

Psychology and humanism in the democratic South African imagination

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Abstract

Attentive to a psychology underlying South Africa's democratic imaginations, I describe how Nelson Mandela's intervention at a critical moment of conflict management, along with mechanisms such as at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Moral Regeneration Movement, invoked and enacted a humanising ethos. Centred on the ideas of restraint, empathy, emotional proximity, witnessing, and fluid generative subjectivities, the humanising ethos was awakened to support the process of reconciliation, social justice, and the making of inclusive and socially just communities. Inspired by a decolonial attitude, and in part successfully enacted in support of the country's liberal democratic ideals, the elaboration of this psychology has been limited by ongoing socio-economic disparities and a ruling psychology that naturalises extractive relations.

Keywords

Decolonial ethics, decolonial psychology, humanism, reflexive critical openness, South Africa, subjectivities

I focus on the psychology underlying South Africa's negotiated settlement and transformation aspirations. I illustrate how Nelson Mandela's humanising leadership during a perilous moment, that could have placed the country on the brink of a full-scale civil war, and the country's development interventions – such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) – when read together as a gestalt, inscribed a psychology of humanism, which in part resonated with a decolonial ethic. In the concluding sections, I reflect on how this humanising ethos has been limited by persistent socio-economic disparities, inadequate

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spaces for public participation in governance decisions, and a ruling psychology that justifies extractive relationships.

My explication is alert to and inspired by diverse literature; it is alert to the writings on Black consciousness inspired resistance psychology (see Ally & Ally, 2008; Bulhan, 1985; Hook, 2004; Manganyi, 1973; Mngxitama, Alexander, & Gibson, 2008; Seedat & Lazarus, 2011), the psychological dimensions of the TRC (Aiken, 2016; Hamber & Kibble, 1999; Mamdani, 1997; Stevens, 2005), and the challenges of various development initiatives (see Cuthbertson, 2008; Wood, 2000); it draws on Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2014) interpretation of Nelson Mandela's political life as the embodiment 'of reconciliation and post-racial humanism' (p. 906), in part representing a psychological orientation to African Studies (see Ratele, 2016); Zagacki's (2003) analysis of Mandela's 'significant political, dialogic and performance effort' (p. 711) at maintaining dialogue at a critical juncture in the country's negotiation process; and Eze's (2012) reflections on the 'rhetoric of empathy' (p. 122). In resonance with Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2014) exemplification of Mandela's political life as a conscious de-linking from the colonial and apartheid projects of war, racial hatred, and racial segregation, Zagacki (2003) and Eze (2012) suggest that Mandela's paradigm of peace was evident in his speeches, including ones delivered at the memorial services for Helen Joseph, an anti-apartheid activist, and poet Ingrid Jonker (Eze, 2012), and his televised address soon after the 10 April 1993 assassination of Chris Hani, the Secretary General of the South African Communist Party (SACP) and member of the African National Congress' (ANC) armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (see Hani, 1991; Zagacki, 2003). These authors offer conceptual hints about the psychology that I describe in this article.

I suggest that this decolonial psychology of humanism was inherent to both Mandela's leadership, and the country's negotiated settlement and development interventions (see Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014, 2015; Posel, 2002; Swartz, 2006). This psychology was grounded in the idea of a post-racial humanity – the rainbow nation – and underscored by critical decolonial ethics and reflexive critical openness as epistemic virtue; the enactment of reflexive critical openness is central to epistemic practices, namely, ways of thinking and making knowledge of lived realities and resisting racist discourses and racist knowledge-making structures (Fricker, 2003; Maldonado-Torres, 2007). The notion of critical decolonial ethics signifies a break from the paradigm of war intrinsic to 'Euro-North American-centric modernity' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014, p. 909) and is 'premised on a radically humanistic phenomenology of liberation aimed at rescuing those people reduced by racism to the category of the "wretched of the earth" through recovery of their lost ontological density and epistemic virtues' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014, pp. 910–911). Reflexive critical openness, as an epistemic virtue, may be understood as the psychological capacity needed to be mindful of (and resist) the influences of what was internalised through colonial and apartheid epistemic socialisation, 'a social training of the interpretative and affective attitudes in play when we are told things by other people' (Fricker, 2003, p. 161). As described below, this psychology of humanism, assuming a trans-disciplinary perspective, resonated with decolonial thought and key concepts inherent to both critical forms of community and peace psychology.

