

Mulling over Manganyi's mind: brain, mind and subject in the decolonial moment¹

A discussion of N Chabani Manganyi's *Apartheid and the Making of a Black Psychologist* (Wits University Press, 2016)

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THANK you, Prof Peter Vale, for the warm introduction, and thank you also to the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study (JIAS) for the generous invitation to speak here today. I am very pleased to be at an Institute for Advanced Study in South Africa, given how important these institutional locales have been in many parts of the world in offering up creative spaces for novel intellectual work, cutting-edge research and public-intellectual engagement, but also to see it in a different form that is perhaps more fitting for our context, as compared to the model that was originally proposed at Princeton University in the 1930s. I have to admit that I had wondered how I would adapt this talk today, given that it is located within a set of seminars and public events on "Why the Brain Matters" that has been running for several months, and I am not immersed or embedded in the cognitive neurosciences in a significant manner in my day-to-day work. That being said though, when I considered the topic of the *social* brain – the idea that the human brain has evolved in relation to the complex demands of social systems, networks and contexts – it became clearer to me that this opened up a vast intellectual terrain with many old and new questions.

As evidenced from the programme of this series of events, questions about the mind-brain dichotomy or the mind-body problem as reflected in the early writings of Descartes and his work on Cartesian Dualism, resurfaced in the context of these seminars and public events. Related questions about free will versus determinism have returned in more ways than one; debates about the socially constructed nature of human experience and activity as opposed to hard empiricist understandings thereof continue to gain traction more than ever in a technologically advancing world; and while these problematics may emerge in new iterations, they often reflect old and on-going conundrums. In fact, very recently, two psychoanalysts in South Africa have gone

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toe-to-toe in a 2015 issue of *Psychoanalytic Review*, on the very issue of the mind-brain or mind-body problem. Solms (2015), a neuro-psychoanalyst, has suggested that the developments in neuro-imaging and other technologies have allowed us to understand the mechanics and interactions of brain physiology in ways that we could not hitherto do, suggesting that this will impact significantly on metapsychology and indeed on psychoanalytic praxis. Barratt (2015), a classically trained psychoanalyst, has however suggested that whilst recognising that *"our corporeality is an inherent consciousness that grounds the possibility of all other-egological-formations of consciousness, and is thus the foundational nature of the psyche"* (2013, p. 91), still argues for a distinction between metapsychology and psychoanalytic praxis, essentially suggesting that the mind is much more complex than what is portrayed through the objectivist and experimentalist basis for much of neuro-psychoanalysis today. Whilst I will not enter into the fray of this debate, what is apparent is that the terrain of the brain continues to present many opportunities to think about the relationship between science and society, brain, mind and behaviour, and importantly also, their connectedness to social context. Clearly, some of the ways in which we attend to these questions can be found in some primary thrusts of intellectual inquiry today, and these are reflected in the discussions that have been part of this colloquium – one being how we think about brain morphology and its relationships to social behaviour (e.g. the current work on mirror neurons and empathy, or the tradition of work done on sexual dimorphism and its impact on social behaviour); or the second inverse approach being, how we think about the impact, influence or interaction of the social world and the resultant consequences on brain functioning, development and behaviour (e.g. the recent work on language acquisition and the importance of social interaction for such acquisition that of course supports Vygotsky's earlier assertions about language development, or the work on stress and the effects on the brain, or a disease such as HIV and its effects on the brain) – an epigenetic approach, if you will.

But of course, not being a cognitive neuroscientist, nor a comparative psychologist or evolutionary anthropologist, I am entering this terrain on the *social* brain somewhat differently. As a clinical psychologist who has really spent much of my career in the realm of critical psychology, I am interested in the manner in which our cognitive and emotional capacities, alongside their attendant neurological correlates are mobilised and activated in the creation and configuration of subjecthood. By subjecthood, I am referring to the entire process of subjectification or the creation of social subjects, the enactment and contestation of subjectivities (Rose, 1998) and the movement between and across different subject positions in the process of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991). What I am interested in is how matters of brain, mind, cognition, affect, morality and so on help to constitute modern subjects and consequently a sense of personhood in contemporary life. So I am in some sense side-stepping some of the afore-mentioned debates and taking a position akin to Ian Hacking's (2000), in which he suggests occupying a space between these opposing views in which the world is either seen as a socially constructed product or as objectively defined and distinct from the social realm. I take this middle position not out of a mere avoidance because others are likely to be

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more familiar with the intricacies of these debates, but also because I think that there are additional intriguing lines of intellectual inquiry to focus upon in examining subjecthood – a phenomenon that precisely occupies this space between that which is considered objective and that which is considered socially constructed.

