Decolonizing the African Psyche: A Pastoral Counselor's Reflection

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DECOLONIZING THE AFRICAN PSYCHE: A
PASTORAL COUNSELOR’S REFLECTION

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF PASTORAL STUDIES

BY
DABULA ANTHONY MPAKO

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
MAY 1994
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank God and the Ancestors who have made it possible for me to develop a keen interest in the subject under discussion in this thesis, and who have enabled me to see this important work to its completion.

In addition, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Faculty of the Pastoral Counseling Program who have shared their knowledge, and indeed their lives, with me over the past two years. In particular, special thanks go to Paul Giblin Ph.D. and Ann Graff Ph.D. who have been generous in giving of their time and energy to read the initial manuscript and to make helpful suggestions. My gratitude also to Mary Stuart for being a helpful spiritual companion all throughout.

Last, but by no means least, I would like to thank Franca Nkemdilim Onyibor who has been a very faithful companion throughout the whole process of the conception and writing of this thesis, sharing important insights and offering encouragement and support.

And to the many others who in many indirect ways have contributed toward this project, I offer my sincere gratitude and appreciation.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Personal Interest in the Subject

The desire to reflect more in depth on the impact of the sociopolitical situation that characterizes most of Africa on the psychological life of the Africans has been with me for quite a long time now. As a result of this desire, I, at one time, seriously considered doing further studies in the area of political science and political philosophy. My experience as a seminary formator in South Africa, however, convinced me of the need to approach this subject from the point of view of psychology. I was then particularly struck by the far-reaching impact that the South African situation of apartheid appeared to have on the psychological functioning of the many young men (both Black and White) who came to our seminary. The sad thing, however, was that, for the most part, the afflicted students were largely unconscious of the enormous influence exerted by this sick sociopolitical environment on their personal psychological lives. My desire to help uncover this reality led me to develop an interest in psychology and pastoral counseling.

My most immediate interest in the subject under discussion, however, goes back to my experience at the Institute for Spiritual Leadership (ISL) in the year 1991-92.
This was in a very special way a time of intense introspection and "soul-searching" for me. A good part of this process involved the revisiting of my early life experiences to see how these continued to influence and to shape my present personality and life experience.

Something interesting happened to me during this process. As I was touching on the origins of my inferiority complex and the feelings of low self-esteem it generated in me, I came to the realization that there was more to this experience than simply the result of my family of origin experiences. It became clear to me that part of my inferiority complex had to do with growing up as a Black man in South Africa. As I stayed with this realization, an even bigger picture emerged. My inferiority complex showed itself to be related to the bigger experience of being Black and African in the world. In the same way, the deep-seated rage that I also touched into at this time showed itself to be much bigger than the cumulative result of the individual painful experiences I had had to reckon with in my personal life. It showed itself to be part of a much bigger reality, namely, the rage of Africans as a group. There was no doubt in my mind that I had come face to face with a realization whose far-reaching implications I was then only beginning to awaken to. My experience at the time was that I was here faced with something that proved to be much bigger and much deeper than I had hitherto realized.

My reflection on this insight gave birth to a rather
lengthy talk that I presented to the ISL community on the occasion of what was termed the "Global Spirituality Day," a talk I then entitled "The African Problem." In retrospect, I realize that, although I had at the time given no thought whatsoever to writing a lengthy thesis on the subject, this talk, in fact, contained in seed all of the ideas elaborated on in this reflection. Thus, in a way, this thesis can be considered a fleshing-out of that talk.

Defining the Problem

There are many problems facing Africa and Africans (both in Africa and in the diaspora) today, problems that can ultimately be traced back to different causes. I think it would, indeed, be grossly simplistic to suggest that all the many troubles and struggles facing Africa and Africans all over the world can be reduced to only one problem. There can, however, be no denying of the fact that the whole reality of colonialism constitutes one of the biggest problems facing Africa and Africans.

Peter Walshe, in a paper presented to the annual meeting of the AFRICA FAITH AND JUSTICE NETWORK dedicated to "The African Synod" (September 19-20, 1991), gives an exposition of some of these problems that face Africa and Africans. First, there is the colonial impact which has produced a great sense of powerlessness amongst Africans, above all by loosening up traditional structures as Western education and modern science
upset the whole cosmology of traditional African society, and as Christianity introduced new tensions. Second, there is the depressing scene of the aftermath of independence and the disillusionment that goes with it. Third, there are the problems caused by the largely irrelevant educational system which in its essence is simply a transplant of Western educational systems. Fourth, there is the ongoing domination of the African economies by Western corporations who set the investment priorities. There is, fifth, of course the population explosion in the background. On top of this there is environmental decay. And this is before we turn to the issue of AIDS and the many other issues that one could readily come up with in doing a thorough analysis of the African situation. Africans in the diaspora (e.g., Africans in America) may have yet another set of problems related to, among other things, their situation of marginalization. The situation is thus very complex.