Reflexive critical openness and reconstituting emotional worlds

The killing of Chris Hani occurred when, even though negotiations had faltered several times, the negotiators were close to reaching major agreements (see Simanowitz, 2013). Chris Hani, widely accepted as a possible successor to Mandela, was killed by a right-wing Polish Immigrant, Janusz Waluś. At the TRC hearings, Waluś and his accomplice, Clive Derby-Lewis, disclosed that the murder was meant to derail the negotiation processes, detonate a full-scale race war in the country, and undermine the establishment of democracy (see Simanowitz, 2013; Zagacki, 2003).

The reactions to the murder were underscored by a racialised dynamic manifest in Black anger and White fear. In a racialised emotionally and socially disconnected world, Blacks experienced the murder of Chris Hani as yet another of many instances of White intransigence and unwillingness to abandon apartheid privilege. The killing re-roused a sense that Whites were indifferent and uncaring about Black lives. Many radicalised youth questioned the wisdom of non-racialism and cross-racial dialogue in the absence of social regard, commitment to social justice, and democracy (see Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Zagacki, 2003). Juxtaposed against expressions of Black anger, that to a limited extent assumed violent forms in some parts of the country, White fears found substance through the re-fabrication of stereotypical notions of Black peril (see Simanowitz, 2013; Zagacki, 2003). The moment seemed filled with a combination of elements that would deepen socio-political polarisation, scupper the peacemaking process, and trigger widespread violence (Simanowitz, 2013; Zagacki, 2003).

Comprehending the psychological and political import of that single murderous event, Mandela (1993), during his televised address, enacted reflexive critical openness (see Fricker, 2003; Zagacki, 2003). In the discussion that follows hereunder, I reference excerpts from Mandela's televised address (see Mandela, 1993, for the full text). He appealed to Black South Africans to transcend the impulse for angry retaliation and retribution as he had done personally after 27 years of incarceration. Mandela utilised 'non-angry' rhetoric (see Zagacki & Boleyn-Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 295) to publicly hold and articulate the substance of Black anger ('What has happened is a national tragedy that has touched millions of people, across the political and colour divide; our grief and anger is tearing us apart') and simultaneously encourage public mourning ('Our shared grief and legitimate anger will find expression in nationwide commemorations that coincide with the funeral service; these funeral service[s] and rallies must be conducted with dignity').

When Mandela asserted, 'our shared grief and legitimate anger will find expression in nationwide commemorations that coincide with the funeral service', he was affirming the establishment of public psychological spaces for mourning ('We will give disciplined expression to our emotions at our pickets, prayer meetings and gatherings, in our homes, our churches and our schools'). The public spaces were to recognise the historical hurt and violations inflicted by colonialism as violence ('A white man, full of prejudice and hate, came to our country and committed a deed so foul that our whole nation now teeters on the brink of disaster'). Mandela was appealing for psychologically holding spaces in which South Africans may mourn ('We are a nation in mourning') the loss of an individual heroic life, namely, Chris Hani, and the greater collective 'disaster' inflicted by over 300 years of combined colonial and apartheid oppression.

The apartheid government had criminalised funerals arranged to commemorate the deaths of anti-apartheid activists, often declaring them illegal and deploying the security apparatus to disrupt such events. Mandela's affirmation of public mourning spaces, a defiance of apartheid policing practice, invited Blacks towards reflexive critical openness – a reflexivity that would allow Blacks to recognise the collective trauma produced by a history of oppression, connect to their unnamed psychological pain, and mourn losses that apartheid colonialism refused to recognise. We may assume that Mandela recognised that mourning the losses inflicted by colonialism, and as reignited by the death of Chris Hani, was necessary to interrupt the inter-generational transmission of collective trauma and thus the cycles of violence in South Africa. Collective trauma may be transmitted trans-generationally when there is no space or opportunity to mourn losses related to occupation and dispossession of land, deaths, and imprisonment and overall structural violence (see Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2009; Brave Heart, Chase, Elkins, & Altschul, 2011; Weingarten, 2011, for detailed explications on inter-generational trauma).

