Article : # Psychology and Politics in Manganyi's Work : a Materialist Critique

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1. ## INTRODUCTION

N C Manganyi has the distinction of being the first black clinical
psychologist trained in South Africa.   His published work (1973, 1974,
1981, 1983) reveals that from the beginning he has been involved in an
attempt to contextualize his discipline.   More specifically, his main
concern has been to utilize psychological discourse to address questions
relevant to what can broadly be called 'the black experience' in South
Africa.   As such he stands as a solitary voice, on the periphery of a
psychological establishment which has tended to become increasingly mute
as regards major political and cultural issues of the last two decades.
The critical perspective developed in this paper must therefore be seen
in the light of the author's appreciation of the boldness of Manganyi's
endeavour to make psychology speak beyond the narrower confines of the

discipline and its institutional practices.

Manganyi's work is characterized by a broad range of interests, and diverse influences. At the most apparent level there is an oscillation between Manganyi the psychologist, with a distinct propensity for abstract theorizing, and Manganyi the fiction writer. Notably, the major themes enunciated in his unfinished novel Mashangu's Reverie, are elaborated in an appended theoretical essay on the valency of the 'violent reverie' in the psychology of racial oppression, and its relevance in the black lite-rary renaissance of the 70's in South Africa. In the space of a mere seventy pages Manganyi moves from a work of fiction on the theme of the divided experience of a black intellectual, to a theoretical attempt at revisiting the Hegelian Master/Slave dialectic in terms of Melanie Klein's theory of the depressive position, and from there to a critical appraisal of the black literary revival (Manganyi, 1974).

On the one hand, it is difficult to avoid the impression of a voice in search of itself, a voice whose inspiration is psychological and yet cannot speak within the resonance of what is conventionally meant by the psychological. By this I mean that Manganyi is at work from the beginning making an intervention which is relevant to the psychology of racial oppression in South Africa. This intervention, however, is not systematic but rather achieves a variety of forms and is directed at a variety of foci which are perhaps starting to find a synthesis in his latest ventures into black psycho-biography. His latest 'Exiles and Homecomings' (Manganyi, 1983) thus stands at the crossroads of fiction writing, psychology and history.

On the other hand, in his attempt to make psychology speak about poli-tically pressing issues, he approaches this task with certain theoretical

assumptions and categories which de-facto guide and permit a certain type of articulation between the psychological and the social. It is to these theoretical categories that the major thrust of my criticism will be directed.

In a nutshell, insofar as the understanding of human subjectivity in the social sciences and humanities has become a major theoretical preoccupation and a site of ideological struggle (Jacoby, 1975) my intention is to unearth the idealist conception of a black subjectivity in Manganyi's psychology and criticise it from the perspective of a materialist theory of human subjectivity. As part of this criticism I intend to show that it is the assumption of an abstract, already-constituted black subjectivity, hence essentialist, which allows Manganyi to achieve a dubious rapprochement between the psychological and the social since both realms function as vehicles for the unfolding of this quasi-transcendental black essence. In order to do so, however, it is essential to situate his work historically and to trace the development of Manganyi's contribution through the variety of forms in which it is expressed so as to disengage the underlying assumptions which provide the main thread in his work. This task will focus on a close reading of five of his published works (Manganyi, 1973; 1974; 1981(a); 1981(b); 1983) which span a most crucial decade of political history in South Africa.

The materialist conception of human subjectivity from which this critical appraisal proceeds is mounted on Freud's radical category of the Unconscious insofar as it is this category, and its re-appraisal by Lacan (1966) which has provided both the point of departure and the impetus for Althusser's seminal paper on the construction of the human subject in ideology and the reproduction of human subjectivity by and in ideology (Althusser, 1969).

The rapprochement b-tween psycho-analytic theory and historical materialism has never been an easy one. It is important to specify, however, that both theories have acquired the status of conflictual theories insofar as they share in common, although from the perspective of two distinct and separate theoretical objects, a radical interrogation of the long tradition of philosophical humanism around which many of the bourgeois social sciences such as sociology, economics, psychology, history and epistemology are organised (Althusser, 1978). Central to theoretical humanism is the idea that the human subject or the abstract category of the subject is the agent of all social phenomena and production, including knowledge itself (Henriques et al, 1984). Furthermore, the specific notion of human subjectivity contained in a humanist outlook is one of a unitary, essentially non-contradictory entity whose unity is founded on the property of consciousness. It is precisely this long and pervasive tradition which both Freud and Marx undermine; after them it becomes difficult to think of subjectivity with either consciousness or a rational ego at its centre or of history and society with the category of the individual subject, or groups of subjects or an abstract conception of Man at its centre. In both Freudian theory and historical materialism the conscious subject is de-centred and furthermore subjectivity is revealed as non-unitary (Althusser, 1969; 1978).

2.   SOME FEATURES OF EARLY BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT (BCM)

There is no indication that Manganyi was ever a member of BCM. Yet it is imperative to situate his work within the historical and intellectual context of the late 1960s and early 1970s when the main themes of BC ideology were being developed and exerted a considerable influence over black

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students, intellectuals and artists (Lodge, 1983). K. Sole (1983) has shown quite decisively the depth to which the artistic and literary revival which took place in the 1970s was influenced by BC theories and assumptions. Manganyi's interest both in the psychology of racial oppression and in the literary revival and his defence of the social realism of black poets and writers (Manganyi, 1977) shows his involvement with themes central to BC ideology. In fact it is paradoxical that Manganyi's first book entitled Being-Black-in-the-World (1973) is generally considered as a forceful expression of many early BC ideas and has become a standard reference on the subject although it does not appear to have been widely read by BC political activists (Nolutshungu, 1982).

In this brief section my aim is to isolate certain key components of BC ideology which in my opinion play an operative role in Manganyi's contribution. The emphasis will not be on the historical parameters of the emergence of BCM nor will it be on the political effectiveness of the political movement as such. The former is well documented and will not be recounted here (Gerhart, 1979; Kane Berman, 1978; Hirson, 1979; Nolutshungu, 1982; Lodge, 1983). The latter is too complex since it involves a major discussion on the relation between the class struggle and the struggle for national liberation in South Africa and the role of BCM is that conjuncture (Hirson, 1979; No Sizwe, 1979; Nolutshungu, 1982). The emphasis will rather be on the idiom of BC ideology and more specifically on its strongly humanist and subjectivist components.

