



BEING-BLACK
-in-the-
WORLD

n.c. Manganji

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by

N.C. MANGANYI

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INTRODUCTION

BEING-BLACK-IN-THE-WORLD is intended as a contribution to the growing body of books and papers on the black experience. It is only very recently that concerted efforts have become manifest in the field of Black Studies at various universities in Africa and elsewhere. The extent of academic and lay interest in the field of Black Studies received concrete expression in the publication by Heineman Educational Books in 1970 of a three volume source book entitled *The African Experience* which was edited by J.N. Paden and E.W. Soja.

The efforts of these academics are definitely deserving of our guarded admiration, although it is probably true to say that the most important contribution on the black experience will have to come from Africa. For it is here, on the African continent, where the great and intricate drama of being-black-in-the-world is taking place. In a field of study and life where there have been so many self-proclaimed experts, it is not always possible to say much that is worth saying. It is partly for this reason that I conceived of this book as essentially a small collection of essays reflecting my thinking on a number of subjects.

There has been no desire on my part to impose any form of structural unity on the book. To impose a structure would have been to tell an unpardonable lie, since my existence and experience are themselves fairly unstructured. The only formal structural requirements I attempted to adhere to are those relating to the internal consistency of the individual essays. This means that each essay has been an attempt to reflect on a specific aspect of the black experience. Overlapping with respect to theme reflects the writer's conviction that experience is not discrete, but continuous.

This collection of essays addresses itself to a limited number of important questions. I consider the questions to be of general significance to South African society as a whole. Issues which are of general significance to our society should be of interest to both academics and members of the lay public. It became necessary to keep this fact in view in the treatment of the various subjects in the collection. Technical terminology was reduced to a minimum in the more demanding essays. A glossary was considered necessary for purposes of clarity. Consideration of the collection as a whole

revealed that there were enough questions raised for both the academically inclined and the general reader.

A recurrent question found throughout the book may be formulated as follows: Is there a black mode of being-in-the-world? Stated differently: Is being black-in-the-world different in fundamental respects to being-white-in-the-world? Some specific essays deal particularly with this question, others are concerned with it in a more indirect fashion.

Of more general significance and interest are the essays on the urban Africans and communication, the meaning of change, Black Consciousness and the postscript on Prof. Engelbrecht's contribution on time and neuroses in Africans. As I prepare this book, the city of Durban is in the grip of one of the worst strikes, by African workers, in the history of our land for a long time. There is growing concern that the strikes may snow-ball into the other urban areas in the rest of the country. These strikes caught the country napping. One of the lessons which should be learnt from the Durban troubles is that the communication gap like all the other famous gaps between whites and blacks is widening into a gulf. Factors which militate against black-white communication in organisational settings are some of the concerns of the essay on the urban Africans.

The widening of the communications gap has other important implications, one of which relates to the question of change in South African society. When observers talk in terms of change in South African society, are they talking about goal-directed and structured change or other forms of unexpected change? Is change in South Africa equally meaningful to both blacks and whites? At this stage in our history, it appears that it is necessary to put a spot-light on the meaning and significance of change. It should be appreciated that the problem of the meaning of change and its implications is crucial to future race relations in South Africa.

Appearing together with the communications gap between blacks and whites has been the assault on national cohesiveness, which is progressively being replaced by polarisation in attitudes, interests and goals. Part of this polarisation is a result of the policies of separate development while the other should be associated with the development of the philosophies of black consciousness and solidarity. Within the South African context, the words 'black consciousness and solidarity' have come to be invested with so much that may be regarded as emotional, either in the pronouncements of its proponents or in the defensive reactions of the white public. There appears to be a danger that this emotive quality may make slogans or clichés out of the philosophies of black consciousness and solidarity. This danger may only be averted if we give a closer look at the meaning and significance of these philosophies within the South African context. My essay on black consciousness was conceived with the

awareness that there is still probably a great deal of misunderstanding about black consciousness and solidarity as a posture both within the black communities and outside.

Racial stereotyping in South Africa is not dead. It has, for example, appeared very recently from the pen of a professor of philosophy at one of our black universities. This academic has used very respectable (erudite) language to say that Africans live in a time of their own. This time, according to him, is different from natural time (white time). He arrives at the curious conclusion that this consideration should be used to justify separate development. The postscript on time and neuroses in this collection concerns itself briefly with the views of Prof. Engelbrecht on this matter.

Let me return to the other essays which deal with the issue of being-black-in-the-world more specifically. Within our country, there are people representing different racial groups, languages, religions and cultures. In race-conscious environments, interest groups organised along racial lines often develop as they have in South Africa. The plural nature of our society, for example, is often referred to, but only in so far as it acts as a justification for a rigid white-black demarcation. 'Us and them' concerns itself with this question of racial group identity and the related one of the differences in modes (patterns) of being-in-the-world between blacks and whites. 'Us' and 'them' in our environment are 'primary' words, in Buber's sense, of relating and distancing; they refer to the in-group and the out-group. These primary forms of relating between blacks and whites are shown to be associated with differences in the way blacks and whites relate to their bodies, to other people, to objects, and to time. 'Us' and 'them' are expressive of an attitude — the attitude of considering an individual as being within one's group or outside it.

'Nausea' raises the question whether the experience of suffering and meaninglessness (absurdity), sometimes so characteristic of life, is of the same order for both blacks and whites. People in despair often ask the question, 'why?' Is this question of the same order for both blacks and whites? If there should be black and white modes of being-in-the-world, the answers to these questions are likely to be different for the two existential experiences.

'*Being-black-in-the-world*' is concerned with the controversy surrounding the concept, 'African Personality'. There have, broadly, been two usages of this concept. The first usage is one that is generally adopted by white observers who have attempted to use the concept as a psychological construct. A second usage is one which could be said to understand the concept as referring to a life style. Understood in this way, the concept becomes interchangeable with Senghor's concept of Negritude. This usage is commonly adopted by some blacks. We consider the controversy which

has been going on to have been completely unnecessary for reasons which are stated in the relevant section of this book.

The 'Reflections' cover a number of related issues mainly in the area of mental health. These reflections arise mainly from my experience as a clinical psychologist. It seems to me that we need to begin to interest ourselves in the psychiatric (mental health) side of our life as South Africans. We have been telling all and sundry that we are capable of teaching the world something novel about racial harmony and peaceful co-existence in a multi-racial (multi-national?) society. Perhaps it is time for us to turn inward and assess whether our claims are not in excess of our progress. One way of monitoring this progress appears to be an evaluation of psychiatric morbidity — the study of the extent to which our society is integrative, in the sense of promoting and supporting individual and community psychic health. The laboratories for such studies are there in South Africa's black communities. It is true to say that in these communities the highest cumulative unfavourable social experiences are to be found. These are populations at special risk, from a mental health point of view.

I would like to make a few more general remarks. These remarks amount to a position statement which may help clarify my preoccupation with the body. This preoccupation is not morbid, but it arises out of the recognition of the body's central position in existence. We make our approaches to the world through our bodies: the body is movement inwards and outwards. To what extent does the body determine the experience of being-black-in-the-world or being-white-in-the-world? This is a crucial question. It may be answered briefly at this stage. An individual develops a personalised, idiomatic mental (image) concept of his body. This is what I describe as the *individual schema*. If he should be black, like myself, he begins to know, through various subtle ways, that his black body is unwholesome; that the white body is the societal standard of wholesomeness. This later development in body awareness I describe as the *sociological schema*. Each one of us lives with two schemas — co-operative or at odds with each other. These two body schemas (images), I believe, have a lot to do with the experiences of being-black-in-the-world and being-white-in-the-world.

Some of the ideas expressed in this book are decidedly provocative. There have been no malicious intentions of the kind usually associated with political propaganda. As I see it, my contribution will have been significant if there should be a generation of informed debate by black scholars and others on the ideas expressed in this collection.

WHO ARE THE URBAN AFRICANS?

THE PROBLEM of effective communication in commerce and industry is not unique to the South African situation. Even in countries with fairly homogenous populations and long histories of industrialisation and urbanisation, this problem continues to constitute a thorny issue for industrial psychologists and communication specialists. This fact in itself is a very clear index of the complexity of the problem.

In the case of South Africa, the complexity of the communication process is compounded by our singular history and the existence of a complex politico-economic structure. This problem cannot but be complex since South Africa's economy must continue to move in the direction of economic integration (multi-racialism) while politically moving more in the direction of multi-nationalism (separate development). This unhappy marriage between the economy and political or ideological demands is leading to a surfacing of a developing debate. The local press has carried a number of articles relating to whether Africans should become members of organised labour (trade unions) or not. This debate appears to be related to a growing fear of possible future labour unrest. This concern about the adequate representation of African workers was highlighted by an observation attributed to A. Grobbelaar (1) who said that about 30 000 Africans had been involved in illegal strikes between 1959 and 1969. The reasons for the increase in the number of illegal strikes are possibly very complex. One thing stands out very clearly and it is that this is a very serious indictment of commerce and industry. Here we have the most dramatic expression of a communication problem par excellence.

This essay is an attempt to deal with some aspects of the socio-economic processes of industrialisation and urbanisation as these have affected the African population. This treatment is bound to be sketchy since particular attention is to be directed at the possible factors which tend to militate against effective communication and to suggest those factors which I consider to promise better organisational hygiene.

Another way of posing the question (who are the urban Africans?) is to ask: who are the Africans now living in South Africa's urban and industrialised areas? This way of asking the question is for the simple reason

that the first question tends to generate more heat than light. Responses to this question have been many and varied. Some observers will tell us that the African is a superstitious simpleton with very little initiative; some will tell us with an air of expertise that his psychology and culture are so different that an elementary course in cultural anthropology would help us out of our particular difficulties; yet others will talk in terms of the 'detrilled', the 'transitional' or the 'attention-getting elites'. If we persisted in asking the question, we would probably be reminded that a Motswana carrying an executive brief-case is a Motswana at heart. There are those who would tell us that the urban African is a myth or a monster created by nihilistic anarchists. The truth of the matter is that none of these people knows who we are. Perhaps this is an ideal time to make the point that it is not the white 'experts' who are going to provide the answers to this question. It is, I submit, the black scholars of this country who will first of all ask the right sort of questions with a greater probability of arriving at the best answers.

Attempts directed at understanding the African response to industrialisation and urbanisation may be characterised as having been of two types. There have been simplistic and paternalistic explanations represented in prototype by the contributions of Silberbauer (2). Not so simplistic but equally naive in conception is the study of the so-called 'personality of the urban African in South Africa' by de Ridder (3). The second group of contributions have been less ambitious in both design and intention. These contributions will be referred to a little later in this discussion.

A meaningful way of attempting to answer this question appears to be one which recognises its complexity. It seems most useful always to say whether one is attempting a sociological analysis, a cultural anthropological one, or a social-psychological one amongst others with the added recognition that all these facets are part of a complex existential experience.

The Great Fish River in 1770 and beyond

South Africa's controversial history tells us that the first recorded encounter between Africans and whites was on the banks of the Great Fish River in 1770. That in many respects tragic and historic encounter, was followed by a history of conflict and disputes whose fallout is still part and parcel of the South African socio-political fabric. After those tragic years came Kimberley and Johannesburg to initiate the denouement of the South African drama.

As a part result of that history, it was estimated that by 1970 55% and 85% (Africans and whites respectively) were living and/or working in the urban areas of South Africa (4). According to this source, 10% of the then African

population was in the urban areas by the turn of the present century. What emerges from this last observation is the fact that Africans have been exposed to the influences of urbanisation and industrialisation for well over half a century. Since it is to be expected that these people came into these areas with their own cultural heritage, it becomes relevant to try to understand the extent to which Africans have responded to the existence of other socio-cultural alternatives or what Pauw (5) has described as the 'triangle of forces' (Western culture, traditional culture, and urbanisation). Perhaps it should be pointed out that to ask how Africans have responded to these forces should always be qualified by adding that there has always been compulsory encapsulation of the various racial groups which has tended to create artificial response patterns.

The question relative to the identity of the urban African is one which is not amenable to full scientific treatment at this stage. It is noteworthy that the first full-scale study of Africans in town is represented by the trilogy *Xhosa in Town* edited by P. Mayer (6). Another important contribution is a 1964 volume edited by Holleman *et al* with contributions by such leading scholars as Mayer, Glass, Wilson and Biesheuvel (7). What has emerged from these contributions is a recognition that changes have been and are taking place in urban populations.

For example, it has been frequently pointed out that the African in the urban industrialised cities of South Africa may be grouped into two broad categories with some intermediate variations in between. There are the real 'townsmen' and there are the migrants. If we were to characterise the townsmen briefly, we could say that these are the people who have no important links with the rural areas. Their network of important personal relationships is to be found in the urban areas. The migrants, on the other hand, consist of those people who are generally rural-area-oriented (their networks of personal relationships are rurally based) and are more traditionalist in outlook.

One could take this opportunity to comment on the general limitations of studies of Africans by white South Africans. The first of these limitations is an obvious one. It amounts to the fact that the white experience is so existentially distant from the black experience that white workers have to abstract to a very unhealthy extent in order to move beyond the level of mere description to that of analysis and understanding (interpretation). The second limitation arises out of the fact that the economic motive has generally been very active in the decisions relating to the areas of the black experience which whites have chosen for study. Studies have been considered valuable to the extent that they have offered clues relevant to the possible harnessing of the black labour force for the benefit of industry and commerce. The recurrence of the themes 'African abilities', 'motivation' and

'attitudes' is a very clear index of this preoccupation.

Currently, the majority of Africans live in residential areas known variously as 'location', 'townships' or 'Bantoeedorpe'. These are satellite complexes which are dependent on the white city area for their existence. While many people live in family accommodation settings, there are thousands, about 13 000 for Soweto, who are on the waiting list for family housing (8). Another group of Africans are those who lead what Professor Seftel of the Wits Medical School has described as a 'wifeless existence' — the occupants of closed and total institutions such as the controversial Alexandra hostels. Yet another group of Africans live in the backyards of suburbia. The mental health problems associated with these areas of social disengagement are too well-known to require detailed documentation. It should suffice to point out that these problems in their day to day manifestations require the most vigilant attention of the employers of African labour.

The adaptational life-style which has developed as a result of the black experience in South Africa is something which has not yet been studied in depth and must await a future generation of black scholars. In this essay I intend to limit myself to a few observations which I consider relevant to the problem under discussion. My own experience in both clinical and industrial settings has led to the germination of some tentative ideas and formulations (9). These may be stated as follows: The most predominant feature of all the groups I studied was a form of endemic, chronic sense of insecurity coupled with an ideation characterised by helplessness. Even in clinical practice, as I reported in 1970, this anxiety is the most dramatic expression of the sense of existential insecurity. In the absence of statistics, it may confidently be stated that anxiety states and reactive-depressions with anxiety features are amongst the most common presenting complaints among African psychiatric patients.

From a mental health point of view, the communities within which Africans have to live are some of the most unhygienic. This is easily appreciated since it has become common-place to observe that they are characterised by a high morbidity rate — alcoholism and other related forms of over-indulgence, crime, a spiralling divorce rate and associated problems in the sphere of parent-child relationships. It is also necessary to point out that in the majority of cases, the work situations are just as unhygienic. There are decided indications that most organisations are not geared towards the growth and self-fulfilment of individual employees.

Indeed we find that in the life experience of the African, there is hardly any situation in his life in which his sense of self-esteem is nourished. His wife and children may have been forced by conditions beyond his control to lose the modicum of respect which they may have had for him as an

effective, self-steering agent in his psychosocial environment. If we were to formulate his psychic status in a phenomenological way, we could say that his subjective experience is one of feeling emasculated. There are other more positive sides to this picture such as the Africans' will to survive (resilience).

At this point in the discussion, I would like to make the following submission. Some observers have never tired of pointing out that the African is 'by nature' without initiative; that he has a low aspiration level; that he will always say 'yes' when he should have said 'no'; that he is emotional and hedonistic and that he has the uncanny habit of not keeping time and talking around the point. The stock explanation for this life style is that it is in the nature of Africans, that we just have to understand this and we will have made the great discovery.