Just as Mandela called on Blacks to exercise restraint under provocative conditions and find psychological healing in collective public mourning, he appealed to Whites to transcend their

apartheid socialisation that produced the myth of pervasive Black danger, positioned Blacks as unworthy of emotional regard and care, denied black pain, and produced distinct racialised emotional worlds. Within apartheid's spatially, emotionally, and socially segregated arrangements, Whites were socialised to limit empathy and compassion to their own and withhold emotional regard from the dangerous, incomprehensible, and emotionally volatile Other (see Bhabha, 1994; Bulhan, 2015; Ndlovu-Gatshehi, 2013).

Alert to the absurd effects of apartheid socialisation, such as the racialisation of the Black body and denial of Black pain, Mandela asked Whites to exercise empathic witnessing ('Now is the time for our white compatriots, from whom messages of condolence continue to pour in, to reach out with an understanding of the grievous loss to our nation, to join in the memorial services and the funeral commemorations'). By invoking empathic witnessing, referring to 'the capacity to recognise and express a common bond with another' (Weingarten, 2011, p. 2), irrespective of the social differentiation that arises from race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and so forth, Mandela was asking White South Africans to be reflexively conscious of the racism produced by colonisation and apartheid, to break voluntarily from the apartheid's epistemic socialisation, and to recognise and witness Black pain and loss. His appeal was for Whites to enact compassionate witnessing and for Blacks to mourn losses, both by way of emotional propinquity (see Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002; Zagacki, 2003) and in collective public mourning spaces.

Generative, fluid, and moral subjectivities

In signifying restraint in the expression of anger and indicating collective mourning for Blacks and compassionate witnessing for Whites, Mandela was inscribing a humanism intended to restore the epistemic virtue of both the oppressed and oppressor. This restoration process was tied to a particular construction of subjectivities. In stark contradiction to the grand discourses of colonial apartheid, that essentialised and racialised identities as fixed and immutable, Mandela positioned human subjectivity as dynamic, generative, and multiple (see Phillips & Zappen, 2006). Mandela appealed to the 'listening audience', both Blacks and Whites, to be receptive and open to the possibilities of exercising reflexive critical openness (see Fricker, 2003). Despite the totalising ideological intentions and violent nature of colonialism and apartheid that fixed subjectivities within hegemonic discourses (see Phillips & Zappen, 2006), as embodied by 'a white man, full of prejudice and hate, [who] came to our country and committed a deed so foul that our whole nation now teeters on the brink of disaster', Mandela pointed to the reflexive critical openness exercised by 'a white woman, of Afrikaner origin, [who] risked her life so that we may know, and bring to justice, this assassin'. That a White woman, perhaps also a reference to feminised capacity for empathy, despite her racialised identity and subject position, acted outside the precepts of apartheid to exercise autonomous agency in the interest of social justice raised hopes of Whites mobilising their capacity to re-humanise themselves and show willingness to re-enter the world of a common moral humanity (see Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002). In his embodiment of critical reflexive openness, Mandela invited Whites to affectively and cognitively imagine themselves as caring and compassionate social actors rather than perpetrators of a distancing and dividing ideology. In Mandela's humanism, the restoration of Whites' epistemic virtue could begin with Whites imagining caring, empathic, and compassionate subjectivities for themselves.

