CHAPTER 7

Discipline and Danger: Psychological Science and the African Personality

Resistance to power has an important place in Foucault’s diagram of discipline. However, unlike its role in conventional analyses (where it blocks power and protects people from its damaging effects), resistance in relation to discipline is a mechanism of power’s extension and elaboration: ‘As soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance. We can never be ensnared by power: We can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy’ (Foucault, in Kritzman 1988: 123).

Resistance provokes discipline, and its consequences are intensified techniques of individualization, a lowering of the descriptive threshold that occurs in a positive relationship to the degree of resistance. As resistance intensifies around technologies that ignore individuality or fail to recognize subjectivity, so the very agents of resistance increasingly confirm their interiorization of the gaze until they become the subjectified objects of their own self-analysis. This was perhaps what Foucault meant where he observed that ‘resistance ... does not predate the power it opposes. It is coextensive with it and absolutely its contemporary’ (Foucault, in Kritzman 1988: 122).

Using this Foucauldian formulation of resistance, Chapter 7 explores the emergence and dissolution of the ‘African personality’ as it was produced by the psychological sciences in South Africa. A case-study in the productive effects of conflict, it highlights the creativity of colonial discipline as this fabricated an African psychology to set in place a new space of domination and subordination.

Lunatics and nervous systems

A first glimpse of the African psyche as a possible object of knowledge occurred in 1875 as the effect of a psychiatric gaze to insane Africans in the Town Hill Hospital at Pietermaritzburg in Natal, South Africa.
Majonda, a tall powerful male native aged about 25 years was admitted on 20th October, 1875 suffering from Dementia. This inmate was a prisoner in the Central Gaol Pietermaritzburg, where he began, a short time ago, to show certain peculiarities indicating insanity. When told to do anything he would laugh in a silly and vacant manner, and when spoken to would answer by entering on a rambling and purposeless conversation. At the same time he began to be dirty in his habits, besmearing the walls of his cell with porridge etc. He has become quarrelsome in his manner without cause and is under the delusion that his head is filled with water. (cited in Minde 1956: 288)

To search any earlier for signs of the African psyche is to toil under a delusion, for until the 1870s when special provisions were made for the identification, treatment and confinement of lunatics, the conditions necessary for its emergence had yet to exist. Prior to this point the insane had no separate existence from the criminals with whom they were confined (see Burrows 1958: 344; Foster 1990). The emergence of madness as a relay of discipline that connected an African mind to behaviour thus dates to this point and the passing of lunacy laws that constituted the insane as a particular class of people composed of various sub-categories such as: 'persons dangerously insane, either with suicidal tendencies or criminal inclination'; 'persons of unsound mind but not dangerously so'; and 'an idiot or person of unsound mind incapable of managing himself or his own affairs' (see Burrows 1958: 344–6). Coinciding with these laws, the first asylums dedicated to the confinement, observation and treatment of lunatics were built (see Burrows 1958: 341–7; Foster 1990: 29–32), and it was with this new practice of isolating the insane to intensive inspection that the first distinctive strand in the genealogy of the 'African personality' became possible.

Built to confine the mad, the early asylums also functioned as observatories into the nature of the 'normal' African nervous system. Delineating insanity as a disease localizable to lesions of the physical body and the brain, they produced the psyche as no more than bundles of nerve fibres and neurons. In 1895, for example, Greenlees at the Grahamstown Lunatic Asylum could observe that the preponderance of mania and rarity of melancholia among African patients indicated that in 'normal' Africans 'the higher and latest developed strata' of the brain had yet to evolve, and therefore that 'the native brain has its analogue in the European child's cerebrum' (Greenlees 1895: 72). This he demonstrated through 'a series of observations on the naked-eye appearances and the microscopical characters [sic] of the native brain', which combined with statistical information on mental diseases among
Africans revealed their place on the scale of evolution (Greenlees 1895: 75).

Confirming the primary spatialization of insanity to the neuronal networks of the African brain, insane Africans were confined in surroundings commensurate with the 'sensitivity' of their 'nervous systems'. As the 1879 Commission of Inquiry into the Cape’s Robben Island Asylum reported:

the modern plan of constructing asylums instead of having these large buildings, is to erect a series of cottages - to have a large space of ground, which is dotted over with separate cottages, so that all can get the benefit of quiet. With regard to the Kafir, the closer you can assimilate his condition to that of his normal state the better. I think it would be a mistake to confine Kafirs to a house and tie them to one spot. They would be better if they had room to roam about a little. For that reason I think the asylum on Robben Island is particularly suited for natives. (Cape of Good Hope 1880a: 3)

Elaborating on this theme, the head of the asylum argued that owing to the greater 'sensitivity' of their 'nervous systems', Europeans were 'more amenable to such influences as scenery' (Cape of Good Hope 1880a: 8) than Africans, and that a 'double classification' (i.e. segregation) by race and type of insanity should be implemented. Violent and incurable African and European patients (such as those suffering from dementia) could be housed together, since with such conditions racial differences in nervous system sophistication were obliterated, and 'all classes become assimilated' (Cape of Good Hope 1880b: 1-4).

