

Chabani Manganyi: Existential Phenomenological Psychology of Difference

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In his autobiographical offering, *Apartheid and the Making of a Black Psychologist* (2017), Chabani Noel Manganyi, perhaps out of modesty or out of disdain, elides articulation of his discursive contributions to a philosophical tradition known as Africana existential phenomenology or Africana existential psychoanalysis in which he stands as one of the main pillars and pioneers. I have no problem with Manganyi the psychologist and his narrative in and by itself. What concerns me is what he does not say about that aspect of his work which, in my view had so much impact on the succeeding generations of scholars, students as well as political activist and generated so much scholarly work in the form of articles, theses and dissertation written about it. I say this because I am one of the individuals influenced by that early work which Manganyi, in my view, so offhandedly relegates to the margins in his memoirs. I think an explanation for this marginalisation is possible.

Scholarship has the tendency of dividing the development of a particular thinker into the early and the late phases. Hence, we often talk of the early Karl Marx of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* as opposed to the later Marx of *Das Capital*; similarly, we talk of the early Jean-Paul Sartre of *Being and Nothingness* against the later Sartre of *The Critique of Dialectic Reason* or the early Frantz Fanon of *Black Skin, White Masks* in contrast to the later Fanon of *The Wretched of the Earth* or even the early and later Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, etc. Very often such authors are putatively anti- their early selves to a point where they occasionally ridicule and disavow that phase of their intellectual development. But this attitude is understandable because self-critique is one of the fundamental and necessary constituent elements of intellectual growth. Besides, to use Sartre's formulation, human reality is not an *is* but constantly becoming something other than what it is. As he puts it, human being *qua* being-for-itself 'is not

what it is and is what it is not' (Sartre 1956:97), meaning that human beings are constantly in flux, ever becoming something other than what they are. However, history has taught us that the early phase of a thinker is just as important or even more important, in some cases, as the later phase precisely because they deal with different realities. A lot of people, myself included, still consider Marx's early writings as philosophically interesting than his later political-economic works. A great number of people are still studying and writing about Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* much more than they do about the two volumes of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. Similarly, in the wake of the current resurgence of invidious global anti-black racism today, Fanon's early work has become one of the most provocative texts. Let me venture a similar explanation for Manganyi's marginalisation of his early work, except that he does not publicly disown but certainly disregards his early work in his autobiography. His early work, in the wake of the Louise Mabilles, Penny Sparrows, the Mabel Jansens, the George Floyds, the emergence of Donald Trump as anti-black, etc., has become ever more important than the biographies, education texts and legal reports he has been doing.

I suspect that Manganyi has, just like Marx, Sartre and Fanon, moved on to higher planes of intellectual development, such that his earlier work seems to him a little too irrelevant and insignificant for today. He speaks very little about the impact of his early philosophical work, particularly the ground-breaking text, *Being-Black-in-the-World*, a text whose very title situates it in the domain of existential phenomenology which I am interested in here. These introductory remarks should not be read or understood as constitutive of what Lewis Gordon has called 'disciplinary decadence'. Disciplinary decadence is when we treat our own disciplines as foundational in explaining every phenomenon. It is a reductionist move that treats our disciplines and their methods as absolute thus regarding them deontologically as the only reality in terms of which every other reality can be seen. Gordon warns that when this happens, our disciplines become solipsistic. For example, 'the decadent philosopher criticizes all for not being philosophical' (Gordon 2006:33). The consequences of disciplinary decadence is that growth is stifled or closed and as such leads to normative epistemological colonialism.

I am certainly not charging Manganyi for not acknowledging his early philosophical work or being philosophical enough in his memoirs. What I am trying to point out is his modesty about his contribution to phenomenology in South Africa, especially in what has recently come to be known in general as

‘Black phenomenology’ or Africana existential phenomenology. By Black or African phenomenology, to use Paget Henry’s definition, I refer to a discourse that has been conditioned by and draws on a specific set of lived experiences and the cultural traditions of Africans and African-descendent people in the world. In this sense it is quite different from Western phenomenology which is conditioned exclusively by white peoples’ lived experiences. In Manganyi’s terms we may thus speak, from a phenomenological perspective, of ‘Being-Black-in-the-world’ and ‘Being-white-in-the-world’. The difference is evident from the classic formulation by Descartes, Kant, Hegel and even Husserl, who conceptualised phenomenology as ‘the self-reflective practice that disclosed the latent movements of universal reason, which was also the prime constituting force operating within the core of the European subject’ (Henry 2016:28). Paradoxically, this universal reason was limited to a very specific cultural particularity: the cultural particularity of Europe and thus constituting Europe as the geography of reason. Hence, for Husserl, the expansion of European phenomenology was attached to the question of whether or not ‘European humanity bears within itself an absolute idea, rather than being merely an empirical anthropological type like ‘China’ or ‘India’ (Husserl 1970:16). For Africana phenomenology, on the contrary, the governing telos has been a fundamental focus on racial liberation and the problems of racial domination from which it emanates.

Heidegger, Sartre and even Hegel, leave the question of Being unattended as it concerns black(ness). All of them proceed as if the question of Being has been settled and that we no longer need to question it. The Being of Black people as victims of colonization and apartheid anti-black racism is a different Being from the Being integral in the subjectivity articulated by Western philosophers such as Hegel, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty or Camus, and psychologists such as Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, or Jacques Lacan. For both Fanon and Manganyi, by contrast, the Being of the Western subject, or what Alexis de Tocqueville describes as ‘MAN pre-eminently so called’ (1981) does not portray the Being of ‘the black man’ because within colonial and apartheid situations, ‘the black is not a man’ (Fanon 1967:8), that is, the Black man is a black man and not man¹. Thus, question of the Being-of-the-Black subject *qua* human raises its head. Manganyi seeks to put the

¹ I am here using ‘man’ in an inclusive sense in accordance with Fanon’s usage in his text.

question of the Being of the Black back in its proper place: at the center of any discourse about Being. When Heidegger claims that Western philosophy has forgotten Being, Manganyi's claim is that Western philosophy has forgotten the Being of Blacks. This means that the Black Question is simultaneously the Question of Being and difference, that is, Being-man-in-the-world and Being-a-black-man-in-the-world. Manganyi's *Being-Black-in-the-World* is thus a meditation about the presumed nonrelation between blackness and Being. He contends that to the extent that Blackness is in the world, it *is* through its Being, a Being different from the Being of Western phenomenology's originary subject. Thus, as I will argue, Manganyi concurs with Fanon in articulating a phenomenology of difference.