Similarly, that a Black man who represented radical political thought and liberatory violence ('Chris Hani was a soldier. He believed in iron discipline') could also be a 'soldier for peace' pointed to possibilities for Blacks to transcend their subject positions arising from the subjugating politics of apartheid and to rethink the place of liberatory violence. In positioning Hani as both a liberation fighter ('a soldier' . . . who 'believed in iron discipline') and a 'soldier of peace' who was engaged

in the prospects that dialogue offered for establishing ‘democracy that will bring real, tangible changes in the lives of the working people, the poor, the jobless, the landless’, Mandela was appealing specifically to radicalised youth to be reflexive and open to the possibilities offered by critical openness. In inviting Blacks to imagine themselves as ‘soldiers of peace’, Mandela adroitly linked the political and the psychological in that restraint and mourning within moral limits (‘These funeral service[s] and rallies must be conducted with dignity’) was contingent on a mindfulness of the triggers and consequences of violence (‘We must not let the men who worship war, and who lust after blood, precipitate actions that will plunge our country into another Angola’), equated with a break from the colonial and apartheid project of violence, and an affirmation of values of freedom (‘Any lack of discipline is trampling on the values that Chris Hani stood for. Those who commit such acts serve only the interests of the assassins, and desecrate his memory’).

The multiple subjectivities that Mandela invoked was meant to open up the space for South Africans across the White–Black racial divide to delink from the colonial project of war (‘We must not let the men who worship war, and who lust after blood, precipitate actions that will plunge our country into another Angola’) and embrace the intentions of dialogue for democracy (‘Our decisions and actions will determine whether we use our pain, our grief and our outrage to move forward to what is the only lasting solution for our country – an elected government of the people, by the people and for the people’). Mandela was creating the psychological climate to reinstate the political processes of dialogue and the negotiation (‘When we, as one people, act together decisively, with discipline and determination, nothing can stop us’) that would see apartheid overturned and democracy established (‘an elected government of the people, by the people and for the people’).

The idea of dynamic generative subjectivities obtained further traction and amplification in the MRM 7 years later. The MRM, established in 2000, was initially led by the then Deputy Minister of Education, Father Smangalis Mkhathshwa and re-launched as a civil society initiative in 2002. The MRM’s draft chapter presented eight nominal values to help support peaceful subjectivities (see MRM, 2005). While in some respects these derived values seemed to have exceeded the constitutional brief (see Swartz, 2006), they placed the accent on supporting democratised subjectivities that would be animated by the principles of human dignity, freedom, and the rule of law; espouse distributive justice, family, and community values; promote loyalty, honesty, and integrity; and safeguard regard for all people, justice, fairness, and peaceful co-existence. When read as an isolated intervention, the MRM may be critiqued for shifting the focus away from the substantial issues of redress and distributive justice to issues of narrow morality (see Swartz, 2006). Despite such critiques, this moral rejuvenation process imbued the decolonial psychology with social and egalitarian values, representing a break from the exclusionary, oppressive, and perverted morality of apartheid and supported the making of generative subjectivities that were to be awakened to democratic humanism through the values of racial tolerance, fairness, social regard, peaceful co-existence, and social justice, as well as a commitment to material well-being. Space constraints do not permit a full elaboration of the Race and Values in Education Initiative (RVI), but suffice to mention that, parallel with the MRM, it too intended to kindle common values that would enable constructive enactments of collective and individual citizenship (see Swartz, 2006).

As an intervention in humanising conflict management and transformation, Mandela’s televised address, underpinned by a rhetoric of empathy to hold the anger and grief that Black South Africans felt at the time (see Eze, 2012; Zagacki, 2003), invoked a decolonial psychology of humanism under conditions of racial provocation, collective loss, and grief – a psychology that contained an appeal to South Africans to forge new ways of expressing hurt and anger, delink from the colonial and apartheid traditions of violence, adopt generative subjectivities, and establish non-racial social cohesion, supportive of dialogue that was compatible with the country’s democratic aspirations.