It may well be that these traits are to be found in some Africans. Does this in itself suggest that these traits reflect a natural, almost genetic predisposition? Some of us are saying that this is not African nature. That there is no such a thing as African nature. We are saying that these traits and many others are patterns of adaptation to an unfriendly, always threatening environment. We are saying that the best human potential, given the black existential experience, would in all probability develop similar adjustment manoeuvres. Reality demands that we conceptualise the problem as one essentially involving human nature, one involving a universal tendency to adapt to circumstances however gruesome.

The first part of this essay has presented a fairly sketchy account of some aspects of the processes of urbanisation and industrialisation as these have affected the African in South Africa. This account was intended as a backdrop for some ideas relating to the African response to these processes as well as the discussion of communication problems *per se*.

Communication and the South African scene

I pointed out at the outset that communication in industrial and commercial organisations continues to be a thorny problem. I said at that stage that this is a problem of unusual complexity. But it remains true to say that the maximum exploitation of this country's human and other resources will depend in large measure on how problems in this area are understood and tackled. A general comment on the problems of communication in the South African context cannot be out of place.

In order to understand the communication potential of black-white interaction, it is necessary to reconstruct the prototype of this communicative relational possibility. This relationship is very well-known to Africans of all types. Let me reconstruct it as follows. Mr Hlungwani and his wife and children are on a Saturday shopping spree for Christmas. They walk into a large departmental store in Johannesburg. They are all in very high spirits.

Mr Hlungwani wants to give his wife the gift of his dreams — a very lovely frock which he had always promised to buy her. They approach the white store assistant. Even before Mr Hlungwani can initiate a conversation (relay a message), Mrs du Pont responds by mouthing an obviously rude 'Ja'. Surging with repressed anger and resentment, Mr Hlungwani goes on to explain that he is interested in a particular dress for his wife. Mrs du Pont in the same contemptuous and indifferent tone tells Mr Hlungwani to go to that other 'Missus' or 'Madam'. Here we have the prototype of the master-servant communication complex. Let us look at what has actually happened. Mrs du Pont has not succeeded, strictly speaking, in communicating ideas. She has not succeeded in telling Mr Hlungwani that he is welcome to buy whatever he wishes. He has continued to buy out of necessity or habit or both. She has in fact communicated an emotion (tonal communication) and Mr Hlungwani should have understood the message to mean that he should walk out of the shop. Most South African communication across the colour-line is of this nature.

This kind of communication complex is contrary to the ideal kind of communication complex, namely one which Van den Berg (10) exposes in his discussion of the psychotherapy relationship. The essential feature of this communication complex is 'communicative equality'. This means, in effect, that the two people involved in the dialogue should experience and recognise themselves as essentially two 'equal' human beings. Neither of them should be condescending in the relationship. It is only when this condition is satisfied that communicative equivalence can be achieved — talking about the same tree, table or what you will. It is not an overstatement to say that our race relations are not of the kind that promote this kind of communication complex.

After these general remarks about the problem of communication in South Africa, we may now direct our attention to problems specific to industry and commerce. In this part of the essay, some ideas are formulated relating first to the important question of the factors which militate against effective communication with African workers. A second set of ideas is concerned with some approaches which may help reduce unhygienic management strategies in the area of communication. The first set of factors may be formulated as follows:

1. The ardent search for simple solutions evidenced by the perpetuation of racial myths. This tendency results in the general development of stereotyped kinds of inter-personal relationships with tonal types of communication and poor communication possibilities.

2. The erstwhile fad of developing separate personnel departments and policies specifically for African labour. In most of these departments African personnel administrators are given token executive status while remaining on the executive fringe of an organisation.
3. The existence of unsatisfactory employee representation machinery. In cases where such machinery has been created, it is again created as a token and not seriously integrated into the total organisational posture.
4. The existence of an unlimited number of unrewarding, frustrating conditions in the work situation vis-a-vis the worker's psychological and other needs.
5. The absence in many large organisations of well-structured employee counselling services for employees who must be burdened with problems.

In ending this discussion of factors which are not favourable to effective communication, I would like to single out the question of the status of personnel officers for special comment. It is my impression that some organisations have no clear notions (notions that are clearly spelt out) about the status and function of black personnel officers. It is not uncommon to see an advertisement in the local press mentioning that familiarity with legislation governing the employment of Africans will be in an important consideration in qualifying for the job. Granted, this, in the nature of South African society, may be an important consideration. I think that in our unique situation, this kind of employer is likely to have communication difficulties with his personnel officer, let alone his other workers. This is the type of employer who is likely to turn his personnel man into a glorified clerk whose main responsibility is to prepare labour turnover returns and extinguish local fires. Surely, one does not require a university degree in the social sciences to do this sort of thing. I will come back to this issue a little later.

It is not particularly difficult to make a social diagnosis. What is difficult is to suggest remedies and perhaps a prognosis. For our present purposes, a presentation of suggested remedies will suffice. As I see it, the first and most important requirement is a demand for a dramatic change of attitude away from the prescriptions of the 'African nature' type of explanations to the more valid position that the cultural and genetic heritage of the African does not deprive him of the essential humanity that characterises mankind. To achieve this goal, South African society will have to explode all the racial myths which have been so dear to it. It means, in fact, that commerce and

industry will have to disrupt the currently unhappy marriage between the economy and political doctrine. In practical terms it means that there must be a progressive recognition of the essential equality of man whether separately or otherwise. Once the above observations are given due credit, it comes as no surprise that the double-barrelled personnel approach should be replaced by a unitary one.

It should also mean that the African personnel administrator is well integrated into the management team; that he is well trained and remunerated; that he enjoys freedom and responsibility in the execution of his skills. He should, as it were, be an effective communication medium. This means that organisational structures should be reorganised.

In the area of employee representation, it seems that in addition to the calls for trade union representation, employee-management committees still remain one viable possibility for ensuring effective communication in the absence of better structures. The introduction of such committees should be very well planned and programmed. There should at least be an induction period for members of the committee. Neglect of considerations of this type often results in tragedies of good intentions.

The dire paucity of community mental health services for blacks is a dramatic indication for the employers of labour to introduce bold initiatives in this area. The creation of full-fledged employee counselling services would constitute a worthwhile investment and would certainly improve the mental health of employees and contribute to better communication and productivity.

Let us conclude this essay by stating that the urban African's response to urbanisation and industrialisation is likely to grow more complex and dynamic to the extent that there is no telling what the future has in stock for us.

FOOTNOTES

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BEING-BLACK-IN-THE-WORLD

GLOSSARY

African personality: (see Negritude).

Anomie: A sociological concept referring to the disorganisation of societal and personal values.

Anthropology: In the sense of the study of man in his wholeness.

Anxiety State: A neurotic disorder whose main feature is the existence of unaccountable pervasive anxiety.

Body boundary: A theoretical construct in body image studies meant to account for definiteness or indefiniteness of the body's exterior.

Body image: A mental representation of one's body.

Counselling: A fairly inclusive term for a variety of ways for helping individuals in difficulty achieve better adaptation.

Dialogue: In the sense of relating.

Dimensional ontology: Frankl's belief that being human means being body, psyche and 'spirit'.

Eschatology: The science of death, judgement, heaven and hell (Theological).

Existentialism: A twentieth century European philosophical and literary movement whose concerns are those of man in the world.

Hypothesis: A scientific hunch for experimental verification.

Hysteria: A complex neurotic disorder which assumes various forms, the most prominent being the conversion of mental conflicts into physical symptoms.

Ideological totalism: Complete unquestioning commitment to an ideology.

Mental health consultation: A service in community mental health provided by mental health specialists to clients.

Methodology: Formulated methods used in scientific inquiries.

Negritude: The totality of the cultural values of the black world, the black life style.

Noëtic: Of the spirit, as used by Frankl.

Ontology: The analysis of being and existence.

Phantom limb: Ghost limb; a feeling that an amputated limb is still in existence and functional.

Positivism: A position which holds that knowledge is limited to observable facts and experience.

Psychotherapy: The use of specialised methods in the treatment of mental disorders.

Schizophrenia: A psychotic reaction accompanied by marked personality disorganisation.

Transcendentalism: In philosophy—a system which is characterised by idealism and visionary qualities.

Vital force: A spirit which has force in African ontology.

BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS

The public marriage between the words 'black' and 'consciousness' has in some instances led to some panic and public consternation in certain sections of the South African public. There have been arguments, debates and naggings. It all happened so quickly that some observers have even suggested that the bogey of *swartgevaar* was suddenly becoming real. After this marriage it even became customary for some people of liberal bent to suggest that black South Africans were now turning racist. In these observations, there appeared at most times to be an insinuation that black people were becoming the ungrateful people that they are known to be by putting the liberals out of work. This kind of reaction is not entirely unexpected when one considers that South African liberalism can only be a form of narcissism — a form of white self-love. People who love themselves can pity only themselves, hardly anybody else.

What, in fact, these people were saying was that they have been fighting for the black cause for a long time, that it had since become second nature to them, to do this pious work. How dare the black people disturb the scheme of things by wanting to do the spade-work as well as the dirty work themselves. The extent of South African white fathering was dramatised recently when a black organisation demanded that the word black be used instead of the notoriously insulting 'non-Whites' or 'non-Europeans'. What happened at that time was very instructive. We were told in so many ways that we should not behave like a naughty little boy who changes his name without the explicit permission of his father. So many theoretical and semantic difficulties were immediately thrown at our faces. We were told even before the Indian population objected that they would feel insulted by being lumped into the black bag. That effort was a unique demonstration of the white people's expertise in hyperbole.

Leaving the white reaction aside for the moment we may now turn our attention to the actual marriage that took place between the words: black, consciousness and solidarity. Since it has been suggested that these words might mean damnation or racialism or *swartgevaar* it becomes necessary to inquire into some of their meanings as understood by us. I should not be misunderstood to be saying that all black people will agree with my

understanding of these concepts. It seems to me that the white people have to wait for us to tell them what we mean by these terms just as they have to accept our interpretation of the concepts 'African personality' and 'Negritude'. When words or concepts become public property they tend to become either clichés or slogans. It becomes necessary to remain strictly within the accepted meanings or definitions for purposes of communication. The word which requires definition is consciousness.

According to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary the following meanings of the word 'consciousness' are given: 'mutual knowledge'; 'knowledge as to which one has the testimony within oneself'; and 'the totality of the impressions, thoughts, and feelings, which make up a person's conscious being'. The first usage, though rare, is of the utmost importance. In our definition of black consciousness, there is an implicit recognition of 'mutual knowledge'. This recognition leads us further to that of black solidarity. From mutual knowledge to solidarity is a very short and logical step. But now the question may be asked: mutual knowledge about what? This also is a crucial question. Before answering this question, it should be stated that black consciousness is something about which each black person has evidence (testimony) within himself. This will be developed later. The question about mutual knowledge may now be answered. Black consciousness should be understood to mean that there is mutuality of knowledge with respect to the 'totality' of impressions, thoughts and feelings of all black people.

Some observations made by some people may create the spurious impression that black consciousness primarily refers to awareness of skin colour. This is not a judicious interpretation. My own interpretation is that skin colour in itself and of itself is insignificant. What is important is what the skin actually signifies in sociological and psychological terms. The skin only becomes significant in these terms as body. There can be no bickering about the existential significance of the body. It is precisely because of this reason that black consciousness has no choice but to start from the existential fact of the black body.

This is a recognition of the fact that it is the sociological schema of the black body which has in so many ways determined part of our experience of being-in-the-world. In other words, it has determined part of the totality of the experience of which we are being called upon to be conscious of. In terms of the body, then, we may say that we are being called upon to experience our black bodies in a revitalised way. We are being called upon to change the negative sociological schema imposed upon us by whites.

I have often said that the existential fact of the black body has also meant certain specific ways of relating to the world and to others. This relating may be understood as involving both positive and negative features. In its

negative form we recognise the fact of a specific form of suffering; that of having been a colonised people. It stands to reason that part of our consciousness of being black people amounts to a 'mutual knowledge' of this suffering under the hands of white domination. We must hasten to say that this consciousness of mutual suffering must not be mistaken for self-pity, for that would be a tragedy. The black people share the experience of having been abused and exploited. This is part of our consciousness.

Consciousness of our experience of suffering also means on the positive side that we share the 'mutual knowledge' of wanting to escape from this suffering. To the extent that we are conscious of being black people will we be more in a position to improve on our lot. At this stage, one would like to point out that black consciousness is time-bound. This means that it is characterised by its temporality. It is, as it were, consciousness of past, present and future. The fact about the temporality of black consciousness is a very important one. This is accounted for by the following observations. If we should only talk in terms of the mutual knowledge of the fact of suffering (both past and present), we could be accused of over-simplifying. What emerges on reflection is that the consciousness of being black must also include the fact of our contribution to culture, for I am loath to talk in terms of civilisation. For us then, black consciousness in its temporality includes the consciousness of our cultural heritage. It has been said often enough that African cultures were assaulted almost beyond recognition. It has not been said often enough that black consciousness must also include as part of its recognition of suffering this fact.

If black consciousness simply amounted to a mere recognition of this historicity, it would be nothing more than mere ancestor worship. We said that it has its temporal dimensions of past, present and future. It follows that for black consciousness to be an 'active presence' in the world, it has to deal with the present and the future. What may be said about black consciousness and the present? Inter alia, it may be said that in its expression of the present it is first of all mutual knowledge about its historicity. Secondly it amounts to a recognition and the desire to re-establish community feeling. This is generally what is meant by the word solidarity. Some people feel themselves very threatened by this development. It should not constitute any threat of any kind because it is a logical result of a common existential experience. Where there is mutual knowledge it should come as no surprise if there should be solidarity. A negative way of looking at this development is to say that this solidarity is only against white people. People who subscribe to this view fail to go on to say that this is only a historical necessity. It immediately becomes clear that we are not in any way to blame for this fact. Theoretically, black consciousness and solidarity could have been neutral. This, however, is hardly possible since in

large measure black consciousness and solidarity must be considered a response to white consciousness and solidarity (racialism).

Black consciousness and solidarity must be seen by us as phenomena that are positive in themselves. This means that they are desirable even outside considerations involving white domination and racialism. References to these developments as racialism become meaningless in the face of this recognition. Nobody should ever have had any right to tell anybody else that he should not be aware of himself as being. Black consciousness and solidarity as expressed in the present should also mean something in addition. They should mean continuity with the past and the future. Something has been said about the past already. A few remarks on the future.

Our orientation with respect to the future is of the utmost importance. It is a common-place to say that what will happen in the future will be determined in large measure by what black consciousness and solidarity mean to us today. At the time of writing, it is possible to spell out a few thoughts on this matter. The first idea which appeals to my fancy amounts to saying that black consciousness and solidarity must mean to us that we have to re-examine the forms assumed by personal and community relationships in our midst. This is necessary because of the simple reason that we have the mutual knowledge about the assault on the sense of community that befell us. Our spirit of communalism was gradually eroded until we were left with individualism and its stable-mate materialism. Solidarity amongst other things means that we as a people have to share. This sharing is all-embracing since it involves not only the sharing of material things but also the sharing of suffering and the possible joys of being-black-in-the-world. It may now be said that in the past we have not shared as we should have because in order to share, it is imperative to have the mutuality of knowledge of suffering which is now anchored in black consciousness.

There are many important considerations which go against the notion about the significance of tribal groupings. In this age of power politics and major powers, the grouping of people into tribes must be seen as something which amounts to a crude experiment. The money economics of the present century definitely provide the most convincing evidence against such experiments. We as black people have our own evidence which should tell us that tribalism is dead because this is the twentieth century. No efforts on a grand scale to reintroduce tribalism will succeed in the long run. What kind of evidence do we have? The primary evidence revolves around the fact of mutual knowledge which is now expressing itself as black consciousness and solidarity. We do know that there are people who have gone to great lengths to demonstrate that the various tribal groupings in South Africa are so culturally and linguistically different. This has been used as the major premise for current South African policies. We were not asked whether we

did accept that this is a matter of unusual significance to us. There is sufficient respectable evidence to support the idea that there is a great deal that is common to all African cultures on the African continent let alone in South Africa. One such a common denomination is African ontology discussed elsewhere in this collection. Other uniformities arise from the unique type of suffering which has been part of our common experience on the African continent.