This first interpolation of an African psycho-physical space into the anatomy of power was restricted to the interior of the confining asylum. However, in producing the African nervous system as a discrete entity in a particular relationship to the environment, the conditions were created for a subsequent radiation of the psychological gaze into the most intimate and the most public of colonial spaces.

Impulsive insanity and the perilous black

In 1893 a Johannesburg newspaper warned its readers: 'Beware of your houseboy, for under the innocent front may be lurking and lying latent the passions of a panther, or worse!' (cited in Van Onselen 1982: 49). This response to the attempted rape by a black servant of his white 'madam' catalysed a series of 'black peril' scares that traversed the Witwatersrand between then and 1912. Over these years 'the curse of the black peril' recurred sporadically in response to similar instances of
black on white violence, peaking when in 1912 the Rand Daily Mail organized a petition and submitted some 52,000 signatures to parliament demanding that it curb the 'black peril'. The social historian Van Onselen (1982: 50–3) has shown how most incidents clustered among economically less stable working- and middle-class households, to argue that as a collective phenomenon the 'curse of the black peril' was driven by 'periods of stress and acute tension within the political economy of the Witwatersrand as a whole' (Van Onselen 1982: 51).

An anachronistic fiction of the history of the past, this economist explanation for the 'black peril' conceals the underlying power shift that made it possible in the first place for violence to serve as a tactic of visibility by which the inner workings of the African mind could be exposed to the eyes of everyone. For even by this point the power of discipline to fabricate the African psyche as its target was producing increasingly intimate domains of domination and resistance. In 1910, a Johannesburg doctor communicated the following facts of which he felt obliged to inform the Secretary for Native Affairs 'in the interests of the public welfare':

On the 26th Jan. 1909 I find a certain native named Isaac was sent to the Pretoria Asylum certified insane. It appears that he was liberated from there some months afterwards. A few weeks ago this same native was arrested for assault, or threatening to stab his mistress. He was sent up to the Fort by magistrate V. d Berg for medical observation. I am of the opinion that he is a dangerous person, because he has moments of perfect sanity, and afterwards he is apt to lose all control of himself. He says if he is balked or thwarted he feels like murdering the party doing it. In short he suffers from what I call 'impulsive insanity'. Now, it appears to me highly necessary that when a native has been in the asylum and authorities consider it necessary to liberate him, that the fact of his having been in the asylum should in some way be stamped on his pass. You or I or anybody else might innocently engage such a native and expose our families to the utmost danger, whereas if he is known to have been in an asylum he will through force of circumstances ultimately be compelled to return to and remain at his kraal. The community would be well rid of such a character. (Transvaal Archives Depot, AG 202/10 LD 1786)

Emanating from the space of danger produced by the close intermingling of natives and Europeans, 'Isaac' was a marker of how ruptures in the boundaries of crude repression were inducing a shift in the psychological gaze towards problematization not of the nervous system itself, but rather of the relationships between the internal space of the African mind and the external space of the environment. As Conroy (1907: 36) noted, 'the baby when born is treated by such barbarian
1. Herbert's 1638 Hottentot man and women (Hirschberg 1967).
3. Linschoten's cannibals of 1596 (Hirschberg 1967).
4. Instruments for measuring the skull (Bruwer et al. 1958).
5. Scale for comparing the colour of the eye (Bruwer et al. 1958).
6. Scale for comparing the colour of the skin (Bruwer et al. 1958).
7. Types of Mozambique native (Turner 1907).
10. Types of the principal tribes represented on the mines (TBRC 1932).
15. Bilharzial cirrhosis of the liver and splenomegaly (marked in chalk) (Gelfand 1943).
16. Pellagra with ‘collarrette’ resembling lizard skin in the lower region of the neck (Celfand 1943).
methods as are likely to sew the seeds of chronic disease'. Inscribing the same line of environmental determinism, a 1912 editorial could thus argue for 'the curse of the black peril' to be dealt with through 'a scientific treatment of this social evil on exactly the same lines as if it were a human disease' (Editorial 1912: 201). Fabricating a psychological analogue of the 'dressed native' that at the same time entered public-health space (see Chapter 8), it defined 'the black peril' as a consequence of removing Africans from their tribal environment and then failing to substitute this in the cities with an equivalent set of contextual restraints on African sexuality:

We have taken enormous hordes of young adult savages or semi-savages, eminently virile in more senses than one, from their own environment, and have placed them in an environment absolutely teeming with every possible stimulus to the sexual impulse at the same time that they are, necessarily, kept celibates ... We have not even tried to put them in the social mosquito-proof house of a reproduction of a native community, but, on the contrary, have freely exposed them to all the stings of a class of human mosquitoes whose interest is to inoculate them with every kind of human vice, and, as regards some forty thousand of them at least, have permitted their employment in duties of all other most calculated to raise the sexual impulse. (Editorial 1912: 203)

In fabricating an interdependence between African sexuality and socio-cultural context, the African in the city was rendered 'normally abnormal', and therefore the target of interventions directed to ameliorating such 'abnormality' through a combined system of segregation and social sanitation.

Obsolete machinery and the poor white problem  The 'curse of the black peril' and irruption of a psychological gaze to the impulsive African established African behaviour as a possible object of rational management at the level of the population. In 1918 the anthropologist J. S. Marwick published a paper on 'The Natives in the Larger Towns'. One among many similar papers of the time (e.g. Boehmke 1928; W. Flint 1919; Loram 1922; Radcliffe-Brown 1923; Rheinhallt-Jones 1926), this argued for drawing Africans into a system of 'positive law' that would regulate their conduct in urban settings: 'In the early history of the towns the presence of Natives was not a matter that called for regulation by positive law, as their numbers were not great, and their duties and obligations were not easily evaded in a small community' (Marwick 1918: 593). This 'early history' now buried beneath the demographic changes accompanying industrialization, the problem had become one of discipline:
The regulation of the routine of human existence in our larger towns, so that Europeans and Natives may live on such terms that mutually satisfactory relations shall subsist between the two races. This foreshadows the necessity of a finely adjusted organisation in which good legislation, good administration and good citizenship shall each bear a part. (Marwick 1918: 590)

For Loram (1922), the securement of 'mutually satisfactory' relations between Africans and Europeans required deployment of the psychological sciences: 'The machinery for dealing with the Native question has become obsolete and ineffectual ... Just as the war needed the chemist, the physicist, and the engineer, so the Native question needs the human-nature scientists, the political scientist, the economist, the psychologist and sociologist' (Loram 1922: 100). These arguments for social scientific solutions to the 'native problem' invented as a surface of intervention the interface where black bodies infiltrated the strictly delimited domain of white bodies, and so threatened to destroy the lines of sovereignty that had previously kept them apart.

At the heart of the 'poor white problem' and the Carnegie Commission's Inquiry (Carnegie Commission 1932) into it was the conviction that through social and sexual intercourse with blacks indigent whites would lose their European identity and destroy the perception by blacks of European superiority. 'Going kaffir' (Carnegie Commission 1932: xix) was a colloquialism that expressed this fear, and connoted the worst scenario, poor whites breeding and living with and in the same way as Africans. In its findings, the Carnegie Commission was unequivocal as to the deleterious effects that extended contact with 'inferior coloured races' would have on Europeans, and in concluding that its 'primary causes ... have not been physical' (W. A. Murray 1932: 127) localized its origin and solution to the domain of economics and the psychological sciences.

Construing the native component to the 'poor white problem' as of the colonists' own making, since 'under European rule the native population has greatly increased in numbers' (Carnegie Commission 1932: xix), the Commission propelled the psychological sciences deep into the interstices between white and black bodies to invest these spaces with the dividing power of discipline. Spread through the minutest points of contact between African and European (the kitchen, the nursery, the road gang, the factory and the mine shaft), these were established as an analysable network of body boundaries and breached spaces between black and white minds. This objectified the African as a source of corruption and the European as a victim, whose Protestant ethic was undermined by psychological proximity to the coarse and careless African.
Uncivilized native habits often affect the white family and break down the work of the Church, the school and the home. The native has no refinement, taste, or sense of propriety, according to European standards, but is coarse and immodest; without realizing it the whites are influenced detrimentally by contact with him. (Albertyn 1932: 40)