Three features of BC ideology will be briefly reviewed:

2.1 BCM placed an unprecedented emphasis on the political necessity of addressing directly the psychological and cultural degradation suffered by blacks on an individual and collective level. The ideology of

racial supremacy and its materialisation in practically all walks of social, economic, and political life in South Africa is a means whereby blacks come to believe in the psychological and cultural inferiority foisted upon them. An intrinsic component of BCM was thus to develop a counter-ideology and initiate a programme of conscientisation whereby this process of psychological and cultural inferiorisation could be combatted. The development of this ideology was undoubtedly influenced by a well articulated body of literature which accompanied the prominence achieved by third world struggles in the 1960s. Gerhart cites the decisive influence of Frantz Fanon's analyses of settler colonialism, the writings of Afro-Americans (Cleaver, Carmichael), Negritude writers (Senghor, Césaire, Cheik Anta Diop) and to a lesser extent the declarations of Kaunda and Nyerere on African Humanism and socialism (Gerhart, 1979).

2.2 The selective amalgamation of such heterogeneous ideas was not marked by any degree of formal rigour. Most writers are at pains to extract a coherent theory that could be associated with BCM. The terms ideology or philosophy instead are used interchangeably to refer to the guiding ideas of BCM. The preoccupation of BC proponents with anti-racism, black unity and national liberation were often combined in a language which can best be described as humanist. The mixture of existentialist, phenomenological and psychological notions used to condemn apartheid and the colonial legacy of apartheid meant that the condemnation of the oppressive system were often couched in humanist terms.

Although BC proponents were centrally preoccupied with the mode of domination of apartheid society they lacked the theoretical concepts to .

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articulate this mode of domination. The absence of Marxist theory in BCM meant that they lacked a proper theory of the State, of ideology itself and of the class nature of South African society (Nolutshungu, 1982). As a result their disjointed analytic statements tended to reflect an emphasis on what is most palpable and tangible : the racial ordering of economic, social, political relations in South Africa. The category of colour was given particular salience at the expense of the manner in which racial domination articulates with and is inseparable from the capitalist mode of production and definite class interests in South Africa (Wolpe, 1970; 1972).

If no systematic sociological or historical analysis is to be found amongst BC proponents there is nevertheless an implicit sociological view-point which can be derived from the writings of S. Biko (1978) and Pityana (1972). Conflict in South Africa is understood in terms of political, economic, social and ideological domination of blacks by a superordinate, homogeneously constituted white group. The white group is guided by a system of values and attitudes dictated by a racist, supremacist, euro-centric ideology which bears all the hallmarks of colonial legacy. In other words this implicit 'two-nation' theory repeats some key aspects of an established sociological legacy which is after all solidly entrenched in South Africa. Both the liberal industrialist thesis (Horwitz, 1967; Houghton, 1969) and the conflict pluralist model (Kuper & Smith, 1969; van den Berghe, 1970) assign to the realm of values and attitudes or to the ideal component of ideology an ultimately determining role on the social. It seems that the BC viewpoint reiterates the same tendency.

Whilst it is undoubtedly true that racial ideology or its variants have played an overdetermining role in giving class formation a specifically racial character in South Africa a materialist analysis of South Africa

precludes an understanding which would leave the realm of the ideological in a position external to and independent from the capitalist mode of production.   In other words a materialist analysis forces us to understand the development and the transitions in racial ideology from the perspective of the structure of class relations.   BC in many ways repeats some of the assumptions of established analyses.

Two consequences emerge from such an implicit sociological viewpoint. Firstly, oppression can be seen to operate a four levels simultaneously : psychological/cultural, social, political and economic.   Ultimately those four forms of oppression derive from the same set of causes : white, racist culture taken as a given and as ultimately determining.   Secondly, in conjunction with existentialist and phenomenological categories of thought, which place such an emphasis on the property of consciousness, the entire process of oppression can be subjectivised and thereby reduced to a grand Hegelian master-slave dialectic in which white consciousness, racist and supremacist, oppresses black consciousness.   Thus one often encounters in BC discourse references to that dialectic of two consciousnesses (Biko, 1978). If capitalism is criticised and opposed it is not understood as a mode of production and as an objective set of economic relations but rather as a property of the 'white personality' with its capitalistic, individualistic and profiteering values.   In other words material relations, independent of the consciousness of any individual are transformed into subjective properties.

The subjectivist idiom of BC thus does not refer only to the obvious emphasis that the movement placed on the set of psychological conflicts engendered by racially oppressive practices.   This field of investigation and its relation to psychopathology is eminently worthwhile and indeed

paramount for psychology. The term subjectivism, however, also refers to the formal
category of the human subject and the role such a category plays in under-
standing the social and history. The category of a white consciousness
entails such a subjectivism and it is predictable that such a conjuncture
of psychological and sociological viewpoints needs for its functioning an
antithesis in the form of another consciousness, a black consciousness,
out of which a different set of values, attitudes and practices will flow.
This moment is best observed in the ideological programme of redefinitions
which is central to the process of conscientisation.

2.3 At the centre of BC ideology is the representation of a black man reduced
to the homuncular status of an empty shell (Biko, 1978).   This represen-
tation provides a formidable condensation of the various feelings and com-
plexes engendered by racial ideology in which black subjects can recognize
their oppressed condition.   It deserves to be quoted in full:

"But this type of black man we have today has lost his manhood.
Reduced to an obliging shell he looks with awe at the white
power structure and accepts what he regards as the 'inevitable
position' . . .   In the privacy of his toilet his face twists
in silent condemnation of white society but brightens up in
sheepish obedience as he comes out hurrying in response to his
master's impatient call . . . . His heart yearns for the comfort
of white society and makes him blame himself for not having
been 'educated' enough to warrant such luxury . . . All in all
the black man has become his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing
the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity." (Biko, 1978:28).

The ideology guarantees and promises the restoration or recovery of a
wholeness which has been lost in the history of contact with the dominant
white racist group.   In contradistinction to the homuncular caricature is
a representation of the black man who has come to himself, undone his

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complicity in his own misuse, a black man infused with pride and dignity. Thus a representation emerges of a black man with his own positive, authentic attributes: humanist, communally oriented and sharing in the community. These attributes constitute a negation of the white attributes.

3. REVIEW OF MANGANYI'S PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION

Manganyi's first book, Being-Black-in-the-World (1973), published during the heyday of the BC movement, is primarily concerned with themes central to BC ideology. The collection of essays is not a detached commentary on BC ideology, but reveals the extent of Manganyi's indebtedness to BC for providing a worthwhile vehicle for the development of a committed psychology.

Manganyi's doctoral thesis had led him to the conclusion that there was no significant difference between the body image of healthy black subjects and that of paraplegic black subjects. Defying all predictions, 'healthy' black subjects showed the same internal psychological disorders (body-images with diffused boundaries, usually associated with passive-submissive and non-coping life strategies) as hospitalized paraplegics.