We have to be unified by our common desire to take the initiative in deciding and determining our future and that of future generations of black South Africans. We have mutual knowledge of the ways in which we have been deprived of this right. In their temporal dimensions, black consciousness and solidarity must mean something more than sheer nostalgia. In their present and future thrusts, they must mean the birth of a new creativity. It needs no gainsaying to point out that this must be a broadly-based type of creativity covering all the significant sectors of our existence. The implications of this last statement for black people are many. The first of these implications amounts to the observation that black consciousness and solidarity must be understood as expressive of a new kind of responsibility. This responsibility covers all the important areas of our socio-political existence. It also means that we have to get away from the political scape-goating which has characterised our existence for the past decade. What this means in practice is that we should not be saying that the white man has closed all the avenues for political expression. When we say this we should normally go on to say that this recognition does not mean that we should recognise our communities as simply dead. Life is not only political. Possibilities for self-improvement as a people should have been explored before we simply just threw up the towel.

There are two important issues which should be raised relating to black consciousness and solidarity. The first is the relationship between consciousness and action. This relationship is often neglected by exponents of black consciousness. The neglect of this aspect almost amounts to a lack of a clear formulation of the actual practical meaning of solidarity. In addition to the relationship between mutual knowledge and solidarity there exists the connotation of action in solidarity. In other words, one has to be thinking of a consciousness which leads to action. It is not a primary consideration for us to point out the forms which should be assumed by the action involved in black solidarity. We are content to make the observation that such action as may be expressive of this solidarity will require all the ingenuity and creativity which we as a people are capable of.

The reader may feel obliged to ask whether in the nature of our actual circumstances it is at all possible to indulge in creative action. Admittedly, the

problems raised by this question are complex but significant. What this question amounts to is to reveal the possible significance of the problem of freedom vis-a-vis black consciousness and solidarity. This is the second issue which I said I intended to raise. The problem of freedom may not be discussed without a reference to its overall significance in human affairs. This is our next task.

Human freedom is a pet subject of existential philosophy however defined. This problem has also found its way into phenomenologically and existentially oriented psychotherapies. For example, we find it being a major concern of Sartres in *Being and Nothingness*; Frankl's in *Psychotherapy and Existentialism*; May's in *Psychology and the Human Dilemma*; Merlan-Ponty's in *Phenomenology of Perception* and Fromm's in *Escape from Freedom*. Besides these academic contributions and many others, the problem must always be considered one which is of interest to the lay public. Since this is a subject of such public significance, I intend to spend a little more time discussing it. We will limit our discussion to some of the ideas of Viktor Frankl since these appear to be the most relevant for the topic under discussion (1). In this book and others, Frankl makes a number of observations concerning freedom. The most important observation on freedom is contained in the following statement (2):

'Needless to say, the freedom of a finite being such as man is a freedom within limits. Man is not free from conditions, be they biological or psychological or sociological in nature. But he is, and always remains, free to take a stand toward these conditions; he always retains the freedom to choose his attitude toward them. Man is free to rise above the plane of somatic and psychic determinants of his existence.'

Frankl is talking about the ultimate freedom expressed generally in what he describes as 'attitudinal values'. His main contention is that a human being has potential to transcend his existential limitations to his freedom by taking a stand (free choice) vis-a-vis these limitation. The question now arises whether this assertion may be considered one which is generally valid in any situation where there are limitations to one's freedom.

To us, it seems that Frankl may in a sense be accused of having indulged in an interesting and profound abstraction. Although this abstraction appears to have been stated with conviction it seems to us to remain an open question which calls for more reflection. As he pointed out, limitations to freedom may arise on a number of levels. These limitations may be somatic (bodily); they may be psychic or they may be sociological. One should in all fairness hasten to add that limitations in one of these dimensions must

always have far reaching effects on the possibilities of freedom in the other two dimensions. It would appear that it is relatively easier for one to take a stand (develop an attitude) towards somatic and psychic limitations since these tend to raise higher order type of questions. This is understandable since such questions as are raised will tend to focus on the obscurities of the meaning of life. Here again, not all human beings are capable of asking these questions, least of all taking a stand against an unalterable fate.

Sociological limitations to freedom are more instructive. An example may well illustrate this point. A healthy slave would be sold to a slave owner. That act would signify for the slave the beginning of excruciating limitations on his freedom. Taking a stand in the face of these limitations immediately implies the existence of several possible choices; for one may not be said to be taking a stand when there is no alternative course of action. A further qualification appears necessary. The available alternatives should include a number of positive possible attitudinal stands. These alternatives may only be positive and meaningful to the extent that they will improve the lot of the slave — redeem part of his existential freedom. Theoretically, it should be possible for the slave to adopt the attitude that he is going to fight his master in order to regain his freedom. The slave recognises the futility of such a stand and may well slide into despair and indifference. This despair and indifference may express themselves in various forms of hedonism which may never be considered an expression of freedom. Could one say that one is expressing one's ability to transcend limitations on one's freedom when one despairs and becomes indifferent? A positive stand should be supported by rational and affective conviction. This condition is not met in the case of despair and indifference.

The point may be made that it is possible for certain resourceful individuals to take a stand to what for all intents and purposes may be provisional limitations to their freedom. A patient who knows that he is going to die within a few days may well brace himself up — may take a stand because death in its obscurity may come to present an absurd kind of freedom. The situation is different for a slave who has the knowledge that his parents were slaves; that he is a slave and his children are going to be slaves. The time perspective here is so different that there appear to be only two alternatives. The first, which is not always possible, is to wish to lose everything by being prepared for a physical death — suicide or taking up arms against his master. The second is the more usual one of committing suicide in small doses represented so often in hedonism.

It, therefore, appears that it is not useful to take a stand as long as such an attitude does not result in conscious action because that becomes indifference. What are the implications of our discussion of freedom with respect to black consciousness and solidarity? The first lesson appears to be

that we have a duty to be conscious of our responsibility to deal with limitations to our freedom. Black consciousness and solidarity must mean a posture which will express a movement away from indifference and despair to rational, organised activity. Frankl has suggested in addition to his position on freedom that there are other values in life which may be realised. He suggests as one of these what he describes as 'creative' values — what we give to the world. I suggested that this in its broadest sense must be considered as one of the possibilities of the awareness of being black. Another possibility away from indifference is an increased sensitivity to one's surroundings ('experiential values'). The creative potential of black South Africans will be measured against their action potential.

I would like to comment on one issue which has generated more heat than light. Some people, even black people, have wondered whether a separatist posture is essential to black consciousness and solidarity. It should be obvious to anybody that black people and white people will continue to live together as long as there is life on this planet. A separatist posture should never be understood to negate the existence of other racial groups. This posture would seem to arise from the fact that we as a people want to indulge unhindered on self-reflection, on self-definition and we are putting conditions on how this should take place. The essential condition is that only people who share our mutual knowledge should actively participate in these activities. This position is capable of being abused by both white and black people. Nobody should consider this to be a very important fact since it is only a side issue.

In sum, we may say that the mutual knowledge which is black consciousness and solidarity is not by design racialism. It is a way of relating, of being-black-in-the-world in its temporality of past, present and future.

FOOTNOTES

1. Frankl, V.E., *Psychotherapy and Existentialism: Selected Papers On Logotherapy*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1967.
2. Frankl, V.E., *Ibid*, p. 3.

US AND THEM

Before the advent of the policy of separate development, some observers believed South Africa to be a multi-racial national state. The historic victory of the Nationalist Party in 1948 changed all that. It is now common in certain circles in South to talk in terms of multi-nationalism. It is claimed by some exponents of the policy of separate development that South Africa is a country consisting of many races, ethnic groups, languages and cultures. This, in fact, is true. The exponents of the policy of separate development go on to suggest that it is in recognition of this diversity that South Africa must be balkanised into several national (ethnic) units.

Policy affecting the country as a whole may be decided on the basis of the above categories. It is questionable whether individual relations and group relationships between blacks and whites are motivated and supported by such considerations. These relationships appear to be determined at much lower and simpler levels. This seems to arise from the fact that in race-conscious environments, such as ours, it is difficult for individuals and groups to develop ways of action, feeling and thinking which transcend the categorical relationships involved in us (in-group) and them (out-group). 'Us' and 'them' constitute, in our society, a linguistic attitudinal form, expressive of distance and relation, and, as such, may be considered to be in the domain of Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue (1).

It will be shown in this essay that these categorical relations are related, in our society, to different experiences, two modes of being-in-the-world. These two existential experiences may be characterised as being-black-in-the-world and being-white-in-the-world. It has to be admitted that the primary mode of being-in-the-world, of existing, is a given, and is, therefore, universal. The differences between the white and black experiences of being-in-the-world have arisen because of the fact that man, unlike other lower animals, is a historical being.

There will be time to return to the above issues. But before that is undertaken, I would like to make some more general observations about the South African social environment.

The general issues relating to man's tribalism have been adequately treated by Reinhold Niebuhr (2). The concerns here are more specific than

his, and relate to a specific environment with its historical and cultural contingencies.

At this stage, there is an important question which requires the most dispassionate kind of reflection, and which may be formulated as follows: What is the most distinctive feature of the South African environment? The answer is not to be found in the public statements of politicians but in the formulations of the psychology of ideological totalism as described by Lifton (3), who has commented as follows:

Any ideology — that is, any set of emotionally-charged convictions about man and his relationship to the natural and supernatural world — may be carried by its adherents in a totalistic direction. But this is most likely to occur with those ideologies which are most sweeping in their content and most ambitious — or messianic — in their claims.

Several criteria (psychological themes) may be used to judge the extent of ideological totalism in an environment. Briefly these may be presented as follows:

One of the most important of these criteria is that relating to the extent of *milieu control*. This may take various forms such as are represented in censorship (communication) and indoctrination-cum-education. A totalistic environment tends to develop a *mystical imperative*. This mystique, generally considered to represent a more all-inclusive and higher purpose, may be God and/or Western Civilisation. A criterion related to mystical manipulation in totalist environments is the *demand for purity*. This requirement results in a two-valued orientation, pure party-men as against communists and agitators — a pure race as against an impure one. The demand for purity also leads to the demand for the *total exposure* of individuals in the community. This demand for exposure is related to the claim of totalistic environments to complete ownership of individuals (their minds) in that milieu.

The last four criteria may be stated briefly as follows: First, there is the active attempt to create an *aura of sacredness* around an ideology and its basic assumptions. This is achieved by active prohibition of serious questioning of the ideology and its underlying assumptions. Associated with ideologically totalist environments is a marked tendency to *load the language* with a limited number of emotionally overloaded clichés. Overloading of the language may manifest itself in phrases and words such as 'the maintenance of law and order', 'agitators and communists'. A most dramatic characteristic of ideological totalism is the *elevation of doctrine*

over the individual. This is evidenced by a sustained encroachment on individual liberties. A totalistic environment maintains a distinction between 'the people' (whose rights and existence are recognised) and the 'non-people' whose existence and rights are not seriously considered.

That South Africa is a totalist country has been said often enough. What has not been said is that there are important issues raised by that recognition. It has not been said often and loud enough that the ideological totalism of apartheid is radically more total in its control of the lives of black South Africans. The ideological totalism of apartheid expresses itself differentially in the white and black sectors of South African society. By design? It has not been said that below the superficial and obvious crudeness of the practical application of separate development there lies a very sophisticated and subtle tiger — psychic manipulation. There are two real dangers amongst others in this form of psychic manipulation. The first of these relates to the fact that a totalistic environment tends to lower the integrative status of a community. This means that such environments become less and less supportive to the individuals that live in them. Integration is rapidly replaced by chaos, by a high morbidity rate and by increasing failures by individuals to constitute meaningful lived-space. In the second place, there can be no doubt that the overall effects of chronic and subtle psychic manipulation must have decisive results on the general vitality and psychic health of future generations of South Africans. This observation is in itself not alarming. What gives the observation its nightmarish quality is the further thought that it may well take a 'second coming' to undo the harm.

The issue as to whether South Africa qualifies for inclusion among ideologically totalist environments is not to be understood as constituting an academic polemic. It is raised here because it is possibly the most important attribute of South African society which must be taken into account in any attempt at understanding the 'us' and 'them' categories as well as the forms taken by the black experience; being-black-in-the-world.

Being-In-The-World in Its Historicity

In order to reflect on the development of the 'us' and 'them' categories (these being categories of interaction, of interpersonal relationships) it is essential to deal with the historically available modes of being-in-the-world. It was pointed out earlier that being-in-the-world (existence) is a given. This means in effect that the basic structure of existence is historical. It is specifically man's historicity and his being a decisive being (man decides what to become) which have infused variations on this given existential structure. It is these two factors which have made it possible if not imperative for us to say that there is a mode of existence (of being-in-the-

world) which may be characterised as being-white-in-the-world and being-black-in-the-world. There is sufficient documentation of the fact that the history of being-in-the-world (*In-der-welt-sein*) of the black and white races of the world is different. This history has been so different, in fact, that one is justified to talk in terms of a black and white existential experience. These observations are to be substantiated at a later stage.

Dialogue and Relation

Existence (*dasein*) is dialogue: relation. This means that an individual is always transacting with his environment. In phenomenological reflection this idea is not novel. It is central. In order to understand this idea more fully, it is necessary to bring it down to the level of individual existence. The individual person, if he should be healthy, is a dialogue: he is always relating. Van den Berg (4) has vividly described this fact in his description of the psychiatric patient. He, amongst others, has helped us identify the major aspects which constitute the structure of existences, of lived-space. Another way of making this point, is to say that dialogue (relation) may be established at four different levels. An individual has to relate himself first to his body as existential fact. In addition to this dialogue with his body, relations have to be established with fellowmen and sometimes God (god); with objects (material culture) and with time. A brief consideration of these constituents of the existential structure follows.

The Body

In order to understand the nature of the differences between the black and white experiences, it is necessary to deal with their respective experiences in relation to the body. Little recognition has been given to the social-psychology of the body outside attempts to describe difficulties and privileges associated with skin colour. This trend is unpardonable, in view of the fact that an extensive treatment of this subject is currently available (5). I have dealt with the body image elsewhere (6). Here I hope to pay particular attention to the social-psychology of the body or, more aptly, the *sociological schema* (7) described in the introduction.

One of the legacies of colonialism in Africa has been the development of the dichotomy relating to the body, namely, the 'bad' and 'good' body. The white man's body has been projected as the standard, the norm of beauty, of accomplishment. Not only the body proper, but its periphery; its embellishments have also been recognised as such. On the contrary, the black body, projected as the 'bad' body, has always been projected as being inferior and unwholesome.

The implications of this dichotomy are many and varied. An important result of this state of affairs was the development of two different sociological schemas of the body. One of these schemas was black and bad and the other was white and good. This distinction has for a long time affected the texture of interpersonal relationships across the colour line. It is understandable why the black body generally acted as a *barrier* to effective communication while the white body thrived on its *appeal* characteristics. Although the body is distinctly ambiguous in its essential nature, rigid and categorical characterisation in the contact situation has resulted in the limitation for *individualisation* of the black body. Under ideal conditions of the 'good body', the body becomes for the individual, a point of view (Merleau-Ponty). This means that the *individual schema* predominates over the *sociological schema*. This last condition is one which has obtained in white societies for a long time. In black communities on the other hand, through the artificial and unnatural predominance of the sociological schema, the individual schema has become traumatised and ceases to be a point of view; of telling the world who one is.

A desirable balance between the individual and sociological schemas of the body is mandatory for individual psychic balance, competence and positive self-steering behaviour. Since the body constitutes the existential nexus of personal existence, it comes as no surprise that the black body with its essentially negative prescribed attributes has not always generated competence. Thus it is that the self-fulfilling prophecy of the white man, that he is competent and superior while the African is 'by nature' inferior and incompetent tends to take on the semblance of a reality (8).

There are people who have discredited the 'black is beautiful' campaign. Since this reaction is a result of ignorance, ignorance about the significance of the sociological schema of the body, it is perhaps pardonable. We as blacks must now say with all the conviction at our command that a massive and creative campaign is essential to alter the negative sociological schema of the black body. This is not only desirable from the point of view of its inherent aesthetic potential, but also because of the unlimited social-psychological significance of the body as existential fact-situation.