Cementing this increased visibility of African mentality was the invention of ‘intelligence’ as a quantitative surveillance device that partitioned the population into a hierarchy of groups and individuals against the norm of the ‘intelligence quotient’. Accordingly, and as had Fick (1927, 1929), Wilcocks (1932: 169) showed that while the environment operated to lower the intelligence quotients of poor whites, ‘the majority of poor white children ... [and] poor white adults possess normal, and, in part, even more ordinary innate intelligence’. By comparison, the ‘average intelligence’ of Africans was equivalent to that of ‘mentally defective whites’, the Africans’ ‘learning ability’ insufficient for them ‘to compete on equal terms with the average European, except on tasks of an extremely simple nature’ (Jansen van Rensburg 1938: 43). Contemporaneous with this wave of intelligence-testing arose plans for eugenic measures to protect the purity of white racial stock through the encouragement of breeding only within races and only between the ‘fit’ whose ‘germ plasm’ was ‘good’. Such direct eugenic measures were, however, never implemented, and references to eugenics in the South African Journal of Science abruptly ceased in 1932 (see Appel 1989: 612).

The psychiatric gaze as it played upon lunatics to invent the African nervous system as a discrete psycho-physical space; the ‘black peril’; the ‘poor white question’; mass intelligence-testing and the putative eugenic reflex. Each of these problems signified difference under siege, a triangular assault upon the biological ‘truth’ of European racial sovereignty which incited a new language of government that not only managed racial distinctions but would actively cultivate a culture of difference.

A 'better native': indirect rule and the cultivation of culture

By the 1930s African customs and culture were constituted as a distinct body of knowledge in the writings of anthropologists, ethnographers, psychologists and psychiatrists. This issued from the formalization of the psychological sciences in general and of sub-specialities devoted to studying the African in particular. In 1921, Radcliffe-Brown was appointed chair of the Union of South Africa’s first department of anthropology (at the University of Cape Town), and in October 1921
the first edition of *Bantu Studies and General South African Anthropology* was published. In 1925, G. P. Lestrade was appointed to head the new ethnological section of the Union’s Native Affairs Department, and within a few years courses in ‘Bantu studies’ and anthropology were offered by most universities (see Dubow 1987: 80).

Unifying these sciences was the common object that was the effect of their investigations: the African mind, behaviour, and their relation to a surrounding social and cultural space. As such they were components of a single power apparatus, a Panoptical system for the production of individual minds and surveillance of a social space traversed by power. Along with other African colonies (see Bhaba 1986; Vaughan 1991), these developments enabled previously irrelevant aspects of African life to be interolated in the gaze of coordinated scientific research and become components in the regulatory mechanisms of ‘indirect rule’. The notion of ‘indirect rule’ described the tactics adopted by Europeans to resolve the crisis posed by the perception that ‘civilization’ was eroding the malleability and docility of Africans, thereby endangering social control and threatening the economic base of cheap labour. To contain this threat the discourse of indirect rule translated African dissatisfaction into the vocabulary of ethnology, anthropology and psychology. Signs of ‘native restlessness’ thus became symptoms of ‘deculturation’ or ‘acculturation’, iatrogenic consequences of the colonial cure for African barbarism. By bolstering African adherence to ‘custom’, obedience to traditional leaders, and cultural or tribal identity, such threats could be averted (cf. Vaughan 1991: 109).

Eiselen, a lecturer in ‘Bantu studies’ at Stellenbosch University, could thus argue in 1929 that: ‘The duty of the native [is] ... not to become a black European, but to become a better native, with ideals and a culture of his own’ (Eiselen 1929: 12). Two years later, this emphasis on cultural purity was modified to form the ‘adaptationist position’, for which the ‘ideal’ African would be manufactured by fusing elements from both African and European traditions:

There is a middle way between tying him [the native] down or trying to make of him a black European, between repressionist and assimilationist schools ... It is possible to adopt an adaptationist attitude which would take out of the Bantu past what was good, and even what was merely neutral, and together with what is good in European culture for the Bantu, build up a Bantu future. (Lestrade 1931, in Dubow 1987: 85–6)

Urbanization and surveillance of the African unconscious. Within the political and economic context of adaptationism, cultural and racial difference took on a new utility. Instead of a negative incitement to
suppression, difference was now a productive element in a novel machinery of discipline that operated through its cooption to render too little difference just as problematic as too much.

It was within this context that the mind of the African attained further depth through the deployment of psychoanalytic techniques. By drawing a line through culture, the unconscious and behaviour, the domain of instinct, desire and emotion was now fabricated as a distinct entity (the 'African personality') within which strategies of disciplinary surveillance could articulate. Two 1937 studies marked the emergence of this psychoanalytic gaze: B. J. F. Laubscher's *Sex, Custom and Psycho-pathology: A Study of South African Pagan Natives*, and W. Sach's *Black Hamlet: The Mind of an African Negro as Revealed by Psychoanalysis*.

