendship of kings and princes in such a way that they will be glad to benefit him and fear to injure him (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 30).

Another route to acquiring power, according to Machiavelli, is through villainy. Although society does not regard as good men princes who come to power through such villainous means, they obtain the obedience of their subjects, which is ultimately necessary for the maintenance of states.

The last method of acquiring power, according to Machiavelli, is through popular or aristocratic favour and he refers to this as a civic principality. Machiavelli is unambiguous here regarding his preference. He states that 'he who becomes prince by help of the nobility has greater difficulty in maintaining his power than he who is raised by the populace, for he is surrounded by those who think themselves his equals, and is thus unable to direct or

command as he pleases'. On the other hand, 'one who is raised to leadership by popular favour finds himself alone, and has no one, or very few, who are not ready to obey him' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 36). Fair dealing and peaceful means more easily satisfy the people, according to Machiavelli, than the aristocratic class. He importantly points out that in order to maintain his territory; the ruler coming into power through popular favour must maintain the friendship of the people. Rulers coming into power through aristocratic favour must place the most importance on gaining the trust of the populace. The ruler may easily attain their trust if he protects them, since people will feel obligated to him if they receive good fortune whilst initially expecting evil.

Having discussed the different methods in which to attain and preserve newly acquired states, Machiavelli moves on to discuss the importance of military forces and argues that this should be one of the main foundations of these states. Hörnqvist (2010, 112) argues that this theme was important to Machiavelli's political thought and that the military crisis that Italy was experiencing during his time influenced his thinking. He believed that Florence (the city in which he was born and lived) had extremely weak foundations because the military was outdated and, hence, vulnerable to external aggression. Although Florence's lack of a proper military force still allowed it to be independent for a long time, Machiavelli believed that circumstances had changed and Florence could no longer expect to maintain itself with a weak military. From this, it is clear that Machiavelli upholds a very close relationship between war and politics to maintain the state (Geuna 2006, 57). He asserts that the principal foundations of all states should be good arms and good laws, since 'there cannot be good laws where there are not good arms, and where there are good arms there must be good laws' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 44).

Machiavelli outlines and differentiates between the various types of military force in addition to stating their respective advantages and disadvantages. The four types of military force are, firstly, the native forces of the country, secondly, mercenaries, thirdly, auxiliaries, and lastly, a mixed military. At the outset, Machiavelli outlines his opposition to mercenaries and auxiliaries since they are not patriotic towards the state. Although these forces help certain people into power, he points out the example of mercenary forces having caused the ruin of Italy after showing little courage when King Charles of France invaded and conquered it. To provide further substance, Machiavelli argues that 'mercenary captains are either very capable men or not. If they are, you cannot rely upon them, for they will always aspire to their own greatness, either by oppressing you, their master, or by oppressing others against

your intentions; but if the captain is not an able man, he will generally ruin you' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 45). In short, mercenary forces are greedy, excessively ambitious and lack discipline and the fear of God.

Auxiliary forces are forces of powerful neighbouring states that come and assist a ruler's own forces in times of war. Although these forces may be powerful in themselves, Machiavelli opposed them arguing that if they lose, you are defeated and if they emerge victorious, you run the danger of becoming their prisoner. Although advising against both auxiliary and mercenary forces, Machiavelli believed that taken together they were better but still inferior to the native forces of a country. His preference for native forces is epitomised when he states that 'no prince is secure without his own troops, on the contrary he is entirely dependent on fortune having no trustworthy means of defence in time of trouble' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 52–53). An army composed of native inhabitants is an indirect means by which to hold the elite to account. Further, Machiavelli regards this as a prerequisite for the freedom and security of all republics (McCormick 2011, 93).

The importance of warfare to Machiavellian thought is clear since he argues that even in times of peace, a ruler should concern himself with the art of warfare so that if circumstances were to change, he would be ready to defend his territories. A prince must have no other objective, no other thought, nor take up any profession but that of war, its methods and its discipline, for that is the only art expected of a ruler. Moreover, it is of such great value that it not only keeps hereditary princes in power, but also often raises men of lowly condition to that rank. This highlights warcraft as both an academic discipline that theorists should study through historical examples and as a matter of practical experience. For Machiavelli, all affairs of government are viewed through a military lens, because the ultimate goal of a government is self-preservation, and military defence – embracing ideas of strategy, diplomacy and geography – is the means by which governments preserve themselves. Machiavelli does not conceive of the prince as a man skilled in many disciplines, but rather as one whose sole responsibility is to ensure the stability of the state that he governs. He believes that in spite of the method by which a ruler has obtained power, if he does not prepare himself for warfare, he will lose his state. In Machiavelli's words,

A prince should therefore have no other aim or thought, nor take up any other thing for his study, but war and its organisation and discipline, for that is the only art that is necessary to one who commands, and it is of such virtù that it not only maintains those who are born princes, but often enables men of private fortune to attain that rank. And one sees, on the other hand, that when princes think more of luxury than of arms, they lose their state. The

chief cause of the loss of states, is the contempt of this art, and way to acquire them is to be well versed in the same ([1532] 1940, 53).

Geuna (2006, 59) provides further impetus to this argument and states that ‘for Machiavelli, liberty means, first and foremost, independence, independence from external aggression’. Thus, we can link Machiavelli’s emphasis on military strength to his thoughts on the attainment of liberty. Machiavelli analysed the humanism of his contemporaries and accused them of ignorantly overlooking the extent to which the maintenance of a successful government depends on an unflinching willingness to supplement the arts of persuasion with the employment of an effective military force (Skinner 1978, 130). A well-trained and equipped army is so important to Machiavelli’s thought that Hörnqvist argues that his state-led ‘religion (and rhetorical manipulation in general) can surround and infuse power with legitimising and mobilising gestures but cannot replace arms as a viable and lasting foundation’ (2010, 118). An effective military force, therefore, is an indispensable component of Machiavelli’s state-initiated and led religion.

Hörnqvist (2010, 119) states that Machiavelli believed that nothing good could arise or last without the assistance of good arms. To illustrate his point, he points to the founding father of Rome in *Discourses I, IX*. Romulus realised that in order to maintain the state, he needed to kill his brother and ‘concentrate all authority in himself’. However, Machiavelli believed that although this gruesome act should usually be punished, because it resulted in a good outcome it should be condoned. The ‘result should excuse him’ Machiavelli believed, and ‘when the result is good, as in the case of Romulus, it will always absolve him of blame’ (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 139). Machiavelli goes further in the *Discourses II, IV*, stating that command and control of the military forces should rest in the exclusive domain of the ruler. The overarching point is that others should never have control over and command of the military (Hörnqvist 2010, 119).

Interestingly, Hörnqvist further points out that Machiavelli’s understanding of every state possessing its own military is inherently imperialistic since he talks about the fact that if states wish to grow and attain greatness, they are required to conquer other states and absorb their populations (Hörnqvist 2010, 119).

Hörnqvist believes the reason Machiavelli places emphasis on obedient and respectful citizens is because

good and civic-minded citizens are created out of obedient subjects, who have learnt to respect the laws, to serve their country, and to place the public good over their own private good. Among such citizens, who realise that they have no rights other than those granted by the state, arms can be introduced and native militia of free citizens created (Hörnqvist 2010, 120).

Importantly, although arms are in the hands of the people, it is the ruler who commands and controls them. Such a military force can now be used to further republican liberty and pursue greatness through imperialistic means. Without liberty and territorial greatness, Machiavelli believed that there could be no sovereignty (Hörnqvist 2010, 120). This, in short, is why Machiavelli places such huge emphasis on the creation of native forces.

Machiavelli argued that troops possess three kinds of character. The first combines warlike ardour with discipline and this produces true valour. Regulations should form the foundation of a well-ordered army. If discipline is preserved, good order sustains the courage and reanimates that passion with the anticipation of victory. In the second type of army, ardour is present without discipline. If this type of army fails to overthrow the enemy in the first attempt, they fail. The last type of army, according to Machiavelli, possesses neither courage nor discipline. He argues that this is the kind of army that was present in Italy at the time. It is useless and is primarily to blame for the poor state of Italy's army. Machiavelli believed that a country must be defended at all costs, whether with glory or with shame. For saving the country, leaders should not reject any propositions. Further, they should not consider any considerations of justice or injustice, humanity or cruelty, nor of glory or of shame.

Machiavelli outlines two ways in which a ruler could introduce a good military. First, a ruler should introduce everything simultaneously, or second, he should make use of a systematic approach. Hörnqvist believes that the manner in which Romulus formed Rome with the killing of his brother is an example of the first simultaneous method, and the second way is 'epitomised by the long-term constitutional development of Rome, which, although described by Machiavelli as "perfetta republica" ... nevertheless went on changing its laws and institutions as necessity required' (Hörnqvist 2010, 120).

According to Hörnqvist (2010, 116), we can summarise Machiavelli's thoughts on military force into three main arguments. First, good arms must be the foundation of all states; second, a military force must have its own arms; and finally, leaders should gradually introduce new military orders. Nevertheless, it is important to note that Machiavelli believed that good arms are merely one component of a well-ordered state and not the end in itself. Good arms,

together with virtù of a flexible disposition, liberty and religion, are what are required to maintain a state over centuries.

Despite Machiavelli's assertion that warfare be the primary concern of rulers and that their military forces should comprise native inhabitants, he advocated the traditionally held view that the ideal manner to secure a state is to disarm its subjects. Alternatively, he was arguing the best and most secure way to turn citizens of conquered states into loyal subjects to draft them into the military forces (Viroli 1998, 60). This is because 'by arming them these arms become your own, those you suspected become faithful and those that were faithful remain so, and from being merely subjects become your partisans' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 77). This was a new understanding of the art of the state.

Virtù

Machiavelli discusses the characteristics virtuous rulers should possess in *The Prince*, XV–XXIII. Readers of *The Prince* might be shocked at the way in which Machiavelli conceptualised virtù. Skinner (1978, 125) argues that Machiavelli wanted to change the idea of virtù as conceived by his humanist predecessors. His views are in contrast to those of his contemporaries in the methodology they adopted in attaining the virtù of honour, glory and fame. Conventional theorists contended that if a ruler wishes to acquire the goal of a well-ordered government; he must follow the doctrine of Christian morality at all times. Machiavelli argues that the practical implementation of Christianity during his time is to blame for the corruption of Italy.

Machiavelli believed that the old religion glorified civic virtù and helped sustain political freedom. Christianity by contrast glorified humble and contemplative men and hence helped bring the world into its present corrupt state (Skinner 1978, 167). Machiavelli insisted that a ruler should enthusiastically embrace a very different type of morality. Khan (2010, 239) contends that Machiavelli believed revolutionary thinking began with a language revolution. He says that 'transformations in the way we speak about politics can themselves produce a new understanding of political action'. This is evident from *The Prince XVIII*, where Machiavelli states that although it is better for rulers to display and rule using good character and faith, practical examples demonstrate that this manner of ruling will not be successful in the long run given the true nature of men. He argues that 'still the experience of our times shows those princes to have done great things who have little regard for good faith, and have been able by astuteness to confuse men's brains, and who have ultimately overcome those

who made loyalty their foundation' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 63). In short, virtù must tend towards the public good.

Many scholars such as Strauss (1958), in his *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, have accused him of promoting tyranny and argued that readers should not take him seriously. However, a closer reading of his texts should make it clear that this view is incorrect since Strauss is making a transhistorical judgement. People should rather read *The Prince* and *The Discourses* as Machiavelli's attempt at theorising a practical political philosophy, taking into consideration what he perceived to be the natural inclination of men. His understanding of virtù seems to be a revival of ancient virtù. At the beginning of *The Discourses*, Machiavelli outlines his nostalgia for the ancient world and its associated characteristics and this seems to have a noticeable influence on his political philosophy. He states that 'history of ancient kingdoms and republics presents to us, prodigies of virtù and of wisdom' (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 104).

He however believed that the leaders of his era merely admired and did not imitate this ancient world, the latter being the more important. Further, at the commencement of *Discourses II*, Machiavelli speaks about the virtù that characterised ancient Rome in comparison to the vice that now rules it. He prefers the virtù of ancient Rome to that of ancient Greece. This theme seems to characterise the *Discourses* and his political philosophy in general. Mansfield (1996, 9) argues that Machiavelli wanted to provide virtù with a practical understanding, to 'unsettle its accommodation with Christianity, to refute its belief in the virtù of the classical gentleman, and to remind it of the value and glory of the military'. This move away from the dictates of Christianity is extremely important for the purposes of understanding his thoughts on civil religion.

The essence of Machiavelli's practical political philosophy is more apparent than ever when he states that 'how we live is so far removed from how we ought to live, that he who abandons what is done for what ought to be done, will rather learn to bring about his own ruin than his preservation' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 56). In short, Machiavelli argues that rulers needed to be pragmatic and realistic regarding the manner in which the world works. Although human nature does not permit rulers to acquire all the necessary qualities needed to rule prudently, it is of the utmost importance that they should avoid those vices that will bring out end of their rule whilst at the same time being wise enough to allow vices that will further the security of the state. Cox (2010, 182) argues that this is also evident in the *Discourses III*,

LX. He believes that this can be interpreted as Machiavelli arguing that a republican government with many leaders is superior to other forms of government, since it allows for leaders to demonstrate a flexible disposition. In short, Machiavellian *virtù* is characterised by ‘dynamism and flexibility ... while rigidity of thought or practice is frowned upon’ (Cox 2010, 182). Machiavelli states that it is essential for a ruler to be half beast and half man for otherwise he will not be able to survive. Humanists, on the hand, argue that this behaviour would cause rulers to deviate from conduct befitting of a man of true manliness (Skinner 1978, 136).

Speaking in broad terms, Machiavelli’s fundamental observation that lofty ideals translate into bad government guides this argument. In essence, Machiavelli is arguing for the independence of politics from normal ethical considerations and presents *virtù* as the most important quality for a free state. More specifically, *virtù* is important for a free state to attain greatness (Geuna 2006, 58–62). Traditional understandings of justice and Christian ethics become matters of secondary importance to Machiavellian thought. In fact, Mansfield claims that Machiavelli abandons justice as a political *virtù*. Although he occasionally refers to justice in his works, this happens more out of necessity than belief. He never refers to natural law or natural justice, which were prevailing themes of his time (1996, 22). As Mansfield (1996, 10) states, Machiavelli was the ‘first to teach openly and without apology that morality should be interpreted “according to times” so that if times were corrupt, one is compelled to behave corruptly and therefore morally excused for doing so’. Machiavelli’s original conception of *virtù* was an attack on the prevailing moral assumptions of the time and an attempt to revolutionise them according to the dictates of circumstances and time.

The abovementioned premise is especially true with respect to personal *virtù*. Machiavelli argues that the people may admire certain *virtùs* such as liberality for their own sake, but for a ruler to act in accordance with *virtù* is often detrimental to the state. This is because liberality will lead to the people hating the ruler, which will eventually lead to his ruin. However, the ruler can use liberality to his advantage. First, he may tax them less than they originally expected and, second, he must get his subjects to always expect less, and when they least expect it he should give them more. As Mansfield (1996, 19) states, ‘thus the prince is liberal because he is not cruel, faithful because he is not betraying, and so forth’.

Similarly, the people may frown upon certain virtù, but vicious actions are sometimes indispensable to the good of the state. Machiavelli is arguing here that it is essential for a ruler to be half beast and half human, otherwise he cannot hope to survive. His contemporaries argued that this conduct was not befitting of a true man (Skinner 1978, 136). A ruler should not object to the people referring to him as miserly because, over time, they will believe that he is liberal when

it is seen that by his parsimony his revenue is sufficient, that he can defend himself against those who make war on him, and undertake enterprises without burdening his people, so that he is really liberal to all those from whom he does not take, who are infinite in number, and niggardly to all to whom he does not give, who are few (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 58).

Further, although it is more advantageous to be merciful than cruel, Machiavelli argues that a ruler must not object to being considered cruel if this serves the purpose of uniting and keeping his subjects faithful to him. Further, he believes that it is better that citizens both fear and love their ruler. However, if both cannot occur simultaneously, it is better to be feared since men ‘love at their own free will, but fear at the will of the prince, and that a wise prince must rely on what is in his power and not on what is in the power of others’ (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 63). Leo Strauss (1958, 9) took this novel conception of virtù to mean that *The Prince* is a handbook for dictators and tyrants and therefore did not contribute anything meaningful to classical political thought. He instead argued that Machiavelli was a theorist who proposed the teaching of wickedness. Strauss (1958, 9) argues that

what other description would fit a man who teaches lessons like these: princes ought to exterminate the families of rulers whose territory they wish to possess securely; princes ought to murder their opponents rather than to confiscate their property since those that have been robbed, but not those who are dead, can think of revenge, men forget the murder of their fathers sooner than the loss of their patrimony.

A closer reading of Machiavelli’s argument, however, reveals that this is instead a logical extension of his assessments of human nature and virtù. In the first place, people will become disloyal if circumstances warrant. In the second, the ruler’s ultimate goal is to maintain the state, which requires the obedience of the people. From these two points, it follows that between benevolence and cruelty, the latter is the more reliable. Machiavelli never advocates the use of cruelty for its own sake, only in the interests of the ultimate end of statecraft, that is, a well-ordered and functioning state.

Although Machiavelli’s critics consider his notion of virtù radical, Viroli argues that Machiavelli did not intend for his unique understanding of classical politics to dismiss it altogether. Rather, he wanted to restrict its usage only to instances where circumstances

dictate that rulers act otherwise. An example of this is the instances of war. The use of the word ‘fraud’ is despicable in most instances according to Machiavelli, but when spoken about in terms of warfare he considers it commendable (Viroli 1998, 54). To illustrate this point, Machiavelli argues in the *Discourses III, XL*, that ‘although deceit is detestable in all other things, yet in the conduct of war it is laudable and honourable; and a commander who vanquishes an enemy by stratagem is equally praised with one who gains victory by force’ (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 526).

Machiavelli combines the above reasoning with the theme that obtaining the goodwill of the populace is the best way to maintain power. Thus, he considers the appearance of virtù as more significant than true virtù, which some rulers in practical terms may see as a liability. A prince, according to Machiavelli, must be able to imitate a fox and a lion, since possessing these two qualities will allow a ruler to recognise traps like a fox and frighten wolves like a lion. Although Machiavelli believes that is not necessary for a ruler to possess all the aforementioned qualities, it is necessary to seem to have them. The most important quality any ruler should possess is being able to change as and when circumstances dictate. As Machiavelli states: ‘he must have a mind disposed to adapt itself according to the wind, and as the variations of fortunes dictate, and, as I said before, not deviate from what is good, if possible, but be able to do evil if constrained’ (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 65).

Cox (2010, 183) puts it eloquently by stating that rulers in Machiavellian politics must be ‘mobile, contingent, and functionally defined’. He further argues that Machiavelli’s conception of virtù may be compared to an orator since, in order for the people to respect and conduct themselves in accordance with the dictates of the leader, he needs to be skilled in the art of public speaking. She argues that a leader can learn this art by observing and knowing the ways of his people (Cox 2010, 183).

In keeping with the theme of virtù, Machiavelli argues that rulers should avoid being despised and hated by the subjects since it is very difficult for a small number of subjects to conspire against a ruler that the majority loves. He goes on to state that the ruler should have two specific fears. The first fear is internal, referring to the subjects of a state, and the second is external, referring to foreign powers. Regarding the latter threat of foreign intervention, Machiavelli returns to the earlier theme of military strength by arguing that a ruler may only adequately defend his territory if he possesses ‘good arms and good friends, and he will always have good friends if he has good arms’ (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 66).

With reference to internal strife, he argues that this area will always be quiet unless subjects conspire in secret against him. A ruler can guard against this by always avoiding hatred and contempt. However, in keeping with his novel conception of *virtù*, Machiavelli argues that a ruler should not hesitate to engage in cruel methods if this is necessary to maintain his state since this should be the foremost concern of all rulers. He uses the example of Ferdinand, King of Spain, who under the pretext of religion, used cruel means to drive out the Moors from the kingdom and ultimately murdered them.

Nonetheless, Machiavelli urges rulers to guard against tyranny. In the *Discourses I, X*, he argues that tyranny makes rulers forfeit their ‘honour, security, satisfaction, and tranquillity of mind’ and only brings to them ‘infamy, disgrace, blame, danger, and disquietude’ (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 142). Viroli (1998, 38) further says that tyranny is the enemy of the *virtù* Machiavelli espouses since it destroys republics and principalities. However, Machiavelli warns that despite this advice, many rulers will still, either voluntarily or involuntarily, become tyrants. ‘False good and false glory’ deceives these men (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 142). He points to the example of Caesar to illustrate his point here. Caesar, despite attaining and maintaining power, murdered his citizens, engaged in treachery, was merciless and irreligious. Machiavelli refers to this as false glory. True glory, according to Machiavelli, is to follow the honourable path set by the Roman generals of the past. He strongly believed that leaders could revive true glory since it was the only motivation to aspire to grand actions (founding republics, expanding their territories, liberating countries from tyranny and corruption) that freedom requires and which will guard against tyranny and infamy (Viroli 1998, 40).

Machiavelli believed that one can judge the character and competence a ruler has for office by looking at the ministers and advisors he has around him. ‘When they are competent and faithful one can always consider him wise, as he has been able to recognise their ability and keep them faithful’ (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 85). The reverse, he argues, also holds true. Further, a ruler must choose his advisors well because advisors who are flatterers and not critical thinkers are unable to speak truth to him in matters he asks. Machiavelli argues that the best way to achieve this is by letting potential advisors understand that they will not cause you to take offence by speaking the truth. Nonetheless, if all your subjects speak truth to you, you lose their respect. Thus, a middle course is required according to Machiavelli. This entails choosing only the wisest subjects as advisors and providing them with the fullest freedom to speak truth to the ruler in matters he asks of them. Subsequent to this, a ruler

should apply his mind concerning the advice received. Beyond this, Machiavelli maintains, is not the task of advisors.

The concluding chapters of *The Prince* connect the book to a precise historical context, that is, Italy's disunity. Machiavelli sets down his account and explanation of the failure of past Italian rulers and concludes with an impassioned plea to the future rulers of the nation. He states that although all rulers require some degree of fortune, they will only be successful as long as they are able to change as circumstances dictate. Machiavelli asserts the belief that only Lorenzo de' Medici, to whom he dedicated this book, can re-establish the honour and pride of Italy. He reasserts his view here that the only way for de' Medici to achieve this is by 'providing yourself with your own forces, for you cannot have more faithful or truer and better soldiers. And although each one of them may be good, they will united become even better when they see themselves commanded by their prince' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 97). Strauss (1958, 11) argues that those who believe that Machiavelli's thoughts can be described in terms of his patriotism towards Italy are being short-sighted, since 'in referring to Machiavelli's patriotism one does not dispose of a mere semblance of evil; one merely obscures something truly evil'.

Nevertheless, this is not a position shared by contemporary Machiavellian scholars. Viroli (1998, 156), for example, discusses that Machiavelli endorsed and advocated for the traditional language of patriotism, that is, 'the interpretation of love of country as a charitable love of the common good of the republic'. In addition to the republican understanding of patriotism, which encourages citizens to put the common good before individual interests, Viroli argues that Machiavelli follows the example of Roman authorities who regarded those who put the common good before their individual interests as conducting themselves in the proper manner, that is, conducting themselves according to civic virtù (Viroli 1998, 156). The most patriotic and subsequently virtuous, Machiavelli maintains, are the 'kings, captains and citizens, and legislators who have sacrificed themselves for their country' (Machiavelli [1531] 1940, 104).

Machiavelli's preference for a republic is further embedded when he equates fatherland with a republic as opposed to a monarchy. Machiavelli argues in the chapter on conspiracies in *The Discourses* that to conspire against your fatherland in order to become the ruler of it is an act of treason since the republic is a legitimate constitutional order. In his various examples of patriotism taken from Roman history, Machiavelli clearly emphasises that patriotism is the

moral force that allows citizens to understand what the common good of the state is. Viroli states that patriotism is a 'passion that makes them (citizens) wise and virtuous; because they can see beyond the boundaries of their family or of their social group, they act in a way that is most apt to secure their own and the republic's interest' (1998, 157). Machiavelli believed that there is an important difference between the patriotism shown to principalities and the patriotism shown to republics. Although the patriotism demonstrated to principalities is attached to a place, to memories and a culture, it lacks the feeling of 'equality, solidarity, and responsibility which grows only among individuals who have shared as equal citizens the pains and the joys of republican liberty and self-government' (Viroli 1998, 156).

In essence, Machiavelli is promoting worldly glory over heavenly glory. He further believed that such glory championed by rulers could live on after their demise if it is true glory. True glory refers to those rulers who institute and preserve republics for long periods. Viroli states in this regard:

However heaven or God may contribute to it, glory is worldly reward; it is the one way of living eternally in this world by remaining alive in the memory of humanity; the other is eternal disgrace, a destiny which ought to be as frightening as the other is appealing. Like virtù and vices, the path of eternal glory and that of infamy are very close to one another' (1998, 37).

Although Machiavelli dismisses goodness as an illusion, he believed that goodness is necessary to create the impressiveness of virtù, since a ruler's virtù can only be impressive if it shocks the goodness of good people. In short, goodness needs to shock the conscience of the people. Although a Christian conception, it plays an imperative role in developing the fear of punishment and hope for reward in the minds of people (Mansfield 1996, 25–26). Mansfield believes that we can consider religion as virtù and even as goodness, as opposed to something that accompanies virtù. It allows people to understand that goodness as a virtù is not sufficient to secure their political futures and they need the assistance of God in addition to fearing his wrath. Mansfield believes that Machiavelli views religion as a way 'to control chance and the unforeseeable future in the power and providence of God' (Mansfield 1996, 26). Religion thus allows subjects to revere their ruler who makes them act in a way they do not understand but nonetheless do.

Cahn (2005, 186) contends that Machiavellian virtù was an attempt at the secularisation of personality. He views political virtù as the path towards eternal salvation, a path that mainstream understandings of Christianity could not help us achieve. It was therefore

important to discuss Machiavellian virtù in order to demonstrate the necessary link between virtù and religion.

Conclusion

Machiavelli does not possess a fully developed argument on civil religion and, as stated at the outset, he never uses the term. Machiavelli's state-led religion, a paganisation of Christianity, was an endeavour to question whether religion could still serve a political function in the affairs of the modern secular state. Guided by the interplay between republican liberty (a populist understanding of class tension between the rulers and the people), a well-armed and trained military and a controversial yet practical understanding of political virtù, Machiavelli sets out the blueprint for his state-initiated and led religion.

His state-led religion, which in essence is coercive in nature, was meant to serve as a practical guide for ruling given the innate nature of human beings. This stands in stark contrast to the idea of liberty espoused by the positive freedom thinkers who view coercion as a hindrance to personal liberty, and liberty can therefore only be found in realms free from influences of laws and politics. Instead, Machiavelli believed that astute legislators would utilise the coercive powers embedded in the laws to facilitate the worldly attainment of the true freedom we actually desire and to circumvent the situations of domination and enslavement that have come to characterise our unrestrained behaviour.

Machiavelli was thus not interested in indulging in the appeal of the afterlife as propagated by Christian belief, preferring only to interest himself in how it could best serve the interests of the modern state. Such an understanding of human nature serves the practical purpose of attempting to unite the citizenry behind the state thereby achieving peace and stability, a desire still shared by all contemporary states. This understanding of the political usages of religion, together with Rousseau's to follow in chapter two, provide the groundwork to practically demonstrate how religion can serve the interests of the modern state. Whether the Mandela mythology analysed in chapter three can serve a similar function will be analysed in chapter four.

Predictably, Machiavelli's controversial thoughts did not achieve universal adulation with many of his contemporaries simply dismissing him as a philosopher who preferred tyranny over freedom. However, I posit that such an understanding of him is a simple-minded and blatantly incorrect interpretation motivated by religious belief and prejudice. Machiavelli's

thoughts nevertheless did gain a meaningful foothold in sixteenth-century France after the collapse of the political fabric there under the impact of the religious wars. I posit that Machiavelli's controversial thoughts were the strong medication that Europe required to treat its ailing body. This hypothesis is not far-fetched as some sections of French society in the sixteenth century began to refer to him as a philosopher who was willing to defend republicanism at any costs. They were perhaps correct in their assertion especially taking into consideration the crisis of sovereignty that has engulfed England later on in the seventeenth century (Khan 2010, 240).

Machiavelli's conceptualisation of the civil concepts of the military, balanced government, property and his controversial understanding on virtù in shaping civic personality left an important legacy for generations of philosophers to come. Most notably, Rousseau, Locke and Hobbes amongst others built upon his thoughts in shaping their ideal version of political societies. For example, and perhaps most important in the context of this thesis, Rousseau states in *The Social Contract*, III, VI, that Machiavelli 'while pretending to teach lessons to kings, he taught great lessons to peoples. Machiavelli's *Prince* is the book of republicans' ([1762] 1997, 95). Machiavelli's controversial republican thoughts, therefore, laid the groundwork for Rousseau's conceptualisation of civil religion. This will become apparent as the next chapter progresses.

CHAPTER TWO

Rousseau on civil religion

Introduction

The debate regarding the most appropriate relationship between religion and the state has its roots in the eighteenth century which can be considered a pivotal moment in the intellectual history of the Western secular state and Jean Jacques Rousseau is arguably the most influential theorist of this era. This era saw tremendous debates concerning the optimal relationship between religion and the state (or in fact whether they could peacefully co-exist at all). The civil religion ideas envisaged by Rousseau provided an alternative model to thinking about this relationship. This is an arrangement that involves the state being governed by a religion of civil principles. Rousseau argues that religion is instrumental to the formation of any state but opposed pagan religions and the Abrahamic faiths.

Rousseau's notion of a civil religion is essentially an attempt to return to the ancient idea of cementing good citizenship in faith. His civil religion is not very complicated; it is not caught up in a great deal of dogma, and is merely intended to ensure that the citizens remain productive and obedient. Still, during an age when religion has been effectively divorced from the state in most countries, the attempt to bring them back together might seem uncomfortable. The notion of worshipping the state also appears disturbingly totalitarian. All this will be discussed in detail in this chapter. Further, and as stated in the previous chapter, Machiavelli had a marked influence on Rousseau's political philosophy and this influence will be clearly demonstrated as the chapter progresses. For instance, Rousseau, like Machiavelli, disliked Christianity since he believed that it detached the focus of citizens from their fatherland and pushed it towards heavenly duties. The former, they believed, should be the primary business of all citizens. Rousseau's contribution to political theory is nonetheless distinct from that of Machiavelli and other theorists such as Hobbes, Locke and Kant in the sense that he envisioned a political society where citizens achieve their ideal of self-governance through a political community defined by the general will (Cohen 2010, 86). They both, nevertheless, pursued a version of religion that possessed practical political usages for rulers intended to serve as the primary source for safety and stability for their territories. For Rousseau, this will become obvious as the chapter develops.

The chapter will initially briefly lay down the thinking behind Rousseau's articulation of his thoughts on civil religion. The second section will link this to his broader political philosophy and the final section will conclude on the topic of Rousseau's conception of civil religion. Therefore, analysis of the concepts of government and sovereign, particular and general wills, is required because it is the key to Rousseau's theory. The notion of the general will is Rousseau's term for the exercise of popular sovereignty. Although this chapter will primarily focus on the works leading up to the *Social Contract*, the *First and Second Discourses*, the *Geneva Manuscript*, *State of War* and *A Letter to Mirabeau*, *Considerations on the Government of Poland* and *Letters Written from the Mountain* also need to be carefully investigated in order to properly trace the development of Rousseau's thought and lead up to his discussion of civil religion.

This chapter assumes tremendous relevance to the thesis as whole since it provides a philosophical account of civil religion. Together with Machiavelli's description in chapter one, it provides the theoretical basis from which to critically assess whether or not it has manifested itself in a particular form capable of serving as the primary unifying agent in post-apartheid South Africa.

Civil religion

Rousseau's discussion on civil religion is found in the penultimate chapter of the *Social Contract* and his principal aim here is to demonstrate that monotheistic religions (Christianity, Islam and Judaism) and politics cannot co-exist. Before getting to the crux of the argument, Rousseau provides a background to the type of society that existed prior to established religion gaining prominence. Like Machiavelli before him, Rousseau speaks about the theocratic, polytheistic and pagan governments of the ancient world that based their rule on the wisdom of the Gods since they believed that people would more readily obey what they thought to be the words of the Gods than those of fallible human beings. This is the point at which Rousseau enters the debate. He writes that 'God was placed at the head of every political society, it followed that there were as many Gods as there were peoples' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 142). Divisions within nations and societies seem to be the foundation of intolerance according to Rousseau. Wars and battles would arise since 'two armies engaged in battle with one another could not obey the same chief. Thus from national divisions resulted polytheism, and from it theological and civil intolerance' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 142–143).

Foreseeing that his critics might attack him based on the fact that pagan societies were not characterised by religious wars, Rousseau provides a reason for this and in the process demonstrates, like Machiavelli, a yearning for pagan societies. He argues that in such an arrangement, the theological and political systems are not separated from each other as is the case of Christianity. As such, we can clearly see the fundamental influence that Machiavelli has had on Rousseau. Machiavelli's obsession with ancient paganised societies is a result of his belief that such societies had mastered the art of generalising will through a civil religion, a powerful military force and the lack of extreme individual thought (Riley 2001, 131). He argues that in such a scenario, the laws and Gods were the same thing. In essence, a 'political war was also theological' (Riley 2001, 131). The various territories that the Gods ruled over were clearly demarcated hence the Gods of one nation could not infringe on the jurisdiction of another. Rousseau provides an example of the Gods of the Canaanites and that of Moses and the Hebrew people to illustrate his point. He writes that

they (Moses and the Hebrew people) did, it is true, regard as naught the Gods of the Canaanites, proscribed peoples, doomed to destruction, and whose stronghold they were to occupy. But note how they spoke of the divinities of the peoples they were forbidden to attack! *The possession of what belongs to Chamos your God, Jephthah said to the Ammonites, is it not legitimacy your due? By the same title we possess the lands our victorious Gods has acquired.* That, it seems to me, indicates a well-recognised parity between the rights of Chamos and those of the God of Israel (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 143).

Nevertheless, when the Jews refused to recognise the authority of the kings of Babylon and later Syria over their own god, this resulted in their subsequent persecution at the hands of these rulers. After this, the religion of every state was always only attached to the laws that governed it. Rousseau believes that at the time of the Roman expansion, paganism became the same religion around the world. It is in this context that Jesus and the teachings of monotheistic Christianity emerged, separating theology from its political system. This subsequently resulted in deep divisions that Rousseau argues will always cause trouble amongst Christians. The idea of the *Spiritual Kingdom of God* on earth did not go down well with pagans, who argued that Christians 'were only looking for the opportunity to become independent and the masters, and craftily to usurp the authority which they pretended to respect as long as they were weak' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 144). This gradual evolution of political society from polytheism to the monotheistic teachings of Christianity was intended to provide a background to why Rousseau formulated his ideas on civil religion.

In short, Rousseau rejected both polytheistic and monotheistic religions because he felt they were politically flawed. He argued that Christianity, in particular, is highly incompatible with

politics. Further, although he demonstrates a clear yearning for Roman paganism, this too he rejects since he believed that to entertain such nostalgia is to fall into the fallacy of anachronism (Beiner 1993, 619). Despite mentioning the shortcomings inherent in polytheistic and monotheistic religion, Rousseau mourned the fact that the Enlightenment era was taking society in the direction of secularisation. He was in favour of political society needing some sort of religion (Cristi 1997, 25). He says that society needs a religion ‘which makes him (the individual) love his duties’, but that the articles of an individual’s faith ‘should only concern the state and its citizens’. He further argues that ‘no state has been founded without a religious basis’. These dogmas require its foundations to be moral in nature and ‘the duties which anyone who professes it is bound to fulfil it towards others’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 150). In other words, this is a religion of civil principles and the sovereign is in charge of enacting them.

Rousseau bases his solution on two important assumptions: first, as mentioned above, the fact that the religious foundations of the state are indispensable; and secondly ‘that the Christian law is at bottom more harmful to a strong constitution of the state’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 146).

Marcela Cristi (1997) argues that the contemporary understanding of civil religion has been misunderstood because of Emile Durkheim’s position. Durkheim argued that a civil religion is an inherent part of a society and not a political construct as suggested by Rousseauian scholars. Cristi maintains that we need to return to Rousseau’s idea in order to attain a balanced conceptualisation of civil religion (1997, IV). However, I will expand on this understanding in chapter three when situating the Mandela mythology in its appropriate contemporary civil religion tradition. For now, the context in which Rousseau derived the concept of civil religion needs consideration. Cristi situates it within Rousseau’s interest in legitimacy. She says ‘indeed, his overall concern in the *Social Contract*, and other political writings, is to provide practical principles by which to evaluate legitimate social order’ (1997, 21). It seems his notion of civil religion is a proposed solution to these problems. In order to see this, it is important, first, to lay out Rousseau’s broader political philosophy.