It becomes evident from this list of problems that there is just too much to deal with in addressing oneself to the problems that face Africa and Africans. The focus of this thesis is going to be on the impact of colonialism and Christian missionary activity on the life of the Africans. But again this impact, as it is all-pervading, can be looked at from many different angles: political, economic, religious, cultural, educational, and psychological. The focus of this thesis is on the last of these, namely, the consequences of
colonialism and missionary activity on the African psyche. In particular, I want to address myself to the form of psychopathology that is directly related to the experience of being colonized. The purpose of this reflection will be to begin to name some of the dynamics involved in this form of psychopathology and to make some suggestions with regards to the healing process.

Review of Related Literature

Fanon's writings on the colonial personality (Fanon 1963, 1965, 1967) provide one of the main sources for this reflection, especially for the first chapter. He addresses himself directly to the psychological consequences on the African person of the experience of being colonized. As one of the first Africans to address this reality from the point of view of psychology, his work was ground-breaking. McCulloch, in his book *Black Soul White Artifact* (1983), offers a comprehensive synthesis of Fanon's work. Fanon, however, because he died young, was not able to bring his reflection on the colonial psychopathology to completion. Thus in certain areas his work needs to be brought up to date with the recent developments in this field of discourse.

The other important source is Steve Biko's writing on the "mentality of the oppressed" (Biko 1978), which was his own way of naming the psychological consequences of oppression on the colonized (South) Africans. I fully resonate with both
Biko's and Fanon's naming of the psychological consequences of colonialism. I will therefore use their work extensively in naming the different aspects of the colonial psychopathology of the African.

Black psychologists have done a lot of reflection on the situation of the African. Jones, in Black Psychology (1991), provides a useful collection of work by different Black psychologists. In particular, N'aim Akbar's classification of the mental disorders found among African Americans and the stages of Black identity development expounded by Cross, Parham, and Helms are directly relevant to the reflection done in this thesis. Amos Wilson, in his collection of lectures on The Falsification of African Consciousness (1993), directly addresses the distorting influence of the history of oppression on the psychological functioning of the Africans and shows how the psychology developed from the point of view of the dominant Eurocentric stance can only contribute toward perpetuating the colonial psychopathology of the African.

Work by feminist psychologists, although primarily concerned with the particular situation of women, is, in many ways, directly relevant to the reflection done in this thesis. The common experience of oppression and marginalization which characterizes the situation of both women and Africans (as well as all other marginalized groups) leads to some commonalities in the reflection done by feminist and African/Black psychologists. In particular, I find the
empowerment model of Feminist Therapy offered by Judith Worell and Pam Remer in their book Feminist Perspectives in Therapy (1992) and the critique of traditional family therapy done by Thelma Jean Goodrich and others (Goodrich 1988, 1991) very relevant to the discussion done here.

The psychosystems model of pastoral care and counseling offered by Larry Kent Graham (Graham 1992) constitutes the basic framework within which the reflection in this thesis is done. His focus on the dynamic interplay between the individual psyche and the larger systems in the development of psychopathology corresponds directly to the view adopted in this reflection. Graham, however, does not explicitly develop the different concepts and dynamics contained in this model to my satisfaction. I therefore find myself having to take the model one step further in applying it to the colonial psychopathology of the African.

The "theologies from the underside" (Thistlethwaite and Engel 1990) - Black Theology, African Theology, Liberation Theology, and Feminist Theology - provide the sources for the theological reflection part of this thesis. The collection of work by South African Black theologians - Basil Moore’s The Challenge of Black Theology in South Africa (1973) and Itumeleng Mosala and Buti Tlhagale’s The Unquestionable Right to be Free (1986) - is particularly relevant. Benezet Bujo, in his African Theology in Its Social Context (1992), directly links his theological reflection to the sociopolitical
context. His work can be helpful in pointing out how colonialism and missionary activity collude in the development of the colonial psychopathology.

Some Important Assumptions

There are two important assumptions that exist as implied all throughout the reflection done in this thesis. As these may not be readily evident to some people, I find it desirable to explicitly name them here.