A senior psychiatrist in South Africa's Union Mental Service, Laubscher combined ethnology with psychoanalysis to impel the psychological gaze into the most intimate corners of 'Tembu tribal life', and behind the resistant front of African antipathy to European surveillance. Like the back lighting that reveals to the Panoptical observer the grid of cells in which inmates are objectified, this device identified the personalities of individual Africans as mere nodes in a matrix of indigenous culture: 'It will be seen that the cultural pattern to which the native belongs, determines the nature of his mental content' (Laubscher 1937: xi).

Established in this way as 'phylogenetically on a par with the Oedipus phase in ontogenetic development' (Laubscher 1937: 58), Africans isolated from their tribal settings were psychologically ill-equipped to cope with the sudden surges of instinct and libido that emanated from the deep psychic well of the now distinctly defined African unconscious: 'The native is not by nature bloodthirsty, but his aggressive instinctive or pugnacious propensities are excitable, easily roused and explosive ... His aggressive libido flows outwards, becomes readily externalized, and sudden, impulsive assaults, often fatal, are common' (pp. 306–7). Now a visible complex, the African unconscious became a site for the installation of a psycho-social calculus directed to managing the African body through the African mind.

Finding that 'sadistic sexual acts on European women' (p. 257) occurred infrequently among rural Africans as compared to Africans in the towns, Laubscher concluded that their prevention in urban settings could be achieved by manipulating tribal rites relating to African masculinity. So, because neglect of the circumcision rite created 'a marked instability ... in behaviour and attitude to practical things' (p. 134), it should not only be permitted but actively encouraged among urban Africans (p. 134). In contrast to this stabilizing rite was the 'racial
characteristic of sharing and mutual assistance' (p. 135). In rural areas this was an admirable attribute. In the towns, however, it 'facilitates his comprehension of communistic ideals ... and makes the native prone to the influence of agitators' (pp. 196–7). Such altruism was therefore to be met with an educational antidote that could engender a desire for private property that was consistent with 'capitalistic administration' (p. 197).

Where Laubscher's ethnological approach began with the construction of traditional African culture through its direct observation, Sachs (1937) concentrated the psychoanalytic gaze to raise a single individual – 'John' – into the eye of disciplinary power. Sachs too fabricated the interzone of European civilization and African tradition as a psychological no man's land which, lying between the clearly demarcated domains of the kraal and the city, produced African psyches that were flawed and split: 'John, moreover, had an additional tragedy which shadows the life of almost every African. The circumstances of his life, the clash of his two worlds, constantly caused inner division. Every African leads a double life in the full sense of the psychological concept' (W. Sachs 1937: 174–5).

While Laubscher and Sachs interpolated the African soul into divergent political projects – Laubscher's an inferiorizing and repressive one, Sachs' a paternalistic one – their disagreement solidified the space between African tradition and European civilization as a region of psychological disintegration bounded on the one side by the 'noble savage', and on the other by the psychologically cloven 'detribalized' African of the city.

Further recognition of detribalization's dangerous effects came with R. E. Phillips' *The Bantu in the City. A Study of Cultural Adjustment on the Witwatersrand* (1948). One of the first questionnaire-based surveys of the African psyche, this elicited responses from '232 Africans in 49 different occupations' to dissect the interface between rural tradition and urban 'civilization'. By extending psychological surveillance into the eye of the urban African, this became an ocular relay in a normalizing network of gazes that isolated for inspection those situations which stimulated 'increases in anxiety and inner tension' (R. E. Phillips 1948: 74), thereby to enable monitoring of 'the emotional orientation of the African and the dominant role which the personality of the acculturator plays in the matter of cultural transference in Africa' (p. 187). Alongside the negative effects of the violent police methods used in suppressing African resistance, the corrupting effects of urbanization were located to all those situations where 'decent, coloured natives', observed 'the white man under conditions which are not favourable to the development of respect on the part of the observer':
African youths seem to be everywhere; they see everything ... To illustrate: the writer found a lad of about fifteen years of age ... engaged as a helper to an elderly woman who kept a magazine stall on Eloff Street, Johannesburg, for the sale of overseas *pulps* - 'True Confessions,' 'Modern Romances,' 'Love Magazine' etc. When visited, the lad was engrossed in his reading of a profusely illustrated pamphlet with actual photographs of nude White women, entitled 'The Beauty of the Female Form.' (R. E. Phillips 1948: 105)

The imposition of apartheid and installation of moral surveillance. The 1948 imposition of statutory apartheid in South Africa involved a draconian extension of existing state controls over the geography of African mobility. By 1952 'Africans required official permission to travel and not to travel, to work and not to work ... Permits were required to look for jobs, to take jobs, and then to change jobs' (Posel 1991: 116). The 1953 introduction of 'Bantu Education' complemented these repressive controls with disciplinary tactics to cement further separate development through the manipulation of mind and language. The result was an intensification of organized and informal African resistance. In turn, this provoked a resurgence in the development of psychological surveillance devices to monitor the African personality and trace the behavioural outcomes of its mutation under the pressures of urbanization and apartheid repression.