Manganyi situates the etiological locus of such an alarming finding at the level of the racist socialization of the black body:

"It means, as we suggested earlier, that in the African experience there was over time developed a sociological schema of the black body prescribed by white standards. The prescribed attributes of this sociological schema have, as we should know by now, been entirely negative. It should be considered natural under these circumstances for an individual black person to conceive of his body image as something entirely undesirable, something which paradoxically must be kept at a distance outside of one's self so to speak." (Manganyi, 1973 : 51)

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The treatment of such a disturbance cannot take place at the individual level since the pathology is endemic to a system which entrenches cultural and aesthetic hegemony:

"My own experience in the field of the body has long led me to the conclusion that a socio-cultural assault on the body requires an equally wide-ranging offensive on the socio-cultural level." (Manganyi, 1973 : 53).

My aim is to trace the evolution of Manganyi's conception of this corrective program, of the 'wide-ranging offensive' on the socio-cultural level through his work. Manganyi's psychology in the service of this 'wide-ranging offensive' evolves through four distinct phases.

3.1 The psychologist as creator of black identity

In the four essays entitled 'Black Consciousness', 'Being-Black-in-the-World', 'Nausea' and 'Us and Them' (1973), Manganyi's psychological program is essentially concerned with the question of re-definition so central to the BC Movement. The psychologist is an active producer of a set of ontological mirrors whose speculary reflection combats a negative black identity by restoring a positive identity. This restorative program is intrinsic to the concept of Black Consciousness itself and depends on the following logic.

By virtue of being black and having lived under centuries of colonial oppression and decades of apartheid rule, each black subject has a 'testimony' within himself of the experience of any other black subject. This transubjective accessibility is not limited to the South African black experience, but transcends the confines of class, geographical, and historical boundaries, and is available to all blacks in South Africa, Africa,

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and in the larger diaspora.

Black Consciousness thus as a universal consciousness, comprises the experience, and hence the knowledge, of having been devalued both culturally and psychologically.   In South Africa, more particularly, apartheid has led to two modes of being-in-the-world : the white and the black.   The black mode of being can be analysed according to 3 categories of experience.

(a) The body : the black man has inherited a negative sociological schema of his black body as a result of which he experiences himself as an object, as something outside of himself.

(b) The individual in society : the relationship of the black man to his society, which was historically characterized by communalism or the corporate personality, has been eroded by colonial conquest.   As a result of the destruction of indigenous cultures and the subsequent suppression of true leaders who could reinstate the communal mode of being, blacks have relinquished an essential aspect of their ontology. The age old characteristic of communalism has been replaced by 'an individualism more malignant than that found within white elitist societies' (Manganyi, 1973 : 331), but the individualist and materialist ethic is essentially alien to the black mode of being.   Manganyi refers briefly to the introduction of money economies as being significant in the genesis of individualism, only to dismiss this historical factor in favour of an explanation that the white mode of being is essentially individualistic and materialistic.

(c) Being-in-the-world with objects or things : whites have lost their spiritual dimension, and as a result they invest material objects with values they do not possess.   Cultural hegemony has ensured that blacks have also lost their spiritual and noëtic dimension.   Blacks attempt

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to mimic white compensating manoeuvres by fetishizing objects, with
the difference that they are deprived of the economic means of ful-
filling such aspirations.

Black Consciousness thus entails an awareness of such negative features
in the black mode of being. The consciousness of this negativity moreover,
provides the condition for the transcendence of such negativity. Black
Consciousness thus involves:

> ". . . the entire promotion of creative, experiential and
> attitudinal values which are not consonant with individualism
> and materialism. This objective may not be realized within
> the current existential structures created by the white
> dominant culture. It seems logical for black people to
> adopt a posture of positive, creative 'isolation'. Group
> introspective analysis - an inward look - is mandatory for
> us in any attempt at restructuring our value system."
> (Manganyi, 1973 : 32).

In Being-Black-in-the-World the call for an introspective analysis
is only partially fulfilled. Manganyi's deeper introspection will come
later, while in the United States. What is evident here is a search out-
wards for the discovery of a black ontology. If Biko finds inspiration
in the writings of Kaunda on African Humanism so as to propound the basic
characteristics of the African Personality, Manganyi has direct recourse
to the work of Senghor on Negritude so as to redress the debased black
image.

Manganyi specifies that Negritude or the African Personality is not
a racially determined concept; nor is it a collection of fixed personality
traits. It is rather a psycho-cultural concept, a sum of cultural values
common to the black world and providing the concrete medium for the struc-
turing of the dialogue between man and the world, that is, for the

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experience of the world.   These characteristics are : black solidarity, communalism, sharing and communication, as opposed to the antithetical attritubes specific to the white mode of being : individualism, atomization, profiteering and exploitation.

In addition Manganyi reiterates Senghor's view on the contribution of African Philosophy to philosophical anthropology.   More specifically, African philosophy promotes a holistic conception of man.   The spiritual or noëtic dimension of Africanhood that was lost owing to the imposition of the white man's materialistic ethos, is restored with the insertion of a spiritualist philosophy marked by two basic categories : Being and Life Force.   The material world and its existents have various appearances but they all culminate in a single reality which is the ultimate reality of the Universe : the life force which emanates and ends in God.   This spiritualist philosophy, though eroded, is not dead amongst millions of present day Africans : it manifests itself in the recourse of Africans, even those who are educated, to traditional healers.   The resilience of traditional beliefs in the area of health and disease attests to this African spiritualist ontology which conceives of reality as consisting of interacting life forces.

Echoing Senghor's claims on the contribution of black ontology to a coming world civilization, Manganyi asserts the role of the surviving spiritualist philosophy in healing the moral decay of the West and its grotesque materialism in the following terms:

"This development in itself is sufficient to support our view that Western civilization is post-menopausal, decadent and sterile.   Something may yet come from the black world to inject a new vitality into this beautiful menopausal old lady." (Manganyi, 1973 : 41)

3.2 The black rebel and the undoing of the White Mask

Manganyi's second book, entitled <u>Mashangu's Rêverie</u> (1974) seems to me a nodal point in Manganyi's development and lays the ground for his future venture into biographical writing. Its interest from a psychological perspective lies in its exploration of Fanonian themes such as that of the acquisition of the mask or a false consciousness and that of the importance of violence in undoing the mask.

Fanon's concept of the White Mask Neurosis denotes a social psychopathology specific to colonial oppression. It is a process whereby the oppressed black individual assumes a white identity, thereby becoming alienated from his 'race' and from himself. It is impossible for the black child to make a normal entry into colonial culture since this entry, operated through language, entails the internalisation of a set of negative and negrophobic cultural stereotypes regarding his colour, his family and the history of his 'race' (Fanon, 1970). To be heir to colonial culture entails a process of self-negation and condemns the colonial subject to live in a psychological structure of ambivalence both vis-a-vis colonial culture and his own.