Manganyi and Africana Phenomenology

Phenomenology and existentialism among African people in South Africa have a long history, which unfortunately has not been explicitly thematised or philosophically engaged. Recently, a lot of work has been done on Steve Biko as an Africana existentialist philosopher.² Unfortunately, very little, if at all, attention has been directed to the entire Black existential-phenomenology tradition in this country, a poetacist tradition fashioned and sustained in the great literary production of South Africans which took the form of what Paget Henry describes as 'the imagistic phenomenology' (2000:105) of consciousness. First to outline a comprehensive phenomenology in South Africa, however, was Chabani Manganyi, who in his various early works, explicitly thematised the phenomenology of Africana self-consciousness. In the tradition of Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, Edward Blyden, Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. du Bois, Frantz Fanon, Steve Biko, Charles Johnson, Manganyi is interested in the 'psychopathological and philosophical explanation of the state of being a

² See for example the following twenty-first century publications on Biko: Mabogo More, 2017. *Biko: Philosophy, Identity and Liberation*. Cape Town: HSRC; Tendayi Sithole, 2016. *Steve Biko: Decolonial Meditations of Black Consciousness*. Lanham: Lexington Books; Joel M. Modiri, 2017. *The Jurisprudence of Steve Biko: A Study in Race, Law and Power in the 'Afterlife' of Colonial Apartheid*. PhD Thesis, Pretoria: University of Pretoria; Shannen Hill, 2015. *Biko's Ghost: The Iconography of Black Consciousness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Negro' (Fanon 1967:15). Given the neglect of the existential-phenomenological tradition in this country, I shall argue that Manganyi is the quintessential African(a) existential-phenomenological psychologist in whose work a very large number of influences converge. Even though he has benefited from and engaged the ideas of, among others, Western psychologists and phenomenologists such as Victor Frankl, Johan van den Berg, Albert Camus, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Sigmund Freud, Herbert Marcuse, Erik Erikson, David R. Laing, Erich Fromm, Erich Neumann, Jean-Paul Sartre, etc., and African existential phenomenologists such as Frantz Fanon, Léopold Sédar Senghor and others, I take the position that he thinks with and against them. For reasons that will be evident later, I briefly put him in conversation with them – especially - Heidegger and Fanon

There is simply no question about Manganyi's status as a Black existential-phenomenological psychologist. His early work brings forth an assortment of Fanon's phenomenology of blackness, Heidegger's phenomenological ontology, Sartre's existential phenomenology, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body schemas, Viktor Frankl's logotherapy (existential psychology), Van den Berg's historical psychology (metabolics), Albert Camus' notions of rebellion and absurdity and Aimé Césaire's and Léopold Sédar Senghor's Negritude. His engagement with the leading existentialists (especially Sartre, Camus, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, and Fanon) is plainly expressed in his choice of the titles for his books and the chapters therein. For example, the title of his first book, *Being-Black-in-the-World* (1973), explicitly echoes Heidegger's and Sartre's phenomenological ontology of 'being-in-the-world'. Contained in that text are chapter titles such as 'Us and Them', 'Black Consciousness', 'Being-black-in-the World', and 'Nausea' (The title of Sartre's celebrated first novel; *Nausea*), all of which have an existential, phenomenological, and ontological ring in them that combines Heidegger's and Sartre's philosophical concerns. His subsequent text *Looking Through the Keyhole* (1981) is clearly reminiscent of Sartre's famous example of a man who, driven by intense jealousy, is caught peeping through the keyhole in the famous section of *Being and Nothingness*: 'The Look'. Two of his other books, *Alienation and the Body in Racist Society* (1977), *Mashangu's Reverie and Other Essays* (1977) besides reminding us of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) and Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, contain chapter titles with existentialist flavour, for example, 'The Body-for-Others', 'Alienation: The Body and Racism', and 'The Body-world and the

Ontogenesis of Racism'. The chapter, 'The Edge of the Precipice', also reminds one of Sartre's articulation of the feeling of vertigo in the face of radical freedom in *Being and Nothingness*. In the next section I briefly want to focus on Manganyi seminal text, *Being-Black-in-the-World*, mainly for its richness in phenomenological significance. This, however, does not mean that the other early texts with phenomenological density will suffer marginalisation. To appreciate the richness and significance of this text, a consideration of Fanon and Heidegger is necessary. First, however, a brief detour on Fanon ideas will help in situating Manganyi within the realm of the phenomenological psychologist of radical difference.

Frantz Fanon's Phenomenology of Blackness

Like Fanon, Manganyi is a psychologist and has repeatedly described himself as such and sees his approach as 'psycho-phenomenological', his work as 'a philosophical orientation, which may be described as existential-phenomenology' (Manganyi 1977:8). In the same manner as Fanon, Manganyi uses phenomenological and existential psychoanalysis to understand the complex effects of racism on the personality and identity of the oppressed Black subject. His fundamental point of departure, '*Being-Black-in-the-World*' is an idea that has long been articulated in the form of 'On Being Black' by earlier black theorists such as W.E.B. du Bois, Eric D. Walrond, etc., and Black psychologists such as Alvin F. Paussaint, Kenneth B Clark etc., in the USA. Indeed, the very title of his text, *Being-Black-in-the-World*, besides invoking Heidegger's ontological-phenomenological concept of 'thrownness', is in many ways an articulation of Fanon's climactic fifth chapter, whose literal translation is 'The lived experience of the Black' in *Black Skin White Masks*.

Manganyi's early work, just like Fanon's early text, has become central in discussions on racism, alienation, identity and sociality, but very rarely do scholars engage it as philosophy. This essay provides such a reading not only to articulate the dimensions of black phenomenology, but also to recognise Manganyi as a unique phenomenologist with an approach to Blackness and ontology that is ambitious and provocative. What I am calling 'Black phenomenology' or 'Africana phenomenology' is a philosophical orientation scattered across the arch of Manganyi's early writings and explores the lived-experiences of being black or African in an anti-black or anti-African world. I think of Manganyi as an Africana phenomenologist, because he

extends Heidegger's neutralist universalistic ontology and Merleau-Ponty's presumed universalistic conception of corporeality to the specificity of the Black (African) mode of being. Because of this intervention, Manganyi's theory may, borrowing Jeremy Weate's phrase, be described as a 'radical phenomenology of difference' (2001:170).