Why is subjectivity configured or constituted in particular ways in specific historical periods (and here I am referring to categories of subjects like the literate, numerate, raced, gendered, classed, psychologised, and more recently, the digital subject)? By way of example, the literate subject becomes a focus of empirical investigation and social importance in periods when schooling gains traction as a mode of regulating and controlling children and their propensity for social deviance at the point when they are displaced from an increasingly competitive labour market in early industrial capitalism; the numerate subject becomes a focus of attention for Republicans in the USA in the early part of the 20th century when such a subjecthood requires fiscal know-how around budgets, savings, investments, etc. with the ascendancy of financial institutions within industrial and speculative finance capitalism; the focus on raced and gendered subjects are clearly related, in part, to the eugenics movement, but fundamental also to modes of capitalist accumulation; the psychologised subject emerges as a form of self-regulation and disciplinary power in modern capitalism, utilising the inward gaze as a confessional technology (Foucault, 1977; Parker, 1999; Rose, 1998); and the digital subject, for writers such as Jan de Vos (2013), becomes more prominent in a world that is increasingly driven by technology, information and a knowledge economy in which capital is becoming uncoupled from its productive and material base.

Of course, other questions that arise if one focuses upon subjecthood, include how fixed it is, how mutable or immutable it is, what the possibilities are of thinking about the subject as more malleable, with a degree of plasticity, to borrow from the cognitive-neurosciences, and what can this tell us about social change and its possibilities and impossibilities.

So in thinking about subjecthood, I am also wanting to utilise Chabani Manganyi's (2016) book, titled *Apartheid and the Making of a Black Psychologist*, as a literary foil of sorts to examine some selective questions, such as memory and subjectivity, race and subjectivity, embodiment and subjectivity, and knowledge and subjectivity – all of course within the context of the decolonial impulse or moment that we find ourselves in, both in South Africa and in many other parts of the world.

I am assuming that not everyone here is familiar with Manganyi's oeuvre, nor would necessarily have read his book, so I hope you will indulge me and allow me to offer some broad introductory comments to frame the rest of my talk.

As I have indicated, many people would not necessarily be familiar with N. Chabani Manganyi's intellectual footprint, both inside psychology and outside of it, but his work has ranged from the 1970s through to 2016, with notable contributions on: 'Being-Black-in-the-World; Mashangu's Reverie' (and his associated essay on 'The Violent

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Reverie'); 'Looking Through the Keyhole; Political Violence and the Struggle in South Africa'; 'Psychology and Racial Difference; Democracy, Transition and Transformation in South African Society'; not to mention his biographies on Gerard Sekoto, Es'kia Mphahlele and Dumile Feni. Certainly his body of work has not necessarily garnered the due recognition within mainstream psychology in South Africa, other than in the terrains of critical and community psychology in the 1980s and 1990s, and of course today in the work of many critical psychologists (see for example, Ratele & Shefer, 2007; Hayes 2011; Hook, 2014; Long, 2016). But beyond this, his impact as a scholar, intellectual, practitioner, activist and institutional builder is, in my view, becoming more clearly understood at this point in our history. He is truly a remarkable man who has consistently upheld, what Michael Billig (1988) has referred to as, a mode of traditional scholarship – cutting across disciplinary boundaries, thinking, writing and acting against the grain. I raise these temporal markers to frame his body of work but also to signal the significance of Manganyi's work over time – his thinking about the black experience in contexts of systemised oppression, his ideas about responses to these forms of domination, his writings on violence and its place in a world that is racialised, the recovery of black thought and practice and of course, and his re-appropriation of disciplinary knowledge (in psychology in particular) in the service of humanity – all of which have resonances today in the contemporary decolonial moment, and perhaps are part of the reason for us re-engaging with his work.

The book itself is autobiographical in tracing his trajectory as a black intellectual, recalling his life growing up in Mavambe and being exposed to mission schooling, his training as a clinical psychologist during apartheid, his travels abroad, his life inside segregated academia, his incessant desire to devour knowledge, the move towards forensic work, the utilisation of psychological knowledge to understand crowd psychology and violence, and ultimately his work in contributing to reshaping the higher education landscape of South Africa in the post-apartheid period.