In 1953 Biesheuvel published his 'Moral Attitudes Inventory', a questionnaire that interrogated 'the manner in which Africans become aware of the conduct that is required of them in their relations with Western society' (Biesheuvel 1953: 13). By 1957 the 'Moral Attitudes Inventory' had been applied to more than 1,000 Africans from 'all walks of life' and 'from all parts of the country and many native reserves and locations' (Biesheuvel 1957: 310).

An understanding of what Africans know concerning European manners, morals, ethics, and legal codes, of the attitudes which they are adopting towards the standards of conduct to which we expect them to conform, is ... exceedingly important for the citizen generally and for those who as educators, administrators, social workers or law-makers have the well-being and future development of Africans in their hands. (Biesheuvel 1957: 309-10)

An observatory that transformed resistance into a calculable capacity, the inventory inducted Africans into imaginary conversations with five 'speakers' by having them rate the 'wisdom' of each speaker's opinions. These opinions were reflections upon everyday situations involving questions of belief, manners, ethical conduct or legal duty. For instance, 'William' said: "'One must be courteous for it is the custom of our
own people”, while ‘Jack’ thought: “Why should the African be courteous to the white man, who is never courteous to him?” (Biesheuvel 1957: 310). Through their responses, ordinary Africans objectified themselves within the categories of this colonial discourse on culture and behaviour to feed the machinery of surveillance with information about the stability of the social order.

The attempted control of African attitudes and relations towards white authority in the late 1950s was thus enabled through manufacture by the psychological sciences of the African mind as the origin and container of attitudes and values. Through instruments such as Biesheuvel’s (1957) ‘Moral Attitudes Inventory’, R. Sherwood’s (1958) ‘hypothetical personality models’ of the ideal ‘Bantu clerk’, and Reader’s (1963) ‘marginal man’, these values were scrutinized and used to plot the lines of opposition and acquiescence running between the sovereign centres of white domination and black resistance. The effect of this was to problematize further the question of African personality. For where studies such as Biesheuvel’s had shown most Africans manifested loyalty towards the government and acceptance of South African society’s moral and legal codes (Biesheuvel 1955, 1957, 1959), other researchers had found less acceptance, and even outright hostility to the state (e.g. Bloom 1960).

The disparity between fabrications of the African as apartheid’s loyal subject and its resistant opponent provoked claims that questionnaire-based measurements of personality were flawed, that they measured not the African personality itself, but instead revealed ‘mere lip-service to the culture of the dominant group, prompted by fear of disapproval or by an attempt to please the examiner by giving him what one believes he wants’ (Biesheuvel 1959: 145). A solution to this problem crystallized in the shape of the projective test. Using pictures rather than words to provoke the unconscious into revealing its tendencies, this could bypass the African’s readiness to ‘please the examiner’ by penetrating to the black skin concealed by the white mask of what was now recognized as pseudo-acquiescence to colonial domination.

**Projective testing and the creation of the African as a dangerous individual** Following Lee’s (1950) early experiments on the projective testing of Africans, Sherwood had by 1957 developed an ‘area-first’ approach to thematic apperception testing. This dissected the personality into discrete yet interacting sub-components such as the relationships between ‘father–son, father–daughter, mother–son’, and other constructs such as ‘person alone, aggression, love triangle’ (E. T. Sherwood 1957: 166). In this way, individuals subjected to the procedure were fabricated...
as microcosms of their surrounding authority figures, intimate relationships and cultural norms that had been internalized or were being eroded by detribalization.

A method that penetrated the innermost core of the African personality it manufactured, this Africanized Thematic Apperception Test allowed a new substrate of unconscious energies to crystallize beneath the ethico-moral topography of contact between black and white that the earlier regime of attitudinal surveillance had illuminated. Manifest from 1960 to 1975 in a spate of studies devoted to refining the methodology of African projective testing (e.g. Baran 1971; Erasmus 1975; Minnaar 1975; Pretorius 1977), this ballooning of the African personality invented urban African townships as analysable constellations of individual minds criss-crossed by the projections, perceptions, impulses and needs that originated from the personalities of their inhabitants.