Besides W.E.B. du Bois' ground-breaking contributions to existential-phenomenology through the concept of 'double consciousness', Frantz Fanon is without doubt the most celebrated Black phenomenological psychologist of the 20th century. The most commonly commented-upon chapter of Frantz Fanon's book, *Black Skin, White Masks*, is 'L'expérience vécue du Noir' famously translated as 'The fact of blackness'. However, a more accurate translation of the chapter 'The lived experience of the black man' succinctly captures and expresses the phenomenological character of Fanon's work. In this chapter, Fanon aims to understand the experience of being black and being defined by your race through the perception of others. This theorisation constituted Fanon as the first phenomenologist to problematise and reorganise Maurice Merleau-Ponty's classical phenomenological theories in order to discuss and theorise race. His radical inclusion of race and racism into phenomenological theory, issues that were left untheorized by European phenomenologists, translated his work into what may be described as corrective or radical phenomenology.

Rather than merely being influenced by the phenomenology of Hegel, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty, Fanon seriously confronted, interrogated and engaged their phenomenological theories in relation to the situation of the black person in an anti-black context. While appreciating Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Sartre's phenomenological ontology of *Being and Nothingness*, and Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, Fanon considered their phenomenological ontology inadequate when applied to the situation of the black person. For instance, in *Black Skin, White Masks*, in a section titled 'The Negro and Hegel', Fanon argues that in Hegel, the master and the slave have a reciprocal relation that constitutes the slave into an Other. When it comes to blacks and whites, the relation of self-Other is simply not as Hegel portrays it; instead it changes into a relation of self-non-Other: 'here the master differs basically from the master described by Hegel. For Hegel there is reciprocity; here the master laughs at the consciousness of the slave. What he wants from the slave is not recognition but work' (1967:220). In other words, Fanon insists that, while Hegel says, 'Man is human only to the extent

to which he tries to impose his existence on another man in order to be recognized by him' (Fanon 1967:216), since in an anti-black racist society the black man is reduced to a non-person, not a man, what Hegel asserts about man does not pertain to the black man.

Concerning Sartre, Fanon laments, 'Jean-Paul Sartre had forgotten that the Negro suffers in his body quite differently from the white man.' This is because as a black man and because of the colour of his body, he is 'overdetermined from without' (Fanon 1967:116). As a footnote on the same page, Fanon bemoans the fact that,

Though Sartre's speculations on the existence of The Other may be correct ... their application to a black consciousness proves fallacious. That is because the white man is not only The Other but also the master, whether real or imaginary (Fanon 1967:138).

According to Sartre's existential ontology, human being is a lack of Being. As a lack of Being, human reality is the being which lacks coincidence or identity with itself by 'being what it is not and not being what it is'. As he puts it, 'Human reality by which lack appears in the world must be itself a lack. For lack can come into being only through lack' (Sartre 1956: 87). As a lack, human reality desires what it lacks. Since human reality lacks self-identity, coincidence with itself, it therefore desires that being which possesses these qualities; in short, brute Being. If human reality's desire can be satisfied, then it would be a synthesis of both consciousness and brute Being, two entities that are oppositional and contradictory. As a contradiction, this desire cannot be fulfilled, for in the event that consciousness can merge with brute Being to achieve identity with it, the demolition and annihilation of consciousness qua consciousness would occur, because the appropriation of brute Being, that which is opaque, substantial and impenetrable requires the elimination of consciousness which is emptiness or nothingness. It is this lack of Being, Sartre contends, that constitutes the source and origins not only of human freedom, but also of the desire for completeness, fullness and opacity. Against Sartre view of consciousness as a lack of Being and a source of freedom, Fanon argues that within an anti-black racist society, the black man is denied consciousness and thus the capacity to be a lack, precisely because he is reduced to a brute Being, a thing or object without freedom. Within this situation, the black man is denied the capacity to even constitute himself as a lack of Being in order to attain self-consciousness. The black man is 'chained to

his being, to his body, more particularly to his skin' (Oliver 2004:14) by colonial and anti-black values. What Fanon is fundamentally claiming here is that there are two modes of existence within anti-black societies, which both Hegel and Sartre ignore because of their white normativity theorisations: being-white-in-the-world and being-black-in-the-world. Developing the category of Black 'world-hood', Manganyi, picks up Fanon's position and articulates a Black radical phenomenology of difference which critiques the universalistic and non-differentiating phenomenology of European thinkers.

Heidegger and Being-in-the-World

An intelligible appreciation of Manganyi's existential-phenomenology, especially the significance of his text *Being-Black-in-the-World*, requires an equal grasp of the existential-ontological notion, particularly Heidegger's formulation, of 'being-in-the-world' in *Being and Time* (1962). The original ground of phenomenological ontology is the fundamental consciousness of being-in-the-world. The hyphenation in Heidegger's formulation, serves a major philosophical function that indicates a primordially primitive, unitary and irreducible relatedness between *Dasein* (human reality) and the world. *Dasein* exists ecstatically, as always already embedded within the world. However, it may be prudent to quickly bring to light each of its constituent structures separately in order to appreciate their connectedness. In Heidegger's *Dasein*'s 'In-der-Welt-Sein' (being-in-the-world), 'Being' *qua* an ontological foundation assumes significance because, for him, traditional philosophy has forgotten 'Being'. Husserl's phenomenology, Heidegger argues, has its main focus on consciousness and how phenomena appear to consciousness. However, Heidegger does not make as strong an onto-epistemic commitment to the paradigm of consciousness as Husserl. For him, privileging consciousness as Husserl does marginalises Being. Thus, when Husserl implores us to phenomenologically go 'Back to the things themselves' as they primordially appear to consciousness, Heidegger urges us to go 'back to Being itself', that is, philosophy must return to the question of Being itself. Philosophy for Heidegger, therefore, becomes phenomenological-ontology as the disclosure and unconcealment of Being. But the intelligibility of Being is conditional on the intelligibility of the nature of the ontic being (Existentialle) which understand. The being which possesses this understanding, Heidegger calls *Dasein* or human existence. *Dasein* literally means 'being there', that is,

being situated somewhere *qua* self. To the question: ‘Being there’ where? The answer is, ‘In the world’. *Dasein* can thus be described as always already situated consciousness.