But back to subjecthood and the manner in which it can be read through Manganyi's memoir. The first point I would like to raise is really about the value of the autobiographical, biographical or life-writing format. In the Preface of his book, Manganyi notes that he has tried very hard to come to terms with the first-person nature of memory. Now we all know that memory is fragile, and in fact can be downright fickle at times. Memory is not truth, and so there have been many criticisms directed at the use of memory work that suggests that it can range from an idealisation of the past, to a reactionary reinstatement of that past, to a concealment of the past, to being locked inside that past in what Freud refers to as a process of repetition-compulsion (Duncan, Stevens & Sonn, 2012). Of course the personal storied account is a mnemonic device – telling the story evokes memories, which as they are written or told, can change the very nature of those remembering's in infinite, iterative ways (Stevens, Duncan & Sonn, 2013). But while storied accounts that utilise memory are perhaps provisional truths, they are as worthy of consideration, as Peterson (2012) points out. Personalised versions of history can also offset the homogenising effects of grand narratives of history and subjectivity, thereby expanding our knowledge archives, and

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we see this in all forms of oral history traditions, histories from below, and so forth (Sonn, Stevens & Duncan, 2013). They bring embodied experiences and affective responses that are of an experience-near nature, into focus. They of course also have an aspect of liminality to them. While they are of the past, they are always speaking in the present. While the past is being recovered to some degree, it is in the context of narrational production that new meanings are attributed to this past potentially, and so they speak about the relationship between the past and the present (Stevens, Duncan & Sonn, 2013). Of course this has implications for the ways in which subjectivity can be recrafted as well. This is central to narrative theory, where the possibilities for rearticulating one's subject position become plausible through redefining experiences of the past. The subject is thus not fixed, but in a state of potential flux in relation to him/herself, in relation to the context, and in relation to the interlocutors who apprehend the story.

What Manganyi's book does is to illuminate the relationship between memory and subjectivity, and the ways in which memory can be mobilised in the service of defining and redefining personal identity or personhood. As importantly, it raises questions about the functions of memory in crafting variegated subject positions and the reasons for this at specific historical moments. Of course, we are compelled to then ask questions about the personal narrative of ascendancy that threads the book – Manganyi's account of adversity, defeating that adversity, and culminating with integrity in its resolution. Here, memory is central to a project of constructing a very particular black subject in post-apartheid South Africa, and may reveal interesting possibilities, impossibilities and injunctions about being black in contemporary South Africa (i.e. what is a tolerable versus an intolerable black subject in neo-liberal South Africa today, where there is a recognition of the past, but simultaneously an imperative and deliberate injunction to not have this past generate a paralysis to 'progress'). White subjects are in many instances expected to be mindful of their historical complicity, to reveal some degree of shame, but not promiscuously so, and frequently have to be reflective about the extent to which they can exercise voice, certainly publicly (Straker, 2013). Black subjects however, are often expected to articulate their historical adversity, but also to reveal a degree of mastery over this, and to perform a new awareness and vigour about their subjecthood (Sullivan & Stevens, 2013). These are some of the tolerable elements of black and white subjectivity that allow us to stake a claim in the 'New South Africa'. But of course, the absence of a memoried and narrated account of the intolerable subject is as important a line of inquiry - an account that is perhaps less visible in Manganyi's memoir, but of deep significance in understanding the discontented in contemporary South Africa who do not neatly adhere to ascendant or propitiatory narratives.

The second related point from the book is the use of these personalised accounts to articulate the multi-dimensional nature of the raced subject. While we have the propensity for hierarchical and compartmentalised cognitive information processing, as well as the minimisation of affective and emotional ambivalence, tension and disequilibrium, we clearly have the capacity to hold contradictory information and