Dr Mashangu, the hero of Manganyi's unfinished novel, born in the Northern Transvaal, is a visiting fellow teaching a course in Comparative Literature at an East Coast Ivy League university. In the throngs of a personal crisis Mashangu embarks on a course of psychoanalytic psychotherapy, at the same time keeping a writer's journal.

As can be expected, the descent into Mashangu's inner world does not disclose an exquisite subjectivity. The disturbing psychical reality which surfaces is organized around his murderous fantasies of slaying a white figure. This symbolic murder is at the same time a symbolic birth :

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it is Mashangu's mother who recounts the passage of his life from birth
to murder.

The murder is equivalent to an undoing of his captivity, dating from
his early education at a mission school where he learnt to say yes to white
culture, an affirmation which entailed the negation of his blackness, his
past and his origins:

"A final no - - - no indeed
    there, in his bath tub
    I saw his cheeks heave
    crying for mercy
    killed a prime master
    not a nondescript
    said no on the sharp edge of a dagger
    no, indeed
    'Today I say yes and no being ablaze with affirmation.'"
    (Manganyi, 1974 : 8).

The black subject can only emerge through the symbolic murder of the
white man who represents the internal mask which has held him captive for
so long. And in a subsequent psychotherapy session Mashangu explains the
psychological mechanism by which the black subject is enslaved and colludes
with his enslavement :

"I . . . I was thinking of repudiation. You know what I mean?
Repudiation. I was looking at my life since the days at the
Mission School. It has been one big battle repudiating,
negating something or other --- myself, my culture even my
people. You see, we're forced to speak only English on
certain days at school. Mind you, not only to enable us to
read Milton or Shakespeare at a later stage but to prepare us
. . . to create in us a readiness to repudiate everything
which was native to us. Can you visualize that . . . each
one of us carries a double . . . a kind of replica of self

that is always in conflict with the mask that faces
the world.   To protect this mask from its double,
one cherished an illusion and nourished it -- the
illusion that the future and prosperity of the mask
depends upon a negation of the past both individual
and collective." (Manganyi, 1974 : 20)

In this passage Manganyi reconstructs an explanation of the acqui-
sition of a false identity.   Why false?   For two, interlocking reasons.
Firstly, the acquisition of white culture is in the nature of an exchange :
it requires the substitution of a white symbolic for a black one.   But
secondly, and this seems more decisive, this exchange is unequal.   The
taking on of or identification with white culture is a lure which does not
fulfil its promise.   Having said yes to white culture the black man is
captive of a system which assigns him an inferior status.

In the novel, Mashangu's final rebellion against his captivity is
triggered off when his passport, the document of his South African identity,
is not renewed, for unknown and arbitrary reasons.   The hero then engages
in a widespread attack against the symbolic per se.   Psychoanalytic
psychotherapy, the realm of the symbolic par excellence, is rejected, and
so is the hero's immersion in Western Literature, represented by the absurd
metaphysics of Camus' Sisyphys.

Mashangu declares to his therapist :

"I am suffering as I do and have done not from neurosis,
metaphysical anxiety, but from a negation of the rebellious
impulse in me.   What I need is not analysis . . . the
verbal and symbolic realm.   Action . . . I need to do
things.   It's not inside this skull that work needs to
be done but out there in the realm of social and historical
action." (p 44).

Mashangu's rebellion traverses a path similar to the one taken by Fanon himself. As a result of his analyses of colonial pathology Fanon resigned his post as psychiatrist to take up the struggle of the FLN (Algerian National Liberation Front) as editor of the newspaper, El Moujahis. It seems that Manganyi's hero is thinking along the same lines, of the irrelevance of psychology in a situation of national liberation struggle and the need to confront the social oppressors directly, since it is the social which engenders psychopathology.

But Manganyi's novel is unfinished and does not resolve the crucial question it raises. Action in the realm of the social and historical takes on a different meaning in Manganyi's theoretical essay entitled : 'The violent rêverie : the unconscious in literature and society' (Manganyi, 1974).

3.3 The appropriation of the symbolic and the élitism of the writer

If Mashangu's Rêverie contains an interesting fictional portrayal of the inner conflict of the black subject, Manganyi proceeds in the theoretical essay to explore the overall psychological and historical relevance of the 'violent rêverie' and its attendant conflicts.

The BC Movement placed emphasis on the responsibility of the oppressed individual, to understand his role in his own oppression, through a process of introspection. In his theoretical essay Manganyi applies a variety of psycho-analytic theories to explain the collusion of the slave with the master and to extoll the valency of the murderous rêverie in undoing this collusion.

Despite the fact that Manganyi does not respect Klein's logic to the full, he makes use of her concept of ambivalence, and the vitally important

role which ambivalence as an emotional structure plays in human develop-
ment, to explain the collusion of the slave. This collusion is primarily
unconscious and is predicated upon the co-existence of both loving and
hostile impulses towards the master. At the unconscious fantasy level
the slave's destructive impulses towards the master lead to the anxiety
of talion and of loss. As a consequence the destructive fantasies and
impulses are turned against the self, so that the structure of ambivalence
is maintained. It is true that clinically speaking the conflicts of
ambivalence, which typify the depressive position as a key structure in
human development, can be witnessed in their spectacular dénouement in a
great variety of clinical configurations. In other words, Klein's theory
has been widely validated in clinical practice and on the basis of clinical
case-studies.

Manganyi extrapolates from the clinical arena to the socio-historical
situation of subordination. In his view there are three paths open to
the subordinate subject in conditions of long subordination of one group
by another:

1. He can continue to collude and maintain his false consciousness based
    upon a negation of the violent impulse towards the master. This
    psychical scenario manifests in the 'proverbial smile of the colon-
    ized, the expressionless face in the wake of intense provocation' (p 64)·
2. He can redirect the violence against the self outwards in the form of
    violence against superordinates and their symbolic representations.
    However, Manganyi is not clear about the exact social manifestations
    obtained by such a psychological scenario although he gives examples
    of 'politically motivated assassination' and 'terrorist blood-bath'
    as manifestations of social action which reveal the 'acting out' of

unconscious themes. The concept of acting out is borrowed from the psychoanalytic vocabulary to refer to a process whereby an unconscious impulse is not submitted to the cognitive and linguistic transform-ations usually associated with secondary-process thinking (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1973). The destructive or murderous impulse is re-leased in its primitive and unmediated form as a direct manifestation of unconscious processes. It is difficult to ascertain what the term 'historical rebellion' involves, whether it covers any form of political rebellion or whether it refers only to the case of extreme violence. The ambiguity is serious especially in the South African context with its specific history of political struggle and armed strategy. If Manganyi's notion of acting out of the murderous includes such events it seems to me that he is misusing psycho-analytic theory to refer to political acts that may form part of a conscious strategy, given the logic of the particular political struggle in this country.