The first assumption concerns the reality of colonialism. Is colonialism a past or present reality? For many of us, especially those who have had no direct experience of being on the side of the marginalized, colonialism may appear as a thing of the past. The guiding view in this reflection is that colonialism is very much a thing of the present. What has changed over the years is not the reality itself of colonialism but its form. I am, therefore, in full agreement with Paul Valley’s approach of distinguishing between three phases of colonialism - the first phase of the subjugation and plunder of Africa by the colonizers, the second phase of the organizing of the captured African resources, and the present third phase of the continued control and plunder of Africa by the rich and economically powerful countries "at arms’ length" (Valley 1990). Furthermore, in our age colonialism, in the form of what some have termed neo-colonialism, has been transformed into a worldwide system that continues to oppress
the disadvantaged Africans wherever they are.

The second assumption has to do with the reference of the designation "African." In the reflection done in this thesis I freely and extensively use work done by Black psychologists whose reflection has the situation of the African Americans as its primary reference. At first sight there may appear to be no close similarity between the experience of Africans in Africa and the experience of African Americans. Indeed, on some level the two situations are different. For instance, significant differences in eating, grooming, and living habits may be found between African Americans and some African groups in Africa. (It has, however, to be said that such differences are also found among the different groups of Africans in Africa).

The view taken in this reflection is that, these differences notwithstanding, on the level of the basic psychological processes dealt with in this thesis the experience of Africans all over the world is identical in nature. The differences that may exist on this level are only in degree and not in kind. Indeed, the basic psychological processes addressed in this reflection are, in differing degrees, true of all people who have been colonized (e.g., Native Americans and all the people of the so-called Third World). As used here, therefore, the designation "African" applies to all people of African descent, both in Africa and in the diaspora.
Theoretical Approach and Method

The psychosystems approach to pastoral care and counseling proposed by Graham, according to which the care of persons and the care of worlds are seen as very closely linked (Graham 1992), provides the basic framework for my reflection in this thesis. I find it to lend itself readily to dealing with the problem under discussion here.

The approach he proposes is to be recommended for many reasons. First, it explicitly places the construction and the development of the human personality in the context of the many larger environmental forces that constitute the web within which the human person operates, something that the current model of psychotherapy, drawing as it does almost exclusively upon a variety of individualistic psychological theories and existentialist-based philosophies, often tends to overlook. Second, the psychosystems approach offers a more comprehensive theory of psychotherapy, incorporating as it does insights from various psychological, sociological, philosophical, and theological theories. Third, Graham does a good job of showing how the psychodynamic concepts of personality theory and the concepts of family systems theory can be extended to apply to the dynamics of the larger systems that constitute the overall context of the individual person.

Finally, Graham’s psychosystems model provides a comprehensive approach to healing and care. His five identifiable principles of organicity, simultaneity,
conscientization, advocacy, and adventure offer an approach that is both holistic and comprehensive. The principle of organicity places the patterns of interconnectedness in the very center of the diagnostic and therapeutic process. The principle of simultaneity underscores the important fact that change is effectively brought about by responding to the organic relationship between persons and their worlds simultaneously. The principle of conscientization reminds us of the impact of the social order upon personal difficulties, and the need to assist those seeking care to devise ways of addressing the destructive elements in the social order. The principle of advocacy underlines the need for the caregiving community to make its influence felt in the field of public policy-making. And the principle of adventure provides the reason to be always hopeful in the healing process.

If the psychosystems model constitutes the basic theoretical framework within which I do my reflection, my orientation is that of Black (African) Psychology. Following the latter, my focus is on the situation of the marginalized Blacks/Africans, and I see effecting far-reaching social change as the ultimate goal of therapy.

Thus the program I follow in this thesis is the following. In chapter one, using the work of Fanon, Biko, and Akbar as my main sources, I lay out the colonial psychopathology of the African in its different aspects. Then in chapter two I place myself within the psychosystems
approach and focus on the four psychological concepts of internalization, splitting, self, and system and power which are key to understanding the most basic processes involved in the colonial psychopathology of the African. Thus, I do some psychological reflection on this reality. Chapter three reflects on this same reality from the point of view of Christian theology. Here I offer some relevant insights coming particularly from liberation Theology. Finally, in chapter four I develop implications for the healing process that can be drawn from this psychological and theological reflection on the dynamics involved in the colonial psychopathology, for the sake of both individual Africans and the socio-cultural world in which we dwell.
CHAPTER II