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affective or emotional states simultaneously. For Manganyi, the black subject is never simply a one-dimensional victim – the black subject has the capacity for agency, resistance, re-appropriation and reconstitution. Manganyi does not do this in a sentimental manner, nor in a way that claims a reflective or restorative nostalgia that Svetlana Boym and South African writers such as Jacob Dlamini articulate (Duncan, Stevens and Sonn, 2012), but he nevertheless suggests that the black subject is much more complex as a relational and agentic being. He goes to great lengths in a humble, yet profoundly eloquent way, to describe these processes through his contact with both whites and blacks, in the minutiae of the everyday, to much lengthier relational accounts, revealing the complexity and ambivalent nature of these relationships at times. One reading of the text suggests that there is a great deal of emphasis by Manganyi on his relationships with white colleagues and mentors throughout significant periods in his life, perhaps indicating an internalised deference towards whiteness. But Manganyi also offers a more complex relational account. From his early experiences in Limpopo where he experienced mission schooling, but later became aware of the pernicious role of these mission schools, and later still the aberrations of Bantu Education, he nevertheless considers this as having had a profound impact on the value that he attaches to education. Despite these sites being created as part and parcel of the apartheid ideological state apparatus, Manganyi is pointing to the possibilities of exploiting these spaces with their internal contradictions as well. His experience as a clinician, for which there are limited possibilities at the time, recapitulates previous experiences of marginalisation and exclusion, but it is also a site for mastery and the development of specialised psychological skills and acumen. His short period in the USA opens up the entire terrain on both the homogeneity and heterogeneity of blackness. While blackness may share similarities globally in the context of a normative whiteness, his experience of his blackness in the USA is altered. Not only is he differentiated from African-Americans in the context of affirmative action when he is not successful for a job application, but he also experiences his own rage and becomes somewhat “obsessed”, in his own words, with the question of violence and counter-violence in relation to South Africa. Here, Edward Said's (2000) conception of the transgressive possibilities in an exilic consciousness becomes useful – the consciousness of the exile in which one belongs to and in multiple contexts, but is never fully immersed in any of them. Whilst this is potentially a form of being unrooted, it is also a form of dislocation from context that allows one to be both inside and outside simultaneously – prompting distance and a degree of transgression that is not always possible within one's natural habitat – allowing for an engagement with his own rage in relation to apartheid South Africa. His time at the University of Transkei is also characterised by an initial optimism at being able to offer tertiary level education to black South Africans, a space in which to work despite being a fabrication of a racist state, but is also marked by increasing draconianism within the Bantustan system, eventually leading to him experiencing it as an untenable context. His work as a clinician and forensic psychologist again opens up questions around black competence (something frequently articulated today still), but is simultaneously a source for appropriating specialist knowledge and asserting an authoritative and expert subject position utilising his psychological knowledge. The

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point here is that the black subject is much more multi-faceted, experiences adversity, but is also able to enact agency. Clearly, Manganyi is implicitly articulating the view that where power is operant, there is also always the possibility for resistance, but also that black subjectivity (and by extension, white subjectivity) is systemically complex and relationally complicated by our experiences of the *Other* as both positive and negative in interpersonal contexts. This systemic and relational question between blacks and whites remains with us profoundly today, both personally and politically, as we attempt to define how to engage from various standpoints – privilege, marginalisation, multi-culturalism, non-racialism, anti-racism, Africanism, and so forth.

The third point I would like to retrieve from Manganyi's book is the relationship between embodiment and subjectivity. In several relatively minor references within the text, he refers to his clinical work in a state hospital servicing black patients. Here, he encounters black female patients with symptoms that resemble neurological illnesses, but without the requisite underlying disease being present. Whilst these patients were often thought to be malingering by white practitioners, Manganyi suggests that they are neurotic compromises, as first fully described by Breuer and Freud (2013) in *Studies on Hysteria* – also today thought about as conversion disorders or functional neurological symptom disorders. Now this is particularly important, as in racialised apartheid South Africa, the black subject was completely infra-humanised, made devoid of any humanising characteristics – even mental illness. Fanon (2005), himself a psychoanalytically-inflected psychiatrist, suggested that within coloniality (and by extension in postcolonial contexts), black subjects are reduced to objects partly through collapsing historical racial schemas about the black *Other* into bodily schemas, and ultimately into racial epidermal schemas – a process in which there is the bifurcation of the soma and the psyche, and the sum total of the black subject is reduced to skin colour. Under these conditions, the psychic worlds of black subjects are declared absent – they are obliterated for all intents and purposes. Deploying the primacy of the black body's pain, either consciously, neurotically or psychotically as a response to the bifurcation of the black soma and the black psyche may be understood as an organic response to reconstitute and reclaim these sequestered, obliterated and enigmatic psychic components. Here, Judith Butler (1993) argues that the body is a representational surface and a site of materialized psychic expression. To rephrase Merleau-Ponty (2013), the body's expression is a disclosure akin to artistic expression – your act is also you! What Manganyi is explicitly and implicitly raising is the relationship between mind, body and subjectivity. Two important points need to be made here. Firstly, the body is a site of expression of mental states and consequently is a site in which personhood is established, and where claims to a reinstatement of citizenship is being covertly played out – illness is an important part of what makes me a person after all. Secondly, the fact that Manganyi's work on black female patients with conversion disorder is published, suggests that the conditions of possibility for the black subject to emerge are in fact clearly present in the 1970s, despite centuries of racism that attempted to denude blacks of their humanity. Again, the interplay between brain, body, mind, personhood and subjectivity should not be lost on us.