The threshold of psychological description lowered beneath the line of consciousness, urban Africans were interrogated not through the overt meanings of what they said, but rather the 'unconscious' dynamics that now underlay the spoken word. '[A] TAT picture [is] ... a question addressed to the subject – addressed both to his conscious and his unconscious mind' (E. T. Sherwood 1957: 167). Epitomizing the paradoxical power of discipline to increase itself through resistance was De Ridder's 1961 publication of the Personality of the Urban African. Against a background text that microscopically detailed the apperceptive interstices of 2,500 Johannesburg Africans, De Ridder noted how 'recent developments have focused attention upon a particular type of individual' (De Ridder 1961: 118). These 'developments' were the 'anti-pass' campaigns of Langa and Sharpeville, where in 1960 black resistance and apartheid oppression led to the shooting of sixty-seven Africans. The 'particular type of individual' was a resistance leader – 'usually referred to by the Europeans in Africa as an agitator or an African nationalist' (De Ridder 1961: 118) – and it was this threat that provoked De Ridder to lend a full chapter to analysing the personality of this dangerous individual. Leaving no doubt that treason itself was an epiphenomenon when viewed against the personality, De Ridder concluded that:

The subject is definitely not adjusted to the prevailing social conditions. He shows very strong feelings of insecurity and anxiety feelings and is frustrated in the satisfaction of his needs, desires and ambitions. His resulting embitterment and his feelings of being discriminated against find outlet in criticism of the prevailing social set-up in general and of Europeans in particular. (De Ridder 1961: 127)
Unsurprisingly in this context of struggle between black and white for a hold over sovereign power, the last projective test designed to assess the African personality was explicitly targeted to identifying the African as an imminent danger to Europeans. Published in 1975, the ‘TAT Zulu’ (‘TAT-Z’) was presented to respondents as ‘a test to measure the power of your imagination’ (Erasmus 1975: frontispiece). Concealing in this concern with imagination the productive power of psychological surveillance, the ‘TAT-Z’ was preoccupied with relationships of domination and subordination, control and rebellion. The ‘aggression card’, for instance, invented as its objects of surveillance the ‘extent of underlying aggression towards Whites ... [and the] degree of aggression ... among the Blacks themselves’ (Erasmus 1984: 17). A scientific rendition of the earlier ‘curse of the black peril’, the scoring manual’s hierarchy of response types supplied a code to seriate Africans on a ladder of threat towards the European.

The anatomy of power

The people are fighting, but the White man in uniform will control them successfully
Perceives aggression towards the White but he himself is clearly negative towards this aggression and rejects it
The people are fighting, although the White man in uniform will not be able to control them, they do not harm him
It is a festival and the White man in uniform is merely a spectator
They are fighting, want to attack White man [sic] or are aggressive towards him without the respondent’s taking up an attitude in favour of the figure
They are going to attack the White man but not necessarily kill him
They are going to kill the White man

(Erasmus 1984: 51)

Monitored by European psychologists as a pre-given entity that would ultimately yield its ‘truth’, the early 1970s confirmed the African personality as also the effect of a more general power mutation. For it was then that the psychological gaze became autonomous of its scientific conduits and internalized by Africans themselves.

Black consciousness and the alienated African

Viewed by conventional historians as among the high points of African resistance to colonial oppression, the 1970s emergence of Black Con-
sciousness was also the moment where disciplinary fabrication of the African personality found its greatest confirmation.

At the heart of this kind of thinking is the realization by the Blacks that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed ... Hence thinking along lines of Black Consciousness makes the Black man see himself as a being, entire in himself, and not as an extension of a broom or additional leverage to some machine. (Biko 1988/1972: 83)

For with Black Consciousness the African personality could exist even without the formal technologies of the psychological sciences. Instead, Black Consciousness being ‘essentially an inward-looking process’, the African personality was now the end-product of a confessional discourse in which the speaking subject was also the object of what was said. A recursive mechanism that refracted the psychological gaze through a revisionist history of the past, Black Consciousness invented Africans as the outcome of their own subjugation:

It becomes more necessary to see the truth as it is if you realize that the only vehicle for change are these people who have lost their personality. The first step therefore is to make the black man come to himself; to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity; to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth. (Biko 1988/1970a: 43)

Exemplifying the disciplinary process by which a positive power that creates is concealed in the identification of a repressive power being lifted, Black Consciousness enabled the recognition that ‘blacks are suffering from inferiority complex – a result of 300 years of deliberate oppression’ (Biko 1988/1970b: 35). Expressed as a strategic relation, knowledge is the other side of the power coin, and it was now possible through the device of ‘alienation’ to shape a new African personality that was the mirror image of the old.