Rousseau’s political philosophy: ‘a free community of equals’

A holistic understanding of Rousseau’s thoughts on civil religion requires that we properly trace its development. Gourevitch (1997, xv) argues that a central tenet of Rousseau’s moral psychology is that humans are moral agents because of the fact that they are citizens or even

members of political societies. Further, he believed that we cannot be moral agents without being political agents. Gourevitch makes the distinction between natural and political right in Rousseau's political philosophy. He argues that Rousseau's discussion of natural right refers to relations between individual humans, to the 'nature of man', whilst political right refers to rules for states or, more specifically, to the rules that take 'men as they are' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 41). 'Taking men as they are' constitutes legitimacy in the eyes of Rousseau. This includes rules for the institution of states, sovereignty, and government and, most importantly, it also refers to rules that govern relations between the ruler and the subjects. As a result of the inherent shortcomings in the state of nature that interfere with an individual's self-preservation, Rousseau argues that individuals desire to hold on to this political right by governing it through convention (civil society).

The above understanding is given credence in the opening chapter of the *Social Contract*, when Rousseau remarks that he aims to

inquire whether in the civil order there can be some legitimate and sure rule of administration, taking men as they are and the laws as they can be: in this inquiry I shall try always to combine what right permits with what interests prescribes, so that justice and peace and utility may not be disjoined (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 41).

Rousseau's concern with legitimacy is given pertinence in the opening paragraph of the *Social Contract* when he writes, 'man is born free and everywhere he is in chains' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 41). The chains referred to are the constraints placed on the freedom of inhabitants. The intention of the book, according to Rousseau, is to debate whether in civil society there can be a legitimate form of government, taking into consideration the instinctive nature of human beings, and applying laws in the best way possible. It is important from the outset that we contextualise Rousseau's usage of the term 'government'. He uses the term in both a normative and institutional sense. Normatively it refers to the legitimate exercise of executive power and institutionally it refers to the body that stands between the subjects and the sovereign (Cohen 2010, 169).

Rousseau's intention is best encapsulated by Cohen (2010, 11–12), who argues that Rousseau hoped to achieve a society in which the individuality of citizens is protected by the collective and, simultaneously, is fully independent of the collective. He yearned to achieve a morally legitimate political society in which the autonomy and freedom of individuals is protected. In order to achieve this, it becomes necessary to have certain authoritative 'chains' enforced by a legitimate power to ensure that all citizens comply.

Cohen (2010, 6) argues that the authoritative chains Rousseau alludes to can best be achieved by looking at his political philosophy as a ‘free community of equals’. This refers to a society in which citizens realise their natural freedom (self-preservation) by cohabiting as equal individuals and guided by a shared understanding of the common good. Rousseau’s critics have labelled the notion of a free community of equals as idealistic and unable to withstand the test of realism. Those who use Hobbes as the basis for such criticism, for example, argue that individuals are inherently evil by nature and only an authoritarian state will be able to direct them towards the common good (Cohen 2010, 18). Such a Rousseauian conception, according to Cohen, is not a utopian dream but a distinct possibility which is compatible with the complexities associated with humans and the demands for social cooperation. Rousseau argues that his ideal of a free community of equals does not make unfair demands on human nature. Nevertheless, simply addressing some of the concerns expressed by realists is not enough to overcome charges of utopianism. Rousseau needs to demonstrate that his convention is politically and socially possible (Cohen 2010, 19).

Rousseau’s understanding of such a legitimate political order is

a form of political association that will defend and protect the person and goods of each associate with the full common force, and by means of which each, uniting with all, nevertheless obey only himself and remain as free as before. This is the fundamental problem to which the social contract provides the solution (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 49–50).

This is the ‘fundamental problem’ to which Rousseau believes he has found the solution with the *Social Contract*. Cohen (2010, 14–15) argues that Rousseau’s conceptualisation of a legitimate political society and, subsequently, his (Cohen’s) idea of a free community of equals are premised on dispelling the myth that political authority requires that one allows oneself to be ruled by others. In Rousseau’s idea of the common good, each individual is given equal concern and citizens take this shared understanding and express it as a collective by agreeing on the laws of their society (Cohen 2010, 15). In the *Social Contract II, IV*, Rousseau states that

from whatever side one traces one’s way back to the principle, one always reaches the same conclusion: namely, that the social pact establishes among the Citizens an equality such that all commit themselves under the same conditions and must all enjoy the same rights ([1762] 1997, 62–63).

He moreover remarks that in his political society, individuals are ‘subjected only to conventions such as these, they obey no one, but only their own will’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 62–63). In essence, Rousseau’s free community of equals refers to a political arrangement in

which individuals commit themselves to belonging and in which all citizens regard each other as equals. Such a conception of equality includes equal status in instituting new laws, recognising each other as equal adherents to the law and agreeing to regard the common good as the ultimate regulating mechanism of their association (Cohen 2010, 15). Such a political arrangement is *free* because the individual maintains full independence but at the same time is a member of the *community* with a unified understanding of the common good. Further, individuals in this community are *equal* because a shared understanding of the common good demonstrates the good of each individual (*italics my emphasis*) (Cohen 2010, 16). Such a political society is characterised by popular sovereignty as it is one of the defining characteristics of legitimacy. I will expand on this important notion later on.

Rousseau outlines the clauses of the *Social Contract* and argues that

these clauses, rightly understood, all come down to just one, namely the total alienation of each associate with all of his rights to the whole community: For, in the first place, since each gives himself entirely, the condition is equal to all, and since the condition is equal for all, no one has any interest in making it burdensome to the rest (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 50).

Barnard talks about the different dangers that characterise the state of nature and civil society. In the state of nature, things threaten individuals, whilst in civil society they are threatened by each other, and it is in this latter relationship that moral problems originate. The movement from the state of nature to civil society based on convention restores the balance between will and power. Hence, it becomes necessary to have equal dependence in order to achieve this balance. For this to be attained, civil society needs to generate a general will that is able to move above and beyond the particular wills of individuals. Rousseau believed that the general will can restore the aforementioned balance so that when we act, we act as members of the collective and not as individuals, whilst still maintaining our self-preservation (Barnard 1984, 246). Shklar (1969, 184) contends that Rousseau's core idea in the *Social Contract* is the general will and that it 'conveys everything he most wanted to say' primarily as a result of it being 'a transposition of the most essential individual moral faculty (will) to the realm of the public experience'.

Further to this understanding, Riley (2001, 128) disassembles the phrase 'general will' to provide greater clarity on this most important phrase in Rousseauian political theory. He argues that 'generality' can be understood as the rule of law that removes citizens from the clutches of particularist thought and points us in the direction of the common good. 'Will', on the other hand, refers to Rousseau's belief that any form of civil association in society needs

to be voluntary since to ‘deprive your will of all freedom is to deprive your actions of all morality’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 45). Riley moreover argues that will and generality are of such importance to Rousseau because he believes that ‘without will there is no freedom, no self-determination, no obligation; without generality the will may be capricious, egoistic, self-obsessed, wilful’ (2001, 128).

The most recognisable feature of the *Social Contract*, according to Gourevitch, is the moral and psychological change that human beings undergo (1997, xvii). Individuals have to make the change from natural men to being citizens, since natural men possess selfish needs whilst citizens realise that they are part of a community. Citizenship transforms individuals from independent to interdependent beings and it is of paramount importance that any institution in civil society understands this. Rousseau considers it to be fatal if human beings remain self-serving and independent beings (Barnard 1984, 245). Individuals also undergo a second transformation. Masters states that the basic assumption of the *Social Contract* is ‘that man renounces his freedom without renouncing his nature as a man’ (1968, 314). Given this, it seems rather peculiar that Rousseau says ‘these clauses, rightly understood, all come down to just one, namely the total alienation of each associate with all of his rights to the whole community’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 50). Rousseau also says that no individual should retain any right,

for if individuals were left some rights, then, since there would be no common superior who might adjudicate between them and the public, each, being judge of his own case on some issue, would soon claim to be so on all, the state of nature would subsist and the association necessarily become tyrannical or empty (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 50).

Masters (1968, 315) maintains that Rousseau takes this view since he believes that civil society must terminate the individual’s right to be the only judge of his self-preservation. Although some theorists have argued that Rousseau advocated for totalitarianism, Masters considers this to be an exaggeration. The total surrender of rights ‘does not involve the surrender of a pre-existing standard of justices by which civil society could be judged. Quite the contrary, all true rights including natural rights are based on the sacred rights of conventional society’ (Masters 1968, 316). Rousseau argues that the principles outlined in chapter one of the *Social Contract* allows the general will to direct the state towards the common good. The agreement of this end made the formation of civil society necessary. Carvet (1974, 120) analyses Rousseau’s intention for writing the *Social Contract*. He states that Rousseau aims to demonstrate ‘how the necessary constraints of political society can be

legitimate and thereby compatible with, if not natural freedom, then an essential human freedom nevertheless’.

It is vital to provide clarity regarding the relationship between the common good and the general will. Here, Rousseau remarks that

while the opposition to particular interests made the establishment of society necessary, it is the agreement of these same interests which made it possible. What these different interests have in common is what forms the social bond, and if there were not some point on which all interests agree, no society could exist. Now it is solely in terms of this common interest that society ought to be governed (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 57).

In short, the common good is the interests that are shared by all members of the community. The notion of the common good serves as the pillar upon which the correct understanding of the general will stands since citizens ‘who are prepared to impose on others only those conditions that they would be prepared to live under themselves will thereby be committed to advance his or her own interests’ (Cohen 2010, 43). Moreover, Cohen argues that a civil society that bases itself on the general will does not merely commit itself to advancing the common good but is also being responsive to that shared commitment and its citizens express commitment to that responsiveness. Such a ‘society of the general will’ is one that advances the idea of a free community of equals (2010, 58).

The desire to achieve a society that guaranteed and protected the liberty of the individual forms the foundation of Rousseau’s thoughts on civil religion. This society needs to solve the ‘fundamental problem’ by forming a political community ‘regulated by a shared understanding of the common good. Only then, in a society of the general will, can people both be assured the protection of their persons and goods, and express the freedom that belongs to their nature’ (Cohen 2010, 60). A free community of equals, according to Cohen, with its emphasis on the common good of its citizens, provides a solution to Rousseau’s ‘fundamental problem’, since it allows citizens to protect their particular wills without being forced to accept a moral subordination of their will (Cohen 2010, 95).

In order to attain this end, equality is necessary and it is the manner in which political freedom can be attained. This society needed to find ways that would make obedience to government legitimate. Since nature does not provide individuals with equality, they needed to attain this through convention. Equality is not the end that Rousseau strives for but is a means through which men can attain political freedom (Gourevitch 1997, xvi). Rousseau believed that it was the duty of government to encourage liberty and equality. Damrosch

(2005, xi) and Harrison (1993, 52–52) remark that Rousseau’s political philosophy influenced the American founding fathers and French revolutionary thinkers who then made the acquisition of this a fundamental concern. It has also become central to our thought in the contemporary era (Harrison 1993, 51–52). In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau identifies the two concepts mentioned above. He states that

if one inquires into precisely what the greatest good of all consists in, which ought to be the end of every system of legislation, one will find that it comes down to these two principal objects, *freedom* and *equality*. Freedom, because any individual dependence is that much force has been taken away from the state; equality, because freedom cannot subsist without it (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 78).

He argues that the social contract is a sacred right that did not come about in the state of nature but rather by conventions. The only natural form of authority, according to Rousseau, is the family unit with the father at the head and the children as his subjects. Nonetheless, once the children attain the age of reason, they become their own judge and the natural bond with their father dissolves. Grotius and Hobbes placed emphasis on the fact that the association involving the ruler and subject is comparable to that involving a father and his child, since they assume that the ruler cares for his subjects and, by way of this, has unrestricted rights over them. Rousseau argues that this assumes that rulers have a natural authority over their subjects. On the contrary, he believes that such supremacy (that advocated for by Hobbes and Grotius) is because of force, not because of nature, and thus has no foundation in nature. Rousseau believes the right of the stronger proposition is illegitimate since ‘force does not make right and that one is only obliged to obey legitimate powers’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 44).

With the above argument in mind, Rousseau says that conventions are the only legitimate basis for political societies. He vehemently disagrees with Grotius that an individual ‘can alienate his freedom, and enslave himself to a master’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 44). This arrangement, according to him, makes individuals sell themselves to the despot, which is illegitimate. Rousseau’s experience of monarchical rule has shown him that a king usually uses his subjects for ‘his own suitable greed’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 44). Each person is the best judge of his own freedom, thus to alienate one’s own freedom is to hand over the right to one’s self-preservation to another person who is less capable of determining how to secure it (Cohen 2010, 29). To alienate one’s freedom is the work of madmen according to Rousseau. He says in *Social Contract I, IV* that such a mentality is ‘illegitimate and null, for the simple reason that whoever does so is not in his right mind. To say the same of a whole people is to

assume a people of mad men; madness not make right' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 45). Rousseau also offers a moral argument against the issue of alienating one's freedom, which Cohen (2010, 30) neatly encapsulates as follows:

The thought is that if I alienate my freedom then I oblige myself to follow the will of a superior, an authority. And if that superior commands me to do something evil – say, kill an innocent person – I will be required to do it. Because the other person's will is supremely authoritative, the obligations take precedence over other practical requirements.

Individuals are born free and as a result, freedom belongs to them. Rousseau says that

hence, for an arbitrary government to be legitimate, the people, in each generation, have to be master of accepting or rejecting it, but in that case the government will no longer be arbitrary (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 45).

Being a contract theorist, Rousseau believes freedom to be the cornerstone of humanity and any renunciation of it would amount to depriving an individual's action of morality. Rousseau was adamant that the will demonstrated by free men is the backbone of legitimate authority (Riley 2001, 128). Thus, Rousseau states in *Social Contract I, V*, in the chapter on slavery, that 'to deprive one's will of all freedom is to deprive one's actions of all morality' and that the notion of morality or right can never be derived from force since 'to yield to force is to act of necessity, not of will' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 45-46). This sets the tone for his vehement attack on Grotius, who argues in favour of slavery after warfare. Grotius believes that the victors possess the right to murder the losers. Nevertheless, the vanquished can buy his life at the expense of his freedom. A convention thus arises between the vanquished and victor which Grotius believes to be legitimate.

Rousseau objects to this conception of freedom and argues that war does not have its foundations on individual relations but on state relations. In this case, individuals are not enemies as men, but as soldiers of the state they represent. Rousseau writes in the *State of War* that wars can never occur between private persons, only between public persons. Here, Rousseau is referring to the sovereign whose existence arises from the social contract and 'whose will bears the name laws' (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 175). In the *Social Contract* he writes that during war, they remain enemies, but as soon as they relinquish their weapons, they should not be killed since they no longer are soldiers. Rousseau uses this understanding to reject the right of the stronger hypothesis, arguing that if victors are not authorised to kill the vanquished, then they do not possess the right to enslave them. Hence, the victor cannot exchange the life of the vanquished for his freedom. To summarise his view on slavery and consequently on rights and freedom, Rousseau says,

thus, from whatever angle one looks at things, the right to slavery is null, not only because it is illegitimate, but because it is meaningless and absurd. These words *slavery* and *right* are contradictory; they are mutually exclusive. Either between one man and another, or between man and people, the following speech will be equally absurd. *I make a convention with you which is entirely at your expense and entirely at my profit, which I shall observe as long as I please, and which you shall observe as long as I please* (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 48).

To promote liberty is not sufficient for Rousseau; he considers the preservation of it equally important. Rousseau's resolution is that 'each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone and remain as free as before' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 51). In *The State of War*, Rousseau disagrees with Hobbes that human beings are inherently evil and that a totalitarian state is needed to deal with this. Hobbes argued that a state of war is a natural inclination of man. Rousseau believes that even if human beings were evil and greedy, these 'natural' predispositions would not result in a state of war of one against the other. He says man 'is born of peace, or at least of the precautions men have taken to secure a lasting peace' (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 163). Rousseau considers humans to be natural peace-loving beings whose first reaction is to be free when in danger. It is only once man has entered into society that he becomes violent and warlike. Rousseau says 'there is, then, no general war between man and man, and the human species was not formed solely to destroy itself' (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 166). Rousseau's arguments thus look at freedom in the positive sense (as opposed to Locke and Hobbes) since someone is only free if he is capable of doing certain things (Harrison 1993, 53).

The idea of liberty propagated by Rousseau seems to contradict the very essence of the word. Understanding of this very uncharacteristic idea of liberty necessitates the understanding of the following remark made in *Social Contract I, VII*: 'for impulsion of mere appetite is slavery' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 54). Harrison (1993, 53) argues that from this, we can determine that it is not simply good enough to want to be free. You must also desire the correct things since freedom consists of the implementation of one's will in the acceptable manner.

It is important to come back and elaborate on the notion of the general will as it is the key to unlocking Rousseau's political philosophy. Rousseau states that the principle that guides the sovereign towards appropriate action is the general will. The 'general will' refers to the united will of the citizens and 'is always upright and always tends to the public utility' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 59). He also distinguishes between the 'will of all' and the general will. The former is the sum of particular wills and the latter looks at common interests. For

example, the ‘will of all’ refers to an instance where a person ‘advances his/her own security, without concern for the security of others, and without coordinating with those others to provide common security. An outcome results from or reflects the will of all’ (Cohen 2010, 26).

Nonetheless, Bloom (1997, 137) states that ‘only the man whose private will wills only the common good, would experience no tension between his individuality and society, freedom and duty’. ‘Adequately informed people’ will result in a good general will. Rousseau desired coordinated political behaviour since this results in mutual advantage. In the absence of such a situation, conflicts of interests arise between members of individuals in society (Cohen 2010, 26). The instance factions arise, however, the general will errs because some factions may dominate others. Rousseau’s solution to the problem of factionalism (and thus for the general will to be expressed perfectly) requires ‘that there be no partial society in the state, and every citizen state only his own opinion’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 60). Rousseau disliked factionalism since he believed that this may allow disunity in the interpretation of the general will. Although many critics have regarded this position as extreme, ‘it is, however, Rousseau’s ideal situation – one where there is complete unity over the interpretation of the general will’ (Engel 2005, 532).

Cohen (2010, 36) argues that the complete unity view expressed by Bloom and others is misleading since Rousseau was well aware that this was impossible in the context of his time. In the *Letters Written from the Mountains*, Rousseau states that the ideal laid out by the ancient societies of Rome and Sparta, amongst others, is not applicable anymore. ‘Ancient peoples are no longer a model for modern ones; they are too alien to them in every respect. You above all, Genevans, keep your place, and do not go for lofty objects ... You are neither Romans, nor Spartans; you are not even Athenians’ (Rousseau [1764] 2001, 292). In doing this, he also clearly departs from Machiavelli who held up ancient societies as the ideal for which leaders should strive.

Issues of hierarchy and influence on duty also need brief consideration. An individual belongs to a number of different associations in civil society. For example, a man may be a soldier but his duty as a citizen precedes his function as a soldier. Similarly, his duty as a human being precedes his duty as a citizen. Importantly, in changing notions of morality, the particular will must meet the general will at every stage. This was one of the major challenges facing Rousseau’s work.

Masters believes the concept of the general will is introduced to ‘elucidate the necessary and inevitable tension’ between the sovereign and the citizen. In other words, the tension between the sovereign and the particular will (1968, 323). This tension not only exists, but is also inherent in society. He also argues that the general will releases ‘the Hobbesian procedure of constructing the logic of the political from Hobbes’ unscientific assumptions about human nature’ (Masters 1968, 324). The tension involving the private interest of the individual and the general will not only exists, but is also an intrinsic part of society.

Although the end of political society is spoken about with reference to the general will, Masters remarks that it is ‘a formal requirement which must be fulfilled by the laws which constitute any legitimate regime’ (1968, 328). In the same way as the particular interest tends to the benefit of the individual, the general will tends to the benefit of society. If this is the case, Rousseau says ‘any true act of the general will obligate or favour equally all citizens’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 63).

The pronouncement of the general will occurs through laws. Rousseau argues that ‘conventions and laws are therefore necessary to combine rights with duties and to bring justice back to its object’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 66). He defines law as follows:

But when the whole people enacts statutes for the whole people it considers only itself, and if a relation is then formed, it is between the entire object from one point of view and the entire object from another point of view, with no division as a whole. Then the matter with regard to which the statute is being enacted is general, as is the enacting will. It is this act I call law (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 67).

The central problem in Rousseauian thought is centred on removing particular acts from the will of the individual without causing its destruction (Riley 2001, 132). Rousseau argues that although laws can overcome the tension between the particular and general wills, they need to be loved by the people and he positioned patriotism as being best suited to achieve this. Although this chapter will expand on this notion of patriotism later on, it is important that a brief statement by Rousseau be made in this context. Rousseau says in *Political Economy* that ‘love for the fatherland is the most effective; for as I have already said: every man is most virtuous when his particular will conforms in all things to the general will, and we readily want (or will) what the people we love want (or will)’ (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 15). In short, Rousseau believed that laws influenced by patriotism allow individuals to act according to reason (Engel 2005, 528). This will be elaborated on later.

Laws that govern the relationship between the sovereign and the state are political laws. Rousseau says the relations amongst citizens should be small in comparison to their relationship with the sovereign but large when compared to their relationship with the state. He writes that the latter relationship gives rise to civil laws. The relationship between individuals and the law also allows for 'establishing criminal laws' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 81). The constitution is the fourth law (but most important law) which 'when the other laws age or die out, revives or replaces them' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 81).

Laws are always general and do not allow for favouritism. Any special privileges are granted in commune. Laws are always granted in commune and are equal, since they tend towards the general will. As a consequence, no person may feel aggrieved (taking his private interests into consideration) that he is being disadvantaged. According to Rousseau, because of this arrangement, people are as free as they were in the state of nature (Masters 1968, 329). A republic, according to Rousseau, is any state governed according to laws. He believes that the people should be the authors of the law. Rousseau's critics have nevertheless pointed out the apparent contradiction between his phrase that states individuals will be 'forced to be free' and the rest of his political philosophy. To gain an appropriate understanding, we need to place this in the context in which it was written. He says,

hence for the social compact not to be an empty formula, it tactically includes the following engagement which alone can give force to the rest, that whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be constrained to do so by the entire body: which means nothing other than that he shall be forced to be free; for this is the condition which, by giving each citizen to the fatherland, guarantees him against all personal dependence; the condition which is the device and makes for the operation of the political machine, and alone renders legitimate civil engagements which would otherwise be absurd, tyrannical, and liable to the most enormous abuses (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 53).

Masters argues that laws are 'intended to introduce a certain element of rationality into the wills of citizens'. Moreover, 'in this sense, the general will may be termed 'the law of reason' because it is the only logical basis on which reasoning men can adopt mutually binding duties' (Masters 1968, 332).

Rousseau argues that the general will is 'always right and tends towards the public good' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 59), though this is a very confusing claim and requires clarity. Rousseau concedes that the body politic does not always have to be equal and just. Given this, Rousseau's critics have questioned how one can ascertain whether the sovereign's actions are in tune with the general will (Masters 1968, 325). Cohen states that Rousseau believed the best method to identify whether a specific act or regulation is a legitimate act of

the sovereign is to see whether we can interpret such an act as providing a ‘coherent conception of the common good of those who are subject to it: only if guided by a conception of our good, as the good of persons who are moved by self-love’ (2010, 66).

Since the common good drives the general will, there needs to be unanimity. If the opposite were to occur then the sovereign’s actions would not be in tune with the general will but would rather be the ‘will of all’. Unanimity, however, does not negate disagreement on, for example, how to attain the common good. There are two types of political disagreement: first, how best to advance the common good and, second, how to appropriately interpret its constitutive elements. Cohen believes that political disagreement does not violate the general will and we should be careful of attributing unreasonable demands regarding consensus. Nevertheless, Cohen does concede that Rousseau expresses strong suspicion regarding this since disagreement may sometimes mean that particular wills are encroaching upon the common good which would ultimately lead to the degeneration of the society he is trying to build (2010, 69–71). In the *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, Rousseau states that the Europeans ‘do the same things under the same circumstances; all will declare themselves disinterested and be cheats; all will speak of the public good and think only of themselves; all will praise moderation and wish to be Croesuses; they have no other ambition than for luxury, no other passion than for gold’ (Rousseau [1772] 1997, 184). This presentation of particular wills as general wills is damaging to the body politic.

The *Social Contract*, according to Rousseau, is the only law that requires unanimous consent from the people. He brings up the important point of those individuals who do not vote in favour of certain laws. Rousseau argues that when the people’s assembly is debating certain laws, everyone voices their opinion on them and casts their ballot either accepting or rejecting the laws. The majority of votes in favour of or opposing the law is the general will. In *Social Contract IV, II*, Rousseau argues that although some citizens may vote in opposition to certain laws, this does not mean that the general will is divided. It merely means that these people are mistaken in what they believed the general will to be. Cohen (2010, 78) rationalises this issue and states that this confines them to a minority. He states that even though before a vote an individual may have a particular viewpoint on an issue regarding how it advances the common good and after a vote finds himself in the minority who mistook the general will, this situation merely provides him with new information about what the citizens want and how to advance the common good. Given this, these individuals should not be dissatisfied since if their proposal had won, the common good would not have been

advanced. Rousseau's rationale for stating that citizens make the advancement of the common good their ultimate aim is because an 'allegiance to the common good would be the only way for people to secure their freedom under conditions of interdependence' (Cohen 2010, 85).

The question now arises as to how the general will should be determined. Rousseau believes a hierarchy of importance should be used in issues of the law. Serious and important matters should have a unanimous general will. In the instance of business matters, the difference of opinion should be narrow and be concluded as soon as a simple majority is reached (50 + 1). However, Rousseau says: 'be that as it may, it is the combination of these two maxims that the best ratios for deciding a majority are determined' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 125).

Subsequent to the discussion of laws, Rousseau deals with the idea of what makes a good state with reference to the size of the state. He argues that the best state is a small one since it can be stronger than a large one. He says,

with regard to the best constitution of a state, there are bounds to the size it can have in order not to be either too large to be well governed, or too small to be self-sustaining. In every body politic there is a maximum of force which it cannot exceed, and from which it often strays by dint of growing too large. The more the social bond stretches, the looser it grows, and in general a small state is proportionately stronger than a large one (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 73–74).

Rousseau's desire for a small state stems from his belief that administrative tasks are much easier to solve. He remarks that governments of large states will find it difficult to enforce laws, and people might also not possess loyalty to a leader they rarely see. He argues that 'the same laws cannot suit a variety of different provinces with different morals, living in widely different climates unable to tolerate the same form of government' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 74). Good governance is more advantageous than the resources of a large territory. The optimum size of a state, according to Rousseau, should be measured against the size of the territory and the number of citizens. There should be enough land to support the citizens and as many citizens as the territory can feed.

Rousseau points out the type of people that should be legislators. These people should not possess

deep-rooted customs nor deep-rooted superstitions; [and] one which is not in fear of being overrun by a sudden invasion; which without taking part in its neighbours quarrels can resist each one of them by itself, or enlist the help of one to repulse the other; one whose every member can be known to all, and where one is not forced to charge a man with a greater

burden than a man can bear; one which can do without all other peoples and without which every other people can do (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 77).

Rousseau provides the example of the small state of Corsica as a well-constituted state. People are able to ‘recover and defend their freedom’ and the educated are able to teach freedom in order to ensure it can be sustained.

Rousseau believes that every piece of legislation should be based on freedom and equality. Much has been spoken about civil freedom already. Equality, on the other hand, refers to the relationship between power and wealth. Cohen (2010, 53) remarks that Rousseau proposed a conception of equality that included economic equality, since equality and freedom are both aspects of the common good. In the *Social Contract II, I*, Rousseau states that, ‘this word (equality) must not be understood to mean that degrees of power and wealth should be absolutely the same, but that, as for power, it stop short of all violence and never be exercised except by virtue of rank and the laws, and that as for wealth, no citizen be very rich that he can buy another, and none so poor that he is compelled to sell himself’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 78). Although admitting that this is usually difficult to find in practice, Rousseau considers this as precisely the reason it should be legislated. Furthermore, he believes that legislation should be adapted to the specifications of each country such as ‘relations that arise as much from local conditions as from the character of the inhabitants’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 79).

Masters (1968, 339) argues that the *Social Contract* is often misunderstood in the contemporary era because commentators have changed the meaning of key terms used by Rousseau. The contemporary understanding of the term ‘legislation’ refers to laws enacted by elected representatives of the people. On the other hand, Rousseau’s understanding of the term refers to basic laws, which are essential for political order. Rousseau argued that the sovereign cannot be represented and some have taken this to mean that his principles advocated for direct democracy. Although he did propose representative institutions in the government of Poland, his discussion on representation in the *Social Contract* must be placed in the context of the distinction between the sovereign and government (Masters 1968:339). Rousseau writes that ‘the deputies of the people therefore are not and cannot be representatives, they are merely agents, they cannot conclude anything definitely’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 114).

Gourevitch argues that although the citizenry may favour the general will, they may not know how to achieve it (1997, xxi). The ideal, which Rousseau envisaged, was popular sovereignty. This was a far cry from the government of monarchy that Rousseau believed should be terminated. He argued that the power of government should be derived from the consent of the people. This ideal of an equal society in which every individual enjoys the same duties and privileges was something that all theorists aspired to achieve. Moreover, Rousseau's ideal envisaged justice and hope for all. This was the basis from which Rousseau started his idea of society. The doctrine of popular sovereignty requires wisdom and Rousseau is aware of the immense difficulty in merging the two concepts. Rousseau nevertheless explores a variety of ways to merge them, by means of patriotism, citizenship, civil religion, lawgiver, elective aristocracy, different methods of elections and so on (Gourevitch 1997, xxi).

Citizenship, patriotism and civil religion

For civil religion to become the mode of life, Rousseau believed that it needed to be reinforced in some way. Citizenship and patriotism are the reinforcing elements that will assist inhabitants in making the duty to their fatherland their primary business. According to Gourevitch, citizenship 'in a well-constituted, legitimate political society, which is self-contained, self-sufficient and patriotic, provides the best or most satisfactory collective solution for men as they are' (1997, xxviii). Rousseau nevertheless acknowledges that this is not the only solution by noticeably outlining the rivalry involving natural and political right, that is, involving humanity and cosmopolitanism on one side and between citizenship and patriotism on the other. Rousseau writes:

Patriotism and humanity ... are incompatible virtues in their very thrust, especially in an entire people. The Lawgiver who strives for them both will achieve neither: such a combination has never been seen; it will never be seen, because it is against nature, and it is impossible to assign two objects to one and the same passion (Rousseau [1772] 1997, 34).

As mentioned earlier, in the movement from the state of nature to civil society, individuals cease being men and rather become citizens. Barnard (1997, 252) states individuals need to be convinced that when making the transition from independent to interdependent beings that 'what they gain through a binding union is of greater permanent value than what they surrender, that by working with and for others they truly work for themselves'. Hence, the individual comes to see himself as a citizen who is no longer an independent individual but a member of the political society at large, and the 'religion he is taught is the civil religion' (Gourevitch 1997, xxx). This tension between man and citizen is the central organising

principle of Rousseau's work. In *Political Economy*, Rousseau talks about the difference between a model citizen and a model philosopher (man), more precisely, between Cato and Socrates. He argues that,

let us dare to contrast Socrates himself with Cato: the one was more a philosopher, the other more a citizen. Athens was already lost, and Socrates had no other fatherland than the whole world: Cato carried his fatherland with his heart; he lived for it alone, and could not outlive it. Socrates' virtue is that of being the wisest of men: but compared to Caesar and Pompey, Cato seems like a God amongst mortals (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 16).

Despite having the same end in sight, Barnard (1984, 253) argues that they differ substantially in their respective origins and provides an appropriate understanding of the difference between patriotism and citizenship. He writes that

a citizen, unlike a patriot, may entertain whatever private thoughts and beliefs he happens to hold; what vitally determines the quality of citizenship, or what indeed characterises the will of the citizen, is his readiness to match public utterances with public deeds. Without such coherence or consistency, Rousseau emphatically maintains, there can be no social order, for it would lack trust to sustain it (Barnard 1984, 253).

This points to the superiority of citizenship over patriotism and, subsequently, the important role citizenship plays in the achievement of order in society. Social order is important for civil religion, thus citizenship performs this function effectively because it is based on discursive reasoning. However, Rousseau believes that discursive reasoning alone cannot make individuals love their fatherland and hence puts forward the possibility of citizenship and patriotism coinciding in relation to Poland. Nonetheless, he remarks that such a possibility in Poland is very small unless the Poles come up with a group of independent states. Here, Barnard argues that

a simultaneous consciousness of patriotism and citizenship is evidently more likely within the more confined space of a canton than within a more extended state since in the latter points of contact are few and far between. In a greatly extended state, let alone in a state that includes all humanity, our sentiments are bound to evaporate and grow feeble (1984, 250).

Although patriotism and citizenship are two distinct terms, Rousseau views patriotism as a reinforcing element of citizenship and both as important for his civil religion. He sees very little conflict between citizenship and patriotism and, for the most part, stresses what they have in common (Barnard 1984, 249). Barnard moreover argues that Rousseau was essentially advocating for a dual theory of public willing. He, however, is severely critical of this, arguing that in trying to reinvigorate the role of patriotism, Rousseau provides a 'rationale that notoriously served the cause of political tyranny' (1984, 261). Rousseau's preference for patriotism is nevertheless clear in *Political Economy* where he argues that

certain it is that the greatest marvels of virtue have been produced by love of fatherland: this gentle and lively sentiment which combines the force of amour propre with all the beauty of virtue, endows it with an energy which, without disfiguring it, makes it the most heroic of all passions. It is patriotism that produced the many immortal actions whose brilliance dazzles our weak eyes; and the great men, whose antique virtues are treated as fables ever since patriotism has been turned into derision (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 16).

Patriotism is a powerful force in politics since it is similar to loving a mistress. Patriotism requires no justification based on reason in a similar way that loving a mistress cannot be argued to be reasonable. Both are spontaneous actions and require no discursive reasoning. Although a person may love his country as a patriot, he is devoid of a purpose. On the other hand,

citizenship is the work of rational will, in which instrumental reasoning of one sort or another plays a decisive role. The purpose of what we say or do lies beyond the action itself. It is the instrumental reasoning that mediates agreement, the source and justification, indeed the authorisation of human association within a state (Barnard 1984, 251).

It is also through people agreeing rationally with one another that individuals in society become *a people*. Without such an agreement there cannot be a sense of national unity and therefore no general will to characterise unity. Even so, it is important that individuals have the same aims and goals to work towards since people do not agree for the sake of agreeing (Barnard 1984, 251). It is once citizens have common objects that they are interdependent beings as opposed to working with one another as if they are still independent beings (driven by *amour de soi* – self-preservation). To elucidate this, citizenship makes inhabitants think that their continued existence lies in them working together as opposed to for themselves (motivated by *amour propre*). *Amour propre* is a heightened consciousness of, and regard for, an individual in relation to others around him. This fits in neatly with the understanding of Rousseau's political philosophy as a free community of equals. In the words of Engel (2005, 519),

amour de soi is natural and non-competitive. Individuals directed by it have no concern for other beings as long as their self-preservation is unaffected. The individual directed by *amour-propre*, however, is constantly concerned with others. This is the case because the unnatural sentiment of *amour-propre* is fuelled by competition and comparisons with others. When directed by *amour de soi*, the individual's self-evaluation is determined in a vacuum, so to speak. The self-worth of individuals filled with *amour-propre* is based on their estimation of their relation to others.

Whereas the savage individual only thinks of himself, men in Rousseau's civil religion also need to be concerned about what others think of them. Agreement comes about only when individuals become aware of what objectives unite them. This is the foundation of citizenship. Particular wills will not necessarily result in a natural move towards the general

will. Therefore, it becomes the task of the legislator to make individuals realise that it is better for them to co-operate with one another, to change inhabitants from individuals into interdependent beings (Barnard 1984, 252). It is important to note that although patriotism may make citizenship stronger, it does not constitute it. Patriotism is the unreasoned love for one's fatherland whilst citizenship is rational agreement on the common objective and the will to stick to that agreement. In essence, patriotism makes civil religion stronger allowing for it to become the mode of life.

Citizens are called upon to put into practice what they publicly stand for. Citizens are characterised by the choices they make and the ends they constantly confront determine choice. It seems Rousseau's aim here is to determine a mode of life that would make citizens masters of their wills as opposed to victims of them (Barnard 1984, 254). Thus, Barnard argues that

what crucially matters about the general will of citizenship, on Rousseau's own showing, is not simply that it be upheld but that it be questioned so that it could reply. It seems therefore, that just as there can be no true political action without will, so likewise there can be no true political will without the possibility of accounting for the way it chooses (1984, 254).