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The fourth point that I would like to make relates to information or knowledge and its constitutive, reproductive and contestatory role in subjecthood. Clearly, processes of learning involving the integration and acquisition of information and knowledge help us to craft understandings of ourselves, others and the world, and in so doing, are central to processes of personhood and subjecthood. But information and knowledge move, constantly shifting in and out of hegemonic and subordinated positions, making it a key feature of what kind of subjects can be possible at any given point in history. As Foucault (1977) notes, knowledge creates objects or field of inquiry, but also simultaneously produces subjects who populate these fields. Here of course, I am alluding to matters of epistemic contestation, disobedience, rupture and reconstruction or cognitive justice, as writers such as Anibal Quijano (2000) have referred to. Manganyi's journey through psychology as a discipline is perhaps a mirror of the challenges faced by many disciplines that are internally contested by subordinated epistemes, today in particular, but also more generally across various temporal moments. In its broadest sense, knowledge helps us to make sense of the world that we live in, but its production, reproduction and contestation is implicitly connected to and reflective of the kinds of subjectivity that may be possible at any given historical moment.

South African psychology has had a peppered history (Suffla, Stevens & Seedat, 2001) – from its birthing in relation to the mining sector where psychology was heavily influenced by the eugenics movement and scientific racism (see Butchart's 1998 history of psychology and the black body in *The Anatomy of Power*; and Kamin's 1993 piece 'On the Length of Black Penises and the Depth of White Racism'); to its impact in the Carnegie Commission of the 1920s to address the poor white problem under psychologists like Wilcocks; to Verwoerd's work on the double-bind theory (with apartheid of course being the quintessential double-bind). This is the world that Manganyi is not only born into, but also the epistemic milieu within which he is educated, and trains as a psychologist. It is a world where certain forms of information and knowledge have pre-determined what kind of subject is possible or impossible. Manganyi's own intellectual trajectory of course reflects his tussles with hegemonic epistemes, attempts to navigate and contest these, and in the process it is fascinating to see how his own subject position changes in relation to knowledge.

His early work on hysteria in black, female patients, perhaps unwittingly illuminates and surfaces the central problem of who is defined as a subject and as a person in apartheid South Africa. But, he also moves to more deliberately uncover and recover black subjectivity and experiences and to give expression to the "vandalised minds" of black South Africans under apartheid. His engagement with issues of state-sanctioned violence and counter-violence in the 1970s and its aftermath, where he offers psychoanalytic interpretations of symbolic instantiations of violence as reverie – where for example, violent talk could be seen as a means to *not* enact violence as the fantasy of violence is given expression symbolically; to his tactical use of mainstream psychological knowledge in the defence and support of victims of apartheid; are all exemplars that are a counterpoint to the early history of psychology in South Africa.

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Again, the point to make here is that disciplines are not static – they are fluid, and knowledge is mobile. More importantly, it is absorbing to see shifts in his own subject positioning in relation to these various knowledges – from a seemingly naïve, young trainee psychologist who has an awareness that the system is somehow broken, to a more deliberate engagement with knowledge to try and locate the limits of its possibilities, to the insertion of new kinds of knowledge as he recovers his own potency as a black subject and intellectual.

So what do these features in Manganyi's book mean for us in the context of the decolonial impulse or moment in South Africa at present?

Whilst the decolonial turn epistemically is frequently cited as only emerging in the literature in the late 1990s and early 2000s with key writings by Walter Dignolo, Ramon Grosfoguel, Sylvia Wynter, Enrique Dussel, Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Nelson Maldonado-Torres amongst others, decoloniality as a terrain of intellectual engagement has existed for a much lengthier period of time and has an impressive intellectual lineage amongst intellectuals such as Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Amílcar Cabral, Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, and still others would argue even in the earlier writings of intellectuals such as W.E.B. Du Bois. Borrowing from writers such as Maldonado-Torres (2011, p. 1), “decoloniality as a way of thinking has long existed in different ways, opposing what could be called the colonizing turn in Western thought ... the paradigm of discovery and newness that also included the gradual propagation of capitalism, racism, [and] the modern/gender system”. As such, it is fundamentally about adopting a skeptical epistemic attitude towards Western modernity and its associated forms of knowledge, power, being and praxis. It is therefore not surprising that decolonial theory currently has significant purchase power in the analyses of postcolonial contexts, because its overarching premise rests in the critique of Western modernity, its terrors and its intractable internal contradictions.