How is the ‘world’ to be understood? The world, Heidegger insists, because we use the words such as ‘in-the-world’ should never be understood as a container of human beings in the manner of an enclosedness of spatial objects. A glass, as a container, can be filled with water and can be emptied of its contents, which is water. Two entities related to each other exist externally in space; that is, the presence or absence of one does not affect the other. This relation is a relation of exteriority, such that the glass can exist without affecting water and water can be somewhere outside the glass without affecting the existence of the glass whatsoever. Unlike the glass and the water, the world cannot exist without the human subject precisely because human beings do not have the categorical structure of objects. ‘Being-in’ involves a much richer relation than merely a spatial one of locatedness in a world-container. The relationship between *Dasein* and the world is a relation of interiority. The world and *Dasein* entail and are primordially connected to each other. Without the world there is no *Dasein* and without *Dasein* there is no world. At the core of Heidegger’s phenomenology, therefore, is the idea of relationships. It is the essence of *Dasein* to always be *Dasein*-in-the-world. Human existence is intrinsically in and of the world. *Dasein* cannot exist without the world and the world cannot be without *Dasein*. If there is no *Dasein* (human reality) that exists, says Heidegger, there is no world. All of us are always already thrown into the world, involved and living in the world and we cannot separate ourselves from the world. The relation between *Dasein* and world expresses the irreducibly interwovenness, inter-involvement and mutual implication of being-in-the-world. The ‘Being-in’, which is fundamentally our relation, or better still, our attitude to the world, Heidegger describes as ‘concern’ or ‘care’. As indicated above, Fanon’s and Manganyi’s works function as critiques of Heidegger’s universalisation of an idealised white consciousness of the world. Even though explicit references to whiteness are scarce in his works, Heidegger deploys it implicitly in the tropes he uses. In Heidegger’s ontology, Being covers reality. On the contrary, Manganyi understood that reality and Being are not, as Heidegger claims, identical. This difference between Heidegger and Manganyi, does indeed serve as an ingress to the philosophical dimensions of Manganyi’s work as articulated in his ground-breaking text: *Being-Black-in-the-World*.

Being-Black-in-the-World

Africana phenomenology, like all phenomenology, undercuts the dualistic metaphysics of empirical realism and idealism and begins with the individual person being-in-the-world. If we follow Heidegger, phenomenology means ‘to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself’ (1962:58). Put differently, phenomenology is to ‘let us see’, to uncover, to explicitly exhibit that which ‘proximally and for the most part does *not* show itself at all’ (Heidegger 1962:59). It is fundamentally a stripping away of concealment and distortions so that we are able to see that which lets itself be seen for what it is, that which is hidden, covered-up, disguised or concealed. Phenomenology, therefore, involves the disclosure, revelation, exposure and uncovering of the Being of that which is concealed or hidden to consciousness. Heidegger’s ‘Being-in-the-world’, phenomenological as it is, is however – from Manganyi’s point of view – a phenomenology of sameness, a transcendental phenomenology that implicitly succumbs to white normativity or the white transcendental norm. Because of its latent Eurocentrism, it is thus still inadvertently a concealment of that which appears to a Black consciousness. It is a phenomenology which in historical terms may be likened, for example, to the original constitution of the United States in which the phrase ‘all men’ did not include black people who are considered two-thirds human. How then does Heidegger’s maxim ‘Being-in-the-world’ fail to disclose or even implicitly conceals the reality of black subjects?

According to Heidegger, what being human (*Dasein*) means is to let things *to be*, that is, let things reveal themselves in their nakedness to consciousness. Letting things *be*, is to allow them to invade presence, to make themselves be present. However, letting a phenomenon present itself as itself, is paradoxically to cover, to conceal other phenomena. For example, when I pick up or look for my car keys, I let their meaning come forth or let them show themselves as themselves to the exclusion, disappearance or concealment of all other things. Every disclosure of being is simultaneously a concealment of others. When we are actively engaged with things in the world, that which makes them possible, gets covered up. When I jump onto my bed, what reveals itself (*qua* bed) covers up something else. When the bed becomes an object of my consciousness, then the space within which the bed exist recedes into the background or disappears. What then does Heidegger’s phenomenology of Being conceal or fail to disclose?

Given what the dominant figures in Western philosophy – for example, Kant, Hume, Hegel – have pronounced about black people; given also the universalistic pretension of Western philosophy, Africana philosophers such as Fanon, Manganyi and others, began to question whether the African functioned as a genuine Other or actually a non-Other within the context of Western phenomenology. They thus became phenomenologist by attempting to disclose or unmask what the English translation of Fanon describes as ‘The Lived Experience of the Black Man’ from concealment in the realm of the ‘present-at-hand’ (substantiality, the untouchables) and particularly, ‘the ready-to-hand’, (the exploitables, the usables, instrumentalities). The focus of Africana phenomenologists therefore – by virtue of slavery, colonisation, apartheid, and anti-black racism – has historically been the stripping away, the clearing-away of concealment and distortions about the reality of Black *Dasein* (human reality) so that we are able ‘to see that which lets itself be seen for what it is’ (Heidegger 1962:59). Since *Dasein*, according to Heidegger is existence, Manganyi *qua Dasein*, phenomenologically thinks and understands himself as existence. As a phenomenologist, he sets forth the basic structures of Black human existence as these structures are disclosed or uncovered or laid bare before us in our own existence. *Dasein*, Heidegger declares,

... always understands itself in terms of its existence – in terms of a possibility for itself: to be itself or not itself. *Dasein* has either chosen these possibilities itself, or get itself into them, or grown up in them already. Only the particular *Dasein* of existence never gets straightened out except through existing itself (Heidegger 1962:33).

Hence, as ‘a being whose being is always an issue for it’ (Heidegger 1962), by introducing the word ‘Black’ within Heidegger’s formulation of ‘being-in-the-world’, Manganyi questions the concealment of his Black existence, of Black mode of ‘being-in-the-world’. In current temperament, Manganyi is almost saying: ‘Black Lives matter!’. We here encounter a serious critique of Heidegger’s universalist presuppositions and an introduction of a phenomenology of the difference of identity.

What difference does difference in phenomenology make? Manganyi’s phenomenology of difference is by inversion a phenomenology of identity as expressed by the inclusion of ‘Black’ in a Eurocentric phenomenology which erases the being of black people in its universalising

white normativity project. Because the governing telos of Africana phenomenology, as Henry contends, has been racial liberation from racial domination, the uniqueness of Manganyi and Fanon lies in the displacement of the problem of Western rationality by the problem of racial liberation as the source of occasion for self-reflection. There is much in blackness that require defence against erasure. A phenomenology of difference, therefore, contains creative responses of resistance to totalitarian regimes (e.g. the apartheid regime that Manganyi was confronting) by marginalised, oppressed and discriminated upon groups. Manganyi's phenomenology of difference is such an oppositional resistance against the decentring Eurocentric discourse that parades as an incarnation and expression of universal human rationality.