It may now be pointed out that the body, in the contact between whites and blacks, has always provided a splendid medium for the development of the 'us' and 'them' categories. It, the body, has always determined distance and relation (dialogue). Through the sociological schemas, it has always acted on its *barrier* or *appeal* characteristics. Distancing and relating. Without going into details, one last point should be made with respect to the body.

A negative sociological schema and by the same token a negative individual schema, inevitably lead to the unhealthy objectification of the

body. This means that the individual begins to experience his body as an object. He experiences his body as though it were something outside himself. This is an expected result of the predominance of the sociological schema over the individual schema. A healthy individual rarely experiences his body as an object, as something outside himself. It is only in pathological states (illness) that the body is experienced as alien. During acute illness the body is objectified to an unusual extent.

As long as the two sociological schemas of the body exist side by side, as is likely to happen for a long time in South Africa, it will remain true to say that the body will continue to foster and nourish the continuation of the 'us' and 'them' categories. This means that there will continue to be being-black-in-the-world and being-white-in-the-world. Two existential experiences.

Of more immediate significance, however, are considerations concerning the black body. Nobody should accuse us of suggesting that the black body is superior to any other biological type. All we wish to say is that the negative prescribed sociological schema (with its barrier attributes) must be replaced by a more realistic sociological schema (with appeal attributes) defined and developed by black people.

Individual in Society

Every individual in society is related to his fellowmen at a number of entry points: family, neighbourhood and ideally the whole of the community of which he is a member. It has been shown that the forms taken by these primary and secondary forms of relationships are culture-bound. In Africa, there has been sufficient documentation of the characteristic primary group structures such as the extended family and kinship systems as well as the secondary group processes involved in communalism (corporate personality). At the level of the relationship between the individual and his fellowmen, we recognise a polarity of approaches. The white approach is characterised by the primacy of the individual (individualism) while the black approach was characterised by the primacy of the community.

The conquest of blacks in South Africa and the subsequent socio-political history has resulted, *inter alia*, in the destruction of African traditional approaches in this area. The main point I wish to raise in this respect is that outside the very real problems associated with money economies, the political suppression of blacks has had one overriding effect, which may be summarised as follows:

The effective control of black political initiatives since the early sixties has meant that blacks relinquish any community-oriented objectives. This destruction of community feeling was achieved by means of a number of

well-studied strategies. One of these has been the stifling of effective and articulate popular leadership. What became of this effort, as I hope to show later, was an individualism more malignant than that found within white elitist capitalist societies.

The rise of the individualistic and materialistic ethic is something which is essentially alien to being-black-in-the-world. The call for black consciousness and solidarity must be considered a medium for the creative development of individual and community dignity. Black consciousness and solidarity will be meaningful only to the extent that they ensure the effective return of the individual to the community. That is where he belongs. In terms of the existential structure suggested here, being-black-in-the-world means, *inter alia*, that we must change our modes of relating to our black bodies and communities from those prescribed by the dominant culture. It obviously must remain a matter of profound indifference to us whether these changes remain acceptable to the dominant culture.

Being-in-the-world with Objects

It was pointed out that existence is dialogue-relation. It has been shown that this relation-dialogue (being-in-the-world) has been and is different for blacks and whites. This has been shown to be the case with respect to the body as well as the larger community. There is another existential category which may be studied in order to demonstrate the difference in modes of being-in-the-world. This category is the category of being-in-the-world with objects or things. The issues raised with respect of man and objects are closely related to those that were made concerning individualism. A well-known stable-mate of individualism is materialism. Now, it seems to me to be a simple matter to recognise that attitudes towards objects (also, material culture) are fundamentally determined by the general cultural ethos of a community, namely whether it be individualistic, capitalistic or communalistic.

The noted distortion of the relationship between the individual and his community also meant a dramatic change in his system of values. Under ideal conditions, man's relationship with an object may generally be said to be decided by the object's aesthetic and utility value. This principle is violated whenever individuals are deprived of dignity, self-respect and are, for some reason or other, unable to activate the spiritual core (not necessarily religious) of their selfhood. Whenever this noëtic dimension is allowed to lie dormant or is not activated, a veritable distortion of the being-in-the-world with objects relationship arises. Such a distortion may easily be shown to arise whenever individuals find themselves in situations where the more intangible values are relegated to an inferior status. Such in-

dividuals have been shown to develop a tendency to validate themselves in terms of external, easily-identifiable criteria. It becomes obvious on close study of such people that their value system did not arise at any stage from the activating core of the noëtic dimension, but is a direct result of naked sociological considerations entirely beyond their control.

In the socially pathological situations of the kind described here, it is not uncommon to find that a poet is considered a lesser being than the Mercedes Benz-driving business tycoon. This universal tragedy is perhaps without comparison in its magnitude as manifested in South Africa's black communities. The psychological impact of the white dominant culture on the relation between blacks and objects may be formulated in the following way: the white culture has over a number of centuries proclaimed the superiority of its cultural heritage. This attitude gave birth to some of the most unfortunate 'hang-ups' experienced by blacks the world over. One of the results was that success, being a white prerogative, also became white by definition. A white norm. For the successful black man, the relationship between him and objects (material culture) moved from the purely aesthetic-utilitarian level to the distinctly pathological compensatory level. In this process, an inversion took place. Instead of the given existential relationship between man and objects in which man continues to decide on the nature of the dialogue, this time it is as though the objects were doing the deciding, assisted, of course, by the white dominant culture.

The development of a favourable man-object relationship will require a regeneration of community-feeling; the active promotion of creative, experiential and attitudinal values which are not consonant with individualism and materialism. This objective may not be realised 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 (9).

Being-in-the-world-in-time

A brief comment on the existential category of time is now appropriate. The existential character of time may be formulated as follows: Time is real only in terms of its primeval relationship with space. In this combination, time and space constitute an individual's lived-space (existence). Ideally, an individual should be free to constitute his lived-space on the basis of the open appeal of time. An individual has potential. Time appeals to this potential to be realised freely. Such potential may only be realised in freedom-in-security (a dialectic).

Once the condition of freedom-in-security is not met, a disturbance of the relationship between man and time is introduced. Without going into

details, it may be said that this condition has not been met in the black experience for more than three centuries. There has not been freedom-insecurity in our relationship with time; in the ways in which we have been 'allowed' to constitute our lived-space; in our response to the open appeal of time to actualise our potential as people. In the absence of freedom-insecurity, planning becomes existentially meaningless and the individual life becomes provisional. When this happens, people live as though they were immortal, as though death were a fiction. Other disturbances associated with this distortion of the man-time relationship are those relating to initiative and achievement. In this respect, it is to be noted that individual initiative as well as the desire for achievement become accidental rather than purely volitional acts.

The black and white modes of being-in-the-world-in-time have been and are different. The white dominant cultures have enshrined freedom-insecurity for members of their kind while ensuring the maximum absence of this condition for blacks. Thus it is that the primeval relationship between man and time is disturbed in the black existential experience. This is indeed a very serious matter requiring the most serious reflection and action on our part.

Us and them

'Us' and 'them' remain basic categories of socio-political interaction here and elsewhere. They are categories of distance and relation. The distance between blacks and whites is real. There is a black mode of being-in-the-world. The relation between blacks and whites, though inescapable, is of a categorical nature; it is in the nature of stereotyping ('us' and 'them'). Since these conclusions are true, dialogue between these two groups will remain superficial for a long time. This is understandable because there will always be two frames of reference (two existential experiences) with regard to any important issue which arises. To take a topical issue, there will be no immediate agreement between blacks and whites regarding the calls for black consciousness and solidarity. White South Africans interpret this as racialism while we regard the same phenomena as a medium for positive, creative and defensive racialism which is opposed to the traditional negative racialism practised by whites.

In our attempt to regain our lost dignity as a people, there are four fundamental levels at which an attack must be launched. There is an urgent need for serious reflection on how best we can redirect our age-old attitudes in respect of our black beautiful bodies; our community responsibilities; our attitudes towards the material culture, and our relationship with time.

FOOTNOTES

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5. See, for example, Fisher, S. & Cleveland, S.E., *Body Image and Personality* (2nd Rev. Ed.), Princeton, New Jersey, D. van Nostrand, 1968. Another respectable treatment of this subject is available in M. Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1962. Shontz, F.C., in *Perceptual and Cognitive Aspects of Body Experience*, New York, Academic Press Inc., 1969, raises some pertinent theoretical and empirical questions relating to this problem.
6. Manganyi, N.C., 'Body Image Boundary Differentiation and Self-steering behaviour in African paraplegics', *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 36, 1, 1972, 45-50.
7. Kouwer, B.J., 'Gelaat en Karakter', in J.H. van den Berg en J. Linkschoten (Redactie): *Persoon en Wereld: Bijdragen tot de Phaenomenologische Psychologie*, Erven J. Bijleveld, Utrecht, 1953, 59-73, refers to this schema.
8. This conclusion is expressed as follows by L. Schlemmer in *Towards Social Change*, the report of the Spro-cas Social Commission: '... lifelong experience of subservience, the daily struggle for existence, the massive proportions of white power and the superior morale of whites, have produced divisions and conflicts within black communities, and a general feeling of disspiritedness and helplessness, all of which are functional for the continuation of white supremacy' (p. 162).
9. This is effectively described by Bennie Khoapa in *Black Viewpoint*, published by the Spro-cas Black Community Programmes, p. 61-67.

BEING-BLACK-IN-THE-WORLD

The question regarding the usefulness and psychological meaningfulness of the concept 'African personality' remains essentially undecided. A recent review of its status by a noted scholar, though probably the most well formulated in the literature, poses more questions than are answered (1). LeVine, whose guarded reserve is evident, has lucidly isolated some of the most thorny issues attendant on the concept and its development.

Areas of specific agreement between this author and myself are the following: First, all reasonable and informed observers will agree that part of the stalemate in the development of the concept may in large measure be attributed to partisan stereotyping such as is represented in the contributions of Carothers (2) and the Johannesburg psychologist, J.C. de Ridder (3). With respect to personality structure, LeVine makes the important observation that there are various possible levels of abstraction in the analysis and description of personality which must always be recognised in any attempt at formulating personality characteristics of a group of people. This valid point is not always recognised. Thirdly, I also support the proposition that African societies and cultures as compared to others outside Africa are in important respects distinctive.

The methodological problems attendant on the concept 'African personality' in its psychological connotations are very aptly expressed by LeVine in the following statement (4):

Thus 'the African personality' cannot be more than a matter of statistical tendency and is likely to show less uniformity across African populations than do patterns of culture.

Contributions in the area have tended to highlight an obtrusive conceptual mix-up between 'patterns of culture' and what some authors have described as 'personality'. This mix-up has been a direct result of the failure to conceptualise personality structure as being essentially stratified; as being made of core and outer possible levels of abstraction.

The apparent and real semantic and other problems associated with the

concept 'African personality' appear upon reflection to be of a fairly simple nature. These difficulties vanish from the scene the moment due recognition is given to the following considerations: rather than ask the unwieldy question: is there an African personality? it appears more legitimate to reformulate this along the following lines. Is there an experiential repertoire which may be considered distinctly African? I will return to this question a little later.

As a second observation it may be stated that the concept 'African personality' as defined by white observers is foreign to us as Africans. As defined and understood by leading Africans the concept refers more inclusively to a life-style. In our view, African personality should be nothing more or less than what Senghor has popularised as Negritude (5). His definition of Negritude makes the identity of the African personality unmistakably clear:

It is — as you can guess from what precedes — the sum of the cultural values of the black world; that is, a certain active presence in the world, or better, in the universe. It is, as John Reed and Clive Wake call it, a certain 'way of relating oneself to the world and to others.'

It should be readily admitted that in this, the only legitimate interpretation of the concept, there is no cause or reason for any misunderstanding. Confusion has arisen because the de Ridder (6) have attempted and preferred to see in this concept strictly psychological properties. It appears to have escaped the notice of the de Ridder that it may probably make sense to study the personality of an individual person but hardly that of a million people. It should be clear that statistical central tendencies do not tell us much about Africans, let alone their personality!

Since it may not be so easy to settle so emotionally-charged an issue as the one under discussion, it may be necessary to supply more supportive arguments. Those who may be interested in the behavioural manifestations of Negritude could better conceptualise their area of interest as one which primarily involves adaptational life styles. Such a shift would ensure the realisation of a number of objectives, one of which would be a recognition of the fact that Africans are part of the human race, and that contrary to popular notions there is a trend more towards genetic convergence at this stage in the history of man than towards divergence (7).

This last point would not require documentation if we did not have to contend with almost universal racial bigotry in the guise of respectable scientific knowledge. A second objective appears to be a rather unfortunate one since it is not always cordial to remind people that they colonised one.

Detractors will tell us that this question of having been colonised is a historical platitude; that, in fact, nobody was or is to blame. It remains fundamentally true to insist on a fresh recognition of the historical fact of colonialism since this historical exigency may make certain currently less understood realities about being black-in-the-world understandable.

An approach of the kind suggested here would appear to promise a greater probability of meaningfully studying the African mode of relating, the African mode of being-in-the-world; the African mode of relating (dialogue) to the body, to others, to objects and to space and time. There cannot be any doubt that being-in-the-world with a black body has transformed the essential forms of the relationships amongst the different existential categories such as time and objects. The problem as I see it involves the ontological study of black existence. Before such a radical statement is made, the following further points should be made.

The active presence that is Negritude

We accept Senghor's contention that Negritude is 'the sum of the cultural values of the black world' and that this totality of cultural values is a 'certain active presence' in the world (8). Unlike most white observers, we consider this presence to be a positive one to the extent that Senghor could go on to describe Negritude as a 'Humanism' of the 20th century. Some observations concerning the ontological significance of culture will not be inappropriate.

Ontologically, culture may be understood as constituting the most concrete medium for the structuring of the dialogue between man and the universe. This recognition of culture as the primary medium for the constituting of man-world relations leads one to the conclusion that since there are many cultural patterns in the world, it should come as no matter for controversy to say that there are variations in the mode of being-in-the-world. This notion is not as radical as it appears at first sight since it has been convincingly suggested that there is a feminine mode of being-in-the-world. Some sceptics may invoke biology in an attempt to take the wind out of my sails. This kind of scape-goating will not prove to be novel.

That questions of biology, of heredity, of biological determinism, of the superiority and inferiority of one biological group (race) as against others still constitute matters for time-consuming debate has been highlighted by the so-called Jensen controversy so ably presented by Tobias recently (9). We brush aside with gusto the puerile suggestions of the Jensens of this world who would let us believe that biological determinism is the main existential category accounting for differences in modes of being-in-the-world. Radical reflection on the contrary tells us that the issue is much more complex. Very little attention should be paid to these detractors. What is

urgently required is to establish whether there is a distinctly black mode of existing — whether one may identify an ontological structure that may be associated with being-black-in-the-world.

There are of course, academics and lay people who will, because of some unshakeable racialistic convictions, be prepared for an outright inquisition before admitting the possible existence of a strictly African ontology. This reaction is to be treated with contempt since it will come as no surprise to us. Our experience has taught us that these are likely to be the same people who have cast doubt on the possibility of early and flourishing African civilisations, who have cast doubts whether or not it was African civilisation which gave birth to the Zimbabwe ruins! Such denials should always remain matters of the most profound indifference to us since we have already made the point that in the nature of the US and THEM categories communicative equivalence between whites and blacks must, for the time being at least, be considered a prospective matter, a mere future possibility.

Contributions to Philosophical Anthropology

The statement may be made that contributions purporting to create an understanding of man's own image (anthropology) are broadly of two types. There are those contributions which are the unmistakeable brain children of the naturalistic positivistic ethos of the Anglo-Saxon part of the world. The primary objection to these contributions is that of reductionism — namely, the reduction of the human person to those attributes, traits or what you will which are supposedly available to objective measurement. It will readily be appreciated that though these contributions are more sophisticated, they retain very strong family links with the earlier psychologies of the pioneers. It is, however, gratifying to note that in recent years there has been a visible emphasis away from preoccupations with method to grappling with the enigma that is the human person (10).