Barnard (1984, 245) argues that although patriotism may be the most powerful force in garnering political commitment, it is highly problematic since it is incredibly difficult to justify intrinsic reasoning of sentiment above discursive reasoning. Many of Rousseau's contemporaries did not take patriotism seriously precisely because of this problem. Rousseau was nonetheless unswayed because he was certain that reasoned action alone could not dictate what is right otherwise he would not have made the remarks that 'the general will is always upright' but 'it does not follow that from it that the people's deliberations are always upright'. He further remarks that if reason alone dictated right, the Rousseauian state would be in no need of a lawgiver in the vein of those in the ancient pagan societies to help effect 'a general will that is always enlightened' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 59–60). It is because of this that Rousseau places importance on the intrinsic reasoning of sentiment characteristic of patriotism. He does so because he believes that inhabitants will hold laws in higher esteem if they have affection (*amour propre*) for their fatherland, which will ultimately cause civil religion to prosper. By going this route, Barnard argues that Rousseau undermined the power of reasoning as a determining force in politics. This is because the patriot has no need of justifying his sentiments as opposed to a citizen who always needs to rationalise his sentiments (1984, 244, 254).

The biggest test that questions the assertion that intrinsic reasoning is important to citizenship is appropriately discussed by Rousseau in terms of a citizen willing to sacrifice his life for his country. In this regard, whilst a patriot's love is implicit in his being, a citizen needs to be provided with rational arguments. A rational argument tells a citizen that he cannot protect his own life without protecting his country (Barnard 1984, 255). In short, 'patriotism and citizenship, therefore, though they are both characterised by generality of willing, draw on radically different justifying sources, the former on disinterested love, the latter on rational interest' (Barnard 1984, 255).

Engel (2005, 528) contends that patriotism directs the imagination of individuals towards the community at large. The question nonetheless remains as to how Rousseau understood patriotism could be achieved. Riley (2001, 131) argues that Rousseau believed that self-love may be avoided and love for the fatherland may be achieved by citizens undertaking political education. Political education in the Rousseauian sense, Riley remarks, will give society a general will before a particular will. In *Political Economy*, Rousseau states that political education will 'draw us out of ourselves' before our particular will has 'become actively engaged in the contemptible concerns that do away with all virtue and make up the life of petty souls' (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 21). Moreover, Rousseau explains in the *Considerations on the Government of Poland* that

it is education that must give souls the national form, and so direct their tastes and opinions that they will be patriotic by inclination, passion, necessity. Upon opening its eyes, a child should see the fatherland, and see only it until his dying day (Rousseau [1772] 1997, 189).

Education allows men to be free and bound by the laws of the fatherland. Rousseau argues that true republicans loved the laws and freedoms of their fatherland and this love was moulded into them from an extremely young age – 'with his mother's milk' (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 189). He talks about the specific knowledge every child should have by a specific age. For example, 'at fifteen he (a Pole) should know its (Poland's) entire history, at sixteen all of its laws' (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 189).

Equality in education is also considered important for patriotism and, ultimately, civil religion. Rousseau detested the difference between the education of the rich and the poor. He argues that since the constitution regarded everyone as equals, the education system should be no different. If the civil religion proposed by Rousseau were to become the 'bible' of the people, each inhabitant needed to properly understand its principles and equality in education was the best method to bring this about. Rousseau also believes that education will cause

Poles to ‘respect laws which flatter its noble pride, which will make and keep it happy and free; extirpating from its breast the passions that elude the laws, it will foster those that cause them to be loved’ (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 192–193).

Riley (2001, 145) remarks that Rousseau's emphasis on education as the basis for achieving patriotism is because he hopes to achieve a general will that is not based on Christian doctrines of faith. His general will must be derived from the individual wills of society. His aim was to provide secular thought to the general will so that individuals would have an ‘efficacious power of choosing’ influenced by civil republican education.

According to Lincoln, critics of Rousseau make the mistake of believing that he advocated re-creating the state through education. On the contrary,

he does not consider such action as possible, since after the state has been instituted, its form of government may only be altered. He would regenerate its members by education and training until they had the same qualifications as those which the original units possessed. They would then be sufficiently wise to select the most advantageous form of government, and national prosperity would be assured (1897, 61).

The problem of basing the pursuit of justice on taking ‘men as they are’ is that although individuals may unite their powers, their wills become divided. This is important since a properly functioning civil religion requires the unification of the wills. Hence, in order for the unification of wills to occur, morals must work in tandem with what the laws prescribe. The unification of the wills requires the passion of love, the type Rousseau refers to as *amour propre*. The general will becomes a significant pursuit when individuals attain the virtue of patriotism, since patriotism is the ‘public-spirited devotion to the common good’ (Gourevitch 1997, xxii). In the *Considerations for the Government of Poland*, Rousseau says,

only a patriotism enlightened by experience can learn to sacrifice for the sake of the greater goods (general will) a brilliant right grown pernicious through abuse, and henceforth inseparable from that abuse (Rousseau [1772] 1997, 216).

In classifying laws for the civil religion, Rousseau places importance on the patriotic symbols of beliefs, habits and a people’s fundamental practices. He talks about these patriotic symbols assisting the country in reviving the constitution once current laws become outdated. In the *Social Contract*, he states:

Which is the state’s genuine constitution; which daily gathers new force; which, when the other laws age or die out, revives or replaces them, and imperceptibly substitutes the force of habit for that of authority. I speak of morals, customs, and above all of opinion; a part [of the laws] unknown to our politicians but on which success of all others depends (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 81).

Anderson (1991) argues that language is at the centre of pushing the attention of individuals towards the state as opposed to themselves. He argues that ‘a shared language, particularly shared anthems, poems, and oaths, help foster a special kind of contemporaneous community’ (Anderson 1991, 144). Such sharing, according to Engel (2005, 525), allows individuals to feel a sense of connection to the national community, consequently fuelling social unity across time and space. This will be elaborated on in chapter four.

In the *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, Rousseau contends that it is imperative that public spectacles, festivals and games be instituted since they play a crucial role in directing the attention of citizens towards the common good. In his words:

[Let there be] many public games where the good mother country delights in seeing her children at play. Let her frequently attend to them so that they always attend to her. The usual courtly entertainments must be eliminated, even at Court, because of the example it sets: gambling, theatres, comedies, opera; all that makes men effeminate, all that distracts them, isolates them, makes them forget their fatherland and their duty; all that makes them be comfortable anywhere at all so long as they are entertained; games must be devised, festivals, solemn occasions so distinctive of this particular Court (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 186).

Although this type of patriotism has the potential for propaganda purposes, Rousseau is referring to patriotism used for healthy purposes – to foster allegiance to one’s fatherland (Engel 2005, 537).

As stated earlier, Rousseau has demonstrated a clear preference for small states. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that he would have argued that patriotism and citizenship are impossible for large states, especially in the modern era. As such, Engel (2005, 530–533) believes that although the nature and size of modern states make it impractical for all citizens to attend such gatherings, the advent of film and television allows them to be simultaneously shared by millions of people throughout the country. This is another aspect that will be expanded on in chapter four.

Rousseau’s argument for patriotism is consistent with freedom, according to Engel (2005, 536). He argues that a state in which the general will is obeyed by all its citizens is ideal; and if patriotism guides the individual to the general will, then it is consistent with freedom. Moreover, Engel argues that patriotism provides support to freedom since, without it, citizens will be torn between their particular and general wills.

The importance of both patriotism and citizenship for the effective functioning of the civil religion should be quite apparent by now. Both must be viewed as reinforcing elements of

Rousseau's thoughts on civil religion without which it cannot function appropriately. The next section deals with the importance of the lawgiver for an effective civil religion.

Lawgiver

Rousseau's civil religion necessitates a superior being (lawgiver) to regulate laws, to have the necessary foresight, and to declare them in the appropriate instance. He places tremendous emphasis on the wisdom of the lawgiver to pursue the aforementioned tasks. Gourevitch (1997, xxii) believes that Rousseau conceived of the lawgiver as someone able to convince individuals to forsake their adherence to particular wills and focus on attaining a general will. Riley (2001, 125) claims that Rousseau's general will allows the lawgiver the best possible tool to achieve the civic goals of the social contract, since the notion of the general will allows the lawgiver's civil knowledge to be enlightened and correct.

In analysing the most suitable traits that a lawgiver should possess and the tasks he should undertake, Rousseau writes that he should be able

to discover the best rules of society suited to each nation [this] would require a superior intelligence who saw all of man's passions and experienced none of them, who had no relation to our nature yet knew it thoroughly, whose happiness was independent of us and who was nevertheless willing to care for ours; finally, one who, preparing his distant glory in the progress of times, could work in one century and enjoy reward in another. It would require Gods to make laws (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 68–69).

In analysing the manner in which the lawgiver may attain the common good, we can again see the influence that Machiavelli has had on Rousseau. Machiavelli states in the *Discourses* that 'do wise men, for the purpose of removing this difficulty, resort to divine authority' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 147). On the other hand, Rousseau says in the *Social Contract*, 2, 7 that lawgivers should 'rally by divine authority those whom human prudence could not move'. Further, he states that attaining the common good 'has at times forced the fathers of nations to resort to the intervention of heaven and to honour the Gods with their own wisdom' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 71). The lawgiver should aim to deeply entrench fundamental patriotic habits, tastes and dispositions of the populace by placing emphasis on citizens' religion, morals and unique lifestyles. Rousseau argues that good lawgivers

sought bonds that might attach the citizens to the fatherland and to one another, and they found them in distinctive practices, in religious ceremonies which by their very nature were always exclusive and national, in games which kept the citizens frequently assembled, in exercises which increased their pride and self-esteem together with their vigour and strength in spectacles which by reminding them of the history of their ancestors, their misfortunes,

their virtues, their victories, stirred their hearts, fired them with a lively spirit of emulation, and strongly attached them to the fatherland with which they were being kept constantly occupied (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 181).

It is evident that Rousseau regards a lawgiver as a rare person who is ‘an authoritative person who is neither authoritarian nor personal, who generalises will while leaving it voluntary’ (Riley 2001, 142). Rousseau additionally argues that a lawgiver should be capable of transforming the fundamental nature of people from being individuals in themselves to being individuals as part of the body politic. In essence, the lawgiver should be someone able to create a political society in terms of a free community of equals. ‘He (the lawgiver) should take from his own forces in order to give him forces which are foreign to him and of which he cannot make use without the help of others’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 69). In short, the lawgiver should take away from the natural inclinations of people and help them develop new ones. He believes that the more these natural forces decrease, the more the acquired forces increase and the longer the acquired forces last, thus the more unyielding and the longer a government can last. These acquired forces Rousseau refers to are the forces that transform individuals into interdependent beings. He writes, ‘so that when each citizen is nothing and can do nothing except with all the others’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 69). Legislation can also be said to have achieved its most perfect stage when the force acquired by human beings as a whole is greater than the sum of all individuals’ natural forces.

The position of lawgiver is independent of, and holds no similarities with, human society since ‘he who has command over men ought not to have command over the laws, so neither should he who has command over the laws have command over men’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 69). If the converse situation were to prevail, this would result in severe injustices and particular views taking precedence over general views.

The mission of the lawgiver is to ‘attach the citizens to the fatherland’ and this is done through a civil religion. They (the lawgiver) should ‘resort to the intervention of heaven and to honour the Gods with their own wisdom’ and make the people realise that ‘he (the lawgiver) proclaims himself their interpreter’ (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 71). Rousseau speaks about the great lawgivers of the past such as Numa, Moses and Muhammad and how they used their respective religions to mould the societies they governed. With respect to Muhammad, Rousseau says,

Muhammad had very sound views, he tied his political system together very well, and as long as his government endured under the Caliphs who succeeded him this government was strictly unitary, and in this respect good (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 145).

Nevertheless, he argues that once they passed away, their people corrupted their belief systems and ultimately their societies crumbled. However, it is important to note that although Rousseau believed that the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) possessed sound views, he did not have as much sympathy for Islam as this suggests. Rather, Rousseau was more attracted to the methods used by the Prophet Muhammad, and the caliphate that emerged after him, in reuniting ‘the heads of the eagle’ especially in relation to Christianity (Beiner 1993, 631).

In essence, a good lawgiver needs to transform individuals into patriotic beings through equal education, good legislation and wisdom. With patriotic individuals, good citizens and good lawgivers, the various components of Rousseau’s civil religion idea are slowly coming together. The next component involves the doctrine of separation of powers.

Separation of powers

The powers of the lawgiver should be carefully controlled. There should be a separation of powers between the lawgiver and the sovereign, with the former charged with enacting laws and the latter commanding them. Rousseau says that ‘he who drafts laws has, then, or should have no legislative right’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 70). Rousseau talks about the dangers of uniting the legislative and the sovereign authority, citing Rome as an example. Those who enact laws should play no part in the legislative. He writes:

Rome in its finest period witnessed the rebirth of all crimes of tyranny in its midst, and found itself on the verge of perishing, for having united the legislative authority and the sovereign power in the same hands (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 70).

The sovereign cannot implement laws because its purpose is to attend to matters of general concern and not laws that are of particular importance. It cannot allow one part of the sovereign to implement laws since Rousseau argues that the sovereign is inalienable. As soon as the sovereign tends towards a particular will (in effect having two sovereigns), the body politic dissolves. This is because the particular will tends towards partiality and the general will towards equality. Sovereignty is also indivisible according to Rousseau. Will is either general (unanimous, any exclusion negates generality) or not. Sovereignty should be the declaration of the general will for it to be regarded as law. Rousseau regards the particular will as an act of decree at best. From the above discussion, it is clear that Rousseau understands sovereign authority as lying in a shared understanding by citizens of the common good, with the individual interests being taken into consideration. Unlike Hobbes, who

argued that the sovereign is a collection of individual beings, Rousseau argues that the sovereign is one agent who expresses the general will (Cohen 2010, 66).

The responsibility of implementing laws should thus be given to the magistrates or government in the sense that Rousseau conceived of them (Gourevitch 1997, xxiv). The government is merely a minister of the sovereign. With this discussion in mind, Rousseau formulates a definition of government as an

intermediate body established between subjects and sovereign so that they might conform to one another, and charged with the execution of the laws and the maintenance of freedom, both civil and political (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 83).

Government then is the ‘legitimate exercise of the executive power’ and members of the government are *magistrates* and are ‘charged with that administration’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 81). It is important to make the distinction between the sovereign and government. Rousseau remarks that whilst the sovereign is independent, the government exists by virtue of the sovereign. The general will imposes limitations on the sovereign’s actions to concern only the general will, whilst the government cannot tend towards generality (Masters 1968, 336). To further elucidate this, Gourevitch (1997, xxiv) states that the sovereign ratifies the laws whilst the government implements them. In short, the government is the “minister” of the sovereign.

Rousseau writes of the three different ‘wills’ present in the individual of the magistrate. He says,

first: the individual’s own will, which is solely to his particular advantage; second, the common will of the Magistrates which is exclusively concerned with the advantage of the Prince, may be called the corporate will, which is general in relation to the government and particularly in relation to the state of which the government is a part; in the third place, the will of the people or the sovereign will, which is general in relation both to the state considered as a whole, and to the government considered as part of the whole (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 87).

Rousseau argues that rigid laws can sometimes be to the detriment of the state since their effect may become null and void. Suspending laws, however, must only be done in extraordinary circumstances where there is tremendous danger to the public order. Rousseau says that ‘one should never suspend the sacred power of the laws except when the salvation of the fatherland is at stake’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 138). Rousseau advocates for dictatorships (although not in the modern usage of the term) in this special case scenario. He writes that the government should be concentrated in the hands of a few members when the

form of administration is in danger and not the laws. Nevertheless, if the laws are an impediment to dealing with the crisis, then

a supreme chief is named who silences all the laws and provisionally suspends the sovereign authority; in such a case the general will is not in doubt, it is obvious that the people's foremost intention is that the state not perish. This way of suspension of the legislative authority does not abolish it; the magistrate who silences it cannot make it speak, he dominates it without being able to represent, he can do everything, except make laws (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 138–139).

In a perfect situation the general will should be dominant; in practice however the particular will is the strongest. Because of this, Rousseau argues that the number of magistrates to the government should be smaller in relation to the number of subjects to the sovereign.

The distinction between the sovereign and the government raises the question of the type of government suited to a country. Rousseau subsequently discusses the various forms of government: Aristocracy involves entrusting government to the hands of a selected few while monarchy is the concentration of government in the hands of a single person. He considers democracies to be most well suited to small states, aristocracies for states of a medium size and monarchies for states that are very large. However, Rousseau opposed the establishment of very large states in the *Considerations on the Government of Poland*. He argues that

all great peoples crushed by their own mass groan either in anarchy as do you, or under subordinate oppressors which a necessary devolution forces Kings to set over them. Only God can govern the world, and it would take more than human faculties to govern great nations (Rousseau [1772] 1997, 193).

Additionally, Rousseau did not believe that large states such as Poland could bring together patriotism and citizenship except in a type of federal arrangement. He says in *Political Economy* that we usually show more concern for what is nearer as opposed to what is further away. He furthermore argues that in large states, sentiments will most probably evaporate from our consciousness (Barnard 1984, 250).

Discussing democracy, Rousseau argues that there should be a separation of powers between the legislative and the executive. He writes that 'it is not good that he who makes the laws execute them' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 91). He is quick to point out that true democracy has never existed since it goes against the usual order that the more govern and the less be governed. Rousseau believes it to be impractical for citizens to constantly assemble to deal with affairs of the state. He also writes that too many things need to fall into place perfectly for a democracy to be a reality. Firstly, the state needs to be small so that the populace can easily assemble to deliberate on public affairs. Secondly, there needs to be equality in terms

of rank and fortune and, finally, there should be little or no luxury in society since he believes it corrupts both the rich and poor. To summarise, Rousseau writes that ‘if there were a people of Gods, they would govern themselves democratically. So perfect a government is not suited to men’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 92).

Although arguing that monarchies are best suited to large states, Rousseau points out one major defect that will always make monarchies inferior to aristocracies or democracies. He speaks about the major corruption, in terms of wealth and resources, present in monarchies of the day. He believes that this major defect will result in a monarchy never being able to run efficiently, which will eventually lead to its demise. In the *Letter to Mirabeau*, Rousseau rebuffs monarchies, arguing that there is no evidence to back up legal despotism. He writes that no evidence exists in natural law in favour of monarchies and the maxim ‘let the salvation of the people be the supreme law’ would not be considered important by a monarchy (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 269). Rousseau argues that Mirabeau’s preference for monarchical rule does not take into consideration the feelings and emotions of humans and is more suited to utopia but ‘worthless for the children of Adam’ (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 270). In short, Rousseau views democracies and monarchies as susceptible to dictatorships and ruin.

Elective aristocracies

The final component of Rousseau’s ideas on civil religion is his preference for elective aristocracies. An aristocracy is a form of government where leaders assume their position on the basis of wealth, age, family prominence and so on. Rousseau says that there exists natural, elective and hereditary forms of aristocracies and favours an elective aristocratic government, since he believes that governments should restrict leaders to a minority of people, all of whom are there by virtue of elections. Rousseau discusses two methods of election, election by choice and election by lot. He argues that election by lot is more suited to a democracy and voting is suitable for an aristocracy. To put this into perspective Rousseau says,

if one keeps in mind that the elections of chiefs is a function of government and not of sovereignty, one will see why election by lot is more in the nature of democracy, where the administration is all the better in proportion as it as its acts are fewer (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 125).

Furthermore:

In aristocracy the prince chooses the prince, the government perpetuates itself by itself, and that is where voting is appropriate (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 126).

Rousseau says that election by lot is only suited to a genuine democracy and, as stated earlier, there are no genuine democracies. Using Venice as an example, he forwards the possibility of a city using a mixture of these two types of election method. Rousseau argues that election by choice should be used to fill the positions that require skilled personnel such as military positions, and elections by lot should be used to fill positions that require virtues such as justice, integrity and good sense. He gives the example of the judiciary where election by lot would be advantageous.

Moreover, as opposed to a democracy,

assemblies (in aristocracies) are more easily convened, business is discussed better, and dispatched in a more orderly and diligent fashion, the state's prestige is better upheld abroad by venerable senators than by an unknown and despised multitude (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 93).

In short, Rousseau argues that the most intelligent should govern the masses though he is critical of aristocracies to a certain extent, arguing that they require virtues such as 'moderation amongst the rich and contentment among the poor', which are inconceivable in practice (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 94). Although being critical here, Rousseau argues that the inequality in wealth is a small price to pay in exchange for governance by those who can devote all their time and energy to it. Masters (1968, 303) argues that Rousseau is not concerned with utopia but rather with finding a form of administration that is legitimate in different forms of society. Rousseau states:

[H]ence the question, which is absolutely the best government, does not admit to a solution because it is indeterminate: or, if you prefer, it has as many good solutions as there are possible combinations in the absolute and the relative positions of people (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 104–105).

Gourevitch states that Rousseau's discussion of elective aristocracy 'seeks to combine and reconcile popular sovereignty with wisdom' (1997, xxv). The popular assemblies alluded to above are the manner in which he believed popular sovereignty could best be constituted. Rousseau's analysis of popular sovereignty has glaring similarities with that of Machiavelli and is one of the most under-researched aspects of his political philosophy. In speaking about the popular assemblies of the Roman people, Rousseau states that these were called Comitia and were divided into three types, which were distinguished as Curiate, Centuriate, and Tribal comitia.

In terms of law-making functions, Rousseau assigns an important place to popular assemblies in his account of representative government in the sense that they can serve as checks and balances on the powers of government. Moreover, these sovereign assemblies were held in such high esteem and importance that

no law was sanctioned, no magistrate was elected except in the Comitia, and since there was not a single Citizen who was not enrolled in the Curia, a Century or a Tribe, it follows that no Citizen was excluded from the right to vote, and that the Roman People was genuinely sovereign both by right and in fact (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 132).

Rousseau further argues that all citizens and elected representatives were allowed to participate and serve short terms and given specific mandates from which they could not digress. The latter, Rousseau says in the *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, is more suited to large states. To guard against possible corruption, Rousseau remarks that there should be frequent meetings and elections to choose such representatives (Cohen 2010, 136).

Rousseau's preference for popular assemblies centres on his belief that they are guided by the reasons of the common good in addition to considering the particular interests of individual citizens. Individuals are more willing to conform to the common good if they believe that their particular wills were considered to begin with. As such, they form a general will since being treated as equals on public platforms leads to the formation of a specific type of motivation that ultimately expresses this equality (Cohen 2010, 155). This again is consistent with the idea of a free community of equals.

Rousseau argues that the sovereign had the undeniable right to oversee the running of the state. In addition to overseeing the execution the laws, they needed to maintain them in instances where they believed the government to have erred. In the *Letters Written from the Mountains*, Rousseau states that 'the legislative power consists in two inseparable things; to make the laws and to maintain them; that is to say, to have inspection over the executive power. There is no state in the world in which the sovereign power does not have this inspection' (Rousseau [1764] 2001, 247).

Rousseau argues that for the Comitia to be properly constituted, three important criteria need to be met. First, the body convening it must have the authority to do so. Second, the assembly needs to occur on the days when the law is prescribed. In the instance, the auguries must also be favourable. The first and second are self-explanatory but the third allowed rulers to speak to the fundamental religious beliefs of the people. The rulers frequently tampered with the auguries to make the people believe they were in favour of or against a particular decision.

Amongst the issues discussed and decided upon in the assemblies were the laws and the election of chiefs. In fact, there were various forms of assemblies ‘assumed according to the matters they had to decide’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 132).

Rousseau believed that the Comitia by Tribes was most favourable to popular government and should properly be called the council of the Roman people. The senate could neither attend nor vote in them but was compelled to obey the laws passed by them. When citizens voted on a particular matter ‘everyone called out his vote, a Clerk recorded them in writing, one by one; in each Tribe a majority of votes determined the vote of that Tribe, a majority of votes determined the vote of the People’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 135).

Rousseau’s discussion of representative governance revolves around his concern about government consistently encroaching upon the sovereign and usurping sovereign power, which would ultimately lead to the end of the body politic. Rousseau was also apprehensive that the sovereign might attempt to hold onto certain administrative and executive functions of the government. In the *Social Contract IV*, Rousseau considers the various ways in which the Roman people, through the Tribune of the Plebs and Censors amongst other institutions, attempted to maintain the separation between the sovereign and the government. Rousseau picks up this issue from Machiavelli since he elaborates on this in *The Discourses* (Gourevitch 1997, xxv). In the *Letters Written from the Mountains* ([1764] 2001, 237), Rousseau correctly expresses his paranoia regarding government usurping the authority of the sovereign. Speaking to the citizens of Geneva, he says,

what happens to all Governments like yours, Gentlemen, has happened to you. At first the Legislative power and the executive power that constitute sovereignty are not distinct. The Sovereign People wills by itself, and by itself it does what it wills. Soon the inconvenience of this cooperation of all in everything forces the Sovereign People to charge some of its members to execute its wills. These Officers, after having fulfilled their commission, account for it and return to the common equality. Little by little these commissions become more frequent, finally permanent. Insensibly a body forms that always acts. A body that always acts cannot account for each act: it no longer accounts for any but the principal ones; soon it reaches the point of accounting for none of them. The more active the power that acts is, the more it enervates the power that wills. Yesterday’s will is deemed to be today’s also; whereas yesterday’s action does not dispense from acting today. Finally the inaction of the power that wills subjects it to the power that executes; little by little the latter renders its actions independent, soon it wills; instead of acting for the power that wills, it acts upon it. Then there remains in the State only an acting power, that is the executive. The executive power is only force, and where force alone reigns the State is dissolved. There, Sir, is how all democratic States perish in the end.

Rousseau argues that a tribunate should be established to protect the sovereign from the usurping influence of the government and sometimes as a balance between the two, as the

‘tribunes of the people did in Rome, sometimes to uphold the government against the People, as the Council of Ten now does in Venice’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 136). To avoid the usurpation of its authority, the tribunate should not be made permanent but at a given time it should be suspended. These intervals should be clearly stated by law but should not be so long as to allow those who abuse its power enough time to consolidate.

Sovereign power is limited insofar as it does not cross the common good threshold. Rousseau states in *Social Contract II, IV*, that ‘the sovereign, for its part, cannot burden the subjects with any shackles that are useless to the community, it cannot even will to do so’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 61). Cohen (2010, 46) suggests that Rousseau does not imply choice on the part of the sovereign but rather command, since Rousseau uses the word *cannot* and not *ought* (italics my emphasis). Hence, if any legislation has no perceived connection to the common good then it is by no means an expression of the general will.

Cohen (2010, 46–47) argues that the reason the sovereign may only legislate what is in the common good opens up the space for the legislation of a national civil religion, since such an arrangement only contains principles that are useful to civil society and banishes those who do not prescribe to it. The next second section elaborates on this notion of a civil religion.

A summary of the important elements of Rousseau’s civil religion ideas is needed. Patriotism, good citizenship, a good lawgiver, the doctrine of separation of powers and an elective aristocracy are the key components of Rousseau’s political thought upon which he founds his ideas regarding civil religion; hence, these are of paramount importance for the actual functioning of civil religion. The importance of patriotism and how it is related to the creation of good laws and good citizenship is because it links directly to the question of civil religion and its role in the maintenance of order. Good patriots and citizens lend themselves to the state. It is the responsibility of the lawgiver, through education, laws and wisdom, to transform individuals into patriotic beings. A separation of powers is also important to Rousseau’s civil religion arguments since it allows each element of the civil religion not to be improperly influenced by the next. The final component is an elective aristocratic form of government. Rousseau believed that governance should be entrusted in the hands of those who could devote all their time and energies to it and this would only be possible through an elective aristocracy. He nevertheless provided ordinary citizens with the opportunity to be represented in the body politic through popular assemblies.

For all the above components to fall into place, Rousseau desired to make religion important to the state and therefore the individual. In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau occupied himself with the political sphere of religion since it makes obligatory an individual's responsibility as a member of the state. In the *Letter to Montaigne*, Rousseau argues that his civil religion arguments are to do with 'those aspects of religion which concern public welfare and social morality, the duties of man and the citizen, which came under the jurisdiction of government' (cited in Cobban 1934, 83). By placing these issues under the jurisdiction of the state, Cobban argues that Rousseau is not referring to the executive but rather the superiority of the body politic acting through the general will (1934, 83).

Re-visiting civil religion

As mentioned extensively thus far, Rousseau regards the dogmas of civil religion to be extremely important for good citizenship. In the *Letters Written from the Mountain*, Rousseau states that civil religion 'contains no dogma that does not relate to the good of society, and it is not mixed with any dogma useless to morality or any point of pure speculation' (Rousseau [1764] 2001, 145).

The articles of civil religion are also needed for the optimum functioning of society. Rousseau again becomes radical in his thought here by arguing that these articles should be imposed on society without consultation with citizens. In essence, the people do not have a say in the pillars of civil religion. They merely have to be loyal subjects to it (Cristi 1997, 29). It is worth stressing that Rousseau's principal aim is political and not religious. To summarise Rousseau's intentions in the formulation of his civil religion arguments, Cristi writes,

in short, Rousseau's answer to the problem of legitimation and social solidarity in the modern world, is the creation of a national civic religion, capable of binding all individuals to the state (1997, 31).

Rousseau's chapter on civil religion goes into more detail concerning the problems outlined in his discussion of the lawgiver. Rousseau groups religion under 'political right' in view of the fact that he regards the social contract as ineffective and, thus, that it will not be taken seriously if it has no foundation. As mentioned at the outset, this foundation, according to Rousseau, needs to be religion since every state has been formed with religion as its foundation. Rousseau also views religion as a political right because the problem arises as to how to bring together popular sovereignty and religion. He is extremely critical of the

relevance and claim of outward forms of worship; he agrees with Hobbes in this regard and argues that the dividing of sovereignty is evident in Christianity as a whole (Beiner 1993, 618). Rousseau writes:

Hobbes is the only one who saw clearly the evil and the remedy, who dared to propose reuniting the two heads of the eagle, and to return everything to political unity, without which no state or government will ever be well constituted. But he first must have seen that the domineering spirit of Christianity was inconsistent with his system, and that the interest of the priest would always be stronger than that of the state (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 146).

After all the aforementioned discussion, Rousseau provides a precise definition of what he means by a civil religion. His civil religion comprises the

existence of a powerful, intelligent, beneficent, prescient, and provident divinity, the life to come, the happiness of the just, the punishment of the wicked, the sanctity of the Social Contract and the laws ([1762] 1997, 150–151).

It is plausible to take the ‘existence of a powerful, intelligent, beneficent, prescient, and provident divinity’ to mean the belief in God. Rousseau admits the belief in God as resolutely as he admits any other truth even though he denies divine omnipotence and particular providence. He is adamant and reprimands Voltaire for his stance on this issue arguing that simply disbelieving in the existence of God based on reason does not make him to deny it or to suspend judgment on it. For, he goes on to say, doubt is too violent a state for his soul to bear (Gourevitch 2001, 211). Reason and belief, according to Rousseau, are not one and the same thing. Reason leaves the scale in balance. The latter tips the scale in favour of the more consoling alternative. In short, although Rousseau rejects the traditional belief in God of mainstream religions and thus a justification for prayer, he fervently argues that the nature and the existence of God are not subject to rational proof any more than does the immortality of the individual soul (Gourevitch 2001, 211).

Rousseau’s secular idea of God sets the stage for his desire to make religion subservient to the state, something that was common amongst all philosophers of the Enlightenment, although they all did not believe that some form of religion was important to maintain order in society (Cobban 1934, 78–79). Rousseau’s civil religion arguments are something that makes their priority the moral development of citizens. It is because of this that his thoughts posed a threat to the status quo. Cobban writes that

the right of the church to lay down the principles of social behaviour could only be challenged with any possibility of success, as has been said more than once, by something more catholic than itself, and this rival could only be the idea of the community as a whole, conceived as the supreme authority over his own life (1934, 79).

Rousseau's discussion on civil religion provides a practical understanding of how sovereignty should and should not work. He outlines the different types of religious society that have existed. These three variants are 'Religion of the priest', 'of the citizen' and 'of man' (Cristi 1997, 23). Religion of the priest, according to Rousseau, divides the loyalties of individuals. Man is given 'two legislations, two chiefs, two fatherlands' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 146). Roman Catholicism, as result of its strict outward forms of worship, is singled out for particular criticism here. Roman Catholicism entails the sharing of authority between the church and the state. Like Machiavelli, Rousseau believes that this detaches the focus of citizens from the state and pushes them in the direction of their heavenly duties. He believes that this is almost criminal as it contrary to the social harmony. He writes that ever since the separation of the church and state, 'no one has ever succeeded in settling the question of which of the two, the master or the priest, one is obliged to obey' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 145). Rousseau says that this sort of religion is

so manifestly bad that it is a waste of time to amuse oneself demonstrating that it is. Everything which destroys social unity is worthless: All institutions which put man in contradiction with himself are worthless (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 147).

Rousseau additionally argues that priests may attempt to usurp temporal authority and as a result go against the state's authority.

Rousseau goes on to discuss the 'religion of man'. Here he is referring to Christianity. He says that 'through this saintly, sublime, genuine religion, man, as children of the same God, all recognise one another as brothers, and the society that unites them does not dissolve even at death' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 147). The shortcoming of this religion, however, is that it is incapable of holding individuals accountable to the state. On the contrary, individuals are to withdraw themselves from earthly affairs, which Rousseau believes damages the social spirit (Cristi 1997, 25). He writes,

but thus religion, since it has no particular relation to the body politic, leaves the laws with only the force they derive from themselves without adding any other force to them, and hence one of the great bonds of particular societies remain without effect. What is more; far from attaching the citizens' hearts to the state, it detaches them from it as from all earthly things. I know of nothing more contrary to the social spirit (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 147).

Christianity also concerns itself with the formation of the Kingdom of God, which made the distinction between religion and secularity. The state was therefore, 'ceasing to be one, and caused the intestine divisions which have never ceased to convulse the Christian people' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 146). Cristi remarks that disputes between secular and religious

authorities were an impediment to the unity of society (1997, 22). These can be further separated into two types. These are the ‘fairly inclusive, local civil religion of Roman and other paganisms, and the more universalistic and therefore imperialistic theocracies of Islam and Judaism’ (Beiner 1993, 618). Pagan beliefs do not make the separation between church and state. Each state had its ‘own cult and its Gods’ and did not separate its ‘God and its laws’. Political wars were theological in nature since the ‘provinces of the Gods were, so to speak, fixed by the boundaries of nations’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 143).

Finally, Rousseau comes to the ‘religion of the citizen’. He borrows from Machiavelli and argues that this has benefits since it ‘extends the rights and duties of man as far as its altars’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 146). At the same time, Rousseau is also doubtful since he writes that this was founded on ‘lies and terror’ and may lead to a situation of intolerance, tyranny and insecurity (Cristi 1997, 23).

Cristi believes that there are similarities between Rousseau’s civil religion thoughts and ‘religion of the citizen’ and uses the metaphor of ‘political siblings’ to refer to them (1997, 32). She nevertheless argues they are both susceptible to political abuse and may lead to fanaticism, extremism, tyranny or terrorism. In the *Geneva Manuscript*, Rousseau does argue that ‘the advantages of the religion of man and the citizen will be combined. The state will have its cult and will not be the enemy of anyone else’s (Rousseau [1758] 1997, 150). Rousseau eventually removes this from the *Social Contract*, and Beiner believes that he was correct in doing so because this project was overambitious (1993, 634).

In describing the three different types of religion, Rousseau believes that religion of the citizen is desirable since it combines divine worship and love of the laws and the fatherland, which should be the object of all citizens’ worship.

Rousseau makes the important distinction between his thoughts on civil religion and Christianity. He regards Christianity as a religion of slaves. He says that ‘true Christians are made to be slaves, they know it and are hardly moved by it, this brief life has too little value in their lives’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 149). Rousseau repeats this understanding in the *Letter to Usteri* in 1763 where he disputes the fact that Christianity has the answer to society’s problems. On the contrary, he believed that it destroys the unity of the body politic.

Civil religion, as conceived by Rousseau, has often been accused of being radical. Gourevitch (1997, xxvii) argues that the last two beliefs of the civil religion tradition seem to be the most

radical. These proclaim the superiority of the social contract and the laws therein. To elucidate this further, Gourevitch says the fact that the sovereign is inalienable and indivisible and that the church has no true claim to political authority can be interpreted as radical (1997, xxvii).