THE CONSEQUENCES OF COLONIALISM AND MISSIONARY ACTIVITY ON THE AFRICAN PSYCHE

History is often down-played in many societies of today. History has a poor reputation; often it is looked upon by many people as essentially a set of dates and events. People often ask: "Why should I study these dates; why should I study these events; what does it have to do with today?" And yet history is at the very center of life. Amos Wilson, in talking about the falsification of African consciousness, expresses this centrality of history very well:

The psychology, consciousness and behavioral tendencies of individuals and societies are to a very significant extent the products of their personal and collective histories. Both personal and collective psychology are constructed from those experiences which can be consciously retrieved from memory as well as those experiences which have been forgotten or repressed but which still represent themselves in individual and collective habits, tendencies, traditions, emotional responsivities, perspectives, ways of processing information, attitudes and reflex-like reactions to certain stimuli and situations. Both types of experiences interacting with current perceptions are utilized by individuals and groups to achieve certain material and non-material ends. (Wilson 1993, 1)

This is true in the case of the history of colonialism in Africa. The experience of having been colonized constitutes an important part of the African experience. As such it continues
to influence and to shape the psychology and consciousness of both the individual African and Africans as a group, although this often operates at the unconscious level. Ali Mazrui, in tracing the origin of the many problems that plague present day Africa, sees them as rooted in the history of colonialism. In particular, they involve turning Africa's back on previous centuries - an attempt to "modernize" without consulting cultural continuities, an attempt to start the process of "dis-Africanizing" Africa. He concludes his analysis of the African situation by clearly locating the problem in the conflict between indigenous Africa and the forces of Western civilization. He states:

"Africa is at war. It is a war of cultures. It is a war between indigenous Africa and the forces of Western civilization. . . . The crisis of efficiency in the continent is symptomatic of the failure of transplanted organs of the state and the economy. Indigenous African culture is putting up a fight. It is as if the indigenous ancestors have been aroused from the dead, disapproving of what seems like an informal pact between the rulers of independent Africa (the inheritors of the colonial order) and the West - a pact which allows the West to continue to dominate Africa. It is as if the ancestors are angry at the failure of Africans to consult them and to pay attention to Africa's past and usage. (Mazrui 1986, 12).

The history of the clash of the two different cultures which has been an essential part of the phenomenon of colonialism continues to shape and to influence the life of Africans as a group as well as the life of the individual African.

It has been convincingly shown by many writers on the African situation (Bujo 1992, Muzorewa 1985, Dickson 1984,
Boulaga 1984, Martey 1993) that the missionary activity of the Christian church was very closely linked to the colonization process, if not openly a part of it. Bujo explains:

It can at least no longer be seriously disputed that foreign missionaries were encouraged to cooperate with the colonial governments. A Belgian handbook for colonial administrators for instance insisted that the work of civilization was not in the hands of the government alone, but also in the hands of missionaries, for religious teaching and religious institutions were of great importance. The colonial endeavour had three arms: government, mission, commerce, and all had to work together. Government officials had a keen sense of their obligations towards missionaries, and were punctilious, for example, in visiting mission schools. (Bujo 1992, 44)

Such co-operation between church and state extended also to the strictly religious field. For example, the attacks on polygamy and the ancestor-cults of Africa were conducted by both secular and religious authorities. There was therefore a thin line between the missionary intention and the intent of the colonizers. This is how I view the relationship between colonialism and missionary activity in this paper: they are two aspects of the same process.

As the impact of colonialism and missionary activity has been all-pervading, it has had far-reaching effects in all the different areas of African life: political, economic, religious, cultural, educational, and psychological. Colonialism and missionary activity in Africa are indeed topics that can be discussed under any field of knowledge.

In this chapter, and indeed in the entire project, I am going to focus on the consequences of colonialism and
Christian missionary activity on the African psyche. My thesis is that these have had a deep and far-reaching impact that has left the psyche itself of the African wounded. I am of the opinion that while a great deal of attention has been given to the politico-economical liberation of the African, not enough attention has been given to the woundedness of the African psyche per se and to the different factors that contribute to keep this woundedness in place.

My own personal experience constitutes the basic foundation for this reflection. However, in articulating the different dynamics involved in the woundedness of the African psyche I am going to rely on the work of those few who have reflected more in depth on this matter. Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko will be my main sources. I will, however, also look at other contemporary voices that continue to reflect on the psychic injuries of the African that have come about as the result of the experience of being colonized.