The second group of contributions are those which have come mainly from the continent of Europe articulated in South Africa by Prof. B.F. Nel of Pretoria University (11). These contributions include those which are characterised as existentialistic or phenomenological. Although method is not unduly enshrined, it is considered important to the extent that it may lead to a better understanding of the human person. The primary thrust in these contributions is that of totality or wholeness, not only of an individual person but that of the existential situation in which he finds himself. Man is always in a situation. He is always in constant dialogue (relation) with his life-space. According to Van den Berg (12), the notion of dialogue is the cornerstone of phenomenological psychology. Nel has given sufficient attention to the differences between naturalistic and phenomenological

anthropologies (13). These are not to be repeated here.

The question arises: Is there an African contribution to philosophical anthropology? The answer to this question is a decided yes. African ontology (analysis and understanding of existence) was documented only recently (14). Its actual life-span remains undated. There appears to be no history of idealistic philosophy in Africa; no concerns about eschatology and/or transcendentalism. This last observation may be debatable. What is not controversial is that the philosophy of dialogue, relation, interdependence; the total existential situation were the very stuff of life in African existence. This truth requires amplification.

A detailed account of African ontology is given by Temples (15). Senghor's brief characterisation of this ontology will suffice for present purposes (16). He observes:

Like others, more than others, he distinguishes the pebble from the plant, the plant from the animal, the animal from Man; but, once again, the accidents and appearances that differentiate these Kingdoms only illustrate different aspects of the same reality. This reality is being and it is life force. For the African, matter in the sense the Europeans understand it, is only a system of signs which translates the single reality of the Universe: being, which is spirit, which is life force. Thus, the whole universe appears as an infinitely small, and at the same time an infinitely large, network of life forces which emanate from God and end in God, who is the source of all life forces. It is he who vitalises and devitalises all other beings, all the other life forces. (p. 4).

Central to African ontology is a recognition that in order to understand the status of an individual at any given time (be it in the areas of interpersonal relations, health or disease) attention should be directed at his existential situation in its totality. This means that the relationship amongst the interdependent vital forces (life forces), elders, ancestors and God have to be fully appreciated in each individual situation.

This totality of the individual's existential situation was to be understood in relation to two existential categories. These categories may be stated as those of vital force (spirit) hierarchy and interdependence. Vital forces were considered to be interdependent and of different potency. Africans recognised relation (dialogue) as being fundamental to existence — to being-in-the-world. Without elaborating, I would like to suggest that African ontology in its own right is a significant contribution to philosophical anthropology. Its primary focus is on the existential situation in its totality; on dialogue as the most fundamental existential category.

We said at an earlier stage that culture must always be considered an existential medium for the constituting of man-world relations. At this stage, the point may be made that the 'theory of forces' as an ontology constituted for the African a back-drop against which variations of cultural mediums could be developed. Since there has been and is an African ontology which has created cultural variations, there appears to be no sound basis for scepticism with regard to the respectability and status of the concepts 'Negritude' — African personality as defined by us. There has undoubtedly been a black, or more specifically African mode of being-in-the-world; of dialogue, of relating to the body, to objects, to others and to time and space.

One may observe that as a result of a number of historical (e.g. colonialism) and socio-cultural contingencies such as the missionary effort, most of the valuable aspects of African ontology were undermined. The colonisers waged a total war on Negritude (African personality) mainly through the missionary thrust. When we look back at these developments we see Africa going through its own Dark Age. Now in the '70s Africa is going through its Renaissance — its own contribution to world humanism. This development is of the utmost importance since it is becoming increasingly clear that Western civilisation has gone into a veritable crisis (17). The civilisations of the West are now approximating the cancerous decline stage of the Roman Empire. That this is the case is easily demonstrated by the decline in the integrative status of our environments; the development of large scale sub-cultures and counter-cultures.

A short digression intended to suggest further evidence in favour of the view that Western civilisation is now post-menopausal will not be inappropriate. Frankl (18) in his three-dimensional ontology suggests that man may be characterised, *inter alia*, by his being soma, psyche and spirit (noëtic dimension). He goes on to suggest that a great many people experience their lives as 'existential vacuums'. We need not get into the details of Frankl's formulations excepting the additional observation that Van den Berg has added flesh to Frankl's three-dimensional ontology, by suggesting convincingly that Western society in its preoccupation with the democratic imperative of equality has elevated mediocrity to a status of a norm and a virtue.

Coupled with this development has been the secularisation of life which has been expressing itself most dramatically in the rejection of the spiritual dimension of existence; of ideals. During the Victorian era and beyond, the specific areas of anomic isolation (socially disapproved of) were sex and aggression. As a result of the then current social attitudes towards these expressive areas they tended to be repressed and thus constituted most of the unconscious material of the people of the times. These affective states

have been released from their social anomic isolation after Freud and are progressively being replaced in the unconscious by the domain of spirituality. The domain of spirituality, of ideals and values, by being shifted into the unconscious is being deprived of its primary function in society, namely that of being the fountain-head of human creativity. This development in itself is sufficient to support our view that Western civilisation is post-menopausal, decadent and sterile. Something may yet come from the black world to inject new vitality into this beautiful post-menopausal old lady!

At this stage in our discussion, we may pose the following question: To what extent is African ontology still operative in the African mode of being-in-the-world? It has to be conceded that in addition to the possible pervasive influence of this ontology, there have been various group adaptational response patterns which may not be disregarded in any attempts at understanding the African personality (Negritude) and being-black-in-the-world. It will suffice to note that the question posed here will be dealt with in another section of this book. It seems to us that an understanding of African ontology is a requirement for the possible formulation of what it means to be black-in-the-world. The following concluding points may now be made.

It must be made clear that the concept African personality as understood by blacks is synonymous with that of Negritude as formulated by Senghor. We should not be dragged into the simplistic attempts to psychologise the concept. Its major focus and coverage is the black experience of being-in-the-world. A second observation to be made is the following. Just as much as theology has until recently ignored the black experience in its major formulations, so has philosophical anthropology. If philosophical anthropology should make any claims to validity and universality, it will have to be reconsidered in the light of the black experience. Let it be so.

FOOTNOTES

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NAUSEA

The fundamental subject of *The Myth of Sisyphus* is this: it is legitimate and necessary to wonder whether life has a meaning; therefore it is legitimate to meet the problem of suicide face to face. The answer, underlying and appearing through the paradoxes which cover it, is this: even if one does not believe in God, suicide is not legitimate'. Thus declared Camus, the philosopher-novelist of the absurd in 1955 (1). A little later, he goes on to say:

There is but one serious philosophical problem and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy. All the rest — whether or not the world has three dimensions ... comes afterwards.

In more general terms, the fundamental problem posed by Camus may be described as that of suffering. It is suffering in the most general terms which results in 'nausea' and a sense of the absurd. Let us, however, return to Camus for a disconcerting dramatisation of the absurdity of human existence (2).

It happens that the stage-sets collapse. Rising, tram, four hours in the office or the factory, meal, tram, four hours of work, meal, sleep and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, according to the same rhythm — this path is easily followed most of the time. But one day the 'why' arises and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement.

This sense of the absurd which is suffering in its most general sense is what Frankl describes as the 'existential vacuum' (3). When the 'why' arises it becomes insistent, almost a compulsive neurosis. The answer to this 'why' as Camus and Frankl would tell us takes various forms ranging from a mild sense of discomfort to psychopathological reactions and sometimes to contemplations about suicide. In this essay, I prefer to leave aside the more general problems of the absurdity of human existence in order that I may

pay attention to some specific aspects. Here I wish to refer to that particular form of human suffering known as illness. It must be during those particularly solitary moments in the sick-bed that the 'why' articulates itself with the force of a sledgehammer. Van den Berg gives us a vivid description of the meaning of being ill (4). The most dramatic changes in the life of the individual which occur as a result of a sudden onset of illness are those affecting his relationships with his body, objects, time, space and other people. The sick individual becomes estranged from his body and his environment. He tends to live more in the here and now than in terms of his past or his future. In terms of an individual's existential situation, these changes may be so all-encompassing that perplexity and despair may follow. Depending on one's socialisation, education, time perspective and premorbid status, the question 'why' is more likely to insinuate itself into one's stream of consciousness.

It has been known for a long time that the meaning of illness is, like other social reaction patterns, culturally determined. This truism also goes for the experience of pain. Sternbach, for example, has suggested that pain has important interpersonal communication meanings for the patient (5). Cultural relativity with respect to pain and illness is understandable if we should concede that different cultural climates result in different patterns of relation to the body, to others, to objects and to space and time. These existential categories tend to constitute themselves into specific combinations which also determine the meaning of being ill. It may well be argued by some observers that where organic pathology is demonstrable the probability of universal patterns of response is greater. It may well be that this is the case. This observation, however, would not go so far as to obscure the equally valid point that the subjective experience of the same organic process would be variant in different cultural settings. Some of the reasons for these variations should become clearer in due course.

There is one point which should be made at this stage. A consistent theme throughout this collection has been the conviction that there has been and is a distinct mode of being-black-in-the-world. It has also been shown that this mode of being-in-the-world may be characterised as being expressive of Negritude — of the African personality. The impression should be avoided that one is dealing with a static socio-cultural phenomenon. Instead, it should be emphasised that one is dealing with a dynamic process. It is for this reason that it was suggested that the second Renaissance may well emerge from the African continent.

Far-reaching changes are taking place on the African continent. These changes are a result of many cultural change agents such as urbanisation and industrialisation. Coupled with these are the changes which may be seen to be related to the emergence of many countries from the status of

colonies to full sovereign status. The present century is possibly witnessing the last vestiges of the so-called 'traditional' societies in Africa (6). White observers have never tired of pointing out that there are several varieties of man in Africa such as the 'attention-getting elites', the 'detrribalised man', the 'transitional man' and the 'developing man'.

It is legitimate to observe that there is socio-cultural change in Africa. To say that the individuals exposed to such change are 'transitional' or 'developing' is highly questionable. This change only becomes 'transitional' if one presupposes that the direction of change will necessarily be in the direction of Western standards. This issue appears to be pre-judged as far as the Western world is concerned. Since we are not bound to accept the enthusiasm of the West, we find ourselves compelled to ask: transitional or developing in relation to what standards? This remains an open question. We may now return to the question of illness which we hope to discuss very briefly.

Let it be said that suffering, pain and illness as expressions of existential absurdity are a given of existence. They appear to be of the same status as time and space. Just as the constitution of space and time into lived-space is variable, so is the ontological interpretation of illness. We find on reflection that the status of being ill in the African is experienced as a state of incongruence (disharmony) between the individual and his fundamental transactions with his total existential situation. This means that in order to appreciate the meaning of being ill one has to have an understanding of African ontology — the African's philosophy of being, his philosophy of existence. Reference has already been made to this ontology. It will suffice here to limit myself to the following additional observations.

African ontology conceives of reality as consisting of interacting, interdependent life forces. These life forces are not of the same magnitude. Depending on an individual's social and other circumstances, his life force (vital force) could be vitalised (increased) or devitalised (decreased). He could, as it were, be very well or ill. It is understandable why the aetiology and the possible treatment of an individual's illness must be searched for and understood in terms of his relations with other vital forces in his environment. Since we have admitted the existence of change in Africa an important question which arises and requires clarification is the following. Is African ontology still valid? Put differently: could this ontology still be identified with being-black-in-the-world? When we look at the changes which are taking place in Africa we are forced to admit that this could not be an idle question. In order to decide whether this ontology is still a force to be reckoned with, we have to address ourselves to some sociological evidence. It is beyond the scope of this account to give a detailed discussion of this evidence. A brief reference will be made to the South African situation. The

social processes of urbanisation and industrialisation have been studied by several workers (7).

Wilson, reporting on her work in Langa (Cape Town), identified three groups: townsmen, migrants and the Iibari. She also found that there were distinct social groupings such as home-boy cliques, church groups, sporting clubs and savings societies (8). The comprehensive studies by Philip Mayer are referred to later in this book. One other notable feature about Africans in town is the fact that they live in African residential settings which according to Hellman may be considered to be satellite cities such as Soweto (Johannesburg) (9). The processes of urbanisation and industrialisation could not be considered significant in themselves without the additional influences of education and religion. One of the factors which suggests the possible significance of African ontology in the lives of millions of Africans today is the noted resilience of traditional beliefs in the areas of health and disease. This resilience is evidenced by the fact that Africans in South Africa and elsewhere may be classified into three categories on the basis of their response to available medical services. There still exists a group of hidebound traditionalists who will only use traditional African services and remedies. A second group would consist of those Africans who would use Western remedies and services to the total exclusion of traditional services. The third group consists of those Africans who tend to use a combination of traditional and Western services depending on circumstances.

In order to deal with our question more fully, it is necessary to understand the African's perception of being-in-the-world; his mode of experiencing his phenomenal self; his experience. An exercise of this kind leads one to a recognition of the current validity of African ontology as an organising force in the lives of the Red migrants, the Amaqaba and some townspeople. It appears reasonable to assume that in the lives of these people no other subjective experience of being-in-the-world exists other than that organised around the theory of forces. There appears to be no possibility of a competing world view. If and when Western ideas are adhered to, they tend to be subjectively experienced within the framework of African ontology. The relationship involved is not one of conflict and contradiction, but one which is dialectical — a situational synthesis. What about the real townsmen? Why do we find that even in their case there is invariably a sporadic return to African ontology? This return is represented by the usual combination of traditional and Western remedies. In my view, this pattern of response is proportionately related to the degree of stress experienced by the individual and his family since in our case illness is hardly ever an individual matter. Reflection tells us that in these situations we are dealing with competing ontologies — two world views. It is not difficult to recognise that African ontology has decided historico-cultural advantages over Western conceptions derived from the current dominant cultures.

Our analysis tells us further that explanations about the resilience of traditional beliefs which are based on the defence mechanism hypothesis — which understand the African's reaction as constituting a security operation — do not tell the whole story. It seems to me that while the principle of situational relevance accounts for a considerable part of the behaviour, it is necessary to suggest that African ontology as an organising force, though it may have become dissociated from the self-systems of many Africans, tends to remain latent as long as stress is subliminal only to be activated the moment the stress is beyond a certain threshold.

It is now proper to return to the more general problem of suffering, of the absurdity of human existence with which we started. I do not intend to spend a great deal of time on this problem. I would like to make a few concluding remarks. Having been a colonised people over several centuries, and still being in important aspects a colonised people, the question arises as to whether suffering and the general absurdity of life can have the same meaning for us as it may have for white people. Put differently, one may inquire whether when black people ask the question 'why' they do, in fact, ask the same question suggested by Camus. The difference between the two questions which may be asked appears to be of the following order.

The absurd man projected by Camus directs his question to existence (life), as it were, or perhaps to God. The black man, on the other hand, directs his question to life as imposed on him by the white man. In the case of the black man, it has been the white man who has systematically created the specific form of the black man's existential absurdity. A further difference has been that we have not had any difficulties in identifying the source of our nausea — of our suffering. We have been compelled to recognise that unlike the white man we live with the originators of our absurdity. The source of our suffering may be identified in the streets of Pretoria and Johannesburg. Should it surprise anybody that the problem of suicide recognised by Camus as the most important problem of philosophy should be recognised as a paltry matter by us? The fact of the matter is that we live suicide and are too involved in living to contemplate it.

FOOTNOTES

1. Camus, A., *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1955.
2. Camus, A., *Ibid.*, p. 11.
3. Frankl, V.E., *Ibid.*
4. Berg, Van den, J.H., *The Psychology of the Sickbed*, Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh, P.A. 1966.
5. Sternbach, R.A., *Pain: A Psychophysiological Analysis*, Academic Press, New York, 1968.

6. Gutkind, P.C.W. (ed), *The Passing of Tribal Man in Africa*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1970.
7. Holleman, J.F. et al (eds): *Problems of Transition*, Natal University Press, Pietermaritzburg, 1964.
8. Wilson, M., 'The Coherence of Groups', in J.F. Holleman et al (eds.), *Ibid.*, 1-20.
9. Hellman, E., *Soweto*, South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1971.

REFLECTIONS OF A BLACK CLINICIAN

This essay is in three parts. The first section deals with the body boundary experiences of a group of hospitalised African paraplegics and normal subjects. This part of the essay is an expanded revised version of a paper published in 1972 (1). The second part of the essay deals with neurotic disorders and problems of psychotherapy (treatment).