Rousseau's thoughts on civil religion have also been accused of being radical since Rousseau argues that the sovereign may banish individuals who do not profess these civil articles of religion. The manner in which an individual acts is the clearest evidence of whether or not he should be banished from the state. Individuals are not banished because of their lack of piety, but because they do not wish to sincerely obey and love 'laws, justice, and, if need be of sacrificing his life to his duties' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 150). Additionally, if a hypocrite acknowledges the laws but does not obey them, Rousseau believes they should be put to death because they have disobeyed the laws and hence committed a grave sin. Cohen (2010, 49) remarks that:

This dogma is based on the need for sociability, rather than a requirement of piety, but also that those who reject the dogmas of civil religion cannot be good citizens or loyal subjects who love the laws. He says that their loyalty is impossible and presumably he thinks that those who fail to love the laws cannot be expected to obey the laws.

From Rousseau's perspective, this 'forced to be free' phrase seems extremely important. This is because the sovereign (who is the only judge of conflicts) needs to protect those citizens that abide by laws from those who violate them. Masters goes on to explain this in the context of warfare. He poses the question that if individuals enter civil society to protect self-preservation, how can individuals be obligated to sacrifice their lives for their country? (Masters 1968, 330). The most stringent test of citizenship is an individual's enthusiasm to die for his country. Rousseau believes that citizens must think of their lives as a gift, a gift that is conditional on them being willing to sacrifice their lives for the betterment of the state. Rousseau says that 'whoever wants to preserve his life at the expense of others ought also to give it up for them when necessary' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 64). The individual's right to self-preservation also extends to safety from foreign attack. On the other hand, the general will (as mentioned above) obligates citizens to sacrifice their lives for the betterment of the country (Masters 1968, 330). The individual, therefore, cannot 'enjoy the rights of a citizen without fulfilling the duties of a subject' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 53).

Rousseau talks about the ills of the invention of money and commerce. He argues that the state is in ruin as soon as 'public service ceases to be the citizens' primary business'

(Rousseau [1762] 1997, 113). Moreover, he also says ‘finance is a slave’s word ... in a truly free state the citizens do everything with their hands and nothing with money’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 113). In *The Discourses*, Rousseau’s main premise is that commerce has corrupted human beings by taking their attention away from public duty and towards materialism. In our desire to gain recognition and reputation for our works, we have lost virtue (Keohane 1980, 426). This is further echoed in *The Considerations on the Government of Poland*, where he says that ‘the citizen should be kept constantly occupied with the fatherland, for it to be made their principal business, for it to be continuously before their eyes’ (Rousseau [1772] 1997, 185). Rousseau believes that this will be done through his civil religion.

Rousseau brings up the notion of censorship in *Social Contract IV, VII*. He states that ‘censorship maintains morals by preventing opinions from being corrupt, by preserving their uprightness through wise applications, sometimes even by fixing when they are still indeterminate’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 141). Nonetheless, this in no way means that public opinion should be constrained. Despite the fact that Rousseau’s thoughts on civil religion might seem to contain elements of radicalism, he also rejects the issue of intolerance, be it civil or theological, although he regards them as the same thing. He allows for tolerance of others who do not profess the civil religion as long as their articles of faith do not affect their duties as a citizen.

In his discussion of tolerance as a precept of civil religion, Rousseau argues that ‘the dogmas of this religion are only of concern to the state’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 150). In agreeing to the social contract, citizens agree rationally to join for the betterment of all. Yet in basing this contract to some extent on faith rather than on reason, we might argue that citizens sacrifice the rationality and civil freedom that are the purpose for forming the social contract in the first place. Rousseau advocates for freedom of belief and worship as long as it ‘does not harm others’. In addition to this, he says that ‘it certainly matters to the state that each citizen has a religion which makes him love his duties’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 150). According to Cobban (1934, 88), civil religion is the ‘sphere in which he calls on the individual to make the greatest sacrifices to the state of which he is a member’.

Gourevitch (2001, 218) argues that Rousseau opposed religious intolerance since he believed that ‘it does not depend on ourselves to believe or not to believe in matters in which demonstration has no place’. He further states that religious intolerance can be used by

theologians as a tool to suppress popular sovereignty. It seems that Rousseau's principal purpose for rejecting religious intolerance was to release the individual from the grasp of priesthood and make him obligated to follow the dictates of the state alone. In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau argues that intolerance will result in certain people subjecting those who they believe to be damned to the treatment they believe is in store for them (the damned) in the next life.

Gourevitch (1997, xxxi) states that although critics have labelled Rousseau's political philosophy as utopian, Rousseau denies that his civil religion is definitive and able to transform 'men as they are' into 'men as they ought to be'. He believes that at best it can only serve to contain political problems. This is epitomised in *Social Contract III, XI*, when Rousseau states that 'if Sparta and Rome perished, what state can hope to last forever' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 109). On the issue of factionalism in society, Engel argues that although Rousseau preferred a large degree of homogeneity in states, he does allow for a number of partial societies since toleration is regarded as one of the dogmas of civil religion. Further, Rousseau believes that factionalism does not make civil religion impossible but has a tendency to undermine the unity and social fabric of society (Engel 2005, 536).

It is clearly evident from Rousseau's entire discussion that he understood the innate nature of human beings as individuals whose emotions play an intricate part in their everyday lives. Paying careful attention to the context of eighteenth-century Enlightenment Europe, Rousseau realised that any alternative form of society required the presence of both religion and secularity. He believed that he had successfully negotiated the tough terrain between the two with his ideas on civil religion.

Conclusion

Machiavelli's thoughts on religion provided the foundation for the philosophical analysis of civil religion and had a deep influence on Rousseau. It was the latter, however, who afforded us greater substance and a higher degree of clarity on the notion of civil religion. Rousseau's conceptualisation of political society was an attempt to solve the 'fundamental problem' of the social contract. It envisaged a form of political society that was a far cry from the French society of the time, which was characterised by an absolute monarchy. It was absolute in the sense that the monarchy was the final interpreter of divine laws; it decided what was in the public's best interests and possessed the right to ask anything of the French people.

Advancing the idea that no state has ever been formed without religion serving as its foundation, he decided to attach his ideas to a civil religion, although not one in the vein of any monotheistic faith such as Christianity or Islam. The civil principles of patriotism, good citizenship, a good lawgiver, separation of powers and an elective aristocracy would underpin his civil religion paving the way for the best chance to achieve the much desired peace and harmony in society, a goal which still eludes contemporary states. Taken together, the respective natures of patriotism (unreasoned love for the state) and citizenship (intrinsic reasoning of sentiment) would enable the civil religion to prosper. In the context of Rousseau's time, France was about the only place that came close to creating a kind of 'civil religion', and that is because the existing religious order took such a battering during the French Revolution. Although the idea of civil religion is not original, Rousseau's conception of it is unique and of great significance.

This chapter nonetheless only focused on the theoretical aspect of civil religion and not its practical applicability or usage to a contemporary political practice. This, however, does not mean that Rousseau's civil religion arguments have no contemporary relevance and should therefore be relegated to the dustbin of history. The civil principles that comprise their civil religion ideas, for instance, hold glaring similarities and serve a comparable function with the principles that characterise modern liberal democracies the world over, that is, they help protect and enhance political power. They however do not need to be the same but merely serve a similar function to the civil principles. I intend to probe this further in chapter four to extract any contemporary philosophical relevance.

As such, it is envisaged that Rousseau's and Machiavelli's theoretical understanding of civil religion will assist in conceptualising the Mandela mythology as an attempt to create a civil religion aimed at binding citizens to the post-1994 South African state. Chapter four will engage critically with this issue. The next chapter conducts an in-depth critical analysis on the political thought, actions and performative displays of Nelson Mandela and the Mandela mythology that has fed off it. It will also situate the Mandela mythology within the appropriate contemporary debate on civil religion. Accordingly, a platform will then be provided from which to critically analyse whether or not we can regard the Mandela mythology as a civil religion in South Africa.

Chapter Three

Mandela mythology in South Africa

Introduction

The preceding chapters have provided the theoretical foundation for this study by focusing on a close reading and critical analysis of the primary texts of Rousseau and Machiavelli as a gateway to understanding the Mandela mythology as a civil religion in South Africa. The study, however, still needs to discuss and analyse the Mandela mythology before it can provide a philosophically rigorous account and consequently how it has manifested itself in shaping a particular form of civil religion capable of serving as the primary unifying glue in post-apartheid South Africa. This chapter will therefore analyse the galvanising and patriotic power of Mandela by focusing on a number of key elements of the Mandela mythology.

During the liberation struggle, many myths were created from struggle icons in order to boost the morale of the people. The most famous of these was the myth of Nelson Mandela. Many historians and social scientists contend that historical narratives and myths fulfil psychological and social needs rather than scientific demands (Solani 2000, 42). This chapter will critically analyse the Mandela mythology in three parts: First, from his birth in Qunu in 1918 until his release from incarceration in 1990 (dominant narrative), second, the narrative that started to emerge after his release from prison (extension of the dominant narrative), and third, the construction of the Mandela-mania phenomenon which has solidified the dominant narrative as the official narrative. I will posit that it was the Rivonia Trial and Mandela's incarceration on Robben Island that was central to the construction of the Mandela mythology during the first phase. The first two phases, I will further argue, are of central importance since they form the basis of the third phase.

The third phase, and for the purposes of this chapter, the most important, is comprised of an analysis of the various elements of the Mandela-mania phenomenon making use of a number of newspaper articles. This sees the consolidation of the dominant narrative of the previous two phases and its ensuing portrayal as the official narrative. These elements include, amongst others, a proliferation of Mandela bank notes, Mandela coin collections, an annual philanthropic Mandela Day, Mandela 46664 and *Long Walk to Freedom* clothing ranges, the *House of Mandela* wine range, roads, bridges and buildings being named after Mandela and a number of statues both in South Africa and internationally. It is important to note that each

component of the Mandela mythology cannot be understood in isolation from the next. Each is inextricably linked with one another to demonstrate that the post-Mandela presidency in South Africa was largely characterised by a Mandela mythology. The reasons for this however, will be discussed in the next chapter. Together, these three phases provide an epiphenomenal description of the Mandela mythology, since it is at odds with the intuitive conception of Mandela as an autonomous agent in the construction of the mythology.

After concluding phase three of the mythology, I will begin setting the scene for chapter four by situating the Mandela mythology within the two relevant contemporary civil religion traditions. This is done to avoid any confusion regarding the suitable relevance of this chapter to the study. By doing so, I seek to demonstrate in chapter four that the construction of the Mandela mythology was anything but an accident of history. Rather, it was a conscious construction of historical, political and personal influence that resulted in Mandela being referred to in messianic and saint-like terms.

It is important to note that unlike many other important political leaders of the past, Mandela did not write a coherent political philosophy along the lines of Muḥammad Gaddafi's, *The Green Book*, for example. I nonetheless aim to argue that the Mandela-mania phenomenon is an integral component of the Mandela mythology, which feeds off his fragmented political thought and various performative events both during the anti-apartheid struggle and after the advent of democracy. Mandela's influence may be found in the *Programme of Action* (1949), *The Freedom Charter* (1955) and the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (1996). Analysis of his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom* (1995), and the several speeches he made during and after the liberation struggle will be important in order to attain a holistic understanding of his thought. Of his autobiography, Van Heerden posits that that 'the numerous, often-conflicting elements of the dominant narrative were ultimately consolidated and largely supplanted by the official narrative, as represented by *Long Walk to Freedom*, focusing specifically on its theme of progress and maturation' (2012, iii).

I will critically engage with the Mandela mythology so that negative aspects come to the fore. Smith (2010, 266–267) says that not discussing these negative aspects would essentially mean 'that the truth should be vanished, icons kept intact. That of course would be to deny the possibility of considering those involved as rounded human beings, faults, warts and all'. This, however, has been unable to diminish or counteract the immense power of the mythology since it has managed to rise above these negative connotations. This is referred to

as exculpation. I will discuss the profound exculpatory ability of the Mandela mythology in order to uncover how and why it manages to overcome adverse associations.

An extension to the exculpatory ability of the mythology is its immense resistance to any one particular definition of itself. The Mandela mythology evolved over time before it obtained the status of ‘hero’, ‘saint’, ‘saviour’ ‘reconciler’, ‘messiah’ and so forth, and has subsequently allowed the public to view him as possessing angelic qualities. These are also noticeably religious terms and I will argue that, together with the exculpatory ability of the myth, this is the beginning of a religious argument for the Mandela mythology in the Machiavellian and Rousseauian political sense of the word.

This chapter may seem biographical in nature, as it traces the important and defining moments of Mandela’s life from his birth in Qunu in 1918 to the end of his presidency in 1999. These events, however, are important occurrences in the construction of the Mandela mythology and contribute to providing it with a holistic account. This has eventually allowed me to understand the contemporary manifestations (post-Mandela presidency and death) of the Mandela mythology.

The making of the Mandela mythology (part one: 1918–1990)

The Mandela mythology is coherently embodied in his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, which may be unofficially referred to as the secular holy book of Nelson Mandela. In effect, Mandela’s autobiography does not merely provide a story of his life but is rather aimed to construct a cohesive identity not just for Mandela but for the South African nation at large. As Van Heerden remarks, ‘his (Mandela’s) militancy and his non-violence, his non-racialism and his Africanism, his selflessness and his egotism all need to be accounted for and integrated into a cohesive whole. In order to achieve this, Mandela is located within the historical narrative of South Africa’s freedom struggle’ (2012, 35). *Long Walk to Freedom* depicts the development of Mandela’s life as ‘historically inevitable and necessary’ and, as such, presents his personal shortcomings without challenging the dominant narrative of him as a secular saint, thus ‘allowing him to acknowledge his shortcomings, while constructing him as having moved beyond them’ (Van Heerden 2012, 35).

The first part of the Mandela mythology is primarily constructed through Mandela’s dominant role as co-founder of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL), volunteer-in-chief of the Defiance Campaign, his role in the adoption of the Freedom Charter,

his life as a fugitive of the law (popularly known the Black Pimpernel), supreme courtroom performer in the Treason and Rivonia trials, founder of the ANC's armed wing, uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK), and his incarceration on Robben Island. Nonetheless, it is important to begin with a discussion of his childhood years from the moment of his initiation in Qunu in 1918 until his move to Johannesburg. This may provide us with valuable insights into the origins of the mythology.

From Qunu to Johannesburg

It was during his initiation ceremony in Qunu that Mandela was first made aware of his oppression. Chief Meligqili, son of Dalindyebo, exclaimed that 'we Xhosas, and all black South Africans, are a conquered people. We are slaves in our own country. We are tenants on our own soil. We have no strength, no power, no control over our own destiny in the land of our birth' (Mandela 1995, 35). Van Heerden (2012, 2) argues that this sudden awareness, and this period in general, assisted the process of mythologisation, 'partly because of its historical unverifiability in many respects and partly, because Mandela himself has subsequently been popularly located – and has located himself – within a long tradition of African mythology and traditional narratives'. The historical unverifiability of records about Mandela's youth has allowed biographers to essentially shape this period according to their choosing and therefore contribute to the process of myth-making.

With regard to Mandela's own version of this history, Van Heerden contends that because of his immense moral authority, most people have accepted this as the truth (2012, 3). The constructed history of Mandela's upbringing demonstrates the immense power of historical-mythological narratives. These constructs do not depend on concrete facts and this is the key to understanding the power of the Mandela mythology. As Van Heerden (2012, 43) succinctly puts it, 'if concrete facts alone were accountable for the massive emotive and imaginative power of the Mandela myth, then, by right, Tambo, Sisulu and others would enjoy a similar status. Respected and revered though they are, they could hardly be said to wield the same mythological power and personal agency as Mandela'.

Van Heerden posits that Mandela's journey to Johannesburg in order to run away from the patronage of Jongintaba and an arranged marriage, is a crucial point in the development of Mandela's character with him 'seeking an arena in which he could effect political change, driven by a wounded pride and irrepressible political conscience' (2012, 50). Mandela remarks that Johannesburg conscientised him about the daily oppression of the black subject.

He comments that his teachers at Fort Hare rarely engaged with them about racial oppression, poor opportunities and the vast variety of laws that discriminated against the black man and its aim to condemn Africans to perpetual servitude in their own land. The dominant narrative of the pre-1994 Mandela also positions him as ‘consciously political, granting him [personal] agency and foresight, and attributing his move to Johannesburg to a conscious pursuit of his destiny’ (Van Heerden 2012, 56).

Formation of ANCYL

Mandela’s interactions with the ANC leadership at the time made it clear to him that they were unable to remain in touch with the masses. Mandela and others argued that enacting change through constitutional means was bearing no fruit and that the masses were becoming increasingly disillusioned with the potential effectiveness of the ANC as a liberation movement (Kalumba 1995, 168). Mandela, being well aware of this weakness, consciously decided to align himself with more radical policies such as Lembede’s Africanist vision and became a powerful exponent of it. It was during this time, the late 1940s and early 1950s, that Mandela became a leading political figure in the ANC. However, he was not yet the romantic, heroic figure that he would later become (Maylam 2009, 25).

The formation of the Youth League branch of the ANC in 1944 was aimed at moving beyond the passive policies of the mother body. The Youth League’s Programme of Action, as a response to the Nationalist election victory in 1948 and its adoption of apartheid, demanded African nationalism by the mother body whilst also acting as a blueprint for resistance and protest. Mandela was a committed African nationalist and anti-liberal during the early days of the Youth League. Together with Sisulu and Tambo, Mandela sought to blackmail the reluctant Dr AB Xuma into endorsing the Programme of Action by not supporting his quest for re-election as president if he refused. Although they never succeeded, the Youth League supported a vote of no confidence in him at the Bloemfontein conference and Xuma was eventually fired, paving the way for the adoption of the Programme of Action in 1949 (Smith 2010, 90).

Lodge (2006, 39) notes that this conference saw the beginning of Mandela’s rapid movement up the ANC leadership ranks. Chief Albert Luthuli was elected as president and Mandela as one of four deputy presidents. Lodge argues that this may in part be attributed to his patrician lineage at a time when politicians were mostly comprised of ordinary men. The overthrow of Xuma helped reinforce Mandela’s ever-increasing image as a youthful firebrand. The image

of Mandela as a young militant revolutionary bolstered the mythology that was building around him. Although his imprisonment should have put the brakes on this emerging narrative, Van Heerden remarks that ‘these images could never be contested or supplanted by the ageing and increasingly moderate individual’ (2012, 6).

Another advantage of Mandela’s rise in the ANC was his acute ability to transcend ‘racial borders, especially with people of different backgrounds, something facilitated by his regular exposure to, and relationships with, whites during his formative years’ (Van Heerden 2012, 58). This ability would come in very useful once the liberation movement started to gain momentum.

Defiance Campaign

The formation of the youth league was followed in 1953 by a mass campaign of defiance – known in popular memory as the Defiance Campaign. Mandela referred to it as ‘the most powerful action ever undertaken by the oppressed masses in South Africa’ (Mandela 1995, 147–148). It involved a group of individuals who would go about defying petty apartheid laws with the goal of being arrested and imprisoned. Elected volunteer-in-chief of the Defiance Campaign, Mandela cemented his reputation as an emerging leader of the people. By associating himself with the masses, he became known as a leader ‘in tune with the desires of the masses, on the forefront of a more assertive, vibrant and large-scale liberation struggle’ (Van Heerden 2012, 59). The aim of the campaign was the repeal of six unjust pieces of apartheid legislation.

Together with opposition to the Sophiatown removals, the Defiance Campaign may be regarded as a total failure with respect to achieving their stated goals. Not only did it not stem the tide of apartheid but it resulted in more repressive legislation being enacted. Despite this, the unprecedented level of publicity it received served to propel Mandela and the ANC into the spotlight in which he revelled. It also served to legitimise the ANC, in the eyes of the government, as a threat to its ideology. This campaign also gave much needed traction to the ANC’s anti-apartheid struggle. It further legitimised the ANC’s later adoption of the armed struggle since it conscientised many blacks into believing that the days of non-violence as the only tool of liberation was coming to an end since non-violence was always met with brute force.

In a sense, these events may have ‘problematised the dominant construction of Mandela as inherently non-racial and non-violent’ but this was overcome by being interpreted and integrated into ‘Mandela’s process of maturation and development’ (Van Heerden 2012, 59). Lodge (2006, 53) argues that Mandela’s persona was the greatest asset of the Defiance Campaign since it lent prestige to the ANC, the liberation struggle and, most importantly, Mandela himself. Despite its failure, the importance of the Defiance Campaign lies not in its failure to have the six apartheid laws repealed, but in situating its role in the creation of the larger Mandela mythology.

The Defiance Campaign also marked the beginning of interracial cooperation between Indians, Coloureds and Blacks, which served to bolster the liberation struggle. This development greatly worried the apartheid regime who responded by announcing that the justice minister

would soon pass legislation to deal with [their] defiance, a threat he implemented ... with the passage of the Public Safety Act, which empowered the government to declare martial law and to detain people without trial, and the Criminal Laws Amendment Act, which authorised corporal punishment for defiers (Mandela 1995, 153).

Mandela viewed the Defiance Campaign as a personal achievement. He states in *Long Walk to Freedom* that

I nevertheless felt a great sense of accomplishment and satisfaction: I had been engaged in a just cause and had the strength to fight for it and win. The campaign freed me from any lingering sense of doubt or inferiority I might still have felt; it liberated me from the feeling of being overwhelmed by the power and seeming invincibility of the white man and his institutions. But now the white man had felt the power of my punches and I could walk upright like a man, and look everyone in the eye with the dignity that comes from not having succumbed to oppression and fear. I had come of age as a freedom fighter (Mandela 1995, 161).

Mandela states that the Defiance Campaign also served to galvanise support for the ANC. He mentions that before the campaign the ANC had only volunteers who did nothing more than pay lip service to what it stood for. However, the campaign resulted in more than 100 000 members joining its ranks. In essence, Mandela rewrote history by *de facto* rendering the campaign as one that signalled the onset of a more active struggle against apartheid and which resulted in a huge increase in its membership numbers even though these were far from its stated goals at the start of the campaign (Van Heerden 2012, 65–66).

The Freedom Charter

The Freedom Charter was a momentous occasion in the history of South Africa, as it was the first time that South Africans of all races, creeds, ideological convictions and religious affiliations united to renounce all forms of racialism and to begin the process of building the new South Africa. The Freedom Charter was the foremost document capturing the ideology of the liberation struggle, which placed equality and diversity at the forefront. This is epitomised by the words, ‘South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white’ (Freedom Charter [1955] 1987, 672). However, given the significance of the Freedom Charter in relation to other policy documents of the ANC, it is significant to note that Mandela’s central role in it is a constructed myth as he was not very involved. Smith (2010, 155) alleges that a white communist, Rusty Bernstein, wrote the Freedom Charter and the emerging top brass of the ANC merely rubber stamped the document.

In any event, the signing of the Freedom Charter signalled the dawn of a new liberal ideology within the ANC, as well as the emergence of new dominant voices – Mandela, Sisulu and Tambo now began to take charge of the ANC (Smith 2010, 155). In terms of the Mandela mythology, it also transformed Mandela from the much vaunted radical young Africanist to a black liberal. It is my opinion that should Mandela have continued along the path of a radical Africanist, the construction of the Mandela mythology would have stalled at this stage as he would have been subsequently cast in an unfavourable light by the white liberal establishment.

The Treason Trial

The adoption of the Freedom Charter was followed by the arrest and charging of 156 individuals with high treason – a charge punishable by death. The resultant marathon Treason Trial served to further legitimise the ANC-led coalition of parties as a threat to the apartheid government. Mandela used the trial to outline the ANC’s vision of obtaining universal adult suffrage through peaceful means. He argued that the organisation was willing to negotiate the amount of representation Africans would have in parliament, contending that the ANC’s adoption of strikes, boycotts and stay-aways as a method to attain this was only considered once it became clear that the government would never demonstrate its willingness to come to the negotiating table of its own accord. The government failed to prove that the accused aimed to overthrow the government, as the defence demonstrated that only peaceful means of opposition were used. The trial ended after four years with the acquittal of all of the accused.

In fact, Mandela later stated in a conversation with Richard Stengel that ‘hardly anybody believed that we would be convicted. In fact in the case itself, people read and finished books, novels; they were not concerned with the proceedings’ (Mandela [1993] 2011, 260). This greatly embarrassed the government who were now more determined to ensure that this would never happen again. The Treason Trial was another major performative display by Mandela and it confirmed his position at the apex of the struggle.

The Black Pimpernel

After his arrest and imprisonment for five months in 1960 following the Sharpeville massacre, Mandela was forced to go underground to continue the work of the ANC which had now become a banned organisation. He was described in the media as the Black Pimpernel and moved around the country using several disguises. During this time, he undertook some of the most important work of the ANC and remained a fugitive for seventeen months during which time he also left the country illegally to gain military training and international support for the liberation struggle. Van Heerden remarks that this period was the most dominant period in the construction of the Mandela mythology. The name Black Pimpernel helped project Mandela as a man in touch with the people and he refers to this as a quality most desired in any leader.

This is given substance when he narrates the story of his meeting with Tanzanian leader Julius Nyerere. He comments on Nyerere’s home as ‘not at all grand’ and the leader himself as someone who drives a ‘simple car, a little Austin’. This suggested to Mandela that Nyerere ‘was a man of the people’. This excites Mandela who is also impressed by Nyerere’s view that a class-based society is ‘alien to Africa; socialism indigenous’ (1995, 345). This projected identity as a man identifiable with the masses despite his education and desirable employment was essential to the ANC and the struggle at large since previous leaders of the ANC such as Dr A B Xuma and Dr James Moroka were considered elitist and out of touch with the masses, which probably accounted for the organisation’s ineffectiveness during their respective reigns.

Mandela comments that his projection as a fugitive of the law allowed him to ‘become a public symbol of rebellion and struggle’ (1995, 308). He consciously contributed to the construction of the mythology around the Black Pimpernel. In *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela writes that

I would even feed the mythology of the Black Pimpernel by taking a pocketful of ‘tickeys’ (threepenny pieces) and ‘phoning individual newspaper reporters from telephone boxes and relaying to them stories of what we were planning or of the ineptitude of the police. I would pop up here and there to the annoyance of the police and to the delight of the people (1995, 316).

Van Heerden claims that the power of the Black Pimpernel mythology lies only partly in reality. Rather, the greatest strength of the myth lay in the ‘creation of auxiliary myths during the succeeding years’ (2012, 95). This is especially true with regard to the myth created by the ANC to benefit the cause of liberation whilst Mandela was incarcerated on Robben Island. I will explain this in more detail later on.

During this crucial period, Mandela was at the forefront of the creation of MK, and represented the ANC at the Pan African Freedom Movement for East Central and Southern Africa (PAFMECSA) conference in Ethiopia, where he sought to obtain funds and arms for the ANC which was about to embark on the armed struggle. Walter Sisulu remarked in 1995 that when Mandela decided to continue the activities of the ANC underground, he knew that Mandela was essentially stepping into a dominant leadership position (Lodge 2006, 86). Although generally preaching non-violent protest, Mandela’s turn to the armed struggle was only a last resort after it had become obvious that the government was determined to always meet non-violent action with deadly force.

On the second morning of the May 1960 stay-at-home, Mandela told local and international press from a secret hideaway that ‘if the government’s reaction is to crush by naked force our non-violent struggle, we will have to consider changing our tactics’. He concluded with the punchline: ‘in my mind we are closing a chapter on this question of non-violent struggle’ (Mandela 1995, 320). Even when high-ranking members of the ANC opposed Mandela’s call for an armed struggle, he remained resolute and democratic in his bid to get the armed struggle accepted. He first went to the National Working Committee and then the National Executive of the ANC, lobbying for support.

Again, it should be noted that as with Mandela’s youth, the myth-making process during this period was facilitated in part by the difficulty to verify his version of events. Van Heerden argues that the Black Pimpernel allowed Mandela, for the first time, to obtain a public identity which was for the most part independent of the ANC. The immense popularity that the Black Pimpernel gained around the country is indicative of Mandela’s vast individual power (Van Heerden 2012, 97). Mandela’s individual popularity was enhanced by his public calls for an armed struggle long before it was formally adopted by the ANC and he came to

be seen as fulfilling the desire of the impatient masses for liberation via the barrel of the gun. Hence, it was the ANC at large that stood to benefit from Mandela's individualism (Van Heerden 2012, 98). During his time as a fugitive, Mandela wrote a letter to a number of South African print publications talking of the immense sacrifice of his chosen life. This served to create the impression of him of a self-sacrificing leader putting the hopes and desires of the masses before his own. This theme of self-sacrifice is prevalent throughout the Mandela mythology and in general served to reinforce it, since it depicted Mandela as always putting the needs of the people before his own.

The media and the government played a crucial role in providing the Black Pimpernel epithet with its high level of significance. Mandela remarks in *Long Walk to Freedom* that

the May 29 stay-at-home ... was shaping up to be a virtual war between the state and the liberation movement. Late in May, the government staged countrywide raids on opposition leaders. Meetings were banned; printing presses were seized; and legislation was rushed through Parliament permitting the police to detain charged prisoners for twelve days without bail. Verwoerd declared that those supporting the strike, including sympathetic newspapers, were playing with fire ... [t]wo days before the stay-at-home, the government staged the greatest peace-time show of force in South African history. The military exercised its largest call-up since the war. Police holidays were cancelled. Military units were stationed at the entrances and exits of townships. While Saracen tanks rumbled through the dirt streets of the townships, helicopters hovered above, swooping down to break up any gathering. At night, the helicopters trained searchlights on houses (Mandela 1995, 318).

Time magazine played its part in furthering the myth of the Black Pimpernel. In an article dated 17 August 1962, it reported that Mandela

became a disguise artist: dressed as a garage worker, he once wheeled a spare tire down the main street of Johannesburg under the nose of the cops. On another occasion, when he wanted to retrieve some documents from his Johannesburg office, Mandela dressed himself as a Zulu janitor in the traditional blue jumper and shorts, stuck huge earrings through his ear lobes, grabbed a broom and walked through the police cordon outside his office. Once inside, he tucked the papers under his shirt and calmly walked out (Time Magazine [1962] 2012).

The ANC in exile also made a conscious decision to position Mandela as the symbol of all those who were incarcerated by the apartheid government (Solani 2000, 44). Van Heerden states that part of the Black Pimpernel's immense popularity lay in Mandela's relative freedom of movement during an era in which most blacks were restricted by the pass laws. This is evident in *Long Walk to Freedom* when he states that

escape serves a double purpose: it liberates a freedom fighter from jail so that he can continue to fight, but offers a tremendous psychological boost to the struggle and a great publicity blow against the enemy. As a prisoner, I always contemplated escape, and during my various trips to and from the commanding officer's office, I carefully surveyed the walls, the movements of the guards, the types of keys and locks used in the doors. I made a detailed

sketch of the prison grounds with particular emphasis on the exact location of the prison hospital and the gates leading out of it (Mandela 1995, 382).

Mandela's advocacy for an armed struggle goes against the image of a saint or messiah. Scholarly analysis of this, however, has always portrayed it as going against his inherent nature and usually points to his discussion of violence in *Long Walk to Freedom*. During his discussion of boxing at Healdtown, for example, Mandela talks about boxing as a 'sport which [he] seem[s] less suited for than long-distance running' (Mandela 1995, 37). He elaborates on this later on in the book by commenting that boxing for him was less about an enjoyment of violence than the 'science of it'. 'I was intrigued' Mandela says, 'by how one moved one's body to protect oneself, how one uses a strategy both to attack and retreat, how one paced oneself over a match' (Mandela 1995, 226).

During his trip to Algeria to receive military training, Mandela portrays himself as someone unsuited to military training. 'I was now embarking on what was to be the most unfamiliar part of my trip: military training. I had arranged to receive six months of training in Addis Ababa ... where I was to learn the art and science of soldiering. While I was a fair amateur boxer, I had very little knowledge of even the rudiments of combat' (Mandela 1995, 362). This serves to ease the tension between the portrayal of Mandela as a saint and militant revolutionary. Mandela further represents himself in *Long Walk to Freedom* as someone who is kind and trustworthy even to his adversaries. On the way back to Johannesburg after being arrested in Howick, Mandela was given the opportunity to stretch his legs and walk about. He was not handcuffed which gave him the opportunity to escape his captors. However, he 'did not want to take advantage of the trust they has placed in [him]' (Mandela 1995, 374). Mandela's life as the Black Pimpernel was the foundation for his subsequent performative acts in his 1962 trial for leaving the country illegally and inciting people to strike and, most importantly, the Rivonia Trial.

1962 trial for leaving the country illegally and inciting people to strike

Mandela's court appearances after his arrest in 1962 were used by the ANC and himself in particular, 'as opportunities for performative displays which would strengthen the movement and heighten his personal symbolic currency. Although he was certainly not alone in this, his personal prestige and popularity meant that there was a vast amount of public and media interest around his appearances in court, which could be taken advantage of' (Van Heerden 2012, 103). At the trial, Mandela spoke about the Congress Alliance's constant efforts to

negotiate a new democratic constitution with the government but which efforts were always brutally crushed. He reminded the court about the peaceful resolutions reached by the All-in-Africa conference in Pietermaritzburg which only agreed on a campaign of defiance after attempts at negotiations had failed. He argued that his successive actions were merely a reaction against the government.

In *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela states that he noted uneasiness on the part of the magistrate and other attorneys. He puts this down to them being uncomfortable with the fact that they were persecuting a man who was standing up for his principles. As such, he realised that he was a ‘the symbol of justice in the court of the oppressor, the representative of the great ideals of freedom, fairness, and democracy in a society that dishonoured those virtues’. In this court, he realised that he ‘could carry on the fight even within the fortress of the enemy’ (Mandela 1995, 375–376). As such, he took a moral stance, stating that ‘I was made, by the law, a criminal, not because of what I had done, but because of what I stood for, because of what I thought, because of my conscience’ (Mandela [1962] 2003, 23).

The trial made national and international headlines and *Free Mandela* campaigns were set up throughout the world. In *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela states that the ANC ‘set up a *Free Mandela* Committee and launched a lively campaign with the slogan “*Free Mandela*” (Mandela 1995, 384). Protests were held throughout the country and the slogan began to appear scrawled on the sides of buildings. The government retaliated by banning all gatherings relating to his imprisonment, but this restriction was ignored by the liberation movement. Although the campaign focused on Mandela, he was always at pains to state that he was only one person in the collective of the ANC that was rising up against the injustices of the system. ‘I have been only one in a large army of people, all of whom the credit of any success of achievement must go’ (Mandela [1962] 2003, 21).

During his mitigation speech at the trial, Mandela decided to make a political speech which he knew would not serve any practical purpose for he was certain that incarceration lay ahead. He took the ‘opportunity to construct the Mandela that will be left behind’ and to justify this actions ‘as to construct himself as a martyr, in a time when sacrificial leadership was the ideological focus of the ANC’ (Van Heerden 2012, 105). The government itself played an important part in confirming Mandela’s status as the foremost freedom fighter. The restrictions they imposed on Mandela served to acknowledge the widely held view that he was the liberation struggle’s chief protagonist.

Mandela was eventually sentenced to five years in prison for the aforementioned crimes. It was during this period of incarceration that Lilliesleaf Farm in Rivonia, the ANC's underground base, was raided and all there arrested. What followed was without doubt the most important political trial in South Africa's history, which Mandela himself dubbed 'the trial to end of all trials' (1995, 361). At the trial, Mandela effectively assumed the role of the accused's spokesperson. The Rivonia Trial turned out to be one of the main events in the development of the Mandela mythology since it became the most vital performative display for Mandela and the ANC. In effect, the trial was aimed at enhancing support for the ANC and the liberation struggle in addition to the dissemination of the grievances of Africans (Van Heerden 2012, 106).

Mandela stated that the trialists were not concerned with testing the limits of the law. They wanted to use the trial as a platform to disseminate their beliefs. 'We were not concerned with getting off or lessening our punishment, but with having the trial strengthen the cause for which we were all struggling – at whatever cost to ourselves. We would not defend ourselves in a legal sense so much as in a moral sense' (Mandela 1995, 428–429).

Deliberately choosing not to testify, Mandela delivered a four-hour-long principled political speech at the trial even though he knew it carried less weight than evidence provided through rigorous cross-examination. This iconic statement is probably the defining moment in the creation of the Mandela mythology since it signalled the beginning of Mandela's status and image as a hero, be it amongst blacks, white liberals, the media or African nationalists. Mathebe (2012, 318) argues that 'the folklore of South African history [is] rich with the stories of the hero's mystical qualities [and is] traceable to the Rivonia Trial of the sixties where the former president made a recourse to the universalism of the Enlightenment era'.

In the statement, Mandela spoke about the long and proud history of the African people, the wars they fought in defence of their territory and his founding role in the formation of MK and that he was actively involved in the planning of sabotage activities. He however maintained that this was not the result of recklessness but rather of a 'sober assessment of the political situation' (Mandela [1964] 2003, 27) in the country as a result of centuries of oppression and tyranny of blacks by the white minority. He maintained that despite undertaking the armed struggle, the organisation always provided clear and strict guidelines to all those involved that the innocent should be spared at all costs, be it in the planning or

conducting of its activities. Sabotage, Mandela stated, was the only method that would not serve as a death-knell to future race relations.