3. The third way of coming to terms with ambivalence and undoing the false mask occupies a position of privilege in Manganyi's scheme. This is the position occupied by the creative artist and the writer in particular : "He [the writer] differs from his brethren to the extent that in his case the silent and secret anguish form itself into images and not as is the case with the slave into instant action during a propitious moment.' (p 65).

If earlier Mashangu seemed involved in a rebellion against the sym-bolic itself and left the reader groping for the meaning of direct social and historical action, the subsequent theoretical essay leaves no hint of ambiguity whatsoever :

"For the artist, therefore, the creative act itself
   assumes the same importance which the violent and
   rebellious act assumes for the common rebel. The
   image(s) force itself from formlessness into clarity
   and through this creative act the artist also trans-
   forms subjective experience into the realm of the
   universal - the natural community. The artist is
   enchanted by the charisma of the image"(p 66).

Creative writing becomes a privileged moment of social and historical
action. As an act it is equivalent to social or historical rebellion.
As a process it is superior because of the mediation through the symbolic.
Black Artists are social actors par excellence since by 'letting their
creativity emerge from the resonances and dissonances of the socio-
political fabric of which they are part, [they] remain rooted and true to
the themes struggling for expression, resolution and clarification in the
consciousness of their people' (p 63).   The writer is in a superior and
privileged position in relation to the common rebel and yet simultaneously
at one with his people.

The argument raises several problems. Firstly, in terms of Manganyi's
own development and his oscillations between psychology and fiction writing,
what becomes of the role of the psychologist now? Secondly, what ensures
that the writer, probably an educated member of his community and in all
likelihood belonging to a different social class, will produce a literature
which is a literature of the people and thus on a par with the actions of
the historical or political rebel?

Manganyi absorbs these questions into his argument, invoking the
notion of the black collective psyche in the following way:

"Beginning with Negritude in the 1930s and the notion of
   the African personality during the 1960s there emerged
   in the United States and later in South Africa the

black consciousness movements. I want to suggest that
these movements, discontinuous as they appear and isolated
both in temporal and geographical terms as they have been,
are symptomatic of some profound need in the inner world of
the black collective psyche to materialize a new identity
to harness all the resources of its cultural and historical
unconscious" (p 54 : my emphasis).

Despite the differences that may exist within the black community the
writer is the actor who divines and expresses the profound need in the black
collective psyche to develop a new identity. And since it is the task of
the psychologist also to allow for the emergence of identity the role of
the writer and that of the psychologist coalesce : the writer is the psycho-
logist of his people and both roles are conflated.

We shall return to the notion of a collective unconscious since it
seems to play an essential role in guaranteeing to the intellectual a privi-
leged and quasi de-facto access to truth amongst his people. It is clear
however that Manganyi's predominant concern with black writing since his
return from America and more especially with his biography of Mphalele do
not constitute so much a departure from psychology but rather an extension
of what is entailed by a committed psychology given the set of assumptions
enumerated above.

3.4 The biographer as guardian of black identity and history

In a recent article entitled 'Biography:: the Black South African
connection' (Manganyi, 1981) Manganyi lays down a manifesto of sorts for
the prospects of black life-writing in Southern Africa. He argues that
the study of black lives cannot be mere literary adventure or cultural
play; nor can it be concerned with an individual's anguish in view of the
extent of the 'degradation of the wretched in the black diaspora'. In

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other words, one of the aims of modern biography, its concern with the 'inner truth' of the subject, a project greatly influenced by the advent of modern depth psychologies (Edel, 1981), of necessity must be curtailed in Southern Africa. In such a historical situation the biographer must subscribe to a different set of guidelines and fulfil a different set of roles.

In Manganyi's view, biographical writing, like its twin, autobiography, has the power of restituting 'the past' a vital function in a regime which deprives the black community of the inheritance of its past, through censorship and political oppression and disfigures it through cultural oppression.

Writing about an individual becomes equivalent to writing about a community since the fate of the individual is so intertwined with the fate of the community. The biographer therefore 'freezes' the history of an entire community in his narrative of the life of an individual life. The biographer becomes the historian of black people, an especially significant role in the absence of a solidly established written tradition.

The idea that the biographer of an individual is the historian of a community rests upon the assumption of an organic unity existing between individual and community, an assumption recurrent among black writers in the 70s (Sole, 1983). It is legitimate to ask: since the black biographer cannot be concerned with the inner reality of the individual subject, this is being a luxury on the subcontinent, and since the individual has an organic relationship with the community, which means that the particular individual's response to his community is a non-problem, why write a biography and not write history proper? In addition it seems to me that there is a particular contradiction which leaves practically no room for the psychologist to operate.

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This contradiction, however, finds partial resolution in the concept of individual and collective identity. Manganyi argues that an important role of the biographer is that of 'uncovering for us the meaning of African-hood as an immutable reality in the specific and special circumstances of the historical saga of the subcontinent' (Manganyi, 1981 : 60 - my emphasis).

The concept of an immutable African reality is akin to the notion of an African essence (essence by definition being immutable), which Manganyi has elsewhere expressed as the black collective unconscious in which all blacks partake. Therefore black biography still contains a role for the psychologist, in his privileged position to make the muted African essence vocal and articulate. The study of a life and an identity has an intimate connection with the collective identity of the people since both are vehicles for the unfolding of the same immutable black ontology.

4. CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF MANGANYI'S CONTRIBUTION

In the preceding section I have attempted to show that despite the variety of forms which Manganyi's contribution assumes there are neverthe-less certain underlying assumptions which give a unity to his work and to the development of his committed psychology in South Africa. Although highly unconventional and unsystematic his contribution stands out as unique in South African psychology. As far as is known there is no other South African psychologist who has attempted to employ psychological theory with such an explicit political intention. In this respect Manganyi's committed psychology bears strong similarity with the major trend amongst black writers and poets of the 1970s to write and perform a literature aimed at having meaningful political insights and effects (Sole, 1983).