In 1973 Manganyi’s Being-Black-in-the-World compared the body image of healthy black subjects with that of black paraplegics. The effect of this investigation was to pathologize all Africans, for far from the ‘dangerous individuals’ of white psychological surveillance, the healthy subjects manifested the same diffusion of body-boundaries associated with the non-coping life strategies of hospitalized paraplegics (Manganyi 1973). Installation of the ordinary African as a psychological paraplegic demanded that the aetiology of this dysfunctionality be defined, and Manganyi’s work fabricated the African body as an effect of racist socialization:
In the African experience there was over time developed a sociological schema of the black body prescribed by white standards. The prescribed attributes of this sociological schema have ... been entirely negative. It should be considered natural under these circumstances for an individual black person to conceive of his body image as something entirely undesirable, something which paradoxically must be kept at a distance outside of one's self so to speak. (Manganyi 1973: 51)

Borrowing from Fanon (1967), Manganyi later defined this second order problem as 'a racial epidermal schema' (1977: 15), and by 1981 the imperial forces that sustained this 'white mask' had been lifted further into visibility through historical investigations into how 'Euro-American psychologists have had a definite function and role in the history of (neo)colonial oppression' (Bulhan 1981: 25).

Feeding on its own resistance to invisibility and confirming the inevitable extension of surveillance into every dark space of the social and the psychological, the disciplinary micro-powers of the psychological sciences had moved full circle by the 1980s. So, just as the African personality had coalesced under the earlier regime to invent the African as a dangerous individual, it was now the personality of the white man that was the source of danger, corruption and alienation.

A liberatory psychology and the diffusion of danger

In 1985 the first edition of a psychological journal called *Psychology in Society* was published. This collected the previously scattered writings of 'critical psychologists' to consolidate a new psycho-social space, 'firmly rooted in the context of a changing South Africa and in the service of liberation' (Editorial 1986: 1). Against the preoccupation of earlier regimes with interrogating a pre-given African personality, the new focus was a human subject as the product of a dialectical relationship between the individual and the social:

Critical psychology is based on the rejection of the polar extremes of psychologism (the reduction of cultural phenomena to psychological categories) and sociologism (social determinism). To the extent that sociology exclusively embraces the study of supra-individual forces while dismissing psychic [sic] structure and agency it becomes sterile and devoid of meaning. But, on the other hand, to the extent that psychology tries to explain social phenomena by appealing simply to individual subjectivity it succumbs to the ideology of subjectivism which obscures the penetration of the individual by the social order. (Ivey 1986: 23)

Under this new theoretical configuration the 'African personality' was
dissolved (Couve 1986), for within it the very notions of personality and the individual were themselves constituted as ideological fictions of industrial capitalism (Dawes 1986: 33–4).

Consistent with its mission to 'carve out the foundation of a practice which contributes to the real, not imagined, social arrangements in which full human lives may be lived' (Foster 1986: 65), this new psychology traversed a space of historical depth and interdisciplinary breadth: from the beginnings of colonial occupation at the Cape (Lambley 1980), into the possible future of a democratic state (Seedat 1993); and from the exploitative interests underpinning capitalist industry (Muller and Cloete 1987), to the sinister darkness of torture and detention chambers (Foster and Skinner 1990).

The danger that had provoked the initial installation and continuous renegotiation of the African personality was thus relocated from the individual and diffused into an all-pervasive threat which infiltrated each and every person, profession, practice, relationship and environment. By the 1990s, danger, which initially had resided only in the dark space of mind, had with this most recent power mutation come to be seen as lurking everywhere, each and every individual an agent of moral surveillance, scrutinizing others with infinite care so as to locate them in an unwritten taxonomy of psycho-political correctness or deviance. The diffusion of danger is therefore complete and totalizing, and the psychological sciences, for all their characterization by some of the sentries of sovereignty as irrelevant and ineffectual in an African context, are, as a mode of discipline, omnipresent and inescapable.

Notes

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1. For a social and intellectual history of the 'African mind' and 'ethno-psychiatry' in Kenya, Madagascar, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and other African countries, see McCulloch (1995).

2. A 1996 reprinting of this text (W. Sachs 1996) includes two introductory essays (by Saul Dubow and Jacqueline Rose) that offer a social history of Sachs and the origins of a South African psychoanalytic tradition.