Many would reason that violence is not the conduct befitting a saint. Mandela retorted that he did not plan violence in a ‘spirit of recklessness, nor because I have any love of violence’ ([1964] 2003, 27). He attempted to distinguish the African nationalism of the ANC from its traditional understanding – ‘drive the white man to the sea’ – espoused by the PAC. He argued that the ANC’s African nationalism ‘is the concept of freedom and fulfilment for the African people in their own land’ (Mandela 1995, 435) and its principal document is the Freedom Charter which embodies these ideals and which calls for a non-racial existence in the country. It was because of the common goal of freedom that the ANC was willing to tolerate ideological differences and work with, amongst others, the Communist Party. The communists, he argued, were the only people willing to treat Africans as human beings and equals. The struggle for Africans, he remarked, was a struggle for human dignity and against white supremacy. Mandela ended his statement with the now iconic words where he stated that the ideals of the liberation struggle were something he was prepared to die for.

During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die (Mandela [1964] 1994, 181).

This speech won widespread international approval since it epitomised the ideals of dignity and freedom for all of humanity and, therefore, served as one of the major performative actions that propelled him to saint-like status. This historic speech, according to Maylam (2009, 26), was ‘principled, defiant, uncompromising, lofty and dignified revealing Mandela’s own great integrity and spirit of self-sacrifice’.

Mandela and his fellow accused decided that, even if they were to be given the death sentence, they would not appeal since this would ‘seem anti-climactic and even disillusioning’ because ‘our message was that no sacrifice was too great in the struggle for freedom’ (Mandela 1995, 444). Mandela commented that should the sentence of death be passed upon him, he would have stated to the presiding judge that he ‘was prepared to die secure in the knowledge that my death would be an inspiration to the cause for which I was giving my life. My death – our deaths – would not be in vain; if anything we might serve the cause greater in death as martyrs than we ever could in life’ (Mandela 1995, 359). The life

sentence eventually handed down to most of the accused enriched their image as fearless martyrs of the struggle willing to sacrifice their lives for it. As such, despite Mandela now being eliminated from the public sphere, his ‘greatest show of defiance’ would now catalyse ‘the process of mythologisation which would occur around him during his incarceration on Robben Island’ (Van Heerden 2012, 107).

In essence,

Mandela came to represent the embodiment of this golden period. As co-founder of the CYL, volunteer-in-chief, the Black Pimpernel, consummate courtroom performer, founder of MK and international political celebrity, he embodied an idealised figure of the struggle; his name, words and image were so powerful, it seemed, that simply publishing them was in some way a threat to the government (Van Heerden 2012, 108–109).

This was the last time most South Africans and the world would hear or read from Mandela for almost twenty-seven years, as his words and pictures were banned by the apartheid regime. For Sampson (1999, 199), the Rivonia Trial allowed Mandela to go to ‘jail with all the glory of a lost leader, in an aura of martyrdom’.

Robben Island

Many ascribe the fact that Mandela was not given the death sentence to the immense international pressure. The apartheid regime instead decided to isolate him on Robben Island just as their colonial predecessors had done with Xhosa leaders such as Makana. Mandela’s incarceration on Robben Island is an irony of history since the regime thought they were securing apartheid by throwing Mandela and other liberation fighters into prison. On the contrary, the twenty-seven years of incarceration saw further development of the Mandela mythology. In fact, I postulate that, together with the Rivonia Trial, Robben Island propelled the Mandela mythology to the forefront of the collective conscious of South Africans and the world at large.

Prison life was also characterised by immense personal grief and emotional anguish. In 1968, Mandela received news that his mother had passed on. He requested, but was denied permission, to attend her funeral. More bad news was forthcoming in 1969 when he was told that his son Themvikile had been killed in a car accident. As expected, Mandela was again denied permission to attend the funeral. Maylam (2009, 27) says that Mandela can be described as an archetypal hero who developed coping mechanisms to deal with and survive such intense grief and ordeals. His autobiography is filled with examples of these coping mechanisms. Here, he provides examples of the satisfaction he gained from washing his own

clothes, working on his vegetable garden and waking up early every day to begin his exercise regimen. He also spoke of the techniques he slowly developed in order to pacify many of the prison warders who were hell bent on making his prison life a misery. He would treat them with respect but never tolerated anything which he deemed as an affront to his dignity.

The imprisonment of anti-apartheid leaders on the island 'lent a powerful historical resonance, integrating them – initially, at least – into an extended historical narrative of political oppression and martyrdom' (Van Heerden 2012, 36). Van Heerden remarks that Robben Island was the place at which Mandela and other anti-apartheid leaders underwent a maturing of their political philosophy and ultimately their view of a democratic South Africa. Robben Island was thus not only symbolic of tyranny, oppression and martyrdom but also of reconciliation, transformation and nation-building. The site of so much pain, suffering and oppression has now been included in the post-1994 Mandela and South African narrative. This inversion has mostly been facilitated, according to Van Heerden, by *Long Walk to Freedom* (2012, 36). During Mandela's incarceration, pictures and words of him were outlawed and his contact with the outside world was sporadic at best. The Mandela mythology was being transformed to represent him as the 'black messiah' (Van Heerden 2012, 108).

Despite this, the mainstream of the liberation struggle up until 1976 was largely dormant. Most of its leaders were imprisoned and it was apparent that the apartheid regime had, for the most part, succeeded in crushing the liberation struggle. The South African Students Organisation (SASO), the Black Consciousness movement led by Steve Biko, workers strikes attempted to break free but found it difficult to achieve unanimous support for their actions. During this period of relative quiet in the country, the apartheid regime pushed their propaganda machine to the limits. They claimed that the masses were content with the state of affairs in the country and depicted the freedom fighters as enemy agitators without which South Africa would be at peace. The regime habitually blamed almost any uprising or acts of violence and sabotage on the liberation fighters on Robben Island. By doing so, the regime was singling them out and in the process catapulting them to the forefront of popular imagination of the country and the world as leaders of the anti-apartheid struggle (Van Heerden 2012, 109).

The dormancy of the liberation struggle began to change with the 1976 Soweto Uprising against the system of Bantu Education. In a letter smuggled out of Robben Island after the

uprising and subsequently published by the ANC, Mandela spoke out against the repressive nature of white supremacy and the unyielding determination of the people to crush the system. He spoke of the importance of unity in the liberation struggle. The struggle, he asserted, could ill afford the 'luxury of division and disunity. At all levels and in every walk of life we must close rank. Within the ranks of the people differences must be submerged to the achievement of a single goal – the complete overthrow of apartheid and racist domination' (Mandela [1976] 1994, 191). What followed the uprising was a systematic campaign, both in South Africa and internationally, against apartheid with Mandela being portrayed as the figurehead. Free Mandela campaigns were initiated all over the world and were successful in catching the public's imagination (Meredith 2010, 338).

Mandela therefore became the theoretical, rhetorical and visual signifier of the liberation struggle. Although incarceration suppressed his physical freedom, it tremendously enhanced his status as a hero and the mythology that came to surround him. Meredith (2010, xv) remarks that Mandela had 'gained mythical status – the lost leader whom the world yearned to see again' (2010, xv). Mandela was bestowed with twelve honorary doctorates from academic institutions around the world (Maylam 2009, 28). Lodge (2006, 192–193) contends that 'the imprisonment and isolation from public view kept the narrative and the images that accompanied it pristine, invested with the glamour of martyrdom, but reinforced by apocalyptic possibilities of second coming'. His mythology grew with every attempt by the regime to suppress his presence in the popular consciousness. In essence, Mandela's incarceration only served to enhance his legitimacy as the most famous and powerful liberation fighter (Van Heerden 2012, 110).

In 1975, Ahmed Kathrada suggested that Mandela write a memoir to 'boost the growing cult of [him] and inject some momentum into the stagnating battle against apartheid' (Smith 2010, 119). The plan was to publish the book to mark his 60th birthday. The book was to be necessarily written in secret and smuggled out by Mac Maharaj when he was released in 1976. Maharaj had initially wanted a more personal account from Mandela including personal information about the break-up of his first marriage to Evelyn to which Mandela only slightly relented and wrote: 'and then I led a thoroughly immoral life'. Although Maharaj pressed Mandela for more details, he refused to budge stating only that he would not talk about who he had led the immoral life with.

History has indeed been reconstructed, since *Long Walk to Freedom* is devoid of any reference to his immorality. Nevertheless, the memoir was not published because it was not supported by Oliver Tambo, Joe Slovo or Yusuf Dadoo. In any event, Maharaj claims to have lost the original copy and argues that we would not have learnt much about the real Mandela even if the original had been published since Mandela was reluctant to reveal his true self (Smith 2010, 119–121). Despite this, the Mandela mythology continued to grow and reach unprecedented proportions.

Mac Maharaj contends that the masses' increasing iconising of the incarcerated Mandela was a direct result of his revolutionary stature as the first commander-in-chief of MK, even though most people never saw him personally or even heard him speak. After his release from prison, Maharaj spoke of his journey to Durban and of being held in solitary confinement in prisons across four provinces. Here, he managed to make contact with militant political prisoners who spoke with deep love about Mandela whom they regarded as having inspired them to join the armed struggle despite not having met him (Maharaj [1978] 1994, 236).

Maylam adds that during ancient times, many rulers were bestowed with semi-divine status and, to sustain such images, they would mostly separate themselves from their populace. 'In a paradoxical sense' then, 'prison for Mandela was both hell and heaven – subjecting him to extreme hardship inside, but elevating him to sainthood outside' (Maylam 2009, 28). Van Heerden (2012, 111) further posits that Mandela's removal from the public sphere had many unintended consequences. For example, his absence from the coalface of the struggle meant that he would slowly be seen as diplomatic and more considered than the younger generation of freedom fighters, who were regarded as militant and confrontational.

As such, they could retain connotations of youthful militancy on the mainland, serving as an inspiration for the increasingly militant resistance there, while presenting themselves as considered, diplomatic and politically mature to the prison authorities, a strategy which allowed them to be both symbolically relevant and politically approachable. These two elements would ultimately result in the removal of the core Rivonia Trialists from the island, serving – it was hoped – to lessen its symbolic currency, while singling them out as potential partners in negotiations (Van Heerden 2012, 111).

Mandela was the focus when it came to talking about Robben Island and this helped signify it in the popular consciousness as the 'locus of struggle, perseverance and reconciliation' (Van Heerden 2012, 113). Nixon (1991, 44) advances the idea that incarceration 'helped station the idea of Nelson Mandela on the threshold between the dead and the living, between

commemoration and expectation'. He points out that shortly before Mandela's release from prison in 1990, he heard a white South African tell Ted Koppel's 'Nightline' TV programme that South Africa required a 'messiah to lead us out of the wilderness. Maybe Nelson Mandela is that man' (1991, 47).

Another contribution of Mandela's Robben Island incarceration to the larger Mandela mythology was that imprisonment came to be seen as part of the sacrifices of the struggle – an honour that all liberation fighters should strive for (Van Heerden 2012, 111). During Mandela's incarceration on Robben Island, the ANC adopted a conscious strategy of appropriating their imprisoned leader as the symbol of the anti-apartheid struggle – a strategy they had learnt from other liberation struggles around the world. Despite not being president of the ANC (a position held by Oliver Tambo in exile after the death of Albert Luthuli in 1967), Mandela had gained worldwide prominence through his role in the Defiance Campaign, the Freedom Charter, the Treason Trial and the Rivonia Trial and, as such, was the ANC's first choice. Van Heerden adds that the 'conscious fostering of his mythical persona served to highlight the already considerable symbolic currency he already possessed' (Van Heerden 2012, 112).

Ahmed Kathrada acknowledges that this campaign was, 'like the Defiance Campaign and the Sophiatown removals, a performative campaign, serving to bolster support for the liberation struggle through the evocation of Mandela's personal suffering and martyrdom' (cited in Van Heerden 2012, 112). There were some political prisoners who argued that personalising the struggle under Mandela's name was a 'betrayal of the collectivity of the organisation' (Mandela 1995, 603). Most, however, understood that this was simply a strategy to arouse the consciousness of the people.

Maylam argues that the global appeal of the Mandela mythology lies not only in his heroism but also in his deep humanity. He posits that Mandela's prison years were 'undoubtedly a significant formative experience' (2009, 32). Authors such as Charlene Smith and Andrew Sampson agree with this. Smith (1999, 64) comments that 'before prison, Mandela was a gifted leader who tended to arrogance. Prison hardship taught him patience; the denial of rights – wisdom; the empathy of others less privileged than himself – compassion. Prison made him one of the greatest leaders of history'. For Sampson (1999, xv), incarceration transformed Mandela from a 'headstrong activist into the reflective and self-disciplined world statesman'.

Incarceration allowed Mandela a large degree of self-reflection and freedom of thought. It was prison that allowed him and his comrades to discuss a variety of matters such as whether or not blacks should participate in the Bantustans and the type of political and economic direction the country should take in the event of freedom. In prison, they were not subject to public opinion, discourses or political discourses from the outside world and, hence, they could not be accused of 'deviationism, unacceptable revisionism, or even selling out'. In addition, incarceration allowed Mandela to avoid realpolitik – the 'age of spin-doctoring, blatant lying and media management' to which most politicians succumbed (Maylam 2009, 32).

Whilst in prison, Mandela was provided with many conditional offers of release. In 1974 and a year later, in 1975, he was visited on Robben Island by the then Minister of Justice, Jimmy Kruger. Kruger offered to release Mandela if he accepted banishment to his home in the Transkei Bantustan which was then under the rule of his nephew Kaizer Matanzima. He flatly rejected both offers, stating that he refused to provide legitimacy to the policy of separate development (Maylam 2009, 27). In 1986, President P. W. Botha offered to release Mandela from prison on condition that he renounces the armed struggle.

Mandela's daughter Zindzi read out his response at a mass rally in Soweto. These were the first words that the world had heard from Mandela since his address at the Rivonia Trial in 1964. In the letter, Mandela stated that it was the government which consistently spurned his attempts to negotiate a peaceful settlement and instead chose to meet these peaceful overtures with savage attacks. He talked about the 1952 letter from the ANC to DF Malan which called for a roundtable conference to discuss and find solutions to the political problems of the country. Similar overtures were also made to Hans Strijdom and Hendrik Verwoerd but these too were met with harsh responses. He then called upon President Botha to go against precedent and end the carnage in the country. It was abundantly clear that although Mandela yearned for freedom, he was never willing to sacrifice his principles in its pursuit and accept the pseudo-freedom offered by his oppressors. The following words from the letter epitomise this.

I cherish my own freedom dearly, but I care even more for your freedom. Too many have died since I went to prison. Too many have suffered for the love of freedom. I owe it to their widows, to their orphans, to their mothers and to their fathers who have grieved and wept for them. Not only I have suffered during these long, lonely, wasted years. I am not less life-loving than you are. But I cannot sell my birth right, nor am I prepared to sell the birth right of the people to be free ... Only free men can negotiate. Prisoners cannot enter into contracts

... I cannot and will not give any undertaking at a time when I and you, the people, are not free (Mandela 1985[1994], 196).

Maylam contends that the rejection of these tempting offers ‘underlined Mandela’s spirit of self-sacrifice and confirmed his heroism’ and this in turn showed him to be a ‘master, overcoming the trials, tribulations and temptations before him’ (2009, 28). This was important in strengthening the growing sacrificial element of the Mandela mythology in the minds of the masses.

To resolve the deadlock, Mandela was visited in prison by the Eminent Persons Group headed by General Obasanjo of Nigeria. During the visit, Mandela reiterated that he would not sacrifice his principles for freedom according to the dictates of an illegitimate government. He further outlined his vision of a new South Africa under the ANC leadership and stated that he was an African nationalist firmly committed to the ideal of a non-racial country. The ideology he envisioned, he stated, was outlined in the Freedom Charter since this was the ANC’s blueprint for democracy and human rights but not, according to popular belief, for socialism. He further guaranteed the rights of all minorities in a new South Africa.

Mandela remained principled throughout this phase of informal negotiations, calling only for the advent of formal negotiations between the regime and the ANC. He was resolute that the ANC would never sacrifice itself or its alliances. With respect to the ANC’s alliance with the Communist Party, he was adamant that no self-respecting freedom fighter ‘would take orders from the government he is fighting against or jettison a long-time ally in the interest of pleasing an antagonist’ (Mandela 1995, 642).

It eventually became clear to the apartheid regime that the status quo could not remain. As the last of the most popular political prisoners, Mandela was released on 11 February 1990, paving the way for the commencement of negotiations on the future of the new South Africa. The first phase in the construction of the Mandela mythology had now come to an end. The next phase saw the consolidation and enhancing of the Mandela mythology between 1990 and 1999 and the section below will critically analyse this important period.

The making of the Mandela mythology – phase two (1990–1999)

When Mandela was released from prison in 1990, the economy was in recession and showed no tangible signs of improvement. Unemployment and crime were spiralling out of control and a general culture of anarchy and lawlessness was threatening to engulf the country. It is

against this backdrop that Mandela entered the new South Africa and was provided with the unenviable task of beginning the process to reverse this situation.

I will demonstrate that despite the numerous challenges and the shortcomings associated with the Mandela presidency, the Mandela mythology was not only sustained but flourished in the new South Africa. It will be argued that this is true to such an extent that Mandela is essentially cast as a ‘compelling hero – a supernatural figure who bestrides the ages, a legend who laid on really fantastic performances when he came out of prison’ (Mathebe 2012, x). Although Mandela frequently resented this portrayal, the prevailing narrative of Mandela was not, for the most part, sanctified and strengthened under conditions of his own choosing. Rather, Mathebe (2012, 61) argues, it was the context in which Mandela found himself that did this. In essence, Mandela had as much personal agency on this issue as was afforded him.

The period under scrutiny here, 1990 to 1999, was important in the construction of the Mandela mythology and I will seek to demonstrate, through a number of events, how the dominant narrative of the past was now constructed to become the official narrative of the present and the future. These include, amongst many others, Mandela’s release from prison in 1990, his presidential inauguration in May 1994 and the 1995 Rugby World Cup, which created the illusion of a reconciled nation. The consolidation of the dominant narrative became one largely characterised by Mandela as a saint, messiah, saviour and even a God of the new South Africa.

Release from prison

In the 1980s, the inadequacies of communism became visible in the world and many countries which had once received strong military and financial support from the Soviet Union started to see this declining. The communist threat was one of the tools that the apartheid government used to suppress the liberation movement and justify its actions to the Western world. Once the Berlin Wall fell, De Klerk, the ever-astute politician, realised that holding on to political power was no longer feasible and, hence, began the process of releasing Mandela and dismantling apartheid legislation. As such, Suttner interestingly posits that Mandela’s release and his later messianic activities would not have been possible if the context of the world had not changed (2007, 128).

Mandela’s release from prison in 1990 gained national and international attention. Suspense was increased by virtue of the fact that for nearly three decades, no one had seen an image of

him since this, together with his words, were banned from the public discourse. Sampson (1999, 407) remarked that Mandela's walk out of prison 'provided the most powerful image of the time, even in an era of charismatic heroes overcoming tyrannies in Eastern Europe and Russia: of Gorbachev, Walesa, Havel and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Mandela embodied a more elemental and universal myth, like a revolutionary opera or *The Odyssey*, depicting the triumph of the human spirit, the return of the lost leader'.

Television stations, both nationally and internationally, were constantly bracing South Africans for change in the lead up to Mandela's release. For his part, De Klerk was careful in every televised speech concerning the issue of Mandela to make reference to a new South Africa. These overtures were broadcast without censor and he was correct in assuming the media would turn its full attention to this momentous event. Evans comments that Mandela's release from prison was one of live television's most memorable events both in the country and internationally (Evans 2010, 312). Mandela was the 'central ceremonial figure' of this historic media event and is described by Dayan and Katz (2009, 181) as 'a messiah figure, a mediator of extreme oppositions, a realistic dreamer, both utopian and practical, shrewd and imaginative'.

The main significance in attributing messianic and saint-like qualities to Mandela are part of a number of religious metaphors used by both religious and secular scholars to describe what they perceived as a peaceful transition to democracy when arguably the entire world was expecting a racial civil war (Suttner 2007, 126). These religious metaphors are similar to both Machiavelli's and Rousseau's philosophy of using religious inferences to satisfy political purposes. Chapter four will elaborate on this.

This attribution to Mandela also allowed him to be abstracted from the ANC which in turn permitted individuals who didn't support the ANC to applaud him for delivering the country from the brink of disaster. Suttner also argues that there is still a wider significance to this in that it removed the agency of the masses. It 'explains the inauguration of democracy in South Africa', Suttner (2007, 127) believes, 'as resulting from initiatives of two brave and wise men, Mandela acting in prison and former President de Klerk announcing the unbanning of organisations. The chemistry between these two leaders then led to a resolution of the apartheid conflict and the establishment of democracy'.

After being released, Mandela was taken to address a crowd at the Grand Parade in Cape Town. Here, Mandela spoke of equality, reconciliation and unity as essential components of

the new democratic constitution and that this should not be seen as coming from the conqueror aiming to pacify the conquered but rather from a fellow citizen whose aim was to reconcile and unify South Africans divided by a savage and brutal past. He spoke of servitude to the people as his core task in the new South Africa and the fact that he appreciated the 'tireless and heroic sacrifices' of the people which 'made it possible for [him] to be here today'. 'I therefore place the remaining years of my life in your hands' he went on to say (Mandela [1990] 2003, 59). He ended his speech with the famous words of the Rivonia Trial that played the most crucial role in the construction of the first phase of the Mandela mythology.

This became one of the most quoted sound bites in subsequent news broadcasts as a result of its emphasis on reconciliation and its reference to martyrdom (Evans 2010, 314–315). Mandela's release from prison was interpreted as a media event that signalled the beginning of the end of apartheid in the same way as communism had ended with the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

At a Soweto rally soon after his release, Mandela was introduced to the crowd by ANCYL president Peter Mokaba as the messiah of his people and their 'saviour whom the apartheid regime failed dismally to silence' (cited in Lodge 2006, 196). Mandela, however, during an interview with the BBC, tried to reiterate the fact that he was not a messiah or saviour but an individual who was part of the collective of the ANC and it was the organisation that should instead take the credit for the success of the freedom struggle. 'There is no single individual' he said, 'who can undertake the enormous task of solving the problems of the country. If anybody has acquired any particular status that is due largely to what the organisation has done' (Mandela [1990] 2011, 58).

Despite the euphoria surrounding his release, Mandela had the undesirable task of showing his authority to members of the ANC, many of whom suspected that he had 'sold out' during the last years of his incarceration, whilst simultaneously finding a middle ground between black aspirations and white fears. Black critics both inside and outside the ANC feared that he was out of touch with reality and that he had gone soft by negotiating with the enemy (Russell 2009, 2). On the other hand, the prophets of doom and gloom from the right-wing Afrikaner extremists to the conservative layman on the street all predicted the introduction of a Marxist state that would eventually descend into anarchy (Russell 2009, xvi). White capitalists both at home and abroad fervently worried about his prevailing nationalisation

ideology. Mandela's ability to avoid this apocalypse gained him the respect and admiration of white South Africans who not long ago had branded him a terrorist and a communist. This was an important aspect in the making of the saint-like image (Meredith 2010, xvi). It was also a major performative act of post-1994 South Africa, which saw the dominant Mandela narrative of the past being consolidated whilst a new narrative of him as a reconciler and nation-builder was emerging (Van Heerden 2012, 122).

Despite the fact that South Africa is often referred to as a miracle nation for having avoided a racial civil war, the period after Mandela's release from prison until the first democratic elections in April 1994 was extremely tumultuous. Third Force-sponsored violence between Inkatha and the ANC in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng left thousands dead (the former were fighting for greater recognition and autonomy for its Zulu constituency in KwaZulu Natal and hoped to use the violence and instability to force the latter's hand in negotiations), and an insurgency by Afrikaner terrorist groups such as the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), the Sebokeng and Boipothong massacres, as well as disunity within ANC circles, all threatened to propel the country into an all-out civil war. During a visit to Durban to address the black-on-black violence that had engulfed the province, Mandela urged reconciliation between the ANC and Inkatha. He pleaded that people take their guns, knives and pangas and 'throw them into the sea' (Mandela 1995, 690). This plea, however, fell on deaf ears as the fighting and killing continued largely unabated.

Perhaps the biggest threat came from the assassination of South African Communist Party (SACP) Secretary General Chris Hani, who was murdered at his home by right-wing terrorists. This murder had the potential to ignite a civil war across the country (Sampson 1999, 456; Evans 2010, 315). Mandela went on national television in an attempt to quell the situation, stating that he was reaching out to all South Africans to 'stand together against who, from any quarter, wish to destroy what Chris Hani gave his life for – the freedom of the people' (Mandela 1995, 730).

Further, in Kathlehong on the East Rand, Mandela told an angry crowd that discipline is an essential characteristic of any freedom. 'If you have no discipline, you are not freedom fighters, and we do not want you in our organisation', he declared (Russell 2009, 2). In an effort to quash the outbreak of civil war, Mandela publically stated that he was willing to meet and negotiate with Inkatha and the Afrikaner terrorist groups. This did not, however, please many in the ANC who argued that he was too trusting of members of the apartheid

establishment. Sampson (1999, 484) nevertheless, contends that Mandela was ‘determined to placate ex-enemies, whatever their past misdeeds’. Mathebe (2012, xi) posits that the avoidance of conflict is infused with the values of national reconciliation, unity and non-racialism. These values controlled the discourse of post-apartheid history and created a kind of ‘national consensus’ around a leader – Nelson Mandela.

Mandela nonetheless hit back at President FW De Klerk whom he accused of doing nothing to stem the tide of the violence despite having knowledge of it. With such an attitude on the part of De Klerk, Mandela knew that the negotiation process would be long and difficult. ‘We are dealing with a group of politicians’ he said, ‘who do not want to negotiate themselves out of power and representatives of the state who fear the impact of democratic change’ (Mandela [1991] 2003, 104). Mandela nevertheless still reached out to him by stating that ‘we are going to face the problem of this country together’, and ‘I am proud to hold your hand for us to move forward’ (Mandela 1995, 741).

Van Zyl Slabbert argues that throughout the negotiation process, it was clear that although Mandela was willing to promote reconciliation between the races, there were certain ‘non-negotiables’. ‘Mandela epitomised the willingness to compromise’ he remarked, ‘without sacrificing principle’ (Slabbert 2003, 101). Hence, this role as peacemaker, unifier and reconciler was the most important part of Mandela’s role as the ‘saviour’ of the new South Africa and entailed guiding the negotiation process to a desirable conclusion.

Mandela also used reconciliatory rhetoric and action to instil confidence in the new democratic dispensation amongst white South Africans and the international community (Maylam 2009, 30). Mandela himself stated in *Long Walk to Freedom* that his mission after the 1994 elections was one that put reconciliation between the races at the forefront of the new South Africa. He frequently tried to suppress the fears of the white minority by stressing that the ‘liberation struggle was not a battle against one group or colour, but a fight against a system of repression’ (Mandela 1995, 745). Archbishop Desmond Tutu contends that without Mandela, these would have seemed insurmountable tasks. He believes that he was sent by God as a mercy for South Africans and which is why he is consequently revered as an icon of forgiveness and reconciliation. He laid the foundations, according to Tutu, for a non-racial country whose building blocks are ‘magnanimity and generosity, forgiveness and reconciliation’ (Tutu 2003, 317). We can again note the tremendous religious inferences made by Tutu.

Russell (2009, 6) is of the opinion that Mandela's philosophy of reconciliation was not a spontaneous undertaking but a carefully deliberate attitude planned in prison in order to win over white South Africans. In *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela states that he was aware that the world, and South Africans in particular, expected him to harbour deep hatred and animosity towards whites. 'But I had none', he exclaimed. 'In prison my anger towards whites decreased but my hatred for the system [of apartheid] grew' (Mandela 1995, 559).

Although Mandela was subject to critical appraisals from the media, authors and the academic community, most critics tended to downplay the numerous shortcomings of his presidency and in the process helped preserve his image as a hero, saint, reconciler, nation-builder, and so forth. This form of image whitewashing will be analysed as part of the theory of exculpation later on. Many of these critics even took up his project of reconciliation and nation-building. The SABC, for example, contributed to building the narrative of the new South Africa as a multiracial country with blacks and whites living together. Comedies such as *Suburban Bliss* tried to take a light-hearted approach to this issue. Russell (2009, 31) remarks that Mandela, by 'force of his personality and his example, encouraged the belief that true reconciliation between the races really was attainable'. Mandela in effect personified the future. 'His magnanimity and lack of bitterness conveyed a moral seriousness, particularly to white South Africans, as if he were a priest at confessional, forgiving sins and giving his blessings' (Sampson 1999, 411).

Inauguration as president

During campaigning in the run up to the 1994 elections, the ANC had employed the services of an American expert who advised them to set up People's Forums all over the country. Despite this, Sampson (1999, 476) remarks that the ANC was fully aware that their biggest asset was the aura and personality of Nelson Mandela, which had managed to move above the trials and tribulations of the previous years. Mandela and the ANC skilfully took advantage of this by using the mass media that had developed since his incarceration in 1964. The ANC was proved correct in taking advantage of Mandela's immense popularity when the party convincingly won at the polls. The political usages of the Mandela mythology (in the Machiavellian and Rousseauian sense) by the ruling elite will be explained in chapter four.

Evans (2010, 316) comments that unlike with Mandela's release from imprisonment four years earlier, the SABC had now aligned its vision and began to promote the idea of a united, non-racial and reconciled country. Mandela's inauguration as president became a major

media event and the ANC saw this as an opportunity for it to serve as a nation-building spectacle which would serve to attract foreign direct investment and improve the country's extremely poor global image. The live television spectacle helped to create the impression of South Africans, across racial, religious and ethnic lines, united in their celebration of a new South African image.

The inauguration also served as a media event aimed at promoting nation-building through reconciliation by merging symbols of Afrikaner nationalism with new national symbols. The new national anthem for example consisted of both *Die Stem* and *Nkosi Sikeleli Afrika*, whilst the crowd was awash with the new South African flag. The inauguration symbolised the transfer of political authority from the minority to the majority through military and legal authority. Mandela was sworn in by a white Chief Justice whilst also simultaneously being flanked by white military officers from the apartheid era. The inauguration was ended with a military salute to military planes flying overhead, which released smoke in the colours of the new South African flag. This was complemented by the release of white doves into the air, symbolising the dawn of a new peaceful era in South African history. The inauguration occurred at the Union Buildings in Pretoria, the traditional seat of white supremacy. Mandela stated that it now represented a rainbow nation gathered for the inauguration of the country's first non-racial, non-sexist democratic government. Evans (2010, 316–317) posits that the inauguration was a 'merger of discordant symbols' but was harmonised through the 'official adoption of the miracle discourse' through Mandela's speech.

Evans interestingly notes that the enemy (apartheid) was spoken of in abstract terms using words such as racism, oppression and deprivation. Not once does Mandela use the word apartheid. Mandela referred to the military as helping to secure a peaceful transition to democracy from 'bloodthirsty forces which still refuse to see the light' (Mandela [1994] 2003, 69). The 'bloodthirsty forces' which Mandela refers to were the Afrikaner terrorist groups who opposed a negotiated and peaceful transition. Mandela urged these 'bloodthirsty forces' and South Africans in general to accept that the 'time for the healing of the wounds has come' that the 'moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come'. 'We have' he argued, 'at last achieved our political emancipation' (Mandela [1994] 2003, 69). Up until today, however, these groups have never accepted the legitimacy of the democratic dispensation although they have essentially been neutralised.

As expected, both local and international media analysed the event through largely uncritical lenses. The occasion was predominantly interpreted as a miraculous triumph that had been realised against all predictions (Evans 2010, 318). Although the ANC tried vociferously to position the event as one in which all South Africans stood together to witness the dawn of a new era, television figures showed that very few white South Africans watched the event compared to blacks. Further, there was still violence between the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party in KZN and whites were leaving the country in droves (Evans 2010, 319). In essence, South Africans did not constitute the ‘one nation’ that was frequently portrayed in the mainstream media.

Assumption of political power

When the ANC assumed power in May 1994, they were grossly unprepared for the challenges that lay ahead. From the outset, there existed many problems in the Government of National Unity between the idealism of many ANC ministers and the desire of National Party ministers to drive hard compromises. Whites still controlled key ministries such as finance and this agitated the ANC. Mangasuthu Buthelezi, leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party, also accused Mandela of renegeing on a promise of international mediation regarding the autonomy of KZN. In short, Mandela’s presidency was realistically anything but a honeymoon (Sampson 1999, 519). In the midst of this, he still managed to forcibly push his reconciliatory and nation-building agenda and skilfully succeeded in navigating between black aspirations and white fears.

Even though Mandela was the de jure president of the country until 1999, he was mostly, from 1996 onwards, uninvolved in the daily governance of the country (this task was left to Thabo Mbeki), choosing instead to undertake acts of forgiveness and reconciliation towards his former enemies. The mayor of New York stated that Mandela was a ‘man of mythical proportions’, ‘a messiah’, a ‘modern man’ and a ‘transcendent figure of freedom’ (Van Dijk 1991, 120). Although Mandela often modestly denied his comparison to a saint, he never truly objected to it. Tutu often bemoaned the fact that Mandela had been turned into a saint incapable of doing no wrong. This, he said, would blind people to the ‘many colossal problems facing the country’ (cited in Russell 2009, 5). Tutu exclaimed that such hero worship would make the challenges facing the country seem insurmountable once ‘Madiba magic’ was no longer in the spotlight.

Mathebe compares Mandela's presidency to that of Prince William I of Prussia. Just as Prince William became a largely ceremonial figure in 19th century Prussian history, so too Mandela was a largely ceremonial president, since most of the day-to-day duties of governance were seconded to Mbeki. Both men were also positioned as the 'glorious emblem of [their] miracle nation[s]'. Mandela was described as a legend who very seldom got involved in issues of realpolitik'. Mandela, in essence, 'never had a great deal of agency' during his presidency (Mathebe 2012, 225). This is one of the ways in which Mandela managed to hold onto his benevolent image. Mathebe believes that the benevolent positioning of the Mandela mythology would not have been possible without the role that Mbeki played. Mbeki, Mathebe exclaims, allowed Mandela to firstly come out on the right side of history and give impetus to his image as a hero and, secondly, increase awareness of Mandela as a leader who had the best interests of South Africa at heart (2012, 319).

Although the above is generally true, Mandela did in fact take a hands-on approach during his first two years in office and critics have pointed to some policy and personnel shortcomings, as well as questionable associations, he undertook during his presidency. Russell (2009, 8) claims that Mandela neglected important areas of policy such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic. He was also extremely lenient and tolerated under-performing ministers, which encouraged a climate of complacency in government. This was indeed a poor example for a so-called icon to set. Another blemish on Mandela's radar was his lack of transparency involving the wedding of his daughter Zindzi, which was bankrolled by controversial billionaire Sol Kerzner, who it turned out had fraud and corruption charges pending. Mandela was accused by Bantu Holomisa of accepting money from Kerzner in exchange for having the charges dropped. Mandela naturally denied these accusations and later unceremoniously fired Holomisa as deputy minister in the cabinet. There was also the corruption scandal of Alan Boesak, who Mandela initially supported, but was later found guilty. Mandela also had to fire his then estranged wife, Winnie Mandela, as Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture after she disregarded his orders not to undertake an overseas trip.

These blemishes during Mandela's presidency did not, however, affect his messianic and saint-like image. His project of national reconciliation and nation-building was his personal crusade and managed to exculpate him from the aforementioned blemishes. He reached out to his former oppressors such as P. W. Botha and F. W. De Klerk by referring to them in favourable terms. He spoke about his gratitude to General Constant Viljoen for keeping most Afrikaner extremists within the political process before the 1994 election. He even tried

reaching out to the Conservative Party which had boycotted the 1994 elections (Meredith 2010, 522). Mandela made numerous reconciliatory overtures to his enemies and their families. He met Betsi Verwoerd (the widow of the architect of grand apartheid – Hendrik Verwoerd), Percy Yutar (the prosecutor during the Rivonia Trial) and General Willemse (his former jailer on Robben Island). Sampson (1999, 523) likens these reconciliatory gestures to a ‘legendary ex-convict who hunts down all the people who betrayed him, but instead of murdering them, he forgave them’.

Maylam (2009, 31) comments that ‘heroic image and iconic status have been accorded to him largely to satisfy the collective unconsciousness of a people desperate for peace, security and the resolution of racial division and conflict’. Ironically, Suttner (2007, 126) remarks that the most vociferous calls attributing saint-like and miraculous characteristics were from the white minority who had expected their worst fear, being driven to the sea, to be realised. Mandela’s perseverance to match rhetoric with action was one of the reasons for his growing popularity amongst whites and minorities in general. During his speech marking the country’s first year of freedom, he stated that the government has established the Constitutional Court and the Human Rights Commission with the aim of entrenching democratic rule.