Reflections on the body

The body image concept was first introduced into the literature mainly as a result of the contribution of the French physician-surgeon, Ambroise Pare, during the sixteenth century who had interested himself in phantom limb phenomena in amputees (2). Benton elects Bonnier as the first worker to develop the concept of an organised perceptual model of the body (3). Since then, this concept has been defined and developed notably by Gertsmann (4) and Schilder (5).

In the most general terms, the body image may be described as an individual's internalised conception, experience and image of his physical self. Much later in the study of the body image, it became apparent that the experience of the body could be studied on the basis of its boundary (peripheral) characteristics (6). Workers in this latter mould conceive of the body as having boundary features which may be penetrable or non-penetrable. These boundary features are to be understood as relating to the distancing of stimuli in relation to the body. It was not long before these workers demonstrated the fact that body boundary characteristics were related to certain personality constellations and adjustment strategies.

Of more immediate concern was the recognition by several workers that the body image and its boundary features was extremely sensitive to early socialisation experiences (7). From this observation, it is not a long step to conclude that since socialisation experiences are culturally determined, such differences should account for some measure of difference in the development of body boundary features in different cultural settings. In recognition of this possibility, the present writer became interested in the probable influence of these pathoplastic factors (cultural) in the form

assumed by body image disorders in an African group of subjects. This interest was expressed through the formulation of two research hypotheses.

In the present context these hunches may be formulated as follows. It was hypothesised that the paraplegics as a clinical group would show evidence of disorder in their experience of their bodies (body image) when compared to a comparable group of non-hospitalised normal subjects. The expectation was expressed (second hypothesis) that the paraplegics would give evidence of a life-style characterised by a higher loading on passive-submission as opposed to active-coping when compared against a comparable group of non-hospitalised normal subjects. The method and statistical results of my interest in this problem are reflected in the original paper and will not be repeated here.

For the general reader, what is most important is a discussion of the findings of that small investigation. These results and the discussion will not be presented in their technical form. What is intended here, is to give the reader a general feel of the subject. The major finding, a rather intriguing one, was that all the predictions which were made were not supported by the evidence of the study. What emerged was a compelling suggestion that both the sick subjects (paraplegics) and the non-impaired subjects revealed evidence of disturbances in the two areas investigated, namely body image experience and life-style (self-steering).

At this stage in our discussion, it may be helpful to clarify the idea of self-steering behaviour as a life-style. The compound word self-steering suggests the meaning. Self-steering individuals may be characterised as those who are adequate and competent in their transactions with their environments. This life-style has also been characterised as active-coping. On the other hand, there are in any society a group of inadequate individuals whose life-style may be described as being highlighted by passive-submission. These are the social malcontents who in the face of adversity give up hope and 'despair to drowning'. Another idea which is worth clarifying is that of the condition of being paraplegic.

Paraplegia may arise from an injury or a disease of the spinal cord. Injuries to the spinal cord resulting in a paralysis and sensory loss in the lower part of the body (depending on the level of the lesion) may occur as a result of industrial, home and road accidents. Crime also contributes its share to the number of such people who are so inflicted. Besides the other physical complications and the usually long periods of immobilisation which are necessary, there are a number of psychic reaction patterns which have been identified (8). Psychological adaptation in a paraplegic patient is said to progress through five stages. The first of these stages is that associated with the psychic trauma which later develops into a state of depression associated with a lack of mobility. The second stage consists of a

lifting of the depression and general improvement related to optimism about recovery. A third stage is characterised by the development of complications and pain which improve gradually. During the fourth stage, the patient experiences hours of depression with loss of self-esteem and despair. The final phase is one in which the mental status of the patient becomes stabilised. Characteristic of this stage is a generalised loss of drive and interest in society. Neurotic behaviour patterns and recourse to alcohol and drugs are not uncommon at this stage.

It will be evident from this brief discussion that paraplegics are very sick people indeed. Evident also is the fact that these patients must experience a dramatic change in the images of their bodies in addition to the other psychic problems which have been listed above, chief among which is a generalised loss of drive and interest in society. I reported earlier that when paraplegic patients were compared with fully functioning individuals no statistically significant differences between the two groups were found. Instead, what emerged very distinctly was the fact that both groups experienced their bodies very diffusely (indefinite body boundaries) and had a life-style characterised by passive-submission and a chronic sense of helplessness in the face of environmental odds. I must say that I was alarmed by the ominous suggestions of these findings. This is why I decided to include this essay in this collection. In a treatment of this kind it is possible to reflect more freely about the general implications of the finding than was the case in an academic thesis.

A finding which suggests a real possibility that there existed no difference in certain measures between a very sick group of patients and patently normal citizens can only generate concern in all people of goodwill. Intriguing as this finding may be, the more important question which follows relates to the possible origin of this status of being generally unwell in spite of all indications to the contrary. The actual psychological mechanisms which may be invoked to explain the status of these African groups are fairly complicated and will not be discussed in detail here. In this regard, it will suffice to point out that body experience is intimately related to early socialisation and perceptual experiences. First, let us deal with the body experience disorder revealed in these groups.

What in terms of the African experience of being-in-the-world does it mean to talk about the socialisation of the body image? It means, as was suggested earlier, that in the African experience there has 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 all know by now, been entirely negative. It should be considered natural under these circumstances for an individual black person to conceive of his body as something which is essentially undesirable (something

unattractive); something which paradoxically must be kept at a distance outside of one's self so to speak. This paradoxical feat is, of course, never achieved in reality. It expresses itself in reality in a sort of diffuse body experience, a certain inarticulateness of the experience of the physical self. Another trick, so often played on the black body, has been the attempt to impose certain attributes of the white body (appeal characteristics like skin colour and hair texture). In spite of the costly effort expended by some individuals in this direction, it should never be expected that these external (external to the black body) attributes would be integrated into the black body. Neither could the imposition of these attributes on the sociological schema of the black body be expected to drastically improve its status. These, I contend, are some of the factors responsible for the noted pathological experience of the black body.

What follows is worth repeating because it is of great importance. Black people the world over have to face the challenge of improving the socialisation of the black body. It is we who have to eradicate the negative sociological schema prescribed by whites. This might mean that some cosmetic empires might find themselves in the red. This certainly should be no dear concern of ours. There appears to be sufficient evidence for those prepared to see it that the black body can stand on its own without the sort of borrowing that has been going on for years.

A socio-cultural assault on the bodies of a whole people is perhaps one of the most vicious tragedies that can befall a people. This truth is simply illustrated. The physical body constitutes an individual's anchor in the world. It is the physical body which makes it possible for an individual to be given a name, to tell all and sundry who he is — to constitute lived space. The body is the nexus of all the fundamental relations (dialogue) which an individual person develops with others, with objects and with space and time. If the integrity of the body is violated, as it has been in the case of black people, the other existential relationships also become distorted. Integrity for the body is what a solid foundation means for a good house. Violate the integrity of this foundation (the body) and everything else collapses after the fact. Thus it is that we were forced to experience our bodies as though they were not ours; as though our bodies were prospective and were hiding from us in the white suburbs and cosmetic firms.

Another experience of the author may serve to illustrate the significance of the sociological schema a little further. Some unpublished data on African albinos in a Soweto school sample suggested tentative support for the view that a negative or an ambiguous sociological schema creates an essentially negative self-evaluation. A technique for the study of the body image was used to study this group which included a requirement for a self-portrait. When the data was analysed and compared with the other body

image data, it was found that the albinos, unlike the control group of subjects, had a great deal of trouble creating a self-portrait, a fact which suggested the active intervention of negative self-evaluation ideation. My own experience in the field of the body has long led me to the conclusion that a socio-cultural assault on the body will require an equally wide-ranging offensive on the socio-cultural level.

Some observers may feel that this whole question about the black body having been abused in many more ways than one is nothing more than a storm in a teacup. Such detractions would not be entirely unexpected. Disregarding such frivolous claims, I continue to reflect on the condition of being-black-in-the-world. There is another side to the story about the socio-cultural assault on the black body which requires reflection. This reflection is intended to answer the following question. If, as we suggest, the black body has been forced into diffuseness and ambiguity what were and are the related consequences?

One of the most important findings of body image studies is the following. It has been found, for example, that individuals with diffuse body boundaries tended to have a low aspiration level, to lack a sense of independence. In achieving societies, these individuals could not be anything but failures of one type or another. In part, this general finding explains the experience of an almost malignant sense of helplessness which was observed in the groups which I studied. Perhaps it must be added that in the African experience there are other considerations which should always be kept in mind. Outside the distortions of relationships which have been associated with the negative sociological schema of the black body there have been other unfavourable experiences.

Why should black people experience such a sense of insecurity and crippling despair? White observers are known to believe that this sense of insecurity is a general human condition which may become acute during periods of mass stresses and strains such as are involved in urbanisation and industrialisation. Our own view is that while this may be true, it may well be that there are quantitative and qualitative differences in the experience of existential stress. The fundamental difference, as I said elsewhere, is that the slave does not or, better still, cannot experience the absurdity of his existence as being a condition of life. He rather experiences it as arising out of the condition of being a slave. Amongst other things, the condition of being a slave means that one is too tied up with the actual business of living, of planning for tomorrow's supper, to be concerned about the so-called terrifying freedom of individual existence. For a man whose existential alternatives are so limited from birth, freedom, like eternal life, can only assume the status of a catch-word. The idea of existential alternatives also involves that of personal growth — self-realisation. We as black

people have been living on deficiency motivation; on the motivation of want. To grow in stature as a people would have been a contradiction of motivation theory.

We find, therefore, that while the white man is exploring the moon, the black man, deprived of all active participation in the history of man, is still suffering from the onslaughts on his body. With limited existential alternatives he trades on the motivation of want. Could it be that we are doomed to perpetual servitude? That will be the day!

Reflections on the psychiatric patient

In 1970 I reported a number of case histories of psychiatric patients seen at Baragwanath Hospital in Johannesburg. Since that time I have seen many more patients. The clinical presentations have been many and varied representing a broad spectrum of all known psychiatric disorders. Acute and episodic psychotic confusional states usually of obscure origin are not uncommon. So is the condition known as schizophrenia. Neurotic disorders usually with physical equivalents are probably on the increase. Amongst the commonest of these disorders are the anxiety states usually with reactive depression components. Conversion reactions with co-existing anxiety are also common.

The neuroses are indeed no longer the diseases of the wealthy. This recognition immediately poses a number of problems. The first, which is related to the second, is the question of treatment (psychotherapy). To start with the first one, Africans have been practising some form of supportive helping for several centuries. Psychotherapy as currently practised by professionals is as yet unknown in the African community. Some observers have used this fact as an excuse for providing the most rudimentary of psychiatric services. Others have contended that since psychotherapy is not of the African culture, it will remain unacceptable to Africans of all descriptions. But this sort of argument does not hold any water since it could also be argued that modern methods of contraception are foreign to the African experience.

These diversionary tactics must be taken for what they are. I know of no group in the world which has accepted medical advances of any kind without some cold reserve. That this is so is evidenced by the always present need for public health education. Public education for mental health amongst Africans will present its own problems, but so does public health education on family planning. If only Africans could be taught to have smaller but psychiatrically unhealthy families: that is a satisfactory state of affairs! The conviction is strong that the present evidence in the mental health sphere does not in any way justify the extent of public social neglect

in so vital an area of our existence. Before discussing mental health in general, it is necessary to return briefly to the problem of the treatment of psychiatric disorders amongst Africans.

The psychiatric patient presents himself or herself to the doctor, let us say a psychiatrist or a clinical psychologist. In the case of the psychiatrist or the clinical psychologist, the patient is likely to have been referred by a physician who will have satisfied himself that the patient is not afflicted with an essentially organic (physical) illness. Since there are no black psychiatrists in South Africa to-day such a patient tends to be a professional nuisance to the white psychiatrist or clinical psychologist. First there is the problem of communication which for purposes of psychotherapy is insurmountable. In this situation, the psychiatrist can only hope to have the faintest of ideas with respect to the problems the patient might be having. In some situations the psychiatrist's problem may be alleviated by the fact that the patient may be an educated black who may be fluent in languages other than his mother tongue. Other difficulties arise in such cases. One of these is usually that the black patient is hardly ever free to look at the doctor as simply a doctor. The doctor remains in the experience of the black patient a white doctor. This qualification is of the utmost importance since it carries so much of the behaviour which goes on below the verbal level. For the doctor too, the relationship is not a simple one because he too is involved in a relationship not with a patient but with a black patient. This qualification is important too.

Those who may doubt the validity of these observations may only be doubting my good faith for I have had the experience of patients saying 'Baas' and 'Master' to white doctors. Never have I come across any doctor who appeared shocked by this scandalous suggestion!

I think it is probably important to make the point that the psychiatric patient presents special problems in view of the fact that the nature of the patient-doctor relationship is of such crucial importance. In this case the total communication milieu is of such importance. It is well-known that communication between two individuals who may be from the same cultural backgrounds as well as language forms may be a complicated affair. In ordinary circumstances, 'vocal' communication as opposed to 'verbal' communication would involve such things as tone of voice, gesture and facial expression. This means that the communicative act may be very refined and subtle to the extent that if one is not listening with the 'third ear' one may miss the import of the message.

There has been a previous reference to the unique South African communication problems. This may now be taken a step further by pointing out a few more interesting aspects of the problem. I am not in any way scapegoating the black body. This point has to be made. It was suggested during

an earlier analysis that the body in its sociological schema may relate on the basis of its appeal or barrier attributes. This suggests that the body is in a very real sense a medium for distancing. This attribute of the body is maximally expressed in the attraction or repulsion between people of the two sexes. The issue we are dealing with now amounts to the question whether the black body is, in inter-racial communication, an asset to effective communication or not. One cannot escape the feeling that in such situations the black body would tend to create distance because of its barrier characteristics. This means, in effect, that even before communication refinements such as tone and gesture are introduced into the communication mix, the message (or rather one of them) has been grossly communicated through the body. It is as though the body has said to the white doctor or psychiatrist: *Keep your distance, I am black!*

If there should be any grain of truth in what I have been saying some objections which may be raised must be dealt with immediately. One such an objection would seem to be of the following order. The question may legitimately be asked whether I am suggesting that blacks and whites never really talk to each other. First, such an interpretation would be to simplify the issue beyond recognition. My first reaction would be to say that blacks and whites talk down and up to each other. This is another way of saying that what seems to do the talking in the white person is the master and what does the responding in the black man is the servant. In practical terms this has meant that white people always experience themselves as communicating instructions even if this appears otherwise in any specific situation. The black person has tended to communicate an apology not for any conceivable palpable reason. One instructs, the other apologises!

All that has been said suggests that to talk about dialogue where there is no significant possibility of healthy relating is to indulge in sophistry of the worst kind. Relating in the sense of both narrowing the distance and sharing in the sense of experiencing the world as our-world is imperative for effective communication. This is not likely to be achieved in our life time. Thus we find that the doctor and his patient, the manager and his worker, are all back at square one. There is a definite impasse which will require all the goodwill in the world to overcome.

I have deliberately left out of this discussion the actual difficulties experienced in psychotherapy with African patients because I have dealt with these elsewhere (9). From what has been stated above it should be clear that the treatment of black patients by white psychiatrists is fraught with immense difficulties. At this point it may be stated that, obvious as it may sound, the best hope lies, for the time being at least, in the training of black clinicians.

Reflections on community mental health

The first two sections of this essay have highlighted the existence of psychiatric and other emotional disturbances which are part and parcel of the black experience in South Africa. The problem of treatment particularly of neurotic disorders is not limited to the individual patient but raises the further question of available community strategies to deal with mental disorders in the black communities. A meaningful way of reflecting on this subject is to first discuss some important general considerations as a framework for a more focussed treatment.

The first issue to be raised involves the question of the extent to which our environment as a totality facilitates or militates against the flourishing of positive mental health in the different population groups. This issue constitutes an inquiry into the integrative status of South African society. How does one judge the integrative status of a society? The answer to this question is provided by Leighton and Leighton who observe (10):

To find where a community belongs on this range, one may use various socio-cultural indicators: the poverty-affluence dimension; the overall coherence or confusion of cultural values; the availability of its religious system; the stability of families; the leadership and followership; communication networks; supportiveness of interpersonal relationships ... the findings both in the Stirling County and among the Yoruba supported the hypothesis to the extent that mental health was considerably better in the integrated than the disintegrated communities. A corollary of this hypothesis is that if the integrative status of a community improves, so will its mental health.