In phenomenology, one does not simply accept what one sees. Doing phenomenology requires a vigilance on the part of the subject on its object of consciousness. In my view, phenomenology requires a suspension of the habitual ways of seeing, ways of doing. For instance, in what Husserl calls the 'natural attitude' we encounter human beings as Chinese, whites, Indians or blacks. These are simply different human beings in our world. However, they all, *qua* different beings, pre-reflectively or non-positionally participate in Being. This is what in Plato's formulation can be called the many in one or *E pluribus Unum*. But the moment I apply Husserl's principle of 'bracketing' or suspension of the phenomena of the natural attitude, I constitute them into phenomena or objects of consciousness. Instead of 'What is a black person' I phenomenologically shift to 'What does it mean *to be* black-in-the-world?'. The question of meaning then comes into play. A similar approach has been made by Ruth Frankenberg in her book, *White Women, Race Matters. The Social Construction of Whiteness* (1993) in which she addresses the situation of being a white woman in a patriarchal but racist society. Frankenberg is facing the same phenomenological question which Manganyi is posing: 'What does it mean *to be* a white woman in a patriarchal society?' Phenomenologically, Frankenberg's concern amounts to 'What does it mean *to be* a white-woman-in-the-world?'. Embedded in Manganyi's theory is Sartre's concept of the *situation*, which can be rephrased such, 'What is the situation of the black human being in an apartheid world?'.

Sartre's concept of situation may be translated in Manganyi's 'Being-Black-in-the-world' as the equivalence of 'Black situatedness in the world' and in Fanon as 'the lived-experience of the black man'. Drawing from Sartre's description of the situation of the Jew in the *Portrait of the Anti-Semite* (1948),

Manganyi reaches the social constructionist conclusion that:

Likewise, the African or Afro-American lives in a world which takes him for a 'nigger' or a 'kaffir' while he believes himself to be simply a black man. The black man is inassimilable. In South Africa, for example, Africans who have the situation common to blacks are seen as a very real threat to whites even at the peak of political disarray. Again Sartre strikes the nail on the head when he observes: 'It is therefore the idea of the Jew that one forms for himself which would seem to determine history, not the 'historical fact' that produced the idea' (Manganyi 1977:53 note 2).

Thus, the title, *Being-Black-in-the-World* (1973), is significant in two ways: First, in addition to Heidegger's being-in-the-world thesis, that being-in-the-world is existence itself and that the self and world are irreducibly related in a fundamental manner, Manganyi adds the category 'black' in this relation, thereby explicitly thematising a phenomenology of Africana self-consciousness that implicitly suggests alterity. Thus, instead of Heidegger's three operative concepts ('Being', 'World' and 'Self'), Manganyi's title contains four discourse-constitutive fundamentals, viz.: *Being*, *World*, *self* and *Black* with the fourth assuming a different operative concept and thematization from those of Heidegger. These four discourse-constitutive fundamentals do not function as independent and separate concepts, but significantly appear as hyphenated connected concept. The differences are both thematic, such as the issue of racialisation, and metaphysical as indicated by the different rules guiding the prioritising and systematising of discourse-constitutive fundamentals.

Being-Black-in-the-World, therefore, brings in a complex element to Heidegger's maxim of 'Being-in-the-World' and even Husserl's characterisation of phenomenology as 'Back to the things themselves'. It introduces the category of 'Blackness' into these two phenomenological principles. Husserl's maxim is transformed into 'Black to the things themselves' instead of 'Back to the things themselves'. Why introduce blackness in these ontologico-phenomenological formulations? Because Manganyi, just as any other existing being, has the ability to interrogate his Being. Human reality, Sartre and Heidegger remind us, is being such that in its own being its being is always in question, or a being whose very being is

always an issue to itself. By inserting 'Black' in Heidegger's formulation, Manganyi introduces a structure which European phenomenologists completely ignore, the concrete (ontic) corporeality of being in the world and not simply its abstraction. Lacking in Heidegger's phenomenological ontology, for example, is a serious engagement with the body as a phenomenological category in terms of which Dasein manifests itself ontically as presence. To say that human being is 'Being there' (*Dasein*) calls attention to human finitude, that is, bodily dimension or mode because consciousness proximally and for the most part manifests itself in the world through corporeality. Unlike Heidegger, Manganyi proclaims the specificity of African incarnation, the corporeality of existence and thus considers the body as the nexus of worldhood in his theory. In other words, in relation to Heidegger – to use Sartre's formulation from another register – Manganyi 'marks a progress towards realism, since he insists, above all on the *primacy* of the specifically real over thought, that the real cannot be reduced to thought' (Sartre 1968:12). Rather than simply wallowing in Heideggerian categories, Manganyi stretches Heidegger to the limit.

What is the 'Black', the *beingness* of which Manganyi proclaims? Is it biology, colour, race, politics, culture, or all of these? Blackness, it is now universally acknowledged – except of course by anti-black racist – is not biological. What about colour, cultural, social, political, existential blackness? From an epidermal perspective, the paradoxical issue about 'Blackness' in the modern world is that once colour is introduced and attached to people, then race becomes an issue. It then means that we bring into existence other colours such as for example, 'white' and 'black', which in a racist society are considered in terms of contraries. In contraries, blackness becomes the necessary condition for whiteness to exist and vice versa 'For not only must the black man be black, he must be black in relation to the white man' (Fanon 1967:110). To then define someone as black in an anti-black society, is to posit that person as absolutely not white. The relation between these two colours assume a relation of negativity. For example, black people had no reason to consider themselves 'black' before the emergence of circumstances that referred to them as black. In Africa, for example, they considered themselves only in terms of their linguistic and cultural affiliations such as, among others, Sotho, Tswana, Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Ashanti, Akan, Tshona or Xhosa people and so on. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir insists that the verb 'to be' must be understood in its correct meaning, 'it is bad faith to give it a static

value when it really has a dynamic Hegelian sense of ‘to have become’ (1989). Embracing this warning, being-black-in-the-world translates to ‘to-have-become-black-in-the-world’. ‘*Being-black*’ in Manganyi’s formulation should consequently not be taken in terms of substantiality but in terms of ‘*to have become black*’, because blacks have blackness imposed on them from without. Colour as such is for Manganyi not the issue in the world, it is the *meaning* attached to colour that determines racist attitudes and practices. Blackness is a racialised character of being bodily in the world. The epidermal meaning of race is skin. Challenging the view that colour is a necessary and sufficient condition for race, Manganyi explains, ‘My own interpretation is that skin colour in itself and of itself is insignificant. What is important is what the skin actually signifies in sociological and psychological terms’ (1973:18). We realise here with Stuart Hall that the introduction of ‘Black’ leads to race that functions as a producer of differences. As he puts it, race is ‘one of those major or master concepts that organize the *great classificatory systems of difference* that operate in human societies’ (Hall 2017:32 - 33, italics added).