Mandela called on South Africans across the colour divide to resist polarising behavioural and emotional repertoires inherent to apartheid epistemic socialisation and commit to non-racial and socially inclusive individual and collective mourning spaces. Mandela's overall moral authority and credibility, and more specifically the performance of critical reflexive openness throughout his televised speech, helped his conflict management intervention obtain the requisite public receptivity; despite his 27 years of imprisonment, Mandela upheld ethical political practices, including a commitment to negotiations in his engagements with his own party and the apartheid government. Likewise, in his televised speech, he maintained a dignified and 'non-angry' persona and language. In that moment of addressing the polarised country, Mandela embodied visionary moral-ethical leadership inclusive of critical reflexive openness. He was able to reflect and contain White fear and Black anger and loss and yet focus the country on a vision of a future democratic dispensation (see Zagacki, 2003). In as much as this intervention helped to restore the negotiation process and avert a possible racial war, it did not give adequate consideration to the impact of the persistent Black-White asymmetrical power relations and the White elite's monopolisation of economic resources on meaningful conflict resolution and transformation. In hindsight, more than two decades after this intervention, and despite the gains of political independence, it is obvious that the next iterative loop of conflict resolution and transformation and the associated work of conflict analysis would need to address the economic determinants of peace.

Truth, reconciliation, and humanism

The decolonial psychology of humanism that appealed to the recovery of the epistemic virtue of both Blacks and Whites obtained continuation and amplification in the TRC. The TRC's epistemic restoration process relied on mobilising essentialist humanising capacities: victims' generative capacities to forgive the unforgivable and the perpetrators' generative capacities to act on their conscience to express sincere remorse and take responsibility for the pain and suffering of their torturous actions.

Despite the many flaws in the overall TRC process, Gobodo-Madikizela's (2002) work on the significance of authentic apologies in creating languages of forgiveness alerts us to the profound epistemic restoration and humanism underlying the TRC process. Using the concept of *paradox of remorse*, she offers a compelling empirical argument to elucidate the humanisation processes that occurred within the rare intersections between remorseful apology and forgiveness. Forgiveness does not imply forgetting and does not offer immediate ease from pain for victims, nor does it imply relinquishing victims' rights to distributive and restorative justice. Instead, this psychology underlying the TRC assumed that just as full disclosures, including sincere apologies and remorse, may serve to humanise perpetrators; the decision to forgive, especially morally depraved actions, frees victims of vengeful thoughts and emotions such as rage, revenge, and bitterness. This psychology assumed the act of forgiveness allows for the release of psychic energies for constructive choices and opens up space for victims to accede to perpetrators' sincere appeals to be re-admitted into the 'world of moral humanity' (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002, p. 12).

So, continuing the accent on the psychological that was evident in Mandela's speeches, the TRC's process appealed to the transformative capacities of both victims and perpetrators; just as perpetrators were to empathise with the victims' pain and establish an authentic human connection with victims, the victims were expected to live with the moral contradictions of forgiving the unforgivable and deeply regard the 'woundedness' (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002, p. 21) of perpetrators. Here, we may read the TRC as seeking to encourage a 'reciprocal emotional process' (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002, p. 22), through which perpetrators could experience profound pain and remorse about their atrocities committed in the name of apartheid; they were expected to shift away from

having depersonalised their victims to comprehending the victims' pain and suffering and acknowledging the humanness of victims; perpetrators were to assume moral responsibility. As such, this psychology gestured to apartheid's perpetrators to voluntarily use the TRC space to express sincere remorse and regret, to enact empathy for the victims of apartheid, to take responsibility for the consequences of their complicity and silence, and consider ways of promoting restorative justice. Victims, on the contrary, were to exercise agency allowing for perpetrators' rehumanisation and re-entry into the world of moral humanity. In Gobodo-Madikizela's (2002) analysis, the TRC aimed to affirm the victim as a 'human being instead of a dehumanised other' (p. 23) and simultaneously re-humanise the perpetrator (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002). This dialectical humanisation process that constituted the substance of epistemic restoration echoed a needs-based approach to reconciliation; in the logic of the TRC's psychology, reconciliation was contingent on creating spaces for the emotional needs of both Blacks and Whites, that is, spaces for Blacks to assert their agency and reconstitute their sense of self and personhood and for Whites to reconstitute their moral persona (see Aiken, 2016; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002; Hamber & Kibble, 1999; Mamdani, 1997; Stevens, 2005; Worthington, 1998; Worthington & Wade, 1999, for more on diverse approaches to reconciliation).