Another aspect which enhanced his saint-like image was his lack of extravagance. Upon release from prison, Mandela did not fall into the trap most other world leaders succumbed to. Although he lived comfortably, this was largely devoid of extravagance. He donated one third of his salary to his favourite charity - the Nelson Mandela Children’s Fund – and sometimes also to the ANC. This lifestyle, Maylam posits, boosted his moral authority (2009, 34). Together with the degree of integrity he espoused, he had courtesy, decency and respect for ordinary people. Despite being repeatedly mistreated by his warders, he recognised that underneath their harsh exteriors were good human beings who also needed to be liberated from the yoke of mental enslavement (Maylam 2009, 34). Wilmot James (2003, 6) remarks that Mandela never wanted to diminish his own dignity by ‘diminishing that of others’, and never wanted to humiliate his adversaries ‘or do things to make them bitter beyond the reach of a future reciprocal embrace’.

1995 Rugby World Cup

The extent of Mandela’s performative displays of reconciliation and nation-building was extensive and included sport, which had long been regarded as one of the best tools to invoke when seeking patriotism and ultimately nation-building. Mandela was immensely aware of

this fact and remarked in 1998 that sport ‘speaks a language which reaches areas where a president and politician cannot reach’ (cited in Evans 2014, 177). Sport, predominantly through the mass media, had helped the government build the myth of a united country assisted by television images of black and white South Africans at sporting events with their faces painted in the new South African flag.

It was not until the 1995 Rugby World Cup final, however, that Mandela won over the hearts and minds of white South Africans by donning the Springbok jersey during the trophy handover ceremony. This gesture was extremely significant since rugby was traditionally seen as the ‘religion’ of the Afrikaner people and their preserve entirely. Van Heerden (2012, 125) comments that Mandela managed to centre a ‘new conception of nationhood on a traditional site of division and cultural specificity, and by appropriating a sport which had been the subject of ANC-lobbied sanctions during apartheid’. Russell (2009, 33) supports this contention by stating that the ever-astute politician in Mandela sensed an ‘opening into the Afrikaner soul and [also] another way of ensuring stability’.

The 1995 Rugby World Cup was carefully scripted and choreographed to serve as a tool for nation-building. Despite a nearly all-white team (with one coloured player – Chester Williams), Mandela posed alongside team captain Francois Pienaar and this is often referred to as the most memorable image of the time. After this, many South Africans across racial lines began to show interest in what was historically a divisive sport. Other important symbols were team manager Morne Du Plessis’s efforts to get the team to learn the new South African anthem. The Springbok team moreover made a symbolic trip to Robben Island to view for themselves the conditions in which Mandela lived. During the tournament, one of the narratives put forward was the country’s transformation from a global pariah to a rainbow nation and provided nation-builders with the perfect setting in which to describe the country as a non-racial and reconciled country united in its diversity (Evans 2010, 320). The Zulu song, *Shosholoz*, was chosen as the theme song for the event. This song had tremendous significance for both black and white South Africans,

as many white male conscripts (the most fervent rugby supporters) had sung it during their time as national servicemen. Thus, while foreign audiences may have seen it as ‘African’, and while it allowed for black South Africans to feel included in the spectacle, for white males it would also have represented continuity with their past in the apartheid army (Evans 2010, 321).

Although many were justifiably cynical about such attempts at unity and reconciliation, they did seem to bear some fruit. A young black caller to Talk Radio 702 stated that,

I have no idea what they are doing or why. I can't see why they spend all that time sitting on each other or making themselves into that tortoise thing,' she said of the rugby scrum. 'All I know is that I am glued to the screen, and when I see the team in green hugging each other, I get damp in my eyes: those are my boys; that's my team (cited in Russell 2009, 34).

The consequences of the World Cup were interpreted differently by white and black South Africans. White South Africans viewed the event as the new government's attempts to allay their fears through reconciliatory symbols and gestures from which many found comfort. Blacks, on the other hand, interpreted the event as them taking part ownership of a national resource through Mandela. Similarly, there was also dual meaning to the symbol of the rainbow. Whilst white South Africans viewed it as forgiving their past sins and as hope for the future, blacks viewed it as a pot of gold waiting for them as a result of their forgiveness.

In truth, as subsequent events such as the commission set up in 1998 to investigate allegations of racism in rugby, as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), would attest, this cry for forgiveness from whites was definitely not unanimous and did not really extend much further than Mandela (Evans 2010, 323). In short, despite these many gestures, reconciliation and transformation of the sport was and still is quite illusive. There was still a significant gap between reconciliatory gestures and gratitude at the top and the stark racist realities at the bottom.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

Mandela did not want his reconciliation-focused political philosophy to be understood in isolation. Rather, reconciliation included justice – restorative justice concerned with mending broken relationships. This was in contrast to the retributive justice adopted in many post-conflict societies. The restorative justice which Mandela advocated 'contends that the perpetrator must be given an opportunity to be reintegrated into the community he has injured by his offence, thus, restorative justice is being served when efforts are made to work for healing, harmony, forgiveness and reconciliation' (Joseph 2003, 503). Although Mandela opposed retribution or vengeance against the past oppressors, he was mindful that the dignity of apartheid's victims needed to be restored.

The TRC, instituted in 1995, was a major undertaking aimed at restorative justice and intended to heal the wounds of the past through amnesty for political crimes if perpetrators were judged to be telling the truth during their applications. This method, he hoped, would satisfy white fears whilst restoring the dignity of the masses. Although an extremely controversial and criticised project, restorative justice was seen as the middle ground between

the victors' justice epitomised by the Nuremburg Trials and the notion of collective amnesia (Russell 2009, 36). Many of apartheid's worst war criminals such as Eugene de Kock and Dirk Coetzee testified to the heinous crimes of systematic murder and torture they had committed in the name of the apartheid state. Although Coetzee was granted amnesty, De Kock was handed two life sentences and 212 years for other crimes. Death squad leader De Kock argued extensively that apartheid leaders such as De Klerk and P. W. Botha had been allowed to get away with their crimes by blaming them on rogue elements within the security police.

There were also those who viewed the TRC as a farce not only because of its limited terms of reference but also because they claimed it sought to criminalise the armed struggle (Sampson 1999, 533). Despite two years and many applications for amnesty, it would be rather naïve to suggest that the truth about apartheid had been unearthed or that reconciliation has been achieved. As Joel Netshitenzhe remarked: 'to crow about closure is premature and insensitive. The search for the truth and lasting reconciliation continues' (cited in Russell 2009, 39). Mandela himself was well aware that the TRC would not provide definitive answers about apartheid but nonetheless viewed it as an indispensable contribution on the road to truth and reconciliation. Reconciliation, he posited, could best be achieved by supporting institutions that strengthened democracy such as the Human Rights Commission, the Gender Commission and others.

Quickly dying euphoria

The euphoria that greeted South Africa's entry into the democratic nations of the world did not last long. Although Mandela's foreign policy was largely characterised by a human rights-based approach, realpolitik soon took precedence over his idealistic visions and the country has often been severely criticised for its associations with the supposed pariahs of democracy such as China and Libya.

The international community finds it exceptionally strange that despite what is generally perceived as universal adoration of Mandela, there is an increasing body of people within South Africa who believe that he sold out black emancipation in favour of whiteness and white monopoly capital. This segment forwards the argument that despite the advent of democracy in South Africa, the economic arrangement is fundamentally skewed in favour of white monopoly capital and a small black elite who are dependent on their white masters. This segment is epitomised by groups such as the September National Imbizo and the newly

formed Economic Freedom Fighters who argue that the ruling political elite are simply black managers of a white man's country. The transition to democracy, they argue, simply served to perpetuate black suffering by allowing whites to hold onto stolen wealth and property (Mda 2013). Although Mandela frequently attempted to address these concerns, critics accused him of paying lip service since no radical action accompanied it.

Russell (2009, 43–46) concurs with the sentiments expressed above and argues that economic disparities between black and white South Africans were so large that, in 2008, whites were said to earn 45% more than blacks and 400% more than people of mixed race. In fact, the gap between the white bourgeoisie and the black poor is said to be increasing uncontrollably and South Africa is now the most unequal country in the world. Russell entrenches his argument by stating that despite Mandela's reconciliation-focused political philosophy, the reality of a post-Mandela presidency was a tale of two worlds: one white and largely affluent and the other black and downtrodden. Economist Duman Ggubale believes that the Mandela mythology is partly to blame for the slow pace of economic change in the country by fostering a 'false sense of reconciliation between blacks and whites' (Murphy 2004). Zizek (2013) remarks that Mandela's universal adoration lies mostly in the fact that he did not disturb the global order of power.

Exculpation

The Mandela mythology has managed to transcend all the above deficiencies associated with him and his presidency, in effect whitewashing his image, thereby succeeding in preserving his saint-like image. As Van Heerden (2012, 129) states,

although the official narrative largely succeeded in engaging in a Levi-Straussian process of myth-making, consolidating the polarised figure of Mandela – the freedom fighter with the terrorist, the African traditionalist with the modern, Western subject – the same historical narrative forms which granted him his extensive symbolic currency within the pre-1990 dominant narrative still exist today, for they are rooted in, and respond to, a visceral, practical reality which remains largely unchanged (Van Heerden 2012, 129).

In order for a myth to function effectively, either facts of misdemeanours need to be swept under the carpet or we need to accept the misdemeanours. Mathebe uses Vera Dika and George de Stefano's theme of exculpation to explain this phenomenon. The exculpatory argument can be viewed through distinctly religious lenses and as the beginning of the religious connotations of the Mandela mythology (in a Machiavellian and Rousseauian sense) since it refers to the erasing of any negative aspects of human character and replacing it,

through media and historical records, with a portrayal that exudes angelic qualities. This helps to begin the Mandela-mythology civil religion to be discussed in chapter four.

The Mandela mythology serves an exculpatory function by valorising ‘human character to a hilt, casting it as an icon of innocence, so that the audience can buy into its moral message, and so that they can support even the slightest hint of its benevolence’ (Mathebe 2012, 270). The exculpatory factor of the Mandela mythology purges him of guilt so that populists can accept him as a saint-like figure. Hence, it manages to perpetuate the predominant narrative of Mandela as a moral force that built the miracle nation, which felt secure under his guidance, and whose kindness and piety helped shelter him from authoritarianism. This is the perfect example of the exculpatory narrative. Mathebe argues that the exculpatory ability of the Mandela narrative is furthered as a result of his ‘monolithic silence’ and ‘introverted’ leadership style (highly active at ceremonial tasks but remarkably quiet on issues of realpolitik), which made it easy to position him as the founding father of the ‘miracle nation’. Mathebe (2012, 63) personifies this perfectly:

His ‘monolithic silence’, his disinterestedness, it seems to be arguably the case, is what bequeathed him a beachhead of moral authenticity – it freed him from the vortex of rumour which all too often surrounded his deputy and successor, Thabo Mbeki ... Mandela acquired ‘great power’ through ‘the strategy of non-response’, which exculpated him entirely, transfiguring him into the excellent showcase for ‘Republicanism’ of his days.

Mathebe likens Mandela to Caesar’s wife – Calpurnia. Like Calpurnia, Mandela is a person beyond reproach and censure, and not many have challenged his status of greatness or offered critical appraisals. ‘His charisma’, according to Mathebe, ‘was designed for public excitement and invested with the saint-like qualities of Julius Caesar’s wife; unimpeachable and beyond reproach’ (2012, 99).

Dika provides an extension to the exculpatory ability of myths and describes the Mandela mythology as a ‘culturally specific myth’ (cited in Mathebe 2012, 63). For Dika, the appealing power of the myth is furthered by its resistance to one definition of itself. The myth becomes a mythology upon itself. In the context of the Mandela mythology, the myth has such fluidity that it has become easy to regard him as the ‘father’, ‘saviour’, ‘messiah’, ‘saint’, ‘reconciliator’, ‘forgiver’ and ‘fallible human being’ of South Africa’s ‘miracle nation’. The multitude of definitions allows the mythology to transfer meaning to the appropriate label and in the appropriate context.

These terms have religious connotations and provide the mythology with a distinct religious gloss and are crucial to understanding the Mandela mythology as a civil religion in South Africa. The fluidity of the myth also helps us understand his continued appeal to South Africans even after his death. Such immense fluidity may also explain why political elites make use of his appeal to serve their own interests. The political usages of the Mandela mythology are characteristic of Machiavelli's and Rousseau's conceptualisation of civil religion as outlined in chapters one and two, and I will explain this in depth in chapter four.

Diala excellently points out that despite the Mandela myth having the potential to serve as an example of a leader that is truly democratically engaging, it conversely also could turn acceptable human weaknesses into apocalyptic threats. 'His god-like stature' according to Diala, meant that their (everyone besides Mandela) abilities would be measured in divine terms. 'Anxieties usually feed on fantasies, and the subscription to the popular imagination of a particular figure in divine terms easily becomes an endorsement of his/her rivals' and even successors inevitable differentiations as necessarily negative' (Diala 2005, 145). Manji concludes this point by arguing that these myths are constructed through 'obituaries in corporate media, through the speeches of politicians, through the eulogies sung at his funeral, through the proclamations of commemorative holidays, biographies, institutions, and so on' (Manji 2013, 1). However, as the analysis below of the Mandela-mania phenomenon shall argue, this process began a long while before Mandela's death in December 2013. The Mandela-mania phenomenon in essence consolidates the Mandela mythology. This will be discussed in the section below.

It is the religious dimension to the exculpatory ability that allows me in chapter four to conceive of the Mandela mythology as a civil religion in contemporary South Africa, since it plays an important part in fulfilling the requirement of Machiavelli and Rousseau that all humans have a religion which results in their attachment to the state. The religious exculpatory capability of the mythology essentially allows political elites to uncover its potential political usages, most important of which is political unity in the state. It is imperative, however, that I first uncover the various forms that characterised phase three of the mythology before arguing in chapter four that the political usages of these various beliefs, rituals and symbols constitute a civil religion à la Machiavelli and Rousseau.

The making of the Mandela mythology – phase 3 (the Mandela-mania phenomenon)

The ANC government attempted to allay the fears associated with a post-Mandela presidency by participating in the fostering and enhancing of the Mandela mythology through the creation of a Mandela-mania phenomenon. This arises out of our belief that ‘great men and women can attain the status of symbols, legends and myths’ (O’Toole 2003, xl). This is done in order to indicate that this person has done something considered otherworldly. The galvanising power of the Mandela mythology through the use of an ever-expanding set of beliefs, rituals and symbols is the new commitment to reconciliation and unity in South Africa, as the next chapter will argue.

Mathebe believes that Mandela is judged as an ‘ethical agent and a motive force that created the new nation – the miracle nation’ (2012, xv). The continued infatuation with Mandela after his presidency, and now after his death, is as a result of his moral significance with regard to the history of South Africa. This moral significance entails Mandela as a legendary individual whose efforts are deemed miraculous in turning ‘apartheid incompatibilities into a rainbow nation of God’ (Mathebe 2012, xv). After 1994, his moral words became even more gripping than his political action.

There are a number of components that make up the Mandela-mania phenomenon and it would seem that, as the country approached his inevitable passing, these began to increase exponentially. These encompass more than eighty-five street names, bridges and buildings, ninety-five statues and other artworks, twenty-five education institutes, thirty-five other structures and schools and an urban municipality, amongst a host of others. The most famous of these are Mandela’s image on South Africa’s official bank notes, Mandela gold coin and five-rand coin collections, an annual philanthropic Mandela Day, Mandela 46664 and *Long Walk to Freedom* clothing ranges, and the *House of Mandela* wine range. In the words of the *Daily News*, ‘it is difficult to travel anywhere in South Africa without seeing a street, theatre, bridge, school or city named in his honour. His image appears on drink coasters, T-shirts, refrigerator magnets, post cards, Krugerrands, paintings and dolls’ (Murphy 2004, 10). These components in effect consolidate the dominant narrative of the Mandela mythology of the previous two phases and become the official narrative of the Mandela mythology.

Although many of the above phenomena point to a strong commercial aspect of the Mandela brand, this is frequently denied by the Nelson Mandela Foundation (the various charities linked to the Nelson Mandela name have signed a formal agreement not to commercialise his

name and image). I will, however, seek to demonstrate that the Mandela name and by extension the Mandela-mania phenomenon has become a highly profitable commercial brand.

It should be clear from the outset that this analysis is by no means exhaustive. It nonetheless provides a realistic basis from which to gauge the extent of Mandela-mania in South Africa. Analysis of these phenomena will not be done in chronological order but rather under the various themes mentioned above.

Mandela-mania – statues

Statues are often built on commission to honour and pay tribute to a historical event, or prominent individual. These are also envisioned as public art and displayed outdoors, in public buildings and city centres. Statues of Mandela are an integral component that helps entrench the Mandela-mania phenomenon in the South African psyche. The fact that there are about ninety-five statues and other artworks of Mandela is clear evidence of South Africa's and the world's infatuation with Mandela. This discussion, however, will only highlight the most famous of these statues. In South Africa, Port Elizabeth, Mthata, the Union Buildings in Pretoria, Johannesburg and Mangaung (Bloemfontein) all boast sculptures of the international icon. These statues were built after he left political office in 1999, which lends credence to the point that the Mandela mythology gained traction after his presidency.

Mandela's home city of Mthata was one of the first to have a statue of him erected when, in 2003, a R400 million sculpture was built at the entrance of the Nelson Mandela Academic Hospital (Anon 2003, 1). This was highly symbolic as Mandela hailed from the region and it wanted to be one of the first to honour him in this way. This statue was followed in 2004 by a six-metre high bronze statue being unveiled at the upmarket Nelson Mandela Square in Sandton, Johannesburg. Sculpted by artists Jacob Maponyane and Kobus Hattingh, the statue shows Mandela doing his famous 'Madiba Jive'. The square's manager stated that he hoped that it 'will serve to inspire South Africans long into the future' (Mgidi 2004, 3). The Nelson Mandela Square receives 12 million visitors annually and the unveiling of a statue at this popular site has undoubtedly contributed to the Mandela-mania phenomenon (Mgidi 2004, 3).

Mandela's international appeal has always been evident. Many countries which once actively supported the apartheid regime also decided to honour him by erecting a statue. In 2007, a

statue was unveiled in London's Parliament Square alongside Jan Smuts, Winston Churchill and Abraham Lincoln. This despite the fact that Britain supported apartheid South Africa. Mandela, however, commented that we 'overthrew them; we are on an equal basis now' (Anon 2007, 14). The United States followed suit and, in September 2013, a statue of Mandela was unveiled outside the South African Embassy in Washington DC. The three-metre high statue was sculpted to show Mandela's most striking pose – the power-to-the-people fist. Interestingly, the sculpture is an exact replica of the Mandela statue that stands at the Drakenstein Correctional Facility, formerly the infamous Victor Verster prison in Paarl, where Mandela spent the latter days of his prison sentence (Neophytou 2013, 5). International statues of him play a vital role in the Mandela-mania phenomenon and are part of a public diplomacy campaign that uses Mandela's 'life, legacy and values' to portray a positive international image. The statue is symbolic since it was built on the ground where thousands of anti-apartheid protesters 'symbolically surrendered their liberty in the mid-1980s under the banner of the Free SA Movement. They hoped to secure Mr Mandela's release and force the Reagan administration to abandon 'constructive engagement' with Pretoria in favour of biting sanctions' (Barber 2013, 5).

Mandela's last hospitalisation in May 2013 for a recurring lung infection was clear evidence that he was reaching the end of his life. The ruling ANC government wanted to take advantage of the ever-developing Mandela-mania. In terms of statues, the government commissioned and later unveiled a seven-metre high statue of Mandela on Naval Hill in Mangaung. President Zuma commented that the statue should serve as a reminder of the core values of reconciliation, nation-building, social cohesion and national healing which Mandela stood for (Anon 2013, 13). In September 2013, the Department of Arts and Culture also announced a decision to erect a nine-metre high bronze statue at the Union Buildings in Pretoria. It was subsequently unveiled on Reconciliation Day – the day after Mandela's funeral. Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory CEO Sello Hatang stated that the 'statue will remind us that we have an obligation to make sure that the future remains bright for our young people' (Bambalele 2013, 12).

The immense popularity of the Mandela mythology means that even ordinary South Africans have tried to capitalise on the Mandela-mania phenomenon. In 2011, a Limpopo villager, Thomas Mabunda, built his own three-metre tall, but unauthorised, wooden statue of Mandela in his village near Tzaneen. Mabunda charges tourists to view the statue in his home

but has refused to sell the sculpture to wealthy tourists, declaring that he would never sell the most important figure in South Africa's history (Maakana 2011, 7).

In January 2014, the eThekweni Municipality in Durban also announced that it hoped to celebrate Mandela's legacy by building a statue of him. Municipal mayor James Nxumalo stated that 'in paying tribute to his life, all parties represented in this council unanimously shared my sentiments of preserving his memory and legacy within the precinct of our seat of government' (Nair 2014, 8). Although still in the commissioning stage, the statue will add to the many already built and will further cement the Mandela-mania phenomenon in the country's consciousness.

Such is the widespread international nature of Mandela artwork that exhibitions of his life and times have been held in many parts of the world including New York and Paris. In May and June 2013, an exhibition was held at the Paris City Hall which included a reconstruction of Mandela's cell on Robben Island, a 50-column steel sculpture and a narrative history of his life in the form of music and video clips. The success of this exhibition allowed organisers to take it other countries such as Luxembourg and Canada (Shangase 2013, 3).

Mandela-mania – notes and coins

The Mandela bank notes, conceived a few months after Mandela's first hospitalisation in 2011, went into circulation in November 2012 and were first used by Reserve Bank governor Gill Marcus (Ngoepe 2012, 6). The inference here is that because of the serious nature of Mandela's illness, the government wanted to capitalise in every possible way on the country's insatiable appetite for everything Mandela. All the new series Mandela bank notes bear Mandela's image on the front whilst the back retains images of the respective 'Big Five' animals. The aim of the Mandela bank notes is not only to honour Mandela, as is claimed by the government, but also to cement his place in the daily lives of all South Africans.

Although the Mandela bank notes cannot be used for commercial gain, the various Mandela gold, silver and special addition coins are often used for this purpose. This is an extremely lucrative financial venture and many companies have attempted to profit from his name, some without the proper authorisation. One such company is Johannesburg-based coin dealer Investgold, which imported President Mandela: 'A Better Life for All' 1994–1999 gold coins, from the UK and sold them in the country without authorisation from the Nelson Mandela Foundation. The foundation sought legal recourse in preventing the sale of these products and

eventually reached a settlement with the company which allowed it to trade in the coins for a further six months whilst providing the foundation with full disclosure of sales and promising not to import any items which bore the Mandela name again (Motale 2012, 3).

During Mandela's first hospitalisation in 2011, it was also reported by the *Sunday Tribune* that demand for Mandela coins had reached such a level that South Africans were buying any coin bearing Mandela's name or image. The newspaper reported that the South African Gold Coin Exchange sales of Mandela products rose by 500 to 700 per cent. The fastest selling coins were the 1 kg silver medallion going for R18 000 and the half-ounce gold medallion going for R20 000. These coins were especially popular since they contained a gold-plated image of Mandela (Bowman 2011, 17). The Mandela-mania phenomenon is so powerful that most people want to get their hands on an iconic piece of history.

During the days of his hospitalisation in June 2013, internet auction site *bidorbuy* spoke of a huge surge in demand for and sales of Mandela-related memorabilia. The site's CEO, Jaco Jonker, stated that 550 items, consisting of mainly coins and medallions, were sold. 'A 1 kg silver centenary Mandela medallion, which sold for R12 000 on auction and a Mandela 155.5 g gold centenary medallion that went for R95 100' were amongst the items sold (Laganparsad 2013, 6). Other items also on sale at the time included a 1 kg Mandela centenary medallion for R640 000, a signed photograph of Mandela looking out of his prison cell for R85 000 and a 1998 Soccer World Cup ball signed by him and Lucas Rabebe for R25 000. In terms of popularity, the term 'Mandela coins' was the fifth most searched for item on the site (Laganparsad 2013, 6).

46664 and Long Walk to Freedom clothing ranges

The Mandela family is exempt from the legal agreement which prevents the commercialisation of the Mandela brand. As such, the family later began to play their part in its commercialisation. The *46664* clothing brand launched in March 2011 became the first global clothing range to emerge from South Africa. It was aimed at raising funds for the various projects associated with the *46664* campaign such as awareness and prevention of HIV and AIDS (Moodley 2011, 4). This was followed on Mandela Day in 2012 with the launch of the *Long Walk to Freedom* clothing range at the Cross Trainer store in upmarket Sandton City in Johannesburg. Zenani Mandela-Dlamini, Mandela's second daughter from his marriage to Winnie, is the brainchild of the clothing range. Together with her daughters Swati, Zaziwe, Zozuko and Zinhle, Zenani launched the clothing range comprising T-shirts,

caps and sweatshirts all bearing Mandela images and signature and the number 67. At the time of its launch, the brand was not officially associated with the Nelson Mandela Foundation which is the custodian of Mandela's legacy (Phillips 2013, 3). The foundation eventually endorsed the brand in August 2012, stating that the Mandela family had full rights to use the Mandela name for commercial gain. 'It's their name and it would be arrogant of the foundation to say they can't use their own surname' said Sello Hatang (Geldenhuys 2012, 6). In keeping with the spirit of Mandela, a portion of the profits go to the Africa Rising Foundation started in 2009 by Ndaba Mandela (Mandela's grandson).

Unfortunately, the Mandela clothing brand was conceived as a fashion statement and not social commentary, unlike the symbolism of wearing Che Guevara or Bob Marley memorabilia which is regarded as 'youthful, often uninformed, sympathy with a rebellion against injustice' (Ikalafeng 2012, 15).

The Mandela coins and clothing ranges are clear evidence of the commercialisation of the Mandela brand. In a world of increasing financial strain, non-profit organisations such as the Nelson Mandela Foundation have resorted to commercial endeavours in order to obtain additional revenue streams. Although these commercial undertakings are linked to Mandela's philanthropic endeavours, critics have often argued that Mandela's primary legacy is not philanthropy but human rights, democracy, non-racialism, reconciliation and good governance, with the former springing from the latter (Anon 2011, 8). Even though most of these components of the Mandela-mania phenomenon are not official undertakings by the ruling ANC government, they have done little to stop it presumably because of the extreme benefit it brings to the organisation and the country at large.

Mandela Day

Such was Mandela's international popularity that even after his formal retirement from political life, there was still a huge demand on him to intervene and solve crises or allow his name to be used to further a number of causes and campaigns around the world. To cater for this, Mandela Day was conceptualised and initiated 'to further his humanitarian work and to hand over his life's work to the world' and in the process became another component of the Mandela-mania phenomenon (May 2010, 19). The South African government formally endorsed the Mandela Day campaign in 2009, urging all South Africans and indeed the world at large to spend sixty-seven minutes in the service of humanity in whatever capacity they

could. Sixty-seven minutes was chosen in recognition of the sixty-seven years Mandela spent fighting for the freedom of South Africans (Mboyisa 2009, 4).

Mandela Day is such a powerful feature of the Mandela-mania phenomenon and the Mandela mythology at large that no public figure, be they politicians, businessmen, celebrities or sport stars both in South Africa and abroad, can be seen not to be doing some philanthropic work on Mandela Day. It is perhaps correct to state that no other secular figure in history has inspired so many philanthropic initiatives. In 2009, an entire week of events was held in New York in celebration of the first annual Mandela Day. The events included an art exhibition of Mandela's life and a gala dinner at the Vanderbilt Hall and culminated in the 46664 concerts that included high profile celebrities such as Will.i.am, Morgan Freeman, Loyiso Bala and Forest Whitaker (Anon 2011, 8).

Not everyone has welcomed the Mandela Day initiative. Cynics have argued that Mandela Day has in essence become a day on which public personalities try to squeeze the maximum amount of publicity into sixty-seven minutes, hence fuelling the Mandela-mania phenomenon. Fikile-Ntshikelelo Moya argues that although Mandela Day in principle is a good initiative, it is largely a farce because it suggests that shortcuts and public relations stunts can achieve true transformation and reconciliation in the country. Moya paraphrases Marx, suggesting that Mandela Day has become the opiate of the South African people. 'It tries to circumvent the reality', he argues that 'we have done nothing as a nation in the last seventeen years of freedom to deal with why we are not a reconciled people' (Moya 2011, 6). Moya is scathing in his criticism of Mandela Day and comments that 'it turns the haves and the big corporates into modern day missionaries who get the opportunity to feel good about themselves for having done something "for the least of my brothers"' (Moya 2011, 6). Mandela Day, Moya argues, strips Mandela's legacy of most of its revolutionary rigour. In essence, Moya posits that we should conduct some serious introspection on Mandela Day and realise that much of what Mandela fought for – a better life for all – still remains unfulfilled.

Mandela naming mania

Although road names, structures and municipalities around the country have been built or have had their names changed to bear the names of various struggle icons, none of these names has achieved the obsession associated with it in the same way as the Mandela name. In 1993, the R120 million Nelson Mandela Bridge was built to connect Braamfontein with western Johannesburg. Originally envisioned as an urban renewal project, the bridge has

come to symbolise the bridging of divides, something that was at the forefront of Mandela's philosophy (Kings 2013, 3).

Port Elizabeth, situated in Mandela's home province of the Eastern Cape, has used his name the most. The city's municipality (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality), university (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University) and soccer stadium (Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium) are all named after Nelson Mandela. In total, there are thirty-one known cities and towns in South Africa with a road, street or structure named after the iconic statesman. These include, amongst others, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Rustenburg, Polokwane, Soweto, East London and Middleburg. Additionally, there are sixteen townships and thirty-six known streets internationally named after Mandela, such as Nelson Mandela Street in Cardiff, Wales, Mandela Avenue in England and the Nelson Mandela interchange in New Delhi, India (Africa Review Network 2012).

Mandela names are in such extreme abundance that tourists visiting the country for example, can boast about driving along Nelson Mandela Drive in Pretoria, crossing the Nelson Mandela Bridge in Johannesburg, eating at a restaurant at the Nelson Mandela Square in Sandton, going to watch a soccer game at the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium in Port Elizabeth and spending a few nights at a hotel in the city's Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality. The list is endless if tourists want to experience a piece of the Mandela-mania phenomenon (Cengimbo 2004, 4).

Mandela-mania – other components

As stated earlier, the list of components that potentially make up the Mandela-mania phenomenon is endless and I will attempt to summarise some of the other known components.

Despite Mandela's wish not to be associated with alcoholic and tobacco products, his daughter, Makaziwe, and granddaughter Tukwini, launched the *House of Mandela* range of expensive wines in 2013. This is another example of the commercialisation of the Mandela brand which ultimately enriches the Mandela-mania phenomenon. Characterised by entry, middle and high-end products, the wine range is available in supermarkets across South Africa, in the USA in Wal-Mart supermarkets and at the OR Tambo International Airport (Liou 2013, 19). Makaziwe followed this up in March 2014 with the launch of the *Thembu*

Collection in Netherlands. The *Thembu Collection* is an addition to the *House of Mandela* wine range (Anon 2014, 2).

There have also been a number of musicals, documentaries and movies of Mandela's life. Journalist Mary Corrigal has written about some of these documentaries which have further entrenched the Mandela-mania phenomenon. Documentaries such as *Welcome Nelson* and *Madiba: The Life and Times of Nelson Mandela*, Corrigal argues, tried to separate Mandela the man from the mythology and although they might have succeeded to some extent in bringing out his perceived humility, this in effect reinforced the Mandela mythology since humility is a desired quality in any saint. Nevertheless, the latter documentary did include a visit to Mandela's old law offices in downtown Johannesburg. At the time the documentary was made, the derelict office was occupied by an impoverished African migrant who did not pay rent for its use just as Mandela did not when he occupied it. Corrigal argues this was a rather sobering point which put Mandela-mania into perspective; that is, despite the euphoria around the Nelson Mandela, the lives of the black majority have, for the most part, remained unchanged if not worsened (Corrigal 2010, 12).

A month before Mandela's death, the movie adaptation of *Long Walk to Freedom* was released in South Africa and became another addition to the irresistible Mandela-mania phenomenon. Achieving international acclaim, the movie can be regarded as the visual embodiment of the liberation struggle with Mandela as its foremost individual. Other movies include *Invictus* (2010) and *Mandela* (1987). Whilst the latter positioned him as the awaited saviour of black South Africans, the former depicts him as a leader who managed to unite all South Africans behind an almost fully white team thereby significantly helping to attain reconciliation between races.

Mandela-mania – analysis of the Mandela brand

Brand experts are unanimous in their assertion that it is impossible to express the monetary value of the Mandela brand. It is abundantly clear, however, that its popularity levels are quite high. A 2007 Markinor survey put its popularity rating at 9.2 out of 10. Perhaps the worth of Brand Mandela is best described by author Muzi Kuzwayo, who stated that 'he is bigger than the word "brand". A brand is something you can put in a box or on the shelf. Can you put a price tag on the Statue of Liberty? He is a national treasure and of infinite worth' (Peters, 2007, 5).

Rather than trying to put a price on the value of the brand, experts have instead described it as being the best possible public relations officer this country could ever wish for. Brand expert Jeremy Sampson remarks that Mandela was the decisive factor when it came to South Africa winning the bid to host the Fifa World Cup. Thebe Ikalafeng remarks, 'Mandela represents the best of what South Africa can be and what we are capable of. When people see him, they see that South Africa is a forgiving, conciliatory, gentlemanly and a peaceful nation' (Davids 2011, 6). The Mandela brand also represents stability to investors who want their money safe and to make good profit. Tourism is also positively affected by the heightened status of the Mandela brand, since thousands of tourists flock to the country every year to visit the iconic places made famous by Mandela such as Robben Island and his home in Vilakazi Street in Soweto (Davids 2011, 6).

Mandela's home province, the Eastern Cape, has also been trying to take full advantage of his links to the province. Tourism operators in the province's Wild Coast have added tours to the Nelson Mandela museums in Qunu and Mthata as part of their tour itinerary of the region in order to cash in on the Mandela-mania phenomenon. In *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela spoke fondly about the rolling hills, sweeping valleys and ridges; and many tourists want to see firsthand the area that played a pivotal role in shaping the life of Mandela (Chiahemen 2006, 6).

Achmat Dangor, former CEO of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, stated that one of the aims of the Foundation is to counteract the tendency of the media to portray Mandela as a legend and saint (Peters 2007, 5). I posit that the foundation has failed miserably in this regard. The Mandela brand has instead evolved uncontrollably around the Mandela-mania phenomenon in effect promoting the Mandela mythology. In fact, it is in the interests of the foundation that Brand Mandela reach extraordinary levels, since this brings with it much-needed income it requires to further its goals.

Now that Mandela has passed on, brand experts have predicted that the Mandela brand will, in monetary terms, reach unprecedented levels. In fact, the immediate aftermath of his death saw roadside informal traders selling anything that bore Mandela's image or name. Online auction site *bidorbuy* also reported a huge rise in demand for products bearing Mandela's name. The same auction site previously reported that during Mandela's hospitalisations in 2011 and 2013, Mandela-related products were selling very fast (Le Roux 2013, 9).

In addition to the criticisms surrounding the commercialisation of the Mandela brand, other criticisms emerged arguing that it has merely diverted attention away from the daily human rights abuses committed against the masses by white capital and their surrogate black managers. The reality, these criticisms state, is that the ‘existing high levels of poverty, unemployment, lack of access to quality housing, equal education, primary health-care and the resultant hardship that is unique to black South Africans. This is proof that the social change remains largely cosmetic as a result of conniving neo-liberal economies and their surrogate African leaders’ (Singiswa 2013, 2).

Singiswa also argues that most white South Africans have embraced the Mandela-mania phenomenon because they fear that when he dies (this article was written six months before his death but still holds relevance for the point I am trying to make here), they will lose the economic privilege they inherited in 1994 and be subject to the built-up frustration and anger of the indigenous impoverished masses (2013, 3). Steven Friedman agrees and states that the Mandela-mania phenomenon is fuelled in part by white South Africans who want to ‘cling to a cuddly, uncomplicated view of the new South Africa’ and this has the tendency to reduce the complex human being that Mandela was into someone who ‘doesn’t have a hang-up about the past’ (Murphy 2004, 10). These criticisms have not, however, stopped the Mandela-mania phenomenon from consolidating the Mandela mythology. The exculpatory factor of the Mandela mythology, it would seem, is resistant to any forms of critical engagement or negative publicity.