Becoming black as a condition has a historical character rather than an ahistorical one. In Manganyi’s world, this history is a history of slavery, colonialism and apartheid. Blackness is an imposed identity on Africana subjects. We thus end up with an exteriority and interiority of blackness. The imposed blackness is from without and thus is an exterior black, a stigmatised, dehumanised blackness. When blackness is appropriated by those designated black, it becomes interiorised Blackness. Interiorised Blackness may or may not be a radical counter-hegemonic Blackness that can be expressed with a capital ‘B’, the Blackness of Biko and the Black Consciousness movement. Similarly, white people had absolutely no reason to consider themselves white until they created the colonial circumstances that required that they designate themselves ‘white’ vis-a-vis created blacks, even though in strict terms of the colour spectrum, there *are no* white, red or yellow people.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon insists,

As long as the black man is among his own, he will have no occasion ... to experience his being through others. The black man among his own in the twentieth century does not know at what moment his inferiority comes into being (1967:109, 110).

Like Fanon, Manganyi believes that blackness cannot be understood

in the context of the black among his or her own. The point made here is that it is only in the encounter with whiteness, more especially the white imagination, in a colonial, apartheid or anti-black society, that the analysis of the experience of racial difference of being-black-in-the-world – the non-Other – can be undertaken. Blackness, therefore, is invariably connected to a history constructed by a white imaginary. In a significantly historical context, Manganyi has the following to say about the meeting of Europeans and Africans and the emergence of the meaning of colours – black and white – and anti-black racism in a colonial situation,

Indeed, in the beginning was the word. The word was *written* and *spoken* and it was, as blacks know so well, about God and whiteness, the devil and blackness It was the power of the word, the power of language, the tyranny of the symbolic, which introduced psycho-social dominance of the blacks by the whites (Manganyi 1981:67)

In another register Manganyi introduces embodiment as a source of historical anti-black racism:

One of the legacies of colonialism in Africa has been the development of the dichotomy relating to the body, namely, the ‘bad’ and ‘good’ body. The white man’s body has been projected as the standard, the norm of beauty, of accomplishment. Not only the body proper, but its periphery; its embellishments have been recognised as such. On the contrary, the black body, projected as the ‘bad’ body, has always been projected as being inferior and unwholesome (Manganyi 1973:28).

When black people became ‘black’ in the modern anti-black world, they found themselves faced with a paradoxical situation of becoming ‘black’ in a world that rejected blackness. If existing is being-in-the-world, what then does it mean to belong to a world in which one does not belong? For Fanon and Manganyi, the non-belonging of the black subject is the product of the ‘historico-racial’ and the ‘sociological’ schemas, respectively. It means that the world becomes a home in which a black person is paradoxically homeless. It also means that ‘Black’ is considered not to have a relationship with the world. Their appearance in the world automatically amounts to an unjustified appearance, an illegitimate presence which requires justification. The problem

with this demand is that once one exists, one does not need any justification for one's existence besides the very fact that one exists. As Heidegger indicates above, 'the question of existence never gets straightened out except through existing itself'. Tendayi Sithole puts it graphically when he declares, 'The place of blackness in the anti-black world is placelessness. It is the belonging without. It is to be without a place, to be displaced. Place and blackness are rendered, in the anti-black world, oxymoronic' (2020:17). This constitution of blackness and black people is an expression of invidious anti-black racism. What we then gather from the above, is that 'Blackness' cannot be black without being epidermal. To stretch this conclusion further, neither can 'Blackness' be black without being political, social, religious, cultural, racial and existential. Blackness in an anti-black world simply signifies racialization, that is, to be black-in-the-anti-black-world is to be raced, named, marked, considered non-rational, criminal, emotional, deviant, pathological, different.

Modes of Being-in-the-world

In the same manner as Fanon's objection to Hegel and Sartre, Manganyi laments the fact that psychology and its many theories, do not take the experience of black people seriously; their universalistic posture is in fact a European particularism that excludes black experience. He then sets himself the project of exploring the lived experiences of black corporeality and incarnated subjectivity, applying, as it were, the various theories in psychology and existential phenomenology. He poses an existential-phenomenological question right at the beginning of his text, *Being-Black-in-the-World*, 'Is there a black mode of being-in-the-world? Stated differently: Is being-black-in-the-world different in fundamental respects to being-white-in-the-world?' (Manganyi 1973:4).

In response, his first move is to establish the primordality of human reality as being-in-the-world, the unreflective, non-thetic or non-positional consciousness of being in the world, such that 'the primary mode of being-in-the-world, of existing, is a given' (Manganyi 1973:25). He recognises that the human condition is indeed the same for all human beings. We all are born and die, feel the pangs of hunger and the desire for sleep, experience joy or sadness, and so forth. But existence is simply not mere existence without context. For him, human existential experiences and problems are situational – in the Sartrean sense – for they arise in, or out of, certain historical, racial or cultural situations.

Hence in his phenomenological description of being-black-in-the-world, he adopts Sartre's idea that human beings are beings 'in situation'. He writes, 'The concept of *situation* is important for the understanding of racism of whatever variety' (Sartre 1977:53). For Sartre in the *Portrait of the Anti-Semite*, to be a Jew 'is to be flung into, and *abandoned* in, the Jewish situation' (Sartre 1948:49, 75). The Jewish situation is neither constituted by Jewish religion nor history, but by an ensemble of structures and restrictions produced by a collectivity that regards the Jew as a Jew. The same applies for blacks; to be black is to be flung into, and abandoned in, the Black situation. It is thus the 'situation' that determines the mode of 'being-black-in-the-world' and 'being-white-in-the-world' as different modes. While Heidegger argues that there are different modes of 'being-in-the-world', such as 'Being-with-others', 'authentic and inauthentic' modes of being, Manganyi, in agreement with Sartre, argues that although this is true in general, in an anti-black world, however, there are fundamentally two primary modes of existing these different modes: a white mode of being and a black mode of being, and the relation between these modes assumes an 'Us' and 'Them' relation.