Langner and Michael have made a related observation. They have pointed out that with an increase in the number of unfavourable social experiences is an associated increase of poor mental health (11). If one were to go by the occasional reports in the local press with respect to such socially pathological phenomena as crime, alcoholism, divorce and drug abuse, one would be inclined to doubt the integrative status of South African society as a whole. The situation is made more intolerable by the fact that there are in South Africa populations which are at special risk. These are the black South Africans (Africans, Indians and Coloureds). I say that they are populations at special risk in view of the fact that they have always been afflicted with a progressive accumulation of unfavourable social experiences associated with discriminatory legislation and practice. This is so true that Mayer could go as far as to describe the status of Africans in

South Africa as pariah status, that experience of being insignificant (12).

It may easily be demonstrated that some of the mental health problems are strictly speaking unique to specific population groups since they are a direct result of the current government posture: the posture of the now dominant white culture. An example a little later will demonstrate that this is true. There can be no argument about the fact that if judged by the sensible criteria suggested above, the integrative status of South African society must be very low indeed. The black communities must continue to be considered communities at special risk because it is in these communities where poverty and starvation are rife; where there is the greatest organised disruption of family life and an associated decrease in the number of supportive interpersonal relationships. In such disintegrating communities there can be no reasonable doubt about the existence of confusion with respect to cultural values.

An authentic case history will illustrate dramatically the differential effects of the posture of the now dominant white culture. In 1970, a woman aged 35 was referred to the Baragwanath Hospital psychiatric out-patients' department. She presented at that stage with the following complaints. She told us that she had developed a generalised loss of drive and concentration and that her work as a midwife had become shoddy. Detailed physical examinations by the physicians had failed to reveal any physical pathology. Psychiatric examination, on the other hand, revealed that a diagnosis of reactive depression could confidently be arrived at.

Her personal history revealed a number of special difficulties. She had been divorced and had been granted custody of their five minor children. After the divorce, she was compelled by law to vacate the house in which the family had been living. Attempts to secure alternative housing had been fruitless and she found herself compelled to live with an elder sister who also had children of her own in a three-roomed house. We understood her reactive depression to represent the response of a divorced mother to a number of unfavourable life experiences.

Adequate psychiatric intervention would have meant not only giving her medication and psychotherapy but also a much needed restructuring of her social conditions. Psychiatry is not expected to supply husbands where these are not available. Improvement of her social conditions would have meant that she should have found it possible to work and bring up her children as ideally as was within her means. She had, in effect, been given this responsibility by the law. In this particular case, psychiatry found itself helpless since her social conditions were so inflexible (could not be changed) since they were prescribed by the 'South African way of life'. With patients of this kind and many others, it must be admitted that they will not be helped by whatever rudimentary psychiatric services may be in existence.

The tragedy assumes its proper dimensions once it is recognised that current estimates show, for example, that there are 13 000 families on the waiting list for family housing. What of the divorcees; the single women with illegitimate children? There must literally be thousands of these people in Soweto and elsewhere who have no recourse to the benefits of psychiatry.

Lay opinion would have us believe that the neuroses are essentially a social class disease. In a sense, this may be so. Their nuisance value may be related to social status; but they have been found to exist even in rural African communities. Support for this last statement emerges from the now fairly well described hysterical manifestations in rural African communities variously described as Ufufunyane by the Zulu and Ukuphosela by the Xhosa. The nuisance value of the psychoses has ensured that various institutions be created for custodial care and treatment. Facilities for the treatment of the psychoneuroses are virtually non-existent outside the occasional out-patients' clinics which have so many problems that they are not as useful as they otherwise could have been.

The question may now be posed whether, in fact, there is anything which may be done to restore positive mental health as a major socio-political priority to its rightful place in our society. Since a great deal of our mental health problems (particularly differential expressivity) must be considered related to the posture of the dominant white culture, particularly in its political expression, it must be conceded that the primary prevention solution may only be initiated at that level. That government action in the mental health sphere is imperative was demonstrated by the American Congress. In an historic move, the American Congress debated and passed Federal Legislation, P.L. 88-164: the Community Mental Health Act of 1963. Since that legislation, it has been estimated that by the year 1980, 2 000 community mental health centres will have been established throughout the country (13).

The most important features of the community mental health approach are the following. First, there is the creation of community mental health centres in the various communities where the need is greatest. There is a constant monitoring of communities at special risk. These centres are expected to provide in-patient facilities; out-patient care; facilities for partial hospitalisation; emergency services as well as facilities for public education and mental health consultation. One of the hallmarks of community mental health has been its lively interest in prevention. Prevention may be primary, secondary or tertiary. Primary prevention is directed at the reduction of new cases of mental disorder in communities through the planned elimination of pathogenic factors in those environments in addition to educational strategies directed at increasing the potential of individuals to deal with stress. Secondary prevention is

intended to reduce the incidence of mental disorders as a result of early identification and immediate effective treatment. The third type of prevention is directed at the elimination of 'residual disability' resulting from mental disorder as well as the provision of necessary follow-up care for those patient populations. Crisis intervention oriented treatment modalities have been developed and are in current application. These methods are supplemented by the availability of mental health consultation services. Consultation skills are offered to other care-giving agencies in the community and they provide follow-up care and feed-back to the community mental health centres.

It seems to me that mental health problems may be tackled at two possible levels. The first level of attack, namely the attack on the level of the state, we could characterise as the primary level of attack. The second level is the secondary level about which I have a few things to say.

First of all I would like to say that it is a shame for an advanced country such as ours not to have a single black psychiatrist, not even in exile. Usual explanations such as those advanced for the shortage of medical personnel are unsatisfactory in the face of the health problem. We leave aside such bickering and concentrate on the problem at hand, namely the problem of what may yet be done on the secondary level of solution. The first strategy for adoption is the 'gem' of community mental health — mental health consultation. Let us describe this strategy briefly and then go on to suggest how it can find beneficial application in our society. Mental health consultation is today one of the most significant developments in the history of comprehensive community mental health. As technique and method, it arose out of a crisis. In the United States, it developed out of a realisation that mental health professionals as against the needs of communities would always be in short supply. Mental health consultation may briefly be defined as an interaction between a mental health consultant and a client. The consultant is a specialist in the mental health field and helps consultees in the solution of specific problems and/or increasing their skills in handling such problems.

The characteristic emphasis of mental health consultation is on prevention (all forms of prevention); environmental manipulation; early case detection; early crisis intervention and a decided emphasis on brief effective contacts. Mental health consultation is geared towards the solution of specific problem(s). Since problems in mental health are many and varied, it follows that mental health consultation must be characterised by flexibility.

The effective use of mental health consultation skills depends in large measure on the studied isolation of points of entry into communities. These entry points consist of those individuals and agencies with the utmost

contact with individuals in the community. Cases in point are the clergy, general practitioners, social welfare workers, public health nurses, guidance and counselling personnel in schools and universities where such workers exist and human relations workers in commerce and industry. Mental health consultation with respect to these groups would consist of organised efforts at increasing their skills in the mental health field. This may be achieved, *inter alia*, through seminars, workshops and individual training. Besides the help these people could offer to people in distress, they could act as sensitive observers and could be of great help in the early detection of mental and emotional disorders. Mental health consultation is particularly germane to our local situation with its noted scarcity of mental health professionals. This appears to be the strategy for adoption.

But first, I do think that it must be emphasised that mental health problems should be tackled at the primary level. This demands a serious assessment of our socio-political fabric to determine in what ways improvements could be made to heighten the integrative status of our society. In the African communities, for example, efforts could be made to deal with the socially and psychologically disruptive effects of the migratory labour system. There are many other areas centred around discriminatory practices which could be handled. For the present, our biggest hope lies in the active promotion of mental health consultation practice. The limited professional skills which exist in this country may be used to man consultation services for the various population entry points. I would like to make a special point of referring to several target groups which I consider vital in our situation. Commerce and industry may become important mental health agents by being more sensitive to the quality of life of their employees. This objective may be achieved broadly in the following way: Organisations could be more concerned about organisational hygiene in the area of industrial relations. Personnel functions, for example, may be arranged in such a way as to include some mental health structures in their primary areas of competence. Priorities for the training of industrial mental health workers (counsellors) could be worked out to suit local conditions. American experience in industrial counselling could prove invaluable. During the early stages of this development, industry and commerce could very well rely on consultative services while making use of domestic mental health workers to take care of employees in distress. In this way, industry and commerce could realise an important prevention function: the early identification of mental disorder and crisis intervention. Mental health consultation could be practised here on a large scale.

It will not be necessary to formulate in detail what other areas could be activated along the lines outlined above. It will be sufficient to point out that entry points into communities could be developed based on mental health

consultation principles. For special mention is the following observation. The creation of counselling and psychiatric facilities for Soweto, for example, is long overdue. Here then is a fertile area for social action. The churches and other organisations of goodwill could realise in a very concrete way their secular responsibilities by committing themselves to the creation of such facilities. Symbolic acts however well intended they may be will not in themselves be relevant to the lives of millions of blacks living in this country.

Some remarks on the responsibilities of our academic institutions will not be out of place. I would like to suggest some broad possibilities in this respect. The first prerequisite I consider to be the active propagation of community mental health concepts in our universities, hospitals and clinics and in commerce and industry. It means in effect that mental health professionals and academics must begin to define their community responsibilities in terms of community needs and not in terms of their professional needs. The following suggestions may now be made:

1. Professional training in psychiatry and related professions should be restructured in such a way that the orientation of practitioners is away from the private (office) practice model to community mental health practice. Emphasis should be placed on the development of skills in community consultation, programme evaluation and team approaches to therapy.
2. Particular attention should be paid to the training of non-traditional mental health care-givers. This is the more imperative in view of the fact that experience elsewhere has demonstrated the impossibility of training sufficient numbers of clinical psychologists and psychiatrists to meet community needs.
3. There is a very strong case to be made for the restructuring of the training of social workers in our schools of social work. Psychiatric social work should be actively encouraged and taught. This would help augment the currently inadequate clinical skills.
4. Under current conditions in the black communities, the best hope lies in primary and secondary prevention strategies. These should be accompanied by a concerted effort in the direction of decentralisation of available psychiatric services. General hospitals and poly-clinics should have primary psychiatric responsibilities all geared towards crisis intervention and a speedy return to the community.

Beyond doubt, the American experience in mental health is an invaluable source for South Africa. The relevance of that experience to our local conditions cannot be over-emphasised.

FOOTNOTES

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2. Kolb, L.C., 'Disturbances of the body image'. In S. Arieti (ed.), *American Handbook of Psychiatry*, Vol. I., Basic Books, New York, 1959.
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7. See, for example: Fisher, S.E. and Cleveland, S.E., *Ibid*.
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THE MEANING OF CHANGE

During the year 1972, there was a great deal of noise here and abroad about what some people considered to be indications of change in the 'South African way of life'. It was suggested that these pointers of change could be identified in the political and economic spheres. Examples of this change were given. Two big banking houses after the Polaroid troubles decided to 'equalise' salaries of blacks and whites. There were public demands for a general narrowing of the wage gap as well as the organisation of black labour into trade unions. On the political front, people were saying that there was a need for 'dialogue' with the black communities. Some observers also suggested that the South African government was revealing a more mature attitude towards the Buthelezi. Others observed that the Afrikaner was beginning to show some restlessness and was becoming more open and critical about the national policies of his government. When one looks back at all those 'happenings' one begins to wonder whether this change was apparent or real. Can it be truly said that South African society is changing? If this is so, what may be identified as the particular direction and form of this change? A third question may be formulated as follows: is it possible for black and white South Africans to reach common agreement on the possible significance of this change? This essay concerns itself with these questions since we consider it necessary to achieve a black perspective (interpretation) on these questions.

We begin our analysis by borrowing some of the refreshing ideas of Professor J.H. Moolman, director of the African Institute in Pretoria (1). In spite of the unacceptability of some of his views, it should be admitted that he is an outstanding academic. One of his latest views is that the Republic of South Africa should be viewed as a spatial system. He points out that this spatial system 'consists mainly of a white and black component'. Recognition is given to the fact that the white component is the dominant one in the system. Into the total spatial system was introduced the policy of separate development which has given birth to the concepts of 'homelands' and 'national units' which are now sub-systems in the total spatial system. Some observations relating to these views may now be made. It should be pointed out that the fact that the white component is the dominant one in

spite of being a minority group is very important. Important also is the fact that the policy of separate development which is creating new sub-systems was imposed on the black component of the spatial system by the white component. Other issues pertinent to the views of Moolman will be raised later in this discussion. Let us return to the question of change in South Africa.

With respect to possible change in the spatial system it becomes interesting to reflect first on the possible sources of change. On reflection, one immediately recognises several possibilities. The first and most logical source of change is the white component of the spatial system. Since it is the dominant one, it may introduce new inputs into the system. This is precisely what it did when it imposed the policy of separate development on the black component which created the Mangopes and the Mantanzimas. It is well-known that the black component of the system had no active participation in the initiation of the new sub-systems created by the policy of separate development.

Theoretically, the other source of change in the system is the subordinate black component. I say theoretically because it is a subordinate component. In spite of its current status in the spatial system, the possibility of its actively and directly introducing changes in the system may not be ruled out. New inputs into the system, insignificant as they may appear, are the recent development of Black Consciousness and solidarity, concepts which are threatening to undermine the sub-systems created by the policy of separate development.

In considering the possible new inputs into the boundaries of the spatial system we must first recognise that it is the black and white components of the system which may become change agents. The question arises at this stage whether there are other possibilities which may introduce inputs into the main system while remaining essentially autonomous of the black and white components. In this category may be lumped such forces as world hostility and opinion against current South African policies. Economic forces may also be included in this group. There can be no doubt about the fact that these forces are introducing inputs into the system. This admission does not amount to a recognition of these inputs as being decisive in changing the national character of South African life.

When one looks at the changes arising out of the dominant component one recognises progression rather than a definite change in direction. This is easily shown to be the case since discriminatory legislation is the stock-in-trade of South African legislation. Voting patterns also show no significant swing to the left. There are several indications of social inertia in the dominant component which are expressed through current policies. One of these indications is the determination of the South African government to

abide by the land allocation of a 1936 determination in spite of contradictions suggested by projected population statistics. Another indication of social inertia is the retrogressive step adopted in the creation of the homelands. In this instance, it may be pointed out that the imposition of tribalism on the black component is a retrogressive step since black people are progressively going to reject tribalism as a basis for nationalisms. Job reservation provides additional evidence of the white component's reluctance to change with the times. It has been pointed out that job policies are doing havoc to the economy. Even lay people have begun to understand this situation and yet nothing of significance in this respect has been done. The catalogue could be developed further. We will return to this component a little later.

The black component is the subordinate one in the system. Does this in itself suggest that it is passive? This is definitely not the case. There are two considerations which are against this possibility. The first is the mere fact of it being the second main component in the system — its mere presence in the system. This means that its mere presence demands recognition from the dominant component. The second consideration is that, in terms of sheer numbers, it commands the majority while the dominant system constitutes a minority. This situation must be recognised as one which creates permanent tension in the spatial system. The black component is indirectly a change agent mainly because of its tension-creating potential. Outside these considerations, it may be stated that there are sporadic indications that the black component may progressively increase its tension-creating potential. Indications of this fact are the occasional 'illegal' strikes, the development of Black Consciousness and of solidarity as organising concepts. One may recognise that in its tension-creating potential, the black component is currently characterised by the development of two sub-systems. These spatial sub-systems are represented by the increasingly articulate urban population and the homeland governments. There can be no doubt that these sub-systems will continue to make demands (often conflicting ones) on the dominant white component.

Present indications are that the black component may in future introduce inputs (impose change) on the main system simply because of the fact that black people constitute the bulk of the labouring people of this country. Inputs may be introduced into the system, for example, once the black people recognise the significance of their increasing buying power. They may then decide to use this power for leverage in creating changes in the main system. Similarly, black labour may begin to exert its latent bargaining power (2).