If one were to attempt a characterisation of Manganyi's ideological

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.stance it could be said that it is one of cultural nationalism.   He
situates his work implicitly and explicitly within a perspective which
heralds a new South African nationalism which would replace the existing
and divisive Volk Nationalisme.   This new nationalism is prefixed by the
term cultural for a variety of interrelated reasons.   Firstly, in this
new nationalism it is the majority African culture which would play the
leading role (Manganyi, 1981b).   Secondly, Manganyi reiterates a view of
nationalism founded on the notion of culture as a global concept which
comprises all the institutions in society : the ideological, social,
economic and political.   Thus African culture would de-facto bring about
a new nationalism and a new social order.   Thirdly, culture itself is
understood in terms of an abstract subjectivity : "In any society, social
and cultural institutions are a materialisation of the primacy of subject-
ivity - the achievement in practical terms of man's capacity for symbol-
isation" (Manganyi, 1981b : 67).   And since subjectivity and identity are
closely linked all the social institutions which emanate from this abstract
subjectivity are props for a new national identity : "Institutions retain
their symbolic power and meaning primarily because they clarify for a
society its own cultural identity to the exclusion of other societies.
Institutions consolidate nationalism and identity provided they are inti-
mately associated with a specific territorial unit" (Manganyi, 1981b : 67).
Given such a definition of nationalism which is populist and depends on
the notion of an abstract subjectivity and identity it allows Manganyi to
situate his work as psychologist, writer, biographer, that is, as an intel-
lectual involved with 'black identity' as an intrinsic part of the struggle
for a new national identity.

In this section my main aim will be to criticise Manganyi's committed
psychology for its intrinsic idealist stance.   I will attempt to show that

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the ideological assumptions which subtend his work leads to the favouring of certain concepts which have two distinct sets of effects. On the one hand they blur the materiality of history and politics and on the other they restrict the depth of his psychological investigation.

4.1 Black ontology and the obfuscation of history and politics

It is evident by now that the concept of a unitary subjectivity plays a fundamental role in Manganyi's work. Whether this concept is expressed in the phenomenological language of a mode-of-being-in-the-world, in the depth psychological language of the collective unconscious or in the Negri-tude language of Africanness as an immutable reality the concept remains the same. It is this concept which allows Manganyi to pass unproblematic-ally from the realm of individual identity to that of group and national identity since both are manifestations of the same abstract subjectivity. What needs to be stressed, however, is that such a concept functions in such a way that it obfuscates the materiality of history and also has the paradoxical effect of de-politicising the 'African experience'.

To refer to the apartheid state as a white-mode-of-being is tantamount to a psychological reduction which can only mystify social reality. Nationalist Party policy - apartheid - was a result of the political struggle between the United Party and the Nationalist Party. The shift from segregation to apartheid is characterised by an intensification of repressive state policies of the economic, political, social and educational levels. This new mode of domination, in contradistinction to a mode-of-being, cannot be attributed to a mere mental quirk on the part of an abstract and homogeneous white subject. Neo-marxist historiography has put forward the strong thesis that apartheid cannot be understood outside

of the context of specific contradictions which emerged in the capitalist mode production (Wolpe, 1970, 1972; Legassick, 1974; Davies, 1979). On the one hand changes in the reserves were threatening the conditions for the production and reproduction of cheap black labour vital to the accumulation of surplus. On the other hand, the erosion of the reserve economics which subsidised the employment of migrant workers entailed a growing exodus of African workers who were becoming proletarianised in the capitalist sector. The advent of apartheid policy and ideology as a mode of domination and control has to be understood in relation to the erosion of the prior basis for cheap labour and the problems posed to the capitalist classes in maintaining their rate of exploitation.

Although Wolpe's thesis has been criticised for its functionalism and economism (Posel, 1983) its value has been to show that it is impossible to understand racialist ideology and practices as stemming from an autonomous realm of irrational values and attitudes (white subjectivity!) which a psychology would ultimately explain given its supposed ability to explain irrationality. The task of psychologists is thus to step out of their discipline so as to be able to formulate appropriate questions informed by a knowledge of history. The abstract concept of a white-mode-of-being assigns to subjectivity a primacy which is tantamount to an obfuscation of the material structure of history and politics.

In a similar vein, the concept of a black ontology, as a universal consciousness, allows Manganyi to link the 19th century Afro-Cuban renaissance movements, the culmination of Negritude in the work of Césaire and Senghor, to the various struggles for independence in Africa and to the various BC movements in the United States and South Africa. It cannot be denied that subjection to racist domination will engender moments of recog-

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nition amongst black subjects and a basis for a certain black solidarity.
But to link all these movements under the aegis of an abstract black essence
is tantamount to a denial of history itself and of the heterogeneous social,
political and national experiences and struggles of black subjects.   To stay
on the South African arena how would the concept of a black ontology account
for the emergence of competing black movements with their specific ideolo-
gical, political and strategic differences such as the PAC, the ANC, the
NEUM and later BCM, AZAPO etc ...?   Clearly the struggle of the oppressed
does not reveal one unitary subjectivity but a plurality of 'subjectivities'.
Despite the fact that Manganyi is at pains to point out that the African
Personality is not a racially determined concept but rather a psycho-
cultural concept the effects are exactly the same.   The concept of a unitary
black subject, whether anchored in a crude biological theory or in an essence
of black values, remains an idealist concept which explains everything,
hence very little.

   Manganyi's concept of a unitary black subjectivity reiterates the two
fundamental propositions of Negritude, namely, that black people experience
a unique perception of the world and that there are fundamental black values.
What is not understandable, however, is that Manganyi fails to take into
account the cogent criticism addressed to Negritude by various authors, some
of whom were themselves deeply involved in political struggle.   Both
Mpahlele (1962) and Keita (1973) have pointed to the politically conservative
ends to which the concept of black ontology has been put.   It is Fanon and
Cabral, however, who have formulated more incisive criticism.   Fanon's
relation to Negritude was ambivalent from the start.   On the one hand he
condemned the concept of black metaphysics on two main counts : for its
tendency to stereotype blacks and perpetuate an image of homogeneity which
masks the heterogeneity of their social experience.   For Fanon this tendency

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reiterates the racial stereotyping of blacks omnipresent in racist ideology. He expresses his disapproval in caustic sarcasms such as : "My black skin is not the wrapping of specific black values" (Fanon, 1970 : 162) or "I secreted a race. And that race staggered under the burden of a basic element. What was it? Rhythm?" (Fanon, 1970 : 87). Behind the irony, however, lies the more forceful argument that to posit a black ontology is to neglect the historical character of men and the fact that culture is first and foremost national, not racial, and its determinants are those very same forces which shape the economic and historical foundations of man's experience (Fanon, 1978). Despite Fanon's disdain for the content of Negritude thought he nevertheless retained some regard for its subjective value as regards the psycho-affective disequilibrium of the 'évolué'. Negritude thus can be of help to the native intellectual and help him or her forge links with political struggle (MacCullogh, 1983).

It is Cabral, however, who has voiced the more decisive critique of Negritude and the social class of those who espouse it. Although writing about an experience different to South Africa since in South Africa there is no peasantry, Cabral links the concern with identity and the philosophy of a return to the source more specifically to the urban petty-bourgeoisie. The proximity of that class to colonial culture and its inability to participate fully in that culture leads to an obsession with personal identity. For Cabral, however, the quest for identity is politically sterile unless it leads to a commitment against imperialism and an active identification with the bulk of the people : the peasantry (Cabral in MacCullogh, 1983). For Cabral, negritude is the ideology of the petty-bourgeoisie and the plight of this class cannot be universalised.