The psychology of humanism, inclusive of moral rejuvenation, epistemic restoration, and the aim to establish a moral order, linked the healing of victims to that of perpetrators, privileged compassion and forgiveness over retribution and punishment, and defended truthfulness and transparency over concealment and secrecy. Thus, the TRC process and subsequently the MRM also motioned the development of a particular public morality that would aim to delink democratic subjectivities from the violence of apartheid colonialism and the practices of depravity, greed, crime, corruption, violence, accumulation, secrecy, and exclusion. The moral dimension to the decolonial psychology of humanism gained specific elaboration in the planned MRM that imagined tolerant, respectful, and caring subjectivities that were to be animated by the values of honesty and truthfulness and those underlying the country's democratic ideals.

A humanising ethos supporting peace promotion

The decolonial psychology of humanism obtains particular salience when it is considered and located within South Africa's overall democratisation and transformation project that may be read as a national peace promotion initiative and which incorporated the classical measures of conflict management, resolution, and transformation and emphasised the making of non-racial community. *Conflict management*, focused on preventing outbreaks of violent episodes and limiting situational violent escalations, included interventions such as the National Peace Accord and appeals for calm and restraint by moral leaders at moments of potential violent escalation, as was exemplified by Mandela's televised address after Hani's killing. *Conflict resolution*, referring to the many processes by which combative parties reached agreements, encompassed 'Talks about Talks', the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) and the Multi-Party Negotiating Forum (MPNF) that together produced the negotiated political settlement (see South African History Online, 2013). While conflict management and resolution were not mutually exclusive, they were used differentially to shift South Africa from violent encounters to non-violent exchanges and dialogic spaces and then towards spaces for substantive transformative work. *Conflict transformation (or peacebuilding)*, seated primarily within the post-1994 mechanisms described above, aimed to address the deep-seated socio-economic, political, and psychological drivers of conflicts and shifted the focus from containment of violent episodes, namely, negative peace and the negotiated political settlement, to conditions for positive peace, including attempts to dismantle the systems of colonial and apartheid violence and governance, reconciliation and healing, reconstruction of

polarised communities, the reformation of public institutions, facilitating socio-economic equity, establishing harmonious and equitable social relations, and reciprocal communal engagements (see Christie, Wagner, & Winter, 2001; Swartz, 2006; Taylor & Christie, 2015).

Located within and shaped by the larger peace promotion project and vision of a democratic egalitarian future, this decolonial psychology imbued the country, its people, and the transformation journey with an emancipatory post-racial humanising ethos. Inspired by the idea of a democratic rainbow nation, this psychology aimed to awaken a humanism critical for restoring the epistemic virtue of all South Africans (also see Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014). The envisaged psychological process of restoring the epistemic virtue of all situated Blacks and Whites in a dialectical engagement predicated on the assumption of decolonial ethics and the virtue of reflexive critical openness. In the humanisation process, just as the country would adopt decolonial ethics in order to delink from the colonial project of war and violence, so its people were encouraged to delink from the marks of apartheid epistemic socialisation and enter into engagements based on relational accountability. Notwithstanding the contradictions that arose from the first democratic government's decision to retain a funded national military (Holden & Van Vuuren, 2011), the humanising ethos that was to be animated in spaces of Black–White emotional proximity wanted to trigger Whites collective and individual capacities to acknowledge direct or indirect complicity, assume moral responsibility for apartheid as a crime against humanity, and recognise those who had been othered, as well as the consequences of the othering process on their own humanity (see Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, 2014). Likewise, the humanising ethos appealed to apartheid victims' sense of and capacities for forgiveness (see Gobodo-Madikizela, 2002). Resonant with Mandela's legitimisation of public mourning in the aftermath of Hani's murder, the TRC inscribed the idea that a space for apartheid's victims to tell their stories of suffering, loss, and pain in their own terms to a listening and attentive audience is validating and affirming of a healing process and confers some degree of control over their narratives of suffering. In these respects, the TRC's psychology signified the process of restoring the epistemic virtues of both Blacks and Whites through the facilitation of victim–perpetrator emotional proximity, even if only momentarily.