We said that changes may occur in the system as a result of forces originating from world opinion and economic considerations. These, as we

may see later, are very closely related types of change agents. World opinion with respect to the policies of the South African government is no longer a monopoly of the United Nations and the Organisation for African Unity. Hostility against the policies of this country (the white component) has been expressed to the consternation and surprise of some Christians by such bodies as the World Council of Churches. Several other Anti-Apartheid groups are in existence in several of the capitals of the Western world. The cumulative effect of this effort has been so wide in its ramifications that even the once benign Lesotho government has begun to hammer at our policies. (The 'our policies' is naturally a speech habit more than anything else!). One may now ponder over the implications for change involved in this tension between South Africa and other world bodies. It should be admitted at the outset that one may only talk in terms of probability rather than fact in so complex an area of international and other relations.

Present indications are that these pressures will increase as suggested by the recent change of attitude expressed by the new Australian government. It is true to say that there are people who are revolted by current South African policies. With this recognition must follow an awareness of the paradoxical nature of the situation, which presents itself in the following manner. There is sufficient evidence of big financial investment in the South African economy by the major powers of the West. While this is true, the people who would like to see changes in the 'South African Way of Life' are citizens of those countries which have a big stake in the future of this country. One can only assume that their interest in our problems stems from motives of a much higher order since this is the only way of resolving the paradox. For our own part we can only say that the black component must recognise that the dominant status of the white component is maintained and supported by inputs external to itself, namely the big investments of the money giants of the twentieth century. This must mean that the black component has to realise that the fight for self-betterment may not only be understood as one which is essentially against the dominant white component, but one which also involves the inputs of factors outside the main system.

We are often told that economic pressures at home will lead to domestic initiatives for change. This may well be. In this respect, it should be made clear that we as black South Africans should never be deluded into believing that white South Africa is changing the moment we come across some symbolic acts like increases in salaries. These acts represent objective good (the moral sense) but should not be mistaken for a change of heart on the part of white South Africans. I may be taken to task for looking a gift horse in the mouth, but I would like to support my contention immediately. These acts are of a morally questionable character since we know that they are not

dictated by a sense of the moral and just. We know that they are not inspired by human decency — they do not spring from conviction. How do I support such an allegation? I would like to say that it is because white people love themselves and the life they are leading that they find themselves forced to introduce some changes into the system. It is merely a question of self-love and self-interest. This view is supported by the fact that the suggested changes in the economic sphere arise out of the crisis in the economy and not from the suffering of black South Africans. This means that these changes whenever they occur should be viewed as being external to the white component of the system — as being something which has gone out of control. These observations suggest that some of the changes which will occur in the South African system will consist of these unplanned inputs (3).

An important issue which should receive consideration is whether there can be any common agreement between the black and white components on the meaning of change in this country. This, at this stage in our history, is completely out of question. We should not be shocked by the implications of this submission. Disagreement arises because white South Africans will always identify change which arises from unplanned inputs as something expressive of their own sense of justice. Since change in the direction of justice is something foreign to the South African system any triviality is likely to appear as something which is epoch-making. I once listened to a white South African tell an international conference in New York that he had succeeded in persuading industrial and commercial organisations to stop calling their employees 'boys'. This may be commendable, but what shocked me was that he reported this with so much enthusiasm and gratification that to him it must have been something deserving of a Nobel Prize.


Our response to tokens and symbolic acts must always accommodate a recognition that the interest of white South Africans in the plight of black South Africans may only be of a very superficial kind. This is related to the fact that they have no direct share in the black experience. It is also related to the fact that this interest may only be self-reflexive by which I mean to suggest that the interest stems from the white people's preoccupation with security — their own security. I am suggesting, in fact, that change in the South African spatial system is not likely to come from the white component. Such a possibility would be extremely paradoxical since it would involve a lot of altruism of a kind lacking in South African society. Since the dominant component is not likely to introduce changes meaningful to the black component it seems likely that most of the change which may overtake South African society may be of the unplanned variety. The usual references to revolution as against evolution as a possibility in the South African society refers to these types of unplanned inputs.

I would like to end on the following note. In the abstract of Professor Moolman's paper, the following important conclusion about the spatial system RSA is arrived at (4):

The formation of sub-systems: a concept based on the premise that it is impossible — or at any rate undesirable — to attempt to break up the system into independent systems and that sub-systems should rather be formed: a reflection or microcosm, as it were, of the main system but retaining numerous characteristics of the main system such as territorial distinctiveness, (sub-) independence, a (sub-) economy and a specific nation as the nucleus nation and chief cohesive factor. The sub-systems approach is an acknowledgement of the cohesive force of uniformity in respect of culture, language, etc. At the same time, however, it is an acknowledgement of the fact that each distinctive nation in South Africa cannot exert its nationalism without restraint but is subject to necessary sacrifices by virtue of the multi-national character of the system and the imperative need for a sub-system status. Those who believe that separation between white and black nations can be pursued to the full consequences of sovereign independence subscribe to an illusion which does not accord with the realities of the spatial system RSA'.

Moolman's conviction about the spatial system RSA in relation to the possible complete break up of the spatial system into black and white sovereign independent states is clear from his last sentence. It seems, therefore, that we must recognise that the spatial system RSA will have to retain unity at certain levels. I would venture to suggest that peaceful coexistence in this system and its sub-systems will exist in proportion to the amount of meaningful planned change which is introduced into the system. For change to be meaningful, it will have to be meaningful to both the black and the white components of the system. In the meantime, we will have to keep a vigil of an unknown duration since meaningful change has not yet made an appearance on the South African horizon (5).

FOOTNOTES

1. Moolman, J.H., 'Peaceful Coexistence in the Spatial System of the R.S.A.', *Bulletin of the Africa Institute of South Africa*, X, 10, 1972, 416-419.
2. See discussion on this in *Power, Privilege and Poverty*, report of the Spro-cas Economics Commission, e.g. p. 55, p. 87.
3. The Report of the Spro-cas Social Commission, *Towards Social Change*, explores similar considerations.
4. Moolman, J.H., *Ibid*, p. 417.
5. Compare Khoapa in 'The New Black':  (Black Viewpoint, Spro-cas Black Community Programmes, p. 67).

POSTSCRIPTUM—‘AFRICAN TIME’

This is indeed an after-thought. My thoughts had actually wandered off the subject matter of the essays which I had just completed, and I had started working in my study on the problem of identity. While reflecting on this difficult subject, I remembered as an after-thought that a friend had recounted how he had been shocked by the contents of a recent publication. I also remembered that he had been indignant and amazed that such ideas could still find their way into academic print. I know him to be a very balanced person who is never overhasty with opinions. Since I had just been working on some aspects of the African experience, my curiosity was naturally aroused by this bit of information.

With unusual curiosity, I instituted an immediate search for ‘Tyd en Neurose by die Bantoe’, translated in the summary as ‘The Bantu, Time and Neuroses’ (1). For the benefit of those readers who may be unable to consult the original, I would like to quote two paragraphs from the English summary which represent the main theses of the paper. Engelbrecht writes as follows:

‘The tempo of life of the Bantu is slow — slower than that of the white. You can see a different time in their bodily movements, in the things of their world, in their places, in the whole landscape in which they exist. There is a remarkable difference between the lived-time (vital time) of the white and the black. We find two different tempos in two different worlds. When these two different worlds and realities come into contact, distortion and dislocation of human time takes place. Since time is a fundamental dimension of human existence the total existential situation of the individual and society will also be affected and distorted ...

The life-world of the Bantu is totally different from that of the white. Integration and equation would not only create confusion but also psychological and social disturbances. On the other hand, the tempo of life of the Bantu is perhaps too slow for a too rapid development and change’. (p. 2).

I would like to be arrogant enough to take this celebrity of philosophy at the University of the North to task for some of his unfounded claims. My primary intention is to demonstrate briefly that his paper is in essence an apology for separate development. The writer's assurance that he is not interested in political controversy is indeed a red herring. Let me avail myself of the opportunity of saying that Prof. Engelbrecht is interesting himself in very important but difficult problems. Let me say also that the bibliographical notes in his paper are very impressive. He definitely keeps very good company! Perhaps I should add that he is a philosopher. I had really not been aware that he is interested in psychiatry and psychology. Being a philosopher, his interest in matters psychological is perhaps understandable. Small wonder that he writes with the calm conviction of a master. In spite of all these considerations, I wondered as I read through his paper whether he had not ventured too far afield. Of course, this is debatable. This possible debate is easily settled. I am a black clinician by which I do not wish to suggest a monopoly of knowledge in this area. I simply have both an academic and existential advantage over Prof. Engelbrecht because I am part of the experience which he has been trying to understand from his office desk or his car.

Let me say at this stage that my essays which were prepared before my familiarity with Prof. Engelbrecht's contribution deal with some of the main issues raised in his paper. My first admission amounts to saying that I am the first person to agree with the view that there is a black mode of being-in-the-world. This theme runs through my essays. This should be considered the only point of agreement between myself and Prof. Engelbrecht.

To return to his analysis, one may first refer to his admission, repeated several times in his paper, to the effect that he does not know the African as a people. He says that Africans always keep him at arm's length. His inquisitive overtures are always reciprocated with the now-proverbial African smile. It seems to us that this admission should, in fact, have completed the paper. Was there a compulsion to continue in spite of this knowledge? The writer admits to an unusual amount of unrest over this problem ('Hierdie twyfel maak mens onrustig'). There is an explicit admission of being an 'outsider' in that situation. One may only assume that he continued to contemplate this problem because of some intellectual discomfort. What may be considered the most important ideas arising from his reflections?

In addition to the themes covered in the summary, the following points are, inter alia, raised in the paper. It is reported that the African negates his identity and strives for equality and sameness with the white man. The African, we are told, is concrete; he lives with the 'things'. He is not abstract like his white counterpart. It is argued that in the rural (semi-rural) setting of the University of the North there is peace and calm and the African

people appear to be in harmony with their landscape. In order to capture the meaning of time for the African, the author gives a detailed description of how African workers at the University go about their daily work. He is decent enough not to suggest, as others have done, that these workers by taking their time over a piece of work were simply being lazy. The author arrives at the conclusion that Africans live in the past and in the present, not in terms of an anticipated future. They live from day to day, he says.

I would like to spend a little more time on those workers. It is reported that they were working at a snail's pace, they were talking about women about trivialities - about the past. It did not matter to them when they finished the job; they even sung some uninspiring tunes. As usual, this tempo was temporarily disrupted by the appearance of the white supervisor (white time). Things changed. The men worked faster. They suddenly had a notion of the future, an idea that the work had to be completed. As soon as the white supervisor had made his retreat, they are reported to have regressed into black time. The writer's only explanation for this absurd story is that African time is slow — 'Slower than that of the white'. Could this be an adequate explanation? Decidedly not. I have tried to offer some explanations elsewhere in this book.

Here I would only like to make the following additional observations. It seems to me that if the writer had not been so compelled to prove a point he probably would have remembered a few ideas about motivation, particularly the complexities of work motivation. He would have been forced to arrive at different types of conclusions. I would like him for a moment to imagine himself outside his observation point (his office) as one of those workers. He works a full day at starvation wages. Let us say he has eight children and let us add four wives to that crowd. Let us also say that he is only allowed to work in Pietersburg and its environs. Let him ask himself whether he would have plans about the future. Let him ask himself whether he would care about when the job would get done. Let him also know that the mere presence of the supervisor means that he might lose his job. He should know all that because that is the existential experience of all those workers. If he experienced all that he would know that the conclusion about fast time and slow time tends to beg the question.

I suggested earlier that Prof. Engelbrecht had strayed too far afield. In his paper, he also presents the case of a patient he 'examined' at Pietersburg hospital. According to his report, this was an African man who had presented at the hospital complaining of palpitations, pain in his chest, fatigue and weakness of his lower limbs. Neurological and other examinations could not demonstrate active organic pathology. It is reported that this man found himself estranged from his body and his environment. He felt and believed that all other people were against him and that objects

in the street appeared to be moving too fast. It is also reported that this man had worked for a merchant as a messenger using a bicycle for his errands. Before his admission to hospital, the outfitter's shop at which he was employed had been bought over by an energetic young man. It is suggested that this resulted in a change in the tempo of work at the shop. The author arrives at the conclusion that this patient was a neurotic patient whose condition must have been associated with the change in the time tempo (the introduction of white time).

I did not examine the patient. That much I must admit. I do have a sneaking feeling that Prof. Engelbrecht was dealing with a self-fulfilling prophecy. He appears to have expected to find a disturbance related to the time dimension at the core of that neurosis. Indeed that is what he found! Even experienced clinicians do find themselves in that kind of situation now and again. Even if he had been a trained clinician, he would have found it extremely difficult to unearth the mechanism which was involved in that man's neurosis. In fact, I doubt whether he asked the right sort of questions which had a greater probability of leading him to more meaningful conclusions. That man's new employer may have been a slave-driver in more than one sense; in more than the sense of an increased tempo of time. He may have been dictatorial; he may have abused and insulted the dignity of that man. He may have had nothing to do with it all. Prof. Engelbrecht should never hope to know all that. The smile will always be there to obscure the existential realities — to take care of business — to obscure the sources of the neuroses.

I leave aside the problem of the future since reference has already been made to it in *Us and Them*. What requires analysis is the writer's understanding of the black man's frustration and aggression. It is his experience that Africans are frustrated. He observes that the African has a natural aggressive reaction (whatever that means). Reference is also made to the fact that there has been a development of a Black Power movement since 1967. His understanding is that this is not directed against white South Africa but is merely a symptom of the black man's frustration. So far so good. What follows is probably the most interesting social diagnosis of the year. He writes:

Dieperliggend egter is 'n gevoel van frustrasie, 'n soek na die 'eie ek' wat verlore en opgebreek word. Die swart gebalde vuus is nie slegs 'n teken van swartmag en swart-bewussyn nie, maar veel eerder 'n simbool van aggressie — van botsing in sigself en tussen drome en werklikheid. Die swart vuus is nie soseer gemik teen die witman en sy wêreld nie, maar teen die swart man en sy frustrasies self — teen sy andersheid d.w.s. teen die gelykmakers. Dit is eerder 'n hand wat gryp in 'n leegt — na niks' (p. 27).

I have quoted Engelbrecht verbatim so that I cannot be accused of having misrepresented him. He is convinced that the black man's frustration is a result of lost identity and a search for that identity. The black clenched fist should, according to him, be understood as having very little to do with Black Power or Black Consciousness. It should be understood as being directed at the black himself with his frustrations. The fist is directed also at those people who say that we are all the same. The fist, we are told with contempt, is a hand which is grasping at nothing. The professor maintains that the people who say that we are all the same create frustrations in the black man and make him dream! Even the most *verkrampte* Afrikaner will admit in private gossip that there are many other reasons for the black man's frustrations which are far removed from the issue of an identity crisis. Pap, hostels, removals, pass laws, being beaten up on the highways ...

It is interesting to note that Prof. Engelbrecht announces a lack of interest in matters political. In spite of this bold and unexpected posture, we find him wallowing in the politics of separate development. As if that were not enough, he tails off his paper by giving an air of respectability to his claims by quoting Prof. J.H. van den Berg out of context:

Psychotherapeut zijn onze dagen: het betekent advocaat zijn van rechtvaardige ongelijkheid'.

I insist this tail-piece is out of context because I am also familiar with Prof. van den Berg's views on the matter of equality and sameness. His fundamental thesis appears to be that one who is sane may not legitimately say that Bach or Mozart is equal to the man who drives a train to Soweto. This is legitimate. There appear to be no reasonable grounds for extending this idea from the area of psychotherapy to broad sociological planning.

Park Station, Johannesburg, in the morning, in the evening, during the day, a mad rushing about of black people in all directions. Black time? White time? The question is absurd. It is my contention that Prof. Engelbrecht generalises so frivolously because he is politically motivated; motivated by a compulsive desire to defend separate development.

FOOTNOTES

1. Engelbrecht, F.J., 'Tyd en Neurose by die Bantoe', Reeks A No. 16, Publikasies van die Universiteit van die Noorde, 1972.