Further, existence is simply not mere existence in abstraction. To exist is to exist as something; that is, for human reality, to be is to-be-there, 'there in the classroom', 'there next to the car', etc. Being-there (*Dasein*) can thus only be possible through bodily presence. Corporeality is thus the primary medium through which we are present to and engaged in the world. It bestows upon each one of us, our existential identity. Since whiteness and blackness are essentially qualities belonging to corporeality, the body therefore assumes primacy in the determination of being-white-in-the-world or being-black-in-the-world. It is for this reason that the body becomes a central category of Manganyi's phenomenological account of being-in-the-world. The centring of the body happens out of the recognition of its fundamental position in existence. 'We make our approaches to the world through our bodies: the body is movement inwards and outwards' (Manganyi 1973:6). In other words, the body constitutes our primary relation with the world. I am conscious of the world through the mediation of the body.

In phenomenological terms, Manganyi's question may be rephrase in this manner: Is there a black way of experiencing the world; a black 'mode of intentionality'? By mode of intentionality is meant 'what it is like to experience things, oneself, others, events, nature, children, etc. – the world out of historical location of [one's skin colour] produced by what might be called the relations

of race formation' (Vasey 1998:4). Arguing that indeed there exists a white or black or Latino 'mode of intentionality' Vasey's explanation supports Manganyi's thesis,

In spite of the scientific truth that there is no such thing as a white race, and no racial essences at all, it would be absurd to deny that in the world which we inhabit, it is possible to be white, and that if one is white, one experiences the world in a white way (Vasey 2000:4).

Similarly, being defined as black, one experiences the world in a Black way, that is, being-black-in-the-world. Given that the answer to the above question is affirmative, further questions emerge; What does it mean to *live* 'blackness' in a world that rejects black people? or What does it mean to *experience* 'blackness' in a white supremacist society? What are the consequences (psychological, philosophical, moral, social, political, cultural and religious) for black people internalising (interiorising) anti-black racism? The lived experience of black people in a racist society, Manganyi contends, is an experience of alienation caused by a condition known as 'psychic splitting' or 'Double Consciousness' in du Bois' formulation. In existential terms, 'psychic splitting' is a fissure in an individual's experience of her Being 'associated with the societal devaluation of the body' (Manganyi 1977:39).

The problem of the body, Manganyi argues, is central in an anti-black world, for, it is through the body that I am present in the world and to others. This problem originates primarily with the dualistic nature of the 'old ethic' of Western civilisation, a dualistic worldview in which a polarisation between the spiritual (soul, psychic) and the bodily (physical) exists. I think Manganyi is here referring to the Cartesian bifurcation of *res cogitantes* and *res extensae*, an indication of Western ontological division between higher (spirit, mind, soul) and lower (body). Throughout human history, Manganyi contends,

The body has been the object of disturbing ambivalence. It has always been real or substantial enough for it not to be ignored completely. But under the conditions of the old ethic – which is generally still operative – the body has been experienced as an object that could stand in man's way to eternal life (Manganyi 1977:39).

In time, the body became vulgarised by being reduced and devalued to

the realm of the unwanted, the base, and the appetites. The mind or spirit, on the other hand, was elevated to the realm of thought or rationality. It is this 'rejected portion of the individual and social existence', which for Manganyi, 'creates tensions not only in the individual but also in the life of whole groups and nations' (1977:32).

'To what extent does the body determine the experience of being-black-in-the-world or being-white-in-the-world?' Manganyi (1973:6) asks. In response to this question which he regards as 'crucial', he introduces the concepts of the 'individual schema' and the 'sociological schema', notions made popular by Merleau-Ponty and Fanon. Besides the Manichaen epidermalisation of the body, each individual develops a concept or image of his or her body: the 'individual schema', what in Sartre's language can be called 'the body as being-for-itself', that is, the body as we non-thetically or pre-reflectively exist it, or the body as one's perspective on the world. The body image or individual schema, Manganyi defines as 'the mental representation of one's body' or '*the primary body reality*' (Manganyi 1977:9, 51). In most general terms, the body image may be described as an individual's internalised conception or experience or image of his/her physical self. The experience of our body-for-the-other is the source of what Manganyi calls the 'sociological schema', that is, the socialisation of our body image which is culture bound and specific. If, for instance, an individual is black, 'he begins to know, through various subtle ways, that his black body is unwholesome, that the white body is the societal standard of wholesomeness' (Manganyi 1973:6). Consequently, there is an African as well as a European sociological schema of the body constituted by these two different cultures. However, in a white supremacist culture, the black body schema is socially constructed as a negative sociological schema. Manganyi writes,

What in terms of the African experience of being-in-the-world does it mean to talk about the socialisation of the body image? It means ... that in the African experience there has over time developed a sociological schema of the black body prescribed by white standards. The prescribed attributes of this sociological schema have ... been entirely negative (Manganyi, 1973:51).

For a well-integrated personality, harmony should exist between the two body schemas. Disharmony results in a rupture or split in the individual's

perception of self, a divided-self, an alienated self. However, in race-supremacist or anti-black societies, the sociological schema may express itself in the form of body stereotype, either expressive of *overvaluation* or *undervaluation* of the body. Black subjectivity is attributed the contents that white consciousness itself fears to contain or confront: bestial sexuality, uncleanness, criminality, all the purported 'dark things'. The stereotypes, Manganyi argues, are developed from childhood during which whiteness is equated with mind while blackness is associated with the body which in turn is equated to dirt/faeces.

Like the body of the Jew, the black body was tagged with all the anti-values of the Caucasian body. In the colonial and following situations of black-white interaction, the black body has become the repository of and target for all the bad objects in the collective psyche of the West – the stereotype for everything from dirt to evil' (Manganyi 1977:76).

The consequence of such sociological schemata is the disintegration of the individual body schema and the sociological schema which leads to the splitting process or alienation. This condition involves the experience of the body primarily as the body-for-others and not as the body-for-me. In other words, alienation is for Manganyi primarily the lack of balance, wholeness and unity between the two body schemata. Because of this disequilibrium the black body is experienced as a burden, as an object and a lived weight of subordination and therefore as an alienated body.

In his later work, *Alienation and the Body in Racist Society: A Study of a Society that Invented Soweto*, Manganyi offers 'psycho-phenomenological' responses to these critical questions. In dealing with the issue of alienation and racism, Manganyi claims that formal psychological methods, or even a socio-psychological approach, though necessary, is however, not sufficient to deal effectively with the phenomenon of alienation in its varied and complex reality. A more promising approach to the rampant alienation that is characteristic of modern-day Western societies, Manganyi suggests, is psycho-phenomenological method. This is 'the study of alienation and racism, viewed from the vintage point of the body-world. Put in another way, the approach here is that of a psychologist who thinks and conceptualizes psychosocial reality in a phenomenological way' (Manganyi 1977:8).