The humanising ethos seemed to focus on reawakening a full range of emotions that would have Blacks and Whites connect with their respective psychological vulnerabilities. Framed by the promise of distributive and restorative justice, as articulated in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) – a former South African socio-economic policy framework that was substituted by neo-liberal oriented policy – and other mechanisms, the humanisation process encouraged Blacks to go deeper than their manifest anger and mourn their losses and pain inflicted by colonial apartheid and Whites to recognise and transcend their anxieties and fears produced by discourses of black peril. Signifying practices of collective public mourning and disclosure, the notion of multiple fluid generative subjectivities, and the values of restraint, empathy, and witnessing, the humanising ethos wanted to move all South Africans towards a shared public morality, informed by constitutional ideals and shaping a social contract, to work alongside each other in pursuance of non-racial and non-sexist relationships and communities, and a 'better life for all'.

Concluding thoughts

The elaboration and further enactment of this psychology of humanism has been uneven and perhaps even disrupted as South Africa's aspirations to grow into a socially just and harmonious society have experienced severe strain. In particular, failure to address adequately the economic determinants of peace has placed limits on the humanisation process. After more than two decades of political democracy, South Africa records a Gini coefficient of .65, a measure of gross socio-economic inequality that places the country in fourth place after Brazil, China, and Russia, respectively

(Chitiga, Sekyere, & Tsoanamatsie, 2015). South Africa's neo-liberal economic policies that replaced the distributive-oriented RDP have not succeeded in containing socio-economic inequality. Occurrences of public violence have increased; whereas in 2007 less than 50% of all protests were characterised by some type of violence, in 2014 a projected 80% of protests were distinguished by violence visible in interpersonal assaults, deaths, armed police responses, and property damage. Public protests are often symbolic of claims for epistemic justice by subaltern groups, such as university students and workers, whose claims for participation in governance decisions are ignored by authorities (see Alexander, 2010; Powell, O'Donovan, & De Visser, 2015). Against the backdrop of the country's development challenges (for full review of challenges, see Swartz, 2006) and the associated troubles arising from corruption and unethical political and economic practices, this psychology and its ethos of humanism have also been increasingly over-shadowed by a ruling psychology located within hegemonic socio-political arrangements. This ruling psychology produces languages and practices serving interests antithetical to the principles of social and distributive justice, relational accountability, and participation. It is invoked to naturalise extractive relationships, wanton acquisitiveness, and elite accumulation and justify extreme notions of individualism and competitiveness. In brief, the material determinants of humanisation, and hence peace, have obtained inadequate redress.

Attempts to recover and reassert this psychology of humanism in South Africa are, however, evident in many public-driven efforts. Such efforts have redrawn public attention to the urgent need for massive interventions that address socio-economic inequality and create solutions for competing priorities in the context of limited resources and economic growth, restoring clean and transparent governance, and re-directing the population's anger and energies towards a renewed consensus-driven socio-political agenda (see Habib, 2017; Hunter & Shoba, 2017). If this psychology of humanism, that is partly motivated by decolonial thought and critical enactments of community psychology and peace psychology, is to obtain its own renewal within the larger project of reclaiming South Africa's democratic ideals, then it may want to be explicit about how it reimagines both Blacks' and Whites' unfinished journey of humanisation in the context of ongoing coloniality (see Fanon, 1963; Maldonado-Torres, 2007); consider how the unequal exercise of power and vested interests may undercut its re-emergence and how grassroots disillusionment may contest the further expression of this psychology, especially if material conditions remain unchanged for the majority and privileged sections of the society continue to live in physically and emotionally gated spaces (see Cooke & Kothari, 2004; Kothari 2004; Phillips & Zappen, 2006).

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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