It seems unfortunate that Manganyi has not integrated these important criticisms in his work. In addition, the attitude of Manganyi to politics

per se, as reflected in his writings, is unclear to say the least.   In

his first book (1973) he refers to the suppression of true political

leaders who could reinstate the communal mode of being without specifying

what the latter entails.   His hero Mashangu (Manganyi, 1974) in his moment

of liberating anger threatens to involve himself directly in historical

action but the novel ends at this precise moment.   As has been pointed

out artistic and intellectual creativity is seen as the privileged moment

of the solution of the white mask neurosis and the term historical rebel-

lion is left undefined.   Since artists and intellectuals are a small

minority there is no reference whatsoever to the role which political and

other collective organisations may play in helping the black subjects over-

come their oppression.   In addition, the relation of the intellectual and

artist to such organisations is not raised.   Instead the abstract notion

of black subjectivity allows Manganyi to assume that writing about 'black

experience' in itself has political and historical relevance for all blacks.

It is in this sense that the concept of black ontology is tantamount to a

denial of politics since it fails to take into account class divisions,

divergences of interests, and a diversity of actions and goals guided by

differing ideologies amongst blacks.

4.2 The conflict between existential-phenomenological and psycho-analytic
    categories

Despite Manganyi's interest in psycho-analytic theory and his utilisa-

tion of concepts borrowed from a psycho-analytic vocabulary it seems evident

that his portrayal of the subjective conflicts engendered by racism is in

fact dominated by categories derived from existential-phenomenological

psychology.   The subjectivity of the colonised is presented as conflictual

and divided but this division is articulated in terms of a distinction between a false self-for-others, constructed in contact with racist culture, which masks the authentic unitary black self-in-itself with its positive attributes. In other words, the psychological portrayal rests upon the possible recovery of a discrete, unitary black subjectivity. However important such a representation may be in a counter-ideology designed to combat racism its theoretical ability to provide an understanding of subjectivity in a situation of racial oppression is questionable.

The psychological problematic of a false consciousness is fundamentally pre-Freudian and remains above all a psychology of consciousness. Freud's radical insights - his theory of the Unconscious and of the development of the ego - as re-visited by Lacan (1966) show that the I or the ego, what is usually presumed to be the centre of subjectivity is in fact a precipitate or a crystallisation of the dialectics of identification with the other. Subjectivity is then de-centred and has no true centre. The category of a self-in-itself or of a true self is thus exposed as essentialist or naturalist. The entire edifice of humanistic psychology hinges on such a conception of the individual as endowed with a true self and dualistically separated from the other and the social, although in interaction with the social. It is from within such a conception that the other can impinge on the true self and lead to the development of a mask or a false consciousness.

The concept of a black self who would have undone its false consciousness and come back to itself contains all the trappings of a humanistic and essentialist psychology. If one asks : what is the black self, the answer is always in terms of a mythos of idealised attributes with the habitual qualities of communalism, democracy and love of peace. As an ideological

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concept it reiterates features of the structure of any ideological dis-
course which is to interpellate concrete subjects in terms of the subject
of ideology - God, the Nation, the Family, Man, Woman ... the Black self -
and thereby reproduce subjectivity (Althusser, 1969). But if it is not
situated as an ideological concept and adopted as a theoretical one its
value in helping us understand the manner in which 'racial' subjectivity
is acquired in a racially divided social order is perforce limited.

Although the topic deserves far more rigorous treatment it seems
important to point out Fanon, given his status of paterfamilias of the
radicalisation of various BC movements (Sutton, 1969), has left behind a
psychology legacy which deserves close scrutiny precisely because it
reflects a constant tension between humanistic and psycho-analytic psycho-
logy. His formulation of the White Mask Neurosis is of great interest
because it is based on an explicit repudiation of what is most central in
psycho-analytic psychology : the theory of the Oedipus Complex. Far from
wanting to impose the specific Freudian theory on kinship structures
different from the nuclear bourgeois family it is nevertheless essential
to point out that, at a more general level, Freud's articulations leave
the field of psychopathology far behind and is in fact a radical interro-
gation on the acquisition of masculinity and feminity in a sexually divided
universe (Mitchell, 1974 : 19). It is from this vantage point that the
question his theory points to has validity beyond Freud's own culture.
Furthermore, theoretically speaking, it is impossible to understand the
formation of the Unconscious without the theory of psycho-sexuality.
Fanon's articulation of the Mask Neurosis is precisely based on a repudia-
tion of the Oedipus Complex : "...it would be relatively easy for me to
show that in the French Antilles 97 percent of families cannot produce one

Oedipal.neurosis. This incapacity is one on which we heartily congratu-
late ourselves" (Fanon, 1970. : 108). This repudiation leads him to make
the unsubstantiated claim that in a colonial situation : "every neurosis,
every abnormal manifestation, every affective erethism in an Antillean is
a product of his cultural situation" (Fanon, 1970 : 108).

In Fanon's radical psychology the family of the colonised is exonerated
and the central etiological locus is colonial culture and more specifically
the school since it is this latter which is a point of maximal transmission
of colonial culture. The question which needs be raised is whether this
exoneration and exclusion of the family does not simultaneously entail the
ejection of a theory of the Unconscious and open the way rather for pheno-
menology between self and other in which the black self is always already
constituted and yet never positioned. It is omnipresent and omniabsent :
a becoming, a mythical past, an idealised future. Yet the concrete black
subject exists : he/she is born in a family, with its specific traditions,
language, mythologies, a family situated itself in a class formation and
having to face the problems of that class. He/she has to become a sexed
subject in a culture with its own rituals of masculinity and femininity.
The formal contact with colonial culture only starts later in school.
How can a psycho-analytic psychology of the black subject ignore its child-
hood and by so doing doesn't it automatically entail a neglect of the
theoretical category of the Unconscious which is always infantile and
archaic? Furthermore, can such a psychology provide an explanation for
the specific trauma engendered by racist ideology, the internalisation of
racist values, if it fails to take into account the prior structurations
of subjectivity into consideration?