His project is first of all the attempt to legitimise the relationship

between black people and the world, to insist that Black existence in the world is just as justified as any other and that Black humanity cannot be put into question at all, as the apartheid system does. The apartheid demand for justification for black people's existence throws us directly into the realm of race and inevitably the corporeal realm. Manganyi's *Being-Black-in-the-World* is thus a text about anti-black racism, specifically apartheid society which he consistently describes as a 'race supremacist society'. The titles of the chapters in his work speak to this racial orientation; for example, 'Alienation: The Body and Racism', 'The Body-world and the Ontogenesis of Racism' 'Alienation and the Body in a Racist Society'. At the phenomenological level, 'being black' refers to a certain consciousness in the world. Since phenomenologically, consciousness is always consciousness of something, the black person's consciousness is proximally and for the most part (always already) a consciousness of the self that is constituted as black. Black consciousness is thus a consequence of being constituted as black in a 'race supremacist world'. This explains Manganyi's inclusion of the chapter 'Black Consciousness' in his book.

For reasons of space, I shall not offer a critique of some of Manganyi's ideas except to hurriedly mention that, in my opinion, he is guilty of conflating anti-Semitism with anti-black racism in his phenomenology of the body. Furthermore, his suggestion for the transcendence of racism is predicated on black solidarity which he curiously defines as 'Mutual Knowledge', an epistemic category if there was any. It is therefore strange for Manganyi to explain solidarity in terms of 'mutual knowledge' (More 2006; 2017) and to make a logical entailment statement such as 'where there is mutual knowledge it should come as no surprise if there should be solidarity' (Manganyi 1973:19). Having said this I immediately wish to put to rest a criticism that always accompanies the work of Black thinkers. In a paper titled, 'The Psychologist and Black Consciousness in South Africa: The Work of N.C. Manganyi' (1984), presented in the Department of Psychology at the University of Cape Town, Cyril Couve criticised Manganyi for using Western categories to articulate black experience. He writes:

There is a particular paradox appearing in writers like Manganyi who derive their inspiration from a BC [Black Consciousness] perspective. In trying to articulate a black experience or a black self which would be unique they seem in fact captive of conceptual categories which

have profound roots in Western philosophies such as empiricism and phenomenology (Couve 1984:42).

The issue here translates into Audre Lorde's question: 'Can the master's tools dismantle the master's house?' The problem with this kind of critique is that it implicitly deprives black people of knowledge production. It naively assumes, as it is mostly the case, that philosophy and its theories and categories are Hellenistic or of Western origins. Apparently Couve was not familiar with the work of Cheik Anta Diop, Theophile Obenga, Martin Bernal, Molefi K. Asante, Marimba Ani, Yosef Ben-Jochannan, George James, Lewis Gordon, Richard King, Ivan van Sertima etc., among others.³ Although Manganyi was influenced by Western existential phenomenology, psychoanalysis and logotherapy, it will nevertheless be an error to assume that this influence functions as a 'cause' rather than a consequence; he is not a Husserlian, a Sartrean, a Freudian or a Franklean. His lived-experiences in apartheid South Africa, his native country as he so clearly describes it in his memoirs, had already provided him with sufficient grounds to raise existential questions of being-black-in-the-world, Black identity, authenticity, or Black liberation.

Couve's critique further assumes that Western or European philosophers constitute the conditions of possibility not only for Black thought, but also for all

³ See, for example, the following texts Cheik Anta Diop *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*. New York: L Hill, 1974; Theophile Obenga, 'African Philosophy of the Pharoanic Period' *Egypt Revisited*. 2nd Edition. Ivan van Sertima (ed.), New Brunswick: Transaction Press.1989; 286-324; Martin Bernal. *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization (The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985, Volume 1*. New Brunswick:: Rutgers University Press, 1987; Molefi, K. Asante, *Kemet: Afrocentricity, and Knowledge*. Trenton: Africa World Press, 1990; Richard King, 'African Origins of Psychology' Lecture at City College. New York: 1987; George G.M. James, *Stolen Legacy: Greek Philosophy is Stolen Egyptian Philosophy*. Trenton: Africa World Press. 1954, 1992; Ivan van Sertima. *Blacks in Science: Ancient and Modern*. New Brunswick: Transaction, 1983; Marimba Ani *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior*. Trenton: Africa World Press, 1994; Lewis R. Gordon, *In Introduction to Africana Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008; etc.

thought. The problem with this is that it imagines that the only way Black thinkers can think is through the ideas, theories, doctrines or categories of European Western philosophers. In short, this view echoes Kant, Hume, Hegel and many enlightenment philosophers about the rational capacity of black subjects. It is the same argument used to question the existence of African and Black philosophy in the academy. As imitators of European philosophers, Black philosophers then are assumed to be incapable of original thought, let alone thinking at all such that the notion of Black/African/Africana thought becomes oxymoronic. In his *An Introduction to Africana Philosophy* (2008) Gordon, reiterating George James, Asante, Van Sertima and Bernal, argues that as a matter of fact, the term ‘philosophy’, contra popular presumption of its Greek origins, is in fact Kemetic (Egyptian/ Nubian) and that Greek philosophy itself could not have developed had it not exchanged relations with other civilizations around it. Gordon also argued explicitly against the relegation of blacks to experience and their presumed dependence on white thought. He argues that thought is a necessary element of liberatory work and thus belongs to everyone (Gordon 2000).

Conclusion

Given what the dominant figures in philosophy (Kant, Hume, Hegel, etc.) claim about the rationality and thus the humanity of black people, given also the fact that the theorisation of these Euro-modern philosophers about what it means to be human pretends to be universalistic while in fact it is particularistic through the exclusion of black people; Black philosophers such as du Bois, Fanon, Yancy, Birt, Zack, Gordon, Curry, Henry, Alcoff, Césaire, Senghor, Biko and, more importantly for my purpose, Manganyi and many others, have conceptualised their existence phenomenologically and existentially by attempting to disclose or reveal what in Fanon’s words is ‘The live-experience of Blackness’ from concealment in the space of the human. As if speaking for the many mentioned Black philosopher, Manganyi declares, ‘Each one of us in his own way is forced to be a philosopher of existence’ (1981:123). What Manganyi and most Black phenomenologists therefore share, is a deep understanding of the relationship between Blackness, ontology and racism – a relation that Heidegger and most European phenomenologists could not, or would not, envision because of their Eurocentric perspective of Being and *Dasein*. Thus Manganyi’s project, in fundamentally being a stripping away of

concealment and distortions so that black people are able to see that which lets itself be seen for what it is, articulates a phenomenology of difference and diversity.

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