More than ever, there are perhaps a range of decolonial impulses across the globe – in South Africa, various formations have mobilized around issues of landlessness, service delivery and around the transformation of higher education; in Latin America we have seen coalitions between the precariat and working class formations in insurgent citizen responses to the increasing centrism of ruling parties; and even the USA has seen its fair share of the occupy movements, #BlackLivesMatter, etc.

But let me return to Manganyi in this moment in South Africa.

On the issue of the raced subject, the systemic and relational question between blacks and whites remains with us profoundly today, both personally and politically, as I have mentioned. In a moment when there are legitimate calls for the re-examination of black and white subjectivity, there are also forms of increasing racialised polarisations and a return to narrow racialised essentialisms. Whilst appreciating the political import of strategic essentialism at specific historical moments (see Biko, 1979, on the debate around the relationship between the Black Consciousness Movement and white

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liberals), bell hooks (1995) cautions against narrowly defined, monolithic identity politics that tend to invisibilise the complex, intersectional and diverse nature of subjectivities. To this end, Manganyi's autobiography will be one important resource to return to. New questions about the rights attributed to various social subjects; revisiting the intersectional nature of raced, classed and gendered subjectivities; interrogating whether the focus of our attention should be on black and white subjects as opposed to blackness and whiteness; and how we create new global solidarities based on more complex subjectivities; will all be critical for us in this decolonial moment – an interregnum in which the new is yet to be born and the old is not yet dead (Gramsci, 1971).

With regard to violence, Manganyi's work on reverie, affect and embodiment may go a long way to helping us understand the specific forms of violence that we see in contemporary South Africa, especially (but not solely) as they relate to social protests. Here, the body can be seen variously, for example, as a canvass, as an instrument of power, as a communicative tool, as a mode of reinstating citizenship, and of course, as means of reconstituting obliterated psychic space. Similarly, we perhaps need to re-examine the apparently visceral, affective and emotional components that are so prevalent inside many acts of violence. Features of rage, fear or fearlessness, jouissance, and so on are all very common in enactments of violence, and when they run contrary to our sensibilities of what is considered appropriate and legitimate, are frequently seen as ephemeral moments of irrationality or primordiality by those on the outside of these moments of violence. Appreciating the embodied and affective nature of violence may help to move us from a spontaneous affective or embodied politics to a more deliberate politics of affectivity and embodiment. Our knee-jerk responses to violence in recent times have often been characterized by an immediate vilification of violence in all its forms, but often without understanding how it occurs. Manganyi's reflections on embodiment, affectivity and reverie offer ways of understanding the possibilities for the escalation and de-escalation of conflicts, but also perhaps open up ways for thinking about violence as deeply implicated in all subject formation within Western modernity.

Finally, I think that Manganyi's work also has a place in debates about the future of the university, and of course, the on-going tensions and contradictions within knowledge domains that we often think about as well-defined and homogenous (i.e. the disciplines that come to constitute a university), in which epistemic battles are constantly being waged. In the last two years, there have been many heated conversations about the decolonisation of universities and their curricula, of course involving a central feature of challenging forms of knowledge, power and ways of being, and Manganyi's intellectual threads that have spanned more than four decades are an illustrative exemplar of the very ideas of epistemic disobedience, contestation, rupture and reconstruction. In the context of debates around epistemic reconstruction in South Africa, we should perhaps avoid the pitfalls of thinking that the fractured archive of Western thought can and should simply be replaced by another archive of sorts. Whilst such a new archive must of course be encouraged, and we should be engaged with an expanded archive, there are also spaces within existing epistemes that are sites for reinterpretation and

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reconstruction. Manganyi's intellectual autobiography amply illustrates that a decolonial praxis that involves a refiguring of subjectivity has to take into account that we cannot simply extricate ourselves from a history of knowledges, that knowledges are fluid across time and contexts, and that such a praxis must also involve the on-going interrogation of the relationship between science and society as we generate new knowledges, uncover subordinated knowledges and appropriate old knowledges.

I want to end by thanking Professor Peter Vale and the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study (JIAS) once again, to encourage you all to read this book if you have not yet done so, and to enjoy it as an autobiography, as a portal into the past, as an entry point into the present and the future, and as a platform to think about brain, mind and subjecthood in the decolonial moment.

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