Manganyi's first hero is essentially Fanonian. His problems start

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exclusively at the mission school and are articulated totally within a humanistic psychology of consciousness. The distance b-tween the authentic black self and the White Mask is small : the expression of anger and rage leads to a retrieval of authenticity and subjectivity has recovered its centre. We are back into the pre-Freudian days of the cathartic method when Freud still pinned his hopes that the recovery of the traumatic memory, dating back to adolescence at most, and its abreaction would lead the hysteric to recover her unitary consciousness and overcome her dual consciousness - 'double conscience' (Freud, 1895). It is clear that the concept of the Unconscious has no place in Manganyi's novel. His concept of repudiation is not akin to the concept of repression in Freud. The undoing of repression is a complex task which introspection alone cannot fulfil and in no way can it be argued that the Unconscious is the true subject of consciousness. The relation of true and false falls away in psycho-analysis. If the concept of the Unconscious is present in Manganyi's work at that stage it is not in its psycho-analytic form but rather in its Jungian form, as a collective unconscious, which allows him to link his experience to that of all blacks universally. But essentially his psychology is a surface psychology of consciousness with no radical topographical opposition (Freud, 1915). Accompanying such a psychology is the emphasis placed or experience. Since humanistic psychology is a psychology of consciousness then experience holds the key to the truth of the subject. Looking into oneself, or into the life of another black man, reveals unproblematically the truth about black experience in its individual and collective form.

Manganyi's second hero is Mpahlele (Manganyi, 1983). The task of psycho-biography is more complex because it entails the narrative recon-

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struction of the complex facts and patterns of another person's life in a specific historical and political milieu. Although justice cannot be done to 'Exiles and Homecomings' in its entirety I will attempt to show that from a psychological perspective it is still his notion of a unitary black subject which guides his reading of Mpahlele's life as compared to one which would problematise the contradictory ways in which the subject is positioned at various stages of his life.

One of the main features which strikes in the biography is that it is composed in the first person singular. It is difficult to know whether it is Mpahlele who speaks, or a fictional Mpahlele or the biographer. Manganyi himself acknowledges that his intention was to present 'a certain degree of authorial uncertainty' (1983 : 4). The choice of the first person, however, quite apart from reducing the distance between biographer and biographee inevitably promotes a complicity between the former and the latter. How can the hero who speaks about his own experience avoid the complicity inherent to all confessions? As soon as the interrogation of his experience reaches moments of discontinuity and disequilibrium - Freud's 'gaps in consciousness' - which provide the privileged terrain for a more complex investigation of the subversion of the subject, the I has only one alternative : that of restoring its equilibrium and unity.

An interesting example of such 'complicity' can be found in the manner in which Mpahlele's first breakdown at St Peters college is dealt with. The reader is referred to chapter two of the book entitled 'Grand Mother and the Mountain' (Manganyi, 1983). Briefly, the young Mpahlele with conflicts about achievement and failure has a nervous breakdown on the eve of his mid-year examinations. His anxiety was so severe that he lost consciousness followed by severe headaches. The significant fact, however, is that this acute anxiety spell was preceded by a disappointing first

sexual experience in which the hero's hope of triumph had been betrayed by an acute sense of guilt and feelings of being 'drained as if some vital part of me had been taken away'. It is clear that Manganyi senses the importance of that moment of discontinuity in the subject but it becomes equally clear that he forecloses its investigation.

The aim here is not to provide a definitive clinical answer since a biography is not a therapeutic case-study. In addition the application of psycho-analytic theory to biography or literature can be extremely reduction-istic despite the fact that Freud's concept of overdetermination precludes any simplistic or mechanistic view of psychical causality. But the type of adolescent symptomatology is strongly suggestive of an unresolved Oedipal scenario (Malan, 1979). In addition the biographical material at our dis-posal invites such an investigation : an emotionally inaccessible father, violent and abusive and for whom the hero felt contempt; the deep emotional attachment to his mother, to whom his academic success was devoted; this relation was, however, marked by a protracted separation at the important age of five into the inhospitable care of a grandmother 'as frightening as the mountain'. Whatever the dictates of reality were for his sub-proletarian family the emotional reactions of a child of five are not guided simply by such dictates but rather by the logic of loss and separation so often experienced as stemming from the child's own failure to be loved as he wishes by one or both parents. The fear of academic failure and its coro-llary, the ardent coveting of success so central to the young hero's life and to his family, invites reflection on the symbolic meaning of work and performance for an adolescent.

It is at this juncture that the theory of Oedipus becomes interesting. Through work and scholastic achievements the subject defines its place

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within the social. But psychically speaking the entry into sociality is marked by a positioning of the subject in relation to his primary constellation of figures : the family, father and mother. According to the Oedipus theory this entry always involves a narcissistic failure since oedipal desire, and hence the place in which the subject imagined itself to be, has to be given up in its encounter with the social law which proscribes desire. Scholastic performance, from the perspective of the unconscious, can regressively acquire the valency of a displaced incestuous terrain on which the subject still occupies the tabooed place. The oedipal experience of success and failure can become symbolically dramatised in any realm of social performance.

Whether the above reconstruction is valid or not is not the main issue. The point which it aims at making is that if inner reality is not treated as a mere 'luxury on the subcontinent' but as informing a complex view of subjectivity within the social it can open up various avenues of investigation such as the place of women within the hero's life, his relation to male authority including white authority and the domain of politics, and above all the relation of the hero to the art of writing itself. Manganyi's treatment of this adolescent episode, however, gives it the status of a mere 'crise de passage' which the hero's centred ego salvages impeccably. The 'I' confesses :

> "The experience itself had been unrewarding and I caved in emotionally - and yet in some ways my first sexual experience was an achievement. It expanded my horizon for the possibilities of adult intimacy. One mystery of adult life had been unwrapped before my very eyes and a few years later I was to make use of this precious knowledge to start an enduring relationship with a woman." (Manganyi, 1983 : 66)

Other examples from the biography could be cited to illustrate the thesis that the hero is an existential hero who always surmounts his

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moments of unconsciousness as bad-faith (à la early Sartre) and manages
to abolish discontinuities and contradictions which beg for a more radical
exploration.   The real subtext, consistent with the view of black ontology,
is that of the return to the source, and assumes that there is a real source.

5.   CONCLUSION

In lieu of a conclusion it can simply be said that this critical
appraisal of Manganyi's contribution has proved a daunting task in that the
critic is forced to operate on a plurality of levels simultaneously.   It
is a work which aims at a view of the totality.   I have attempted to show
that it is a certain political position (cultural nationalism) and the
adoption of certain conceptual categories (abstract subjectivity), the
latter being consistent with the former, which permit such a totalisation.
Many aspects of the critical appraisal need to be elaborated since one of
the virtues of Manganyi's work is that it raises many questions, without
necessarily answering them, which are important for the psychology student
in South Africa.   But the main point which needs to be stressed is that
it is perhaps easier to rally to call for a committed psychology in a
situation of political polarisation than to produce one.   The labour of
radical enquiry into the status of the theoretical categories we employ,
although it is no substitute for political activity, is an essential part
of the political process in that theory, like all discourses, produce effects
of a certain type.

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