The discussion of the second and in particular the third phase of the Mandela mythology clearly indicate its undeniable feature as a political construct and by extension its potential political usages in a similar vein to that recommended by Machiavelli and Rousseau. This raises the pertinent question regarding the position of the mythology in the contemporary civil religion debate. Whilst chapter four will discuss the Mandela mythology as a potential civil religion in South Africa, the next section will attempt to set the scene by interrogating and subsequently positioning the mythology within the two dominant streams of the debate.

Situating the Mandela mythology in the contemporary civil religion debate

Two largely different traditions encompass the contemporary civil religion debate – the Durkheimian sociological tradition and the Rousseauian conceptualisation focusing on its possible political usages. The Durkheimian sociological understanding of civil religion views the phenomenon as an inherent property of social life and is based on ‘shared beliefs, rituals

and symbols that express its most fundamental values' (Cristi 2001, 7). Sociological theorists, such as Wilson (1971), Purdy (1982), Swindler (1986), and Wuthnow (1988) on the other hand, argue that it serves an integrating function and in the process allows for order and stability of society. Most analyses of civil religion tend to follow this route and simply begin by making passing references to Rousseau as the intellectual father of the concept. Chief amongst these scholars is Bellah who, in 1967, conceived an American civil religion.

Although analyses of state-led secular religions have always existed in the American academic fraternity, such analysis was devoid of a common conceptual term to describe and analyse it. Bellah (1967, 2) defined civil religion as 'a genuine apprehension of universal and transcendent religious reality as seen or ... as revealed through the experience of the people'. Bellah observed that Americans held the belief that they have a responsibility to carry out the will of God on earth both in their individual and collective capacities. He posits that ever since its independence in 1779, Americans have largely interpreted their history in religious terms. American civil religion, according to Bellah, serves as a genuine vehicle of national religious self-understanding. The effect of this has been to 'generate powerful symbols of national solidarity and encourage Americans to achieve national aspirations and goals' (Cristi 2001, 2).

For Bellah, the primary role of civil religion is to build, affirm and celebrate a common national heritage. Although he is speaking in an American context, this point can be transposed to the South African context. The common national heritage for South Africans, I will argue, is Nelson Mandela. Civil religion is the bridge between the citizen and state and is meant to serve as a uniting force towards attaining the aspirations of the state (Cristi 2001, 70). However, I will come back to this point at a later stage.

Bellah states that, in a civil religion, the presidential inauguration is an essential ceremonial event. 'It affirms', he believes, amongst other things, 'the religious dimension of the highest political authority' (Bellah 1967, 4). In fact, all American presidents since independence in 1779 have mentioned God in their inaugural speeches. In short, Bellah claims that the references to God in the inaugural speeches of presidents, the Declaration of Independence and the constitution, Fourth of July celebrations, Memorial Day and Thanksgiving holidays provide the annual ritual for the American civil religion. The nature of the American civil religion is appropriately captured by Bellah thus:

What we have, then, from the earliest years of the republic is a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals with respect to sacred things and institutionalised in a collectivity. This religion, there seems no other word for it, while not antithetical to and indeed sharing much in common with Christianity, was neither sectarian nor in any specific sense Christian. At a time when the society was overwhelmingly Christian, it seems unlikely that this lack of Christian reference was meant to spare the feelings of the tiny non-Christian minority. Rather, the civil religion expressed what those who set the precedents felt was appropriate under the circumstances. It reflected their private as well as public views. Nor was the civil religion simply 'religion in general'. While generality was undoubtedly seen as a virtue by some, the civil religion was specific enough when it came to the topic of America. Precisely because of this specificity, the civil religion was saved from empty formalism and served as a genuine vehicle of national religious self-understanding (Bellah 1967, 8).

Bellah's thesis provoked widespread debate with some wholeheartedly accepting it whilst others equally dismissed it. Although written more than forty-six years ago, the debate on the contemporary understanding of civil religion rages on. In fact, a plethora of books and academic articles, both in the fields of sociology and political theory, have been written on the subject such as, inter alia, Wimberley and Christenson's (1980) *Civil Religion and Church and State* and Beiner's (2011) *Civil Religion: A Dialogue in the History of Political Thought*. It should be noted, however, that Bellah's civil religion thesis is difficult to transfer to the understanding of other potential civil religions around the world. This is primarily as a result of its conceptualisation according to the Durkheimian tradition.

Cristi (2001, 4) believes that we may circumvent this problem by conceptualising civil religion in a cultural *and* ideological sense. The former places emphasis on the Durkheimian approach and is relevant in certain contexts, whilst the latter emphasises the Rousseauian approach. This encompasses a broader understanding of civil religion and allows for its applicability in different contexts. Civil religion may thus be understood as a phenomenon 'expressing inward conviction on the part of members of a particular group (implicit culture), or as a political resource, a form of external compulsion or force used to support an existing political order' (Cristi, 2001, 4). Cristi posits that civil religion understood in this way allows it to be distinguished conceptually but not distinguishable in reality. Wilson (1971, 111) agrees with this contention, arguing that civil religion should also concern the 'possibility that specific social and cultural beliefs, behaviours and institutions constitute a positive religion concerned with civil order in society'.

The Rousseauian understanding views civil religion as a premeditated political ideology constructed by the state and its political leaders that members of a collective are expected or even forced to accept. Civil religion can thus be understood as a 'political resource at the service of the state' (Cristi 2001, 4–5). This conceptualisation tends to place emphasis on,

and in the process ‘sacralise[,] certain aspects of civic life by means of public rituals and collective ceremonies’ (Cristi 2001, 3). Cristi is effectively calling for a greater political dimension to the civil religion debate since this allows behaviours and beliefs to acquire a religious dimension. ‘As such, civil religion may be considered a belief system or a surrogate religion that expresses the self-identity of a collectivity’ (Cristi 2001, 3).

Given the indication provided in this chapter of the Mandela mythology serving as a conscious political construct, I make use of this conceptualisation in chapter four to advance the idea that the Mandela mythology is a political resource used by the state to serve as the primary unifying agent in achieving national reconciliation, nation-building, social cohesion and political stability in post-apartheid South Africa. In effect, such an understanding critiques the predominant approach of American scholars influenced by Bellah.

Cristi aptly summarises the difference between the sociological and the political traditions of civil religion thus:

While Durkheim suggests that every society naturally *possesses* a religious foundation, Rousseau simply claims that every society *needs* one. For Durkheim, a religious foundation is *inevitable* – a natural phenomenon. For Rousseau, it is only *indispensable* – the result of social convention [italics my emphasis] (Cristi 2001, 46).

Discussing the differences between the Durkheimian and Rousseauian conceptualisations of civil religion has been an important undertaking in order to appropriately situate and contextualise the Mandela mythology.

Conclusion

The Mandela mythology conceived of in this chapter centres around the issue of icon building around political figures in South Africa. Given the country’s historical fight against white supremacy, colonialism and apartheid, it is plausible that certain personalities would tower over others in the bid to overcome these obstacles. Undoubtedly the most important political personality to come through this period was Nelson Mandela. His various performative displays during the three constructed phases alluded to in this chapter and upon which the mythology rests, demonstrates the immense importance of his thoughts and actions to the country. Unlike other important personalities of the anti-apartheid struggle, the largely uncritical creation of the Mandela mythology not only allowed him to be constructed benevolently, but also exculpated him.

The exploration of the Mandela-mania phenomenon in phase three of the mythology firmly establishes the process of icon building in the psyche of South Africans and the world in the form of the Mandela mythology. These components allowed the consolidation and enhancement of the dominant narrative espoused in the previous two phases, which in turn allowed the dominant narrative to become the official narrative of the Mandela mythology. This provides a good platform from which to analyse it through Machiavellian and Rousseauian lenses.

I followed this exploration by situating the Mandela mythology within the two dominant streams that characterise contemporary civil religion debates, that is, the Durkheimian sociological understanding and the Rousseauian political conceptualisation. I concluded that the political usages of the mythology situate it within the Rousseauian tradition. As such, the process of building the icon of Mandela in the Rousseauian tradition has allowed the benevolent positioning of the Mandela mythology in the historical context of post-1994 South Africa and 'allowed him to slip through the filter of many critical scholarly assessments of him in that it established the evacuation of his style of the dark arts of realpolitik, which shredded the reputation and credibility of his more feisty and nationalistic deputy and successor, Thabo Mbeki' (Mathebe 2012, 319).

The exculpatory ability, together with resistance of the myth to one particular definition, has produced a plethora of religious terms associated with the mythology. This can be said to be the beginning of the immense political purchase of the religious argument around the Mandela mythology of which the ANC government was acutely aware of and who consequently started to allow, and in fact sometimes actively participate in, the creation and enhancement of a number symbolic elements around Mandela, most of which were alluded to in phase three of the Mandela mythology.

Mandela was 'a physical and biological man' like every other human but what distinguished him from most others was that he was also a constructed myth or symbol (Van Heerden 2012, 128). Whilst the former has now left this world, the latter will undoubtedly remain and be exploited for political ends. This will be thoroughly investigated in the next chapter with the intention of arguing that what we view as the Mandela mythology in South Africa may in fact be the presence of a national civil religion along the lines envisaged by Machiavelli and Rousseau.

Chapter Four

Mandela mythology as the civil religion of contemporary South Africa

Introduction

In this chapter, I will attempt to bring together the civil religion thoughts expressed by both Machiavelli and Rousseau in chapter one and chapter two respectively with the Mandela mythology discussed and analysed in chapter three arguing that in the South African context there exist a religious dimension to the mythology. Salazar (2002, 16) agrees and argues that ‘rarely indeed in modern history has the emergence of a modern nation been guided by such a strict religious authority’ and ‘liturgically inspired rhetoric has been an important accompaniment of South Africa’s history’. Salazar is referring to the importance of Christianity in the South African political discourse to demonstrate that for the civil religion to achieve the support of the masses, it needs to be articulated using Christian discourse. It is, however, important at this early stage to disentangle the idea of religion (Christianity) in general from one that is incorporated into and supportive of the state (civil religion).

As stated towards the end of chapter three, contemporary thought on civil religion is dominated by two distinct yet important schools of thought in church and state relations, that is, the Durkheimian and Rousseauian traditions. In the modern era, civil religion has been narrowly conceived as a result of the dominance of the Durkheimian sociological tradition, thus neglecting its ideological and potentially manipulative aspects (Cristi 2001, 8). Given the inherent shortcomings in the Durkheimian tradition espoused by Bellah (1967), I argued for the return to the Rousseauian tradition in order to obtain a better conceptualisation of contemporary civil religions that do not embody an implicit culture or form an inherent part of society. I hypothesise in this thesis that we cannot conceptualise the Mandela-mythology civil religion as separate from the state. To suggest otherwise is to advocate a profound misunderstanding of Machiavellian and Rousseauian civil religion. Certainly, civil religion in the Machiavellian and Rousseauian tradition can only be established by the state. As Cristi (2001, 138) exclaims, ‘civil religion as understood by Rousseau is a political religion to be fixed and dictated by the state, for the state’.

I maintain that as long as we see state control or manipulation of civil religion to advance political ends, what we are actually witnessing is a Rousseauian conception of civil religion (Cristi 2001, 236). Wilson (1971, 14) agrees and suggests that Rousseau’s civil religion was

meant to serve as a theory of political religion aimed at supporting the state. As such, the Mandela-mythology civil religion serves as a political tool for enforcing civic responsibility – an important component for the maintenance of the stability and common good of society. I contend that such an understanding would demonstrate a civil religion in the state, which is used by its political elites as a political resource to further certain political agendas.

Little analysis has been attempted to understand the political and ideological forces that may consciously shape or even manipulate civil religion. This has been mostly the result of a lack of conceptual understanding of the phenomenon (Cristi 2001, 8). I aim to fill this void in this chapter. This is particularly true, it will be argued, for countries such as South Africa where the ANC government seeks to use the powerful Mandela mythology as a political tool to further its national policies and programmes.

Before embarking on an analysis of the Mandela mythology as a civil religion in South Africa, I will briefly discuss the existence of two previous civil religions in South Africa, that is, the Afrikaner civil religion during apartheid and the rainbow nation civil religion between 1994 and 1999. A name originally coined by Desmond Tutu, the rainbow nation eventually transformed into a unifying phenomenon for South Africans divided by an inhumane past. This phenomenon followed the Durkheimian tradition and encompassed events such as Mandela's inauguration in 1994 and the Rugby World Cup in 1995 to demonstrate the existence of a national civil religion.

Russell (2009, 40), however, states that Mbeki was deeply sceptical of the rainbow nation idea since he believed that it promoted reconciliation without the fundamental transformation of society. It will therefore be argued that the end of the Mandela presidency also signalled the termination of the rainbow nation as a unifying civil religion in South Africa. Nonetheless, the rainbow nation civil religion will be an important aspect to consider in the build-up to analysing the Mandela mythology as a civil religion in South Africa.

Ultimately, and using Machiavelli's and Rousseau's civil religion ideas enshrined in chapter one and two and the Mandela mythology analysed in chapter three, I will contend that there exists, alongside the multitude of monotheistic and polytheistic faiths in South Africa, a common set of elements that have come to obtain a civil religious dimension shared by the majority of South Africans. This religious dimension is expressed in the form of a set of beliefs, rituals and symbols associated with Nelson Mandela and which I call the Mandela-mythology civil religion.

I will argue that the South African government uses this civil religion as the primary unifying agent for the post-apartheid state and its national aspirations and goals. This is in line with Machiavelli's assertion that it is important that any ruler or state recognise and appreciate the influence and strategic potential of religion. This civil religion is institutionalised in a collection of beliefs, rituals and symbols with respect to sacred things. It is independent of political and religious institutions and also does not compete with either the state or the church, even though the mythology of Mandela does have some Christian undercurrents (Cristi 2001, 1).

Whilst I posit that the Mandela mythology is a conscious political construct used by nationalist ideologues in the ruling ANC to exploit his physical and moral stature for obtaining unity and reconciliation behind the post-1994 state, I am also deeply aware that Mandela himself was an active participant in shaping this image in the public consciousness. The Mandela-mythology civil religion is not the worship of Nelson Mandela or the post-1994 South African state. As Mead (1974, 61) states, 'religion of the republic does not mean worship of the state'. Rather, it provides a unique understanding of the South African experience and its current manifestations in a democratic South Africa. This chapter should also be seen as interrogating and interrupting the linear narrative of the Mandela mythology. It is an attempt to provide a distinctive understanding of the 'shape-shifting' qualities of Mandela which allowed him to bridge the gap and appeal to the different worlds he inhabited during his natural existence.

Previous civil religions in South Africa

Moodie (1975) first theorised about the existence of a civil religion in South Africa when he described the ideology of apartheid as the Afrikaner civil religion of the time. The Afrikaner civil religion, Moodie argues, has its roots in the humiliating defeat of the 1899–1902 South African War. Subsequent to this, the Afrikaner civil religion aimed to separate Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans from their English-speaking countrymen with the ultimate aim of obtaining political power. This vision was ultimately achieved with the nationalist victory in 1948, after which the emphasis shifted from the segregation of white English speakers to the segregation of all non-white South Africans (Dickow et al. 1999, 250).

The propaganda of the Afrikaner civil religion propagated the view of a Christian nationalism as the stated objective of apartheid, which claimed that Afrikaners were the chosen people of God on the African continent and, as such, should remain separate from other racial and

ethnic groups in order to preserve their uniqueness. During apartheid, Afrikaners would commemorate December 16th as the Day of the Covenant when they would give thanks to God for granting them victory against the Zulus at the Battle of Blood River. Although now celebrated as the National Day of Reconciliation, there are still many Afrikaans communities in the new South Africa that continue to celebrate it as the Day of the Covenant (Dickow et al. 1999, 250).

Dickow (1996) states that the unique characteristic of the Afrikaner civil religion was the blurred lines between the separation of the church and the state. Religious sermons at Sunday church services were essentially political gatherings. This viewpoint is epitomised by Willem J. Lubbe, the founder of the Afrikaanse Protestantse Kerk who said that:

We believe that God created differences between nations. We remain true to what God has created. He created diversity among peoples and nations, which remains to the end of days. This is the path to heaven. We do not believe it is a coincidence that we are Afrikaners. We were created Afrikaners by God. And we remain what we were created. If God had wanted something else, he would have made something else. There are Xhosas, Zulus, etc., all with different political and cultural identities. We don't agree with all people being one. Our eyes tell us that people are different. We believe in an own church for each people as part of God's diversity (cited in Dickow 1996).

The existence of such a civil religion is unique in the sense that it aimed to segregate instead of integrate the different racial groups in the country. In general, however, the ultimate aim of any civil religion is to unite and enable citizens from the country's diverse racial groups, religions, ethnicities and political parties to identify with it (Dickow et al. 1999, 249).

In this respect, the symbolism of the rainbow nation was touted by politicians and civil society as the new civil religion in South Africa after the demise of apartheid in 1990, and the creation of the post-apartheid state as the miracle nation which was crucial to the nation-building ethos espoused by the ANC during the uncertain times that followed the emergence of democracy. Archbishop Desmond Tutu is often credited as being the intellectual father of the concept when, in 1988, during a march to parliament and in 1993, during the funeral of Chris Hani, he referred to South Africans as the rainbow people. It only started to gain momentum however after the country's first democratic election in 1994 (Dickow et al. 1999, 252). During the National Thanksgiving Service of 8 May 1994 meant to celebrate the peaceful elections that occurred and the birth of a new non-racial democratic country, Tutu referred to all South Africans as the 'rainbow people of God'. 'We are free' he remarked, 'all of us, black and white together!' (Tutu [1991] 2006, ix). This signalled, according to Dickow

et al. (1999, 252), the birth of the symbolism of the rainbow nation as the new and integrating civil religion to which all South Africans could subscribe.

This term has religious connotations since it originates in the Old Testament. Archbishop Tutu used the 'motif that expresses a covenant between God and humankind and all living creatures. The rainbow is the biblical symbol of reconciliation which affirms God's covenant with Noah after the flood' (Dickow et al. 1999, 252). The most appealing characteristic, however, was that Tutu was not referring to a covenant such as this but rather to a covenant with all South Africans irrespective of race, religion, class or creed. What this also insinuates is that the symbolism of the rainbow nation was an inherent part of South African society and not a conscious creation of the government. The rainbow was effectively meant to serve as a political symbol of unity.

Baines (1998, 1) believes that the metaphor of the rainbow nation also resonates with the symbolism of the rainbow in South Africa's indigenous cultures. For instance, in Xhosa cosmology the rainbow signifies hope and assurance of a bright future. The rainbow nation civil religion aimed to change the 'conception of nationhood from a primordial one predicated on shared 'blood', culture and language (as was the case under Afrikaner nationalism) to one that could accommodate a variety of cultures, races and languages' (Evans 2010, 309). The 'appeal of the rainbow as a political symbol was inclusive of all groups in society and that feelings of national pride and support for the rainbow ideal were positively associated with subjective well-being' (Dickow et al 1999, 245). Rainbow nation nationalism, according to Dickow et al (1999, 249) embodied a 'strong collectivist symbol which defines the group as the entire nation in contrast to the racial groups defined by apartheid society. One might expect the rainbow symbolism to have a stronger appeal to collectivists than individualists'.

In a similar way to the Afrikaner civil religion of the apartheid era and the American civil religion, the new civil religion used biblical references, symbols, rituals and so forth to achieve political ends. In this context, it helped serve as a stepping stone to national reconciliation and unity after a severely fragmented past (Dickow et al. 1999, 252). Although Tutu was the originator of the concept, Mandela was used as the political figurehead to drive the civil religion since there was no figure stronger than his in the country. Mandela was viewed as the guardian of the miracle nation steadfastly safeguarding the ideals of reconciliation and nation-building. The idea of the rainbow nation flourished under the

‘guidance’ of Mandela and, in the process, brought to the fore the heroic story of his career. Mathebe (2012, 60) agrees and states that Mandela, like the Prussian Prince William I, was seen as legendary, the embodiment of the miracle rainbow nation, with his moral/charismatic influence and a passive position on issues of the day, adding that it also brought to the fore, the ‘complete fantasy of South Africa’s exceptionalism’.

The various performative displays Mandela undertook between 1990 and 1999 served as some of the rituals and symbols of the rainbow nation civil religion and helped ensure its success during his presidency. As mentioned in chapter three, these include, but are not limited to, his release from prison in 1990, his inauguration as the country’s first democratically elected president in 1994, and the 1995 Rugby World Cup. Undoubtedly, when Mandela donned the Springbok jersey during the Rugby World Cup he represented the birth of the rainbow nation. Despite the many overtures aimed at nation-building, it would be an illusion to suggest that South Africans miraculously became united and reconciled after the tournament. Evans (2010, 322) suggests, nevertheless, that the tournament as a whole surpassed expectations and the responses to it served to strengthen the civil religion of the ‘new’ miracle rainbow nation.

The success of the Rugby World Cup’s contribution to the rainbow nation civil religion lay in, at least in part, the support of the previously sceptical ‘black’ press. *The Sowetan* dubbed the team *Amabokoboko*, allowing blacks to feel a sense of ownership in a team and sport that had traditionally been the exclusive realm of white South Africans. The *City Press* which had previously supported the termination of the Springbok emblem later exclaimed ‘Viva Amabokoboko! Viva South Africa’ (Evans 2010, 322). The study by Dickow et al. (1999, 273) suggests that the symbols of the rainbow nation, flag and anthem of South Africa were extremely important to the success of the rainbow nation as the new civil religion. The symbol of the rainbow appealed to a wide spectrum of South Africans across religious, ethnic and racial lines, suggesting that the civil religion was mostly inclusive.

Evans (2010, 310) notes that there are striking similarities between Afrikaner nationalism as a civil religion and the rainbow nationalism espoused by the ANC between 1990 and 1999. The ideas of the *volk* and rainbow nationalism both have *religious origins* (my emphasis) and portray ‘the uniqueness of the identity of ‘the people’. Additionally, just as the National Party used the Afrikaans print media to enhance their imagined community, so too the ANC used the mass media to construct and further the inherent rainbow nationalism mythology. The

difference between the two mythologies, however, is that rainbow nationalism benefited from a highly globalised world in which the mass media were more technologically advanced and, hence, could better advance the rainbow nation mythology.

Another major shortcoming of the rainbow nation civil religion was that it merely served to mask many of the deep-rooted historical challenges facing the country. Mathebe (2012, 47) contends that the rainbow nation served as a 'saviour' in the sense that it diverted attention towards heroic conclusions, in the process masking the numerous contradictions of post-apartheid South Africa. It provided a benevolent glow over what was in reality a rather difficult and challenging period. The rainbow nation civil religion produced the fantasy of a country that was united, instead of divided, by its diversity. Mbeki often decried the fact that the country was trying to achieve reconciliation without transformation, in other words trying to allay white fears without tackling black aspirations. In essence, Russell (2009, 40) states that Mbeki was deeply sceptical of the rainbow nation idea. As Evans (2010, 323) suggests, 'the current context, dominated by tense race relations, uprisings against lack of service delivery, increasing inequality and on-going white emigration, suggests that the rainbow nationalist period may have inadvertently helped to defer rather than deflect revolution'.

Both mythologies, nonetheless, made valuable contributions to the Durkheimian sociological understanding of civil religion. Afrikaner nationalism and rainbow nationalism both had mainstream religious foundations, with the former resulting from a divisive view of Christian nationalism whilst the latter originated from the rainbow symbolism of the biblical covenant between Noah and God, in which God promises to never again end all life on earth by the flood, which destroyed those who refused to obey Noah. Thereafter the rainbow became the sign of this eternal promise between God and every living creature.

Although both civil religions had some degree of political control, this has been generally ignored in favour of their religious and cultural significance. There has been little study attempted to investigate the political and ideological forces that may have deliberately shaped or influenced these civil religions. They were not conscious political constructs even though they were exploited for political ends. Conversely, I will argue below that the Mandela-mythology civil religion is indeed such a construct initially advanced by the ANC during the anti-apartheid struggle to enrich the cause of liberation and now rigorously used by it, as the governing party of the state, to achieve political outcomes. This has ultimately resulted in it, I will argue below, serving as a civil religion in South Africa.

The Mandela mythology as the new civil religion in South Africa

In calling for an analysis of the ‘inclusion of the ideological side of civil religion, its inherent political nature and its profound political significance’, Cristi (2001, 122) inadvertently opens up the space for investigating the existence of a national civil religion in the South African context along Machiavellian and Rousseauian lines, which postulate that religion, although an undesirable feature of society, can be altered by the state to have constructive effects. This civil religion, I will argue, is based on the Mandela mythology outlined in chapter three. From this it follows that we should also take into consideration the important role played by those in power, who purposefully create, disseminate and diffuse the civil religion as a tool for social cohesion and political stability (Cristi 2001, 123).

This civic unity is not a spontaneous process as suggested by some sociologists, but rather the result of a collective recognition of the popularity of the Mandela mythology. Posel (2014, 74) succinctly introduces this point in the South African context. She states that many important leaders within ANC ranks were ‘party to Mandela’s symbolic choreography, not least in accommodating the salient role assigned to him by his jailers’, since he was unanimously assumed to be best suited to unite South Africans across racial, ethnic and religious lines behind the fragile post-1994 democratic state. Posel (2014, 77) further contends that ‘perhaps the most striking – and distinguishing – feature of the national and international consensus that went into his making: [is] the shared recognition of the desirability of the myth, as well as key elements of its content, across racial lines and political divisions’.

Even the apartheid regime realised that there could no peace without Mandela playing a leading role in the process. ‘It was obvious to South Africa’s rulers that only their most famous captive could render any settlement legitimate’ (Mandela 1995, 166). As mentioned in chapter two, Rousseau places such importance on the promotion of political unity and the role of civil religion in attaining this unity that he argued that without civil religion, ‘no state or government will ever be well constituted’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 146)

I sketched the foundation for this undertaking in chapter one and, most importantly, in chapter two. Chapters one and two respectively outlined two basic assumptions of Machiavelli’s and Rousseau’s civil religion. First, every state needs a religious foundation and, second, Christianity stands in antithesis to the well-being of a state. Simply understood, Machiavelli and Rousseau assume that religion is ‘politically indispensable for it is the base

on which the state is legitimately anchored' (Cristi 2001, 21). To avoid the problem of the incompatibility of Christianity and the Machiavellian solution of going back to Roman paganism, Rousseau's solution entails creating a religion that creates and fosters a civic creed. Cristi exclaims that Rousseau's civil religion 'was not intended as a kind of surrogate religion, but one that concerns itself with moral and civic duties to other individuals' (2001, 23).

In chapter two, I critically analysed Rousseau's vision for a national civil religion as one in which civil society was based on the civil principles of patriotism, good citizenship, a good lawgiver, separation of powers and an elective aristocracy, all directed by a shared understanding of the common good and the general will. Central to these principles is the belief in God as mentioned in his definition of a civil religion as the 'existence of a powerful, intelligent, beneficent, prescient, and provident divinity (God), the life to come, the happiness of the just, the punishment of the wicked, the sanctity of the Social Contract and the laws' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 150–151). I shall attempt to meticulously interrogate the various components of Rousseau's civil religion in relation to the question of the Mandela mythology as a potential civil religion existing in South Africa along Machiavellian and Rousseauian lines.

The belief in a higher being or God is instrumental to Rousseau's conception of civil religion. Although South Africa is a secular democratic state that does not privilege any one religion's God over the next, the country's Constitution does make references to God. The preamble to the Constitution, for example, states that 'may God protect our people' and 'God bless South Africa' (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996, 1243). The latter is echoed in the opening verse of the national anthem. Additionally, the oath of office of the president, deputy president, ministers and deputy ministers, parliamentarians and so forth, all end with the words 'So help me God' (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996, 1243). The various presidents of post-apartheid South Africa, although advocating that religious belief is a matter of an individual's inward belief, have also mentioned God in many of their speeches. Mandela, for example, remarked that 'to lose faith in fellow humans is, as the Archbishop [Tutu] would correctly point out, to lose faith in God and in the purpose of life itself' (Mandela [1994] 2003, 320).

The specific references to a God in the aforementioned instances and frequently in official presidential speeches might indicate that they serve mainly a ceremonial function intended to

please the majority of citizens to whom religion still plays an important role in their everyday lives. Other critics may argue that religion is frequently used as an electioneering tool. As Bellah (1967, 2) states, a ‘semblance of piety is merely one of the unwritten qualifications for the office’.

Besides the constitutional and other rhetorical references to God in presidential speeches, the leadership of Mandela was frequently referred to as a gift from God. The Mandela mythology was, according to Posel (2014, 86), the hand of God on earth chaperoning the transition to democracy through some of the bloodiest violence the country had ever seen. Such rhetoric resonated deeply amongst a citizenry, Posel (2014, 86) argued, ‘long accustomed to a religious metaphysics of social and political life and a version of political leadership as divinely ordained’.

Some critics such as Hammond (1963, 103) argue that bringing God into the public sphere, as well as the conceptualisation of a civil religion in general, violates the institutionalised separation of church and state since this separation is a prerequisite for a civil religion to exist. I nevertheless hold a view similar to that of Bellah (1974, 107), who remarked that the institutionalised separation of church and state does not mean that our ‘public life has no religious dimension nor that fundamental questions of our national existence are not civil religious questions’.

Nonetheless, simply dismissing religion or the belief in God as somewhat ceremonial or ritualistic would be counterproductive since what people say on ‘solemn occasions need not be taken at face value, but it is often indicative of deep-seated values and commitments that are not made explicit in the course of everyday life’ (Bellah 1967, 2). It should be noted that just as in the American civil religion, the Mandela mythology as a civil religion in South Africa only makes references to the existence of a God and not to any specific religion or prophet, thus preserving its secular nature. As Bellah notes, the concept of God can ‘mean so many different things to so many different people that it is almost an empty sign’ (1967, 3). The Mandela-mythology civil religion therefore satisfies the first criterion of Rousseau’s civil religion, that is, the propagation of the belief in a God.

For civil religion to become the mode of life, Rousseau believed individuals needed to make the duty to their fatherland their primary business. In other words, individuals needed to abandon their devotion to their particular wills in favour of the general will of society. I will argue that the Mandela mythology is the lawgiver for the civil religion, which Rousseau

believed to be important for the success of a civil religion since it creates ‘pride and self-esteem together with their vigour and strength in spectacles which by reminding them (citizens) of the history of their ancestors, their misfortunes, their virtues, their victories, stirred their hearts, fired them with a lively spirit of emulation’ and strongly attaches ‘them to the fatherland with which they were being kept constantly occupied’ (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 181). Chapter two laid out in detail the characteristics and functions of the lawgiver, but it is worth summarising them here for the purposes of the present discussion.

The function of the lawgiver is primarily to discover and cement important patriotic habits, tastes and dispositions of the common people by emphasising their religion, morals and unique way of life. Rousseau argues that good lawgivers

sought bonds that might attach the citizens to the fatherland and to one another, and they found them in distinctive practices, in religious ceremonies which by their very nature was always exclusive and national, in games which kept the citizens frequently assembled, in exercises which increased their pride and self-esteem together with their vigour and strength in spectacles which by reminding them of the history of their ancestors, their misfortunes, their virtues, their victories, stirred their hearts, fired them with a lively spirit of emulation, and strongly attached them to the fatherland with which they were being kept constantly occupied (Rousseau [1782] 1997, 181).

It is evident that the lawgiver is a rare being who is ‘an authoritative person who is neither authoritarian nor personal, who generalises will while leaving it voluntary’ (Cristi 2001, 142). ‘He (the lawgiver) should take from his own forces in order to give him forces which are foreign to him and of which he cannot make use without the help of others’ (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 69). In short, the lawgiver should take away from the natural inclinations of people and help them develop new ones, that is, assist them in making the duty to their country their primary business.

The Mandela-mythology civil religion fulfils Rousseau’s purpose of the lawgiver since it conceives of an alternate civil religion in order to ‘elicit feelings of civic membership and enforce the duties of citizenship in national communities no longer bounded by traditional religious links’ (Cristi 2001, 16). This is important, according to Rousseau, to bind individuals to the state. Whilst this integrative component is crucial to the understanding of civil religion, it should not be assumed that the components of it are a cultural given or an intrinsic part of society. Rather, these can be constructed by the state and its political elites to further a certain agenda and this is what I hope to argue. This conceptualisation again demonstrated the marked influence of Machiavelli on Rousseau, who first argued that it was necessary for rulers to be pragmatic and realistic concerning the functioning of the world.

Roux (2014, 212) claims that the Mandela-mythology civil religion was ‘uniquely situated to fulfil this requirement, not only through visual self-display, but essentially by scripting a narrative to anchor and naturalise his different representations’.

In a similar way to other secular ideologies such as communism and capitalism for example, post-apartheid South Africa’s civil religion has resulted in the creation of a group identity and the legitimation of the existing political order (liberal democracy under ANC rule) by imbuing it with a religious gloss. Engel (2005, 525) believes that this allows individuals to feel a sense of connection to the national community and consequently fuels social unity across time and space. This understanding of the use of civil religion for political ends is ‘essentially a coercive political device’ (Cristi 2001, 7). This fact has generally been overlooked by the sociological understanding of the term.

The question still remains regarding how a lawgiver would serve such political goals. The fundamental problem in taking ‘men as they are’ is that individuals are generally guided by their particular wills and, as a result, the task would be to enact laws and create artificial institutions that take into account the innate nature of men and hence make them act in accordance with the general will. The lawgiver will need fundamentally to transform individuals from a state of *amour-propre* (independent beings) to *amour-de-soi* (interdependent beings). Taking my cue from Machiavelli and Rousseau, I argue that the Mandela-mythology civil religion attempts to help South Africans make this transition by stressing the fact that they are required to be both patriotic individuals and good citizens. By attempting to marry patriotism and citizenship, Sherover (1984, 212) refers to Rousseau as the ‘prophet of nationalism’. Although Rousseau committed himself to a type of nationalism that united different groups in society, such state-led national sentiment and love for the fatherland has the potential to result in the dictatorial and tyrannical excesses that were experienced in the twentieth century. This is, nevertheless, not the focus of this discussion but will be touched upon later on.

This dual theory of public willing allows citizens to be interdependent beings as opposed to independent beings. Although patriotism and citizenship are two distinct terms, Rousseau views patriotism as a reinforcing element of citizenship and both as essential for his civil religion. In chapter two, I defined patriotism as the unreasoned love for one’s fatherland whilst citizenship was defined as a rational agreement on the common good and the will to stick to that agreement through discursive reasoning. This is another instance in which we can

see Machiavelli's influence on Rousseau. Machiavelli points to the many examples of patriotism in Roman history (which inspired his controversial understanding of *virtú* discussed in chapter one), which he believed clearly demonstrate that patriotism is the moral force that allows citizens to recognise what is the common good of the state. I argue that patriotism makes the Mandela-mythology civil religion stronger, allowing it to become the mode of life. Although citizenship is more desirable because that it is based on discursive reasoning, Rousseau did not believe that this alone could make individuals put the business of their country above all else and therefore argued that patriotism was needed for an effective civil religion.

The Mandela-mythology civil religion also needs to succeed in creating patriotic South Africans who at the same time espouse good citizenship. As outlined in chapter two, Rousseau contends, in *The Considerations on the Government of Poland*, that it is imperative that public spectacles, festivals and games be instituted since they play a crucial role in directing the attention of citizens towards the common good. In his words:

[Let there be] many public games where the good mother country delights in seeing her children at play. Let her frequently attend to them so that they always attend to her. The usual courtly entertainments must be eliminated, even at Court, because of the example it sets: gambling, theatres, comedies, opera; all that makes men effeminate, all that distracts them, isolates them, makes them forget their fatherland and their duty; all that makes them be comfortable anywhere at all so long as they are entertained; games must be devised, festivals, solemn occasions so distinctive of this particular Court (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 186).

The public festivals, spectacles and games alluded to above do not need to be taken in the literal sense. I propose that the various components of the Mandela-mania phenomenon outlined and discussed in the latter portion of chapter three can serve as the patriotic games, festivals and spectacles. In the context of this study, I refer to these as beliefs, rituals and symbols that are used by the Mandela-mythology civil religion to both maintain and enhance the sense of community that exists amongst adherents. 'Collective memories are used to mobilise people' according to Dickow et al. (1999, 249). The politics of national sentiment has helped shape the transition of the Mandela mythology and its legacy. Mandela himself was a master of performative displays 'scripted to meet public expectations, or calculated to shift popular sentiment' (Lodge 2006, ix). Posel (2014) argues that the mythology is a modernity of enhancement that manifests itself in many ways in contemporary South Africa from a religion to spirituality to the secular magic of the commodity described in chapter three.

I advance the idea that the components of the Mandela-mythology civil religion form a ‘highly articulated self-conscious belief system, the result of conscious political determination’ (Swindler 1986, 279). This comprises roughly ninety-five statues and other artworks of Mandela in various places around South Africa and the world, South Africa’s official currency bearing the image of Mandela, gold collector coins (some call these ‘Mandelarands’) and five-rand coins also bearing the Mandela image. This is in addition to clothing and wine ranges, an abundance of films, documentaries and songs, and approximately eighty-five known streets, roads, buildings, stadiums and bridges named after Mandela both nationally and internationally. As if these were not enough, since 2009 an annual philanthropic Mandela Day is celebrated on his birthday.

It would seem that post-apartheid South Africa is completely captivated with all things Nelson Mandela. This is explained by Gordimer (1990, 4) as the country’s desperate need to redeem itself from the ghost of apartheid which continues to haunt it. Scrutinising the demise of the apartheid demon in apocalyptic terms, Gordimer states that:

The white [liberal] population has not merely accepted the return of Mandela but turns to him now as the one – the only one – who can absolve and resolve: absolve the sin of apartheid and resolve the problems of reconciliation and integration. President de Klerk’s boldness in freeing Mandela has as its ironic obverse a fervent submission to this idea. He counts on Mandela; without Mandela, the legendary bird rising out of the bars, blue-winged and with a sprig of olive held ready for three decades in its beak, the transformation of South Africa into a place where de Klerk’s white electorate can still live can’t be realised. The Blacks personification of the hidden Mandela as the image of their ultimate liberation is super-imposed by the whites’ picture of him as their salvation, forming a single image (1990, 4).

Mandela has been judged to be an ethical and cleansing agent and the motivating power behind the formation of a new South Africa and is inserted within the dominant Christian paradigm of deliverance from evil. A few months after his release from prison in 1990, a Xhosa praise poet welcomed him at a rally at the University of the Transkei (now Walter Sisulu University) using the language embodied in Christianity. He stated that:

They call him even if they don’t know him,
 They call him even if they have never seen him before,
 That is why we need to be humble and respect one another,
 Because we have seen him at last,
 An example of Jesus followed by many people,
 He has come with truth and dignity,
 That is where we can witness and hear his words,
 That is where we have confirmed that his words are true (cited in Barnard 2014, 205–206).

The praise poet uses the language of Christ’s arrival to infer that the long-awaited physical presence of Mandela serves to confirm his words. Moulding a complex mythology in

messianic terms can be seen in light of the implicit Christian inclination to fit everything into Western historiography (Modisane 2014, 232). In expanding on this, White (2004, 2) states that:

What is unique about the Western idea of history is the notion of rebirth, revival or reformation, the idea that it is possibly always to begin again. Whence the popularity of the notions of Renaissance, Reformation, Revolution, Rebirth and so on for characterising historical processes in the West. These notions of revival and rebirth derive, it would seem, from the peculiarly Christian idea that meaningful temporality describes a process of expectation and deliverance.

The 1987 movie *Mandela*, starring Danny Glover and Alfre Woodard as Mandela and Winnie respectively, epitomises this idea. The film characterises the future in abeyance until the return of Mandela. Mandela, the messiah, given the task of ending the evil of apartheid and ultimately delivering liberation to the masses, thus stood to fulfil his destiny (Modisane 2014, 233). The Christian paradigm continued after 1994 with the words ‘miracle’ and ‘magic’ joining the narrative. This signalled hopefulness that transcended race, culture, ethnicity and religion. Blacks viewed Mandela as the magic that saved them from the horrific political violence during the transition to democracy, which threatened to derail any chance of peace. Whites on the other hand viewed the transition as a miracle since it promised to save them from the existential predicament they had feared as a result of consistent indoctrination from right wingers; the fear to be ‘spared the dreaded brunt of the black rage’ (Posel 2014, 72, 76).

Posel (2014, 87) expands on her earlier point and posits that the idea of living in a miraculous period provided a structure of belief – a novel way of thinking in the new South Africa. She states that ‘the idea of a miracle effaces process and renders discussion and analysis thereof unnecessary. A miracle simply is, and is compelling and captivating for that revelatory attitude’. The Mandela-mythology civil religion is the novel way of thinking in the new South Africa.

In keeping with the underlying Christian theme, Van Robbroek (2014, 247) analysed the 1999 *Time* magazine cover page featuring Mandela. She argues that Mandela, featuring an animated black-power salute, mirrored the ‘iconic Christ figure’s right-hand, which was conventionally raised in benediction’. Such depiction of Mandela tells us a lot about the world’s perception of Mandela in messianic terms – as a product of the unfolding of destiny. Van Robbroek further argues that the endless statues and artworks of Mandela mentioned in chapter three (most recently one that was unveiled at the Union Buildings on National

Reconciliation Day in 2014) serve to entrench the exemplary status of him in the collective consciousness of the public (Van Robbroek 2014, 247).

Rousseau contended that such mobilisation of the civil religion is best achieved in a small state governed by an elective aristocracy for the reason that the most suitably gifted individuals are entrusted with the affairs of government and dedicate their time and talent fully to the state. Small states were also desired since citizens may regularly and personally share in its beliefs, rituals and symbols and, hence, more easily achieve patriotism and citizenship. The contemporary world is able to circumvent this restriction with the advent of film, television, the internet and, lately social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, which allow citizens to instantaneously share the articles of the civil religion with millions of their countrymen throughout a large democratic state such as South Africa.

The Mandela-mythology civil religion can thus be characterised as an imagined community whose patriarch is Nelson Mandela. Imagined because even though South Africans will never know most of their fellow countrymen, 'meet them, or even hear of them', yet in the 'minds of each lives the image of their communion' (Anderson 2006, 6). Mathebe (2012, 49) states that Mandela is the 'imagined leader who embodied the great fantasies and moral aspirations of the new nation at the precise moment at which the forces of liberation were seeking to tear down the political authority of the apartheid state'.

The persistent obsession with Mandela after his presidency, and now his demise, also indicates a sense of secular enchantment in South African politics and is the consequence of him being positioned as a morally significant force in relation to South African history, which defined Mandela as a renowned human being whose political struggles are considered phenomenal in turning 'apartheid incompatibilities into a rainbow nation of God' (Mathebe 2012, xv). His moral words became even more enthralling than his political action in the post-1994 era.

The rituals and symbols mentioned earlier serve to mobilise people to the support of the post-1994 state and its commitment to unity and reconciliation by providing an uncomplicated, and in my opinion, revisionist view of Nelson Mandela and the new South Africa. This is done by reducing an extremely complex mythology (radical, youth firebrand, imprisoned freedom fighter, liberal, a-religious etc.) into a person who simply forgave and forgot and decided to move on in building the new South Africa. The rituals and symbols of the

Mandela-mythology civil religion are essentially being used for political ends and are not concerned with the spiritual dimension of religion (Dickow et al. 1999, 249).

The ritualistic annual public celebration of Mandela Day, for example, has become an occasion for ‘public indoctrination rather than means of exploring principled public sentiment’ (Bennet 1979, 129). Politicians, corporations and celebrities frequently also tend to use this occasion to cram as much free publicity as they can into sixty-seven minutes of supposed charitable endeavours. Wuthnow (1988, 148) agrees and contends that arranging such colossal public rituals permit governments to spread their influence into the lives of the ordinary populace, helping to achieve the common good. Rousseau was convinced that only passionate patriotism created by such commemoratives and philanthropic public rituals can help breed patriotic citizens who desire to put the general will before their particular wills. Such elicited sentiment, according to Lodge (2006, 212), may be referred to as ‘multiracial patriotism’ in line with the vision enshrined in the country’s constitution.

Posel (2004, 72) contends that it is acceptable to proclaim national politics is ‘lubricated by sentiment’ and that ‘political mobilisation is never an appeal to the resources of reason alone’. To analyse South African politics in such terms is to draw attention to the *realpolitik* of the country, which infuses intellectual ideas, policies and interests with premeditated calculation on the part of the political elite to create a general will. Engel (2005, 536) contends that an ideal state is one in which the general will guides all its citizens and if intrinsic reasoning of sentiment (patriotism) guides the individual to the general will, then it is consistent with freedom. Engel additionally claims that patriotism provides support to freedom since, without it, citizens will be torn between their particular and general wills. This is also consistent with Machiavelli’s premise that the patriotism created by the political usage of religion would bind citizens’ loyalty to the state and enable the earthly realisation of true freedom.

The use of rituals, beliefs and symbols is moreover meant to create a civil religion in South Africa that entails ‘a love of country independent of, but not contrary to, a love of God’ (Noone 1980, 145). Such an understanding would satisfy Rousseau’s quest for social solidarity and legitimation. The Mandela-mythology civil religion is an earthly endeavour distinct from mainstream religions in that its goal is to improve the political well-being of the state and its citizens. It is a civil religion that aims to instil a citizenship that is secular and political but religiously enforced. Cristi (2001, 25) posits that such a civil religion ‘elevate[s]

citizenship to quasi-sacred heights' thus creating a new citizen. This new citizen, as a result of the civil religion, will put his duty towards his country above all else thus resulting in a better functioning state, and achieving Machiavelli's and Rousseau's ultimate goal.

Although the integrative role of a civil religion may be an important aspect, it may also result in societal conflict, division and tension. Such a civil religion may only appeal to a certain segment of a country's population or may only benefit some groups at the expense of others which might conflict with social cohesion. Total state appropriation of civil religion or the descending of a civil religion into totalitarianism usually occurs in weak states with the absence of active civil society formations. Such a scenario, however, is not foreseen, as South Africa has highly active civil society organisations which, for their part, cement the Mandela mythology by positioning him as the unquestionable saviour of the new South Africa. In this respect, Zeleza (2013, 8) argues that at the global level, Mandela epitomised 'global moral authority, of humanity at its best, the last in the hallowed canon of twentieth century saintly liberators from Mahatma Gandhi to Martin Luther King'.

I nevertheless remain cognisant of the fact that the Mandela-mythology civil religion 'is more likely to produce a "qualified consensus" rather than total social integration' (Cristi 2001, 9). As such, there will be those who accuse Mandela of abandoning the pursuit of conquering the white-dominated economic kingdom and of obtaining true liberation for the black majority in favour of cementing his personal legacy. This view is given credence by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2014, 918), who states:

Mandela's iconic status is based on the reality that he never destabilised the modern Euro-North American-centric order of power. Those who dared seek to change the global power architecture, like Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba and Thomas Sankara, to mention a few, became victims of either military coups d'état or assassinations.

However, one should remain cognisant of the fact that a Rousseauian-inspired civil religion need not be a national religion. It does not need to reflect the values and beliefs of society as a whole, as is the case with Bellah's sociological understanding of the American civil religion.

Cristi (2001, 95) does not hold civil religion as a tool for legitimation in high regard since she believes that it may not be very significant or effective. She nonetheless does concede that a tremendous amount of research points to it being used for such a purpose both in democratic and undemocratic societies. In fact, the role of religion in legitimation is a historical problem in the tradition of Western political thought. Machiavelli, as discussed in chapter one, was

one of the first philosophers to theorise about religion as an instrument of legitimation. He laid the foundations for the potential political usages of religion by arguing that Roman paganism was best suited to serve as a tool for political legitimation and virtú. Hobbes and Locke also picked up on this but it was Rousseau who best articulated it (Cristi 2001, 95).

Certainly, although there are many forms of legitimation in society, the most effective of these has always been religion (Berger 1967, 27). Rousseau was well aware of this fact which is why he conceived of civil religion as a legitimating mechanism of any state. Cristi, however, vehemently rejects the idea that civil religion is only a tool of legitimation – a positive force favouring cultural legitimation. Instead, she posits that the ideological and political components of civil religion may be used in times of social and political unrest in response to both national and international crises of legitimation. Purdy (1982, 314) agrees. In his opinion, civil religion is a phenomenon that arises in response to ‘episodic crises of legitimation’ rather than a permanent ‘legitimator of power and authority in the polity’. In essence, this signifies ‘loyalty to a sharply defined political structure – indeed, in the extreme case, to a political regime at a particular time’ (Wilson 1971, 163). Apter (1960, 90) concurs and suggests that such a civil religion may result in the support of a political party.

I posit that the ANC government does indeed make use of the Mandela-mythology civil religion to increase or maintain its electoral support and for the purposes of legitimation. In the 2014 national elections, the ANC positioned its election manifesto to a large extent as a continuation of the vision and legacy of Mandela. This has occurred and continues to occur in an attempt to counteract ‘episodic crises of legitimation’, be it the arms deal and Nkandla sagas or corruption allegations against senior government officials including incumbent president Jacob Zuma. This is in addition to its perceived inability to stem the tide against rising levels of discontent amongst the masses with regard to poor service delivery and unemployment. The Mandela-mythology civil religion therefore fulfils the struggle for control in terms of representation. Barnard (2014, 355) observes that ‘for an organisation so long underground, officially erased from view, the politics of symbolic display – the task of visually reconquering the national and international public sphere – was inevitably of great importance’.

Regan goes further and contends that civil religion becomes a necessary political undertaking in times of political instability or disruption (1976, 104). Linder (1975, 419) supports the contention that civil religion tends to flourish in times of political instability, challenges or

crises when the ruling political elites require it to stabilise and unify the citizens of their country. In essence, civil religion as a political tool can best be described as a 'set of ideas or principles intended to reorder collective experience, to regulate political understandings, and to mobilise support and collective action' (Cristi 2001, 120). It was, for example, in the midst of these on-going political crises that one such component of the Mandela-mythology civil religion, the annual philanthropic Mandela Day, was conceived in 2009.

Wuthnow (1988, 132) maintains that 'resources, planning, time, effort, money, lobbying, legislation and professional expertise are all required' to maintain a civil religion. As such, Cristi believes that the state and public officials are inextricably linked to civil religion. The annual Mandela Day, the naming of roads, bridges, streets, statues and a municipality, amongst many other things, come at considerable financial cost to government. It is, however, worth mentioning what was stated in chapter three that just as one cannot put a price tag on the Statue of Liberty in New York, one cannot define the worth of Brand Mandela in monetary terms. Any monetary cost, in the eyes of the government, can only serve to solidify the Mandela-mythology civil religion and, hence, achieve collective harmony.

Whilst I posit that the Mandela-mythology civil religion is being used by the ANC government for national grandeur, and political and electoral support as well as to obtain a largely unified post-1994 citizenry, Pfeffer (1968, 364) argues that the conscious political usage of the Mandela mythology civil religion for national programmes, policies and ambitions may also result in an 'ignoble rather than noble outcome' such as the conscious repression of citizens' rights and freedoms. Critics of the ANC government might argue that we are about to reach such a stage with the impending signing of the Protection of State Information Bill. The Secrecy Bill, as it is more popularly known, has been attacked by critics for its potential to cover up corruption under the guise of national security because of the absence of a whistle-blower clause to protect those who expose corrupt practices in government to the media. Whilst it is impossible to predict whether such a usage of the civil religion will ever materialise, it definitely remains a distinct possibility.

The democratic or authoritarian capacity of the Mandela-mythology civil religion has its foundations in the 'political procedures and uses of civil religion by particular groups at particular times' (Cristi 2001, 154). In short, the advantages and costs of civil religion depend, importantly, on the nature of the political system and the government in that specific

country at specific times. Wuthnow (1988, 148) suggests that both democratic and undemocratic modern governments use public rituals as a compelling way to influence the daily lives of their people. Hence, the Eurocentric argument which assumes that Rousseauian civil religion is confined to communist and autocratic states does not hold. This was a central argument of mid-twentieth century Cold War liberalism, which interpreted Rousseau, Hegel and Marx, amongst others, as theorists promoting authoritarianism in states.

Cristi (2001, 229) has argued that all civil religions are political religions. It is claimed that whilst civil religion can never be totally separated from political religion, the latter depends on the degree of control exercised by the state and its political leaders. I have argued in depth thus far that the ruling political elite has consciously exercised a degree of control and manipulated the Mandela mythology to further political ends, that is, unity, or at least a high semblance of it, behind the post-1994 dispensation. I nevertheless argue that we are not witnessing an extreme amount of control that would border on totalitarianism in order to secure conformity behind the Mandela-mythology civil religion even though it is imposed on the people and ‘demands unquestionable loyalty and unconditional commitment’ (Cristi 2001, 232).

Coupled with state manipulation, we are also experiencing a civil religion which has become internalised in the hearts and minds of the majority of South Africans in a way which is ‘enthusiastic and primarily voluntary’ (Anthony and Robbins 1975, 411). Whilst state control is indeed present, the Mandela mythology is constantly evolving and such evolution may sporadically occur beyond the total control of the state but in a direction that continues to work to the advantage of the political elite in South Africa since it entails a continuation of the dominant narrative of Mandela. Posel agrees with my contention and states:

I don't wish to overstate the degree of strategic deliberation or overt investment in the emergent meanings of Mandela; no doubt, symbolic capital accretes more syncretically, with uneven degrees of planning and intention, and strategies take shape and effect within a world only partially amenable to deliberate control (2014, 76).

In chapter three I outlined a few examples of the non-state controlled evolution of the Mandela mythology such as the Limpopo villager who sculpted an uncommissioned statue of Mandela and began charging tourists to view it at his home. The *46664* and *Long Walk to Freedom* clothing ranges and the *House of Mandela* range of wines are other such examples. These were undertakings by members of the Mandela family. Nevertheless, the government

did not object to any of these endeavours most probably because such additions to the Mandela mythology only served to benefit the ends they were striving for.

A civil religion in the Rousseauian sense also requires that there be a separation of powers between the lawgiver (that is, the Mandela mythology) and the sovereign. The South African state is characterised by a liberal democracy which firmly embeds the doctrine of separation of powers in the constitution. This requirement stems from Rousseau's concern that 'he who drafts laws has, then, or should have no legislative right' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 70). The sovereign encroaching on the powers of the lawgiver would push it towards particular matters contrary to its task of achieving the general will. The task of the sovereign in South Africa, which it consciously manipulates and promotes for political ends, is to command over the articles of the civil religion which are derived by the lawgiver, thus achieving the general will of the people, that is, the common good.

Any civil religion à la Rousseau may be accused of being radical since he argues that any citizen who does not profess the civil religion should be banished by the state. Cohen (2010, 49) explains that this dogma is based 'on the need for sociability, rather than a requirement of piety, but also that those who reject the dogmas of civil religion cannot be good citizens or loyal subjects who love the laws. He says that their loyalty is impossible and presumably he thinks that those who fail to love the laws cannot be expected to obey the laws'. Such thinking by Rousseau is consistent with that of Machiavelli who strongly advocated the belief that there was no other way that would be able to encourage citizens to yield to the laws of the country and, therefore, 'do wise men, for the purpose of removing this difficulty, resort to divine authority' (Machiavelli [1532] 1940, 147).

Despite the radical tendency of a Rousseauian civil religion, Rousseau also rejects both civil and religious intolerance. He permits the tolerance of those citizens that reject the state-led civil religion as long as their views do not conflict with their responsibilities as citizens. Without doubt, I would argue that tolerance is a precept of a civil religion, since 'the dogmas of this religion are only of concern to the state' (Rousseau [1762] 1997, 150). In agreeing to the social contract, citizens agree rationally to join for the betterment of all. The Mandela-mythology civil religion does not call for the banishment of those individuals who do not subscribe to it. The Constitution of South Africa clearly allows for the freedom of religious belief or disbelief and urges tolerance between the various monotheistic and polytheistic faiths. Gourevitch argues that Rousseau's opposition to religious intolerance stems from his

assertion that ‘it does not depend on ourselves to believe or not to believe in matters in which demonstration has no place’ (2001, 218). He further argues that religious intolerance can be used by theologians as a tool to suppress popular sovereignty. It would be plausible to claim that Rousseau’s foremost intention for rejecting religious intolerance was to release citizens from the shackles of the clergy and make them obligated to follow the dictates of civil religion. This is also one of the intended outcomes of the Mandela-mythology civil religions.

By founding the Mandela-mythology civil religion on secular articles of faith, as opposed to reason, the outcome might entail citizens having to sacrifice rationality and civil freedom, which were their initial objectives, when deciding to enter into the social contract. I nevertheless believe that the ultimate ambition of making an individual possess a ‘religion which makes him love his duties’ overrides any potential drawback. Cobban (1934, 88) epitomises this by stating that civil religion is the ‘sphere in which he [Rousseau] calls on the individual to make the greatest sacrifices to the state of which he is a member’.

Whilst critics have labelled such a civil religion utopian, since factionalism is an innate characteristic of modern states, the Mandela-mythology civil religion does allow for the existence of partisan subsections in a particular society since tolerance is one of its key precepts. Such partial societies do not make the existence of a civil religion impossible. Rather, they have the tendency to undermine the unity and social fabric of society. South Africa, like many liberal democracies, is beset with factionalism, from different political parties to religious denominations, and hence, the Mandela-mythology civil religion will most likely achieve a ‘qualified consensus’ as opposed to total unity and social cohesion.

Conclusion

A constitutionally enshrined separation of church and state relations has not prevented a religious dimension to the South African state from existing. This well-defined civil religion is characterised by manipulations of the Mandela mythology by the state and its ruling political elite for political ends. I discovered that the myths of South Africa’s civil religion constitute a strong blend of biblical imagery and nationalistic sentiment.

The extensive network of beliefs, symbols and rituals of this civil religion, all associated with a national hero (Mandela), his national accomplishments and national events are helping to achieve, or at the very least, providing a resemblance of unity, behind the post-1994 democratic state, something thought to be an impossibility given the country’s deeply

fragmented and violent past. The statues and artworks of Mandela; roads, bridges, stadiums and a municipality named after him; films, music and documentaries; gold coins; his image on South Africa's official currency and an annual Mandela Day, amongst others, all help keep the Mandela-mythology civil religion constantly in the minds of South Africans ensuring its continued relevance in our daily lives and is frequently called upon to censor political crises and to ensure the continued dominance of the ruling ANC.

Mandela's death in December 2013 has not terminated the relevance and importance of the Mandela-mythology civil religion. In fact, the opposite has occurred. Most South Africans still have an everyday and perhaps unconscious encounter with him through the use of the country's official currency that bears his iconic image. This symbol is possibly divisive in a country with the world's highest income inequalities. The notion of the Mandela-mythology civil religion is nonetheless fluid and its future political manifestations will generally depend upon the historical and political contexts of South Africa. Although the survival of the South African state is not in jeopardy nor is ANC rule about to end anytime soon, the Mandela-mythology civil religion will still be constantly applied as a support mechanism for the ruling party. We already see this in the run up to the 2016 Local Government Elections with ANC stalwarts invoking the legacy of Mandela whilst on the campaign trail garnering support for the ruling party.

Be it political, nationalistic or civil society led, and perhaps different variations and intensities of this, the civil religion clearly demonstrates the potential to be used as a political religion. Even though the biological and physical Mandela is no more, the impact of Mandela the symbol and the myth will only be heightened. This essentially implies a continuation of the conscious manipulation of national myths that we have already witnessed for political outcomes.

One possible manipulation that immediately springs to mind is the deployment of the messianic characteristics of the mythology to avoid a popular uprising against corruption, nepotism, maladministration and perhaps as well the slow pace of land restitution in the country. In times of political and economic crises, the beginnings of which is being experienced in South Africa, liberal democratic institutions depend heavily on the perceived safeguards provided by highly authoritarian types of charismatic authority such as the Mandela-mythology civil religion (Lodge 2006, 203). Any future expression of the Mandela-mythology civil religion, however, can only be affected by a secular expression of faith.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have used the ideas of Machiavelli and Rousseau on civil religion in relation to what I termed in chapter three as the Mandela mythology. Both thinkers envisaged the creation of a national civil religion which would, in their opinion, create political order and stability in society. I reasoned that the Mandela-mythology civil religion has been intended to serve as this national civil religion by the ruling ANC government with the goal of uniting South Africans behind the post-1994 political project.

Although Rousseau is the primary thinker on civil religion and was the first to coin the term, Machiavelli had a profound influence on him, as was demonstrated in chapter two. It was therefore important to analyse the thoughts of Machiavelli in order to answer the wider question of the thesis. Accordingly, chapter one discussed and analysed Machiavelli's thoughts on the creation of a state-led religion based on a paganised version of Christianity. It essentially necessitates a fundamental transformation of Christianity by rulers to adapt it to the political dictates of the time. Such a transformation needed three other important components. First, Machiavelli believed that freedom in a republican state was indispensable because it could serve as the best form of government in which his civil religion could flourish. Freedom, according to Machiavelli, arose out of the class tension between the rulers and the people. This may be referred to as a populist understanding of freedom, since it allows the people to play a central role in protecting their freedom and also positions the civil religion argument as central to his thoughts.

A powerful and well-armed military was the second component which Machiavelli emphasised as essential to his paganised civil religion, since this would guard against both internal and external threats. Machiavelli held that a robust military would attain prominence for any state expecting to increase its territorial size. The third element is Machiavelli's distinctive and controversial understanding of political *virtù*. He believed that its traditional understanding, championed by Christian humanists, would result in the obliteration of the state. His conception of *virtù*, on the other hand, necessitated that rulers conduct themselves according to the dictates of the political context they find themselves in so as to achieve and safeguard political order and stability in the state.

Rousseau's ideas on civil religion are central to the argument of this thesis and were analysed in chapter two. He argued that since the formation of every state had religion as its foundation, any future state needs religion as well in order to be successful. Rousseau, unlike

Machiavelli, however, emphatically opposed pagan religions in all their manifestations but, like Machiavelli, opposed prophetic religions, especially Christianity, because he believed that they would have detrimental effects on the constitutions of states. Rousseau argued for total adherence to the principles outlined in the *Social Contract*, since this would maintain peace and order in society. He believed that all individuals are born free and any arrangement of society needs to consider this indisputable fact.

The discussion of Rousseau's political philosophy provided the basis for his civil religion arguments. On the issue of government and the sovereign, Rousseau wrote that the executive of the government should be an intermediary body between citizens in their sovereign capacity and as subjects bound by law, and is always comprised of the people's representatives. The sovereign is general in enactments, whilst the exercising of executive power occurs with regard to particular instances.

I carried out an analysis of the general will because it is the key to Rousseau's political theory. This is his term for the exercise of popular sovereignty. The general will is understood as both the public interest that the sovereign of every state ought to promote and the individual will of each citizen to achieve that interest. The latter form was often in contradiction with a person's particular interest. The collection or aggregation of particular interests is what Rousseau calls the will of all. This should not be confused with the general will, however, since the general will looks at common interests whilst the particular will looks to the private interests of citizens, and in effect is nothing more than the sum of particular wills. This was an important distinction to make, since achieving a general will is important for the prosperity of any civil religion, including the Mandela-mythology civil religion.

For the effective functioning of his civil religion, Rousseau placed particular importance on patriotism and good citizenship. Given the innate nature of human beings (driven by lust, pride, vanity and so on), Rousseau believed citizenship alone could not result in a successful civil religion since it was based on discursive reasoning. Thus, he believed that since patriotism is based on intrinsic reasoning of sentiment (unconditional love for one's fatherland), it could supplement citizenship, therefore resulting in a successful civil religion and consequently a peaceful society.

Moreover, the presence of a good lawgiver, the doctrine of separation of powers between the lawgiver and the sovereign, as well as an elective aristocracy, were also important for his

ideas on civil religion. The lawgiver should be an extraordinary being able to attach an individual to the fatherland using patriotic habits, tastes and prepositions. The doctrine of separation of powers ensures that there is no abuse of power by the lawgiver and the sovereign, thereby ensuring that the civil religion prospers. Rousseau wrote that the people who make the laws should not execute them since this would confuse public and private interest. Finally, Rousseau distinguished between a monarchy, an aristocracy and a democracy. He believed that all were dangerous for the different reasons discussed in the chapter. Ultimately, Rousseau preferred an elective aristocracy because the people who are trusted with governmental affairs are suitably talented and have the time to fully dedicate their talents to the state.

Machiavelli's and Rousseau's theories of civil religion discussed in chapters one and two served as the theoretical pillars for the analysis of the Mandela mythology in chapter three. Here, I analysed the three stages of what I referred to as the Mandela mythology. Stage one of the phenomenon covered Mandela's birth in Qunu in 1918 up to his release from prison in 1990. At this juncture I discussed the important moments, inter alia, the formation of the youth league, his time as a fugitive (Black Pimpernel), his performative displays at the Treason and the Rivonia trials, as well his incarceration on Robben Island. Of these, the most notable were the Rivonia Trial and his incarceration on Robben Island. These moments were instrumental in the formation of the Mandela mythology during its formative years.

In stage two of the Mandela-mythology, from 1990 until 1999, I focused on important moments such as his release from prison in 1990, his presidential inauguration in 1994 and the Rugby World Cup in 1995. These various performative displays, which were predominantly characterised by a reconciliation-centred political philosophy, helped consolidate the dominant narrative of the first stage. It also helped to exculpate Mandela from the most critical reflections on his political and personal life. The exculpatory ability of the myth, combined with its ability to resist confinement to one specific definition, has resulted in a number of religious terms and connotations associated within the mythology. This points to an inherently Christian logic in the Mandela narrative of not trying to damn the fallible Mandela, but merely to unearth his human shortcomings. This opens up the space for additional research on the Mandela mythology and civil religion.

I referred to stage three of the Mandela mythology, which started after Mandela left office in 1999 and which continues even after his death, as the Mandela-mania phenomenon. It is

referred to as such because it entails a plethora of rituals, beliefs and symbols that have been and continue to be constructed around Mandela. I argued that these rituals, symbols and beliefs helped merge the dominant narrative of the first two stages of the past into the official narrative of the present. I also argued that the ANC government were active participants in the creation of many of these beliefs, rituals and symbols by wilfully constructing, inter alia, an annual charitable Mandela Day, his image on South Africa's official currency, an urban municipality named after him, gold coins with his image, and approximately eighty-five streets, roads, buildings, stadiums and bridges named for him, as well as not objecting to the sale of Mandela-branded clothing and wine ranges by Mandela family members.

In chapter three, I also situated the Mandela mythology within the contemporary debate on civil religion in order to set the scene for its application in chapter four. After discussing the difference between the Durkheimian sociological and Machiavellian/Rousseauian conceptualisation of the term, I situated the mythology with the latter tradition given that its clear indication of being a political construct. This therefore demonstrated the ability of the mythology of being used for political gain. Chapters one to three effectively served to set the stage for the analysis in chapter four, of the Mandela mythology as a civil religion in South Africa along the lines envisaged by Machiavelli and Rousseau.

I began chapter four by discussing the existence of two previous civil religions in South Africa. These were the divisive Afrikaner civil religion of the apartheid era and the integrative rainbow nationalism of the new South Africa underpinned by the unifying power of Nelson Mandela. I concluded that both of these encompassed the sociological understanding of civil religion, since they took the tenets of the civil religion as a cultural given and not as a conscious political undertaking as intended by Machiavelli and Rousseau. After the above brief discussion, I analysed the Mandela mythology of chapter three through the theoretical lens offered by Machiavelli's and Rousseau's civil religion ideas. I concluded that the excess of beliefs, symbols and rituals of the Mandela mythology constitute the existence of a civil religion à la Machiavelli and Rousseau in view of the fact that it points to the conscious political imposition and manipulation of the aforementioned beliefs, symbols and rituals for political gain by the ruling ANC government. Even in instances where these are not official undertakings by the ruling elite, such as the clothing and wine ranges mentioned above, these are never objected to as long as they work to the advantage of the government.

I have demonstrated that although its modern usage is not as pure as Machiavelli and Rousseau intended it to be, their sixteenth and eighteenth-century thoughts still have tremendous relevance in explaining a contemporary political phenomenon such as the Mandela mythology. There is therefore enough scope for future research around Mandela in general and the Mandela-mythology civil religion in particular.

I have unearthed, for example, that the Mandela narrative has a profound Christian dimension. The frequent references to sainthood, demi-god, prophet, saviour, and so forth, and the significance of his early Christian childhood (Methodist upbringing), constitute an inherent Christian logic. Even attempts at critiquing the Mandela narrative have been largely positioned as not trying to damn Mandela but merely to unearth his human shortcomings, another Christian trope. This Christian dimension is a largely under-researched aspect to the Mandela narrative and I will attempt to provide a deeper understanding of it and other potentially Christian elements in future scholarly publications.

Whilst the ANC government seems to possess an unrestricted monopoly over the use of the Mandela mythology, future research may also centre on the contentious issue as to who (if anybody) owns the Mandela narrative and to what extent it can be delinked from the ANC. For example, what happens in a situation where other parties lay claim to the mythology? This is a very important moment in post-apartheid South African political history where you have a situation where the different political parties are claiming this figurehead and all for purely strategic reasons.

Opposition parties such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) have frequently tried to position themselves as advancing Mandela's legacy through a programme of radical socioeconomic change. At the party's recent commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the Freedom Charter in June 2015, its leader Julius Malema stated that his party's radical manifesto would ensure that the ideals of the Freedom Charter, which Mandela fought hard to implement in his lifetime, would be realised under EFF rule. Further, the first black leader of the minority-dominated Democratic Alliance (DA) stated, during his victory speech at the party's elective conference in May 2015, that his election would ensure that his party's policies are a continuation of Mandela's vision. These two opposition parties have the ability and reach to compete for or control the mythology.

Additional questions arise with regard to the civil religion, such as where does its existence leave South Africa and how strong and resilient is it, especially in face of the socioeconomic

legacy of the ‘historic’ 1990–1994 political compromise? While Mandela’s ability to deliver the visualisation for an all-inclusive South Africa must be lauded, the compromise needed to obtain the agreement of the minority white settler population clearly had its foreseeable weaknesses. Although a racial civil war was effectively forestalled, the political compromise that ‘eased the ANC’s transition to political power preserved so much of the country’s wealth in the hands of the white elite that the social fissures between rich and poor may well prove a disaster in historical storage’ (Cleary 2014, 13). The ongoing nationwide service delivery protests are, in my opinion, testament to this fact.

Contemporary South Africa is largely characterised by a sharing (albeit unequal) of political and economic power by the white and black elites, but the disenfranchised black majority have up till now been forced to wait. This is perhaps a new line of inquiry for future research on the Mandela narrative for those who wish to question (and in the process unsettle the political elite in the ANC) whether the prevailing Mandela narrative and the Mandela-mythology civil religion are impediments to socioeconomic redress in the country. A decolonial critique of Mandela will address this issue which might entail taking the stance that Mandela is little more than the embodiment of the post-independence elite mentioned in the thoughts of African revolutionary thinkers Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko.

Despite these socioeconomic risks, I conclude that the Mandela-mythology civil religion would in all probability manage to weather the storm and that we will see new manifestations of it in the future since the mythology is not stagnant but is constantly finding new ways to reinvent itself, especially given some of the criticism coming its way. These new manifestations are also interesting areas to look at in future research on the subject.

The question that now arises is what does the Mandela mythology mean for South Africa following his death? Does the Mandela mythology still have, or continue to have, life after his death? I would briefly suggest here that it is clear that the mythology is vitally important to the ANC government and, consequently, that it is not going to surrender its hegemonic usage of it. It is not simply important in the sense that it can generate Mandela’s vision of the rainbow nation but rather for more strategic reasons – to keep them in power (strategic intentionality). There is also an unintended consequence, which is if it is something that coheres the country then it is obviously a good unintended consequence of uniting the country around him. In the Zuma era, however, I argue that it is now just about strategic intentionality, that is, the use of the mythology for reasons of self-interest.

The final question that begs brief consideration is that if the Mandela-mythology civil religion simply becomes a strategic tool, how is this it going to undermine it or affect its viability in the future? I would posit that such a consistent usage of the civil religion will not undermine it but instead test the limits of its flexibility as a strategic political tool. The civil religion will thus continue to be used by the ruling elite for political gain, especially in light of the crises of leadership and legitimacy the ruling party seem to be suffering at present and the socioeconomic hurdles the country seems unable or incapable of overcoming.

We will in all probability see a greater number and variety of beliefs, symbols and rituals of the civil religion being created by the ANC government. It would appear, for example, that in addition to the annual philanthropic Mandela Day on his birthday 18 July, that the ANC government would now like all South Africans to annually commemorate 05 December (the day of his passing) as an additional ritual that would add to the Mandela-mythology civil religion. Additionally, it was recently stated by the Nelson Mandela Foundation that a 'sequel' to Mandela's famed biography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, was in the pipeline. As such, I would argue that the confines of the imaginations of the holders of the mythology are the only limits to any further strategic political usage.

I contend that this would not be a problem for Machiavelli since he is happy with the fact that a ruler would use the mythology for his own strategic reasons. Rousseau, on the other hand, would object to it to some degree since this is not his central concern. Instead, Rousseau is driven by a functional argument that patriotism is a foundation for citizenship and freedom and without the necessary patriotism around which to coalesce the civil religion, nothing else will follow.

The answers to the aforementioned questions and others that may consequently arise from this thesis will be found in future research on the subject. I hope that I have opened the conceptual space and theoretical location for political theoretical research on the Mandela narrative, which has largely been dominated by biographical and sociological analyses.

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