**Frantz Fanon and the Colonial Personality**

Frantz Fanon was a Black psychiatrist from Algeria, in North Africa, who was both psychiatrist and social activist. He is the only major writer who has attempted to approach the problems of national liberation and social revolution from the vantage point of psychopathology. In his sociology of mental illness, he set out to analyze the influence of environmental factors in the etiology and treatment of mental disorders.
Fanon believed that it is only by using a sociocentric mode of diagnosis and therapy that the problem of mental illness can be effectively dealt with. Colonialism occupied an important place in his theory of psychopathology because it constituted the overall environment in which the Africans lived their lives.

Fanon distinguishes between two phases of colonialism, that are conterminous with two modes of racism. The first phase is that period during which colonial domination is initially established. This is the time when the indigenous peoples are first subjugated militarily and economically, and then dehumanized through a method that involves the domination of their economic and cultural life. In economic terms, phase one of colonialism corresponds to the crude exploitation of the arms and legs of the indigenous peoples. The mode of racism that would seem to correspond to this phase of colonialism is what can be referred to as vulgar racism, in which the indigenous person is proven inferior by reference to physiological science.

The second phase of colonialism comes about through the evolution of the means of production. According to Fanon, the industrialization that comes with this second phase of colonialism necessitates a more sophisticated method in the subjugation of the colonized (McCulloch 1983, 121). The need for collaborators in the process of production undermines the old doctrines of physiological inferiority and calls for
modification, both in the manner by which the colonized are exploited and in the form of racism that justifies that exploitation. The mode of racism that corresponds to this phase of colonialism can be referred to as cultural racism. It is a more sophisticated form of racism in which the object is no longer the physiology of the individual but the cultural style of a people.

According to Fanon, colonial domination produces a colonized personality in the indigenous peoples. The daily confrontations between the indigenous person and the colonial system inflict successive psychic injuries that lead to, among other things, the erosion of self-respect. This is so because colonial oppression, of which racism is but one element, involves the invalidation of a people’s entire way of life, including the denigration of their language, dress, food and all accepted social mores. To underline the extent of the impact of colonialism on the psyche of the indigenous person, Fanon emphasizes that there is a difference between being colonized and being simply dominated. He states:

> It must in any case be remembered that a colonized people is not only simply a dominated people. Under the German occupation, the French remained men; under the French occupation, the Germans remained men. In Algeria [Africa] there is not simply the domination but the decision to the letter not to occupy anything more than the sum total of the land. The Algerians, the veiled women, the palm-trees and the camels make up the landscape, the natural background to the human presence of the French. (Fanon 1963, 201)

Thus, according to Fanon, in colonialism the indigenous
peoples are subjected to drastic reification. They are reduced to an aspect of the natural landscape and, like the trees and the camels, are viewed as a force to be pacified, not reasoned with.

Fanon goes on to elucidate the process of the development of the colonial personality from childhood (Fanon 1967). He explains that in a normal situation there is a natural continuity between the standards of behavior operating within the family, and those of the wider society. In normal circumstances the individual will, without trauma, traverse the distance between the two during the process of maturation. However, in the case of the colonized, the family will assume its normal function until the child comes into contact with the mores of the dominant White culture. Thus, "a normal Negro child, having grown up within a normal family, will become abnormal on the slightest contact with the White world" (Fanon 1967, 143).

At the center of the trauma is the clash between the two cultures, particularly the clash between the values and self-perceptions transmitted to the child by the family and the negation of those values once the child comes into direct contact with European culture. Fanon’s observation was that there were no substantial links between the structure of the African family and the structure of the nation.

Fanon mentions a number of mental disorders and attitudes which he directly attributes to colonialism. Indeed, Fanon’s
psychopathology of colonialism is based upon a single assumption which he tentatively refers to in his early work *Black Skin White Masks* (Fanon 1967). This assumption is that the seizure of the productive process and the subordination of the indigenous cultural whole to metropolitan economic interests creates a distinct deformation of personality. We will now look more closely at some of the mental disorders and attitudes that Fanon saw as constituting the colonial personality.

The White Mask Syndrome

This is an important factor that Fanon views as part of the alienation brought about by colonialism. It has to do with the fact that the indigenous peoples felt despised by the White community because, in Western culture, black skin is associated with impurity. Fanon's observation was that, more often than not, the indigenous person accepted this judgement and despised himself or herself. Consequently, as a defence against the burden of his or her race, the indigenous person would imitate the European's manner of speech, dress, and when possible seek out white sexual partners. In his *Black Skin White Masks* Fanon traces out the various strategies resorted to by the indigenous people in their attempts to elude the stigma of their race. For the colonized African person, the only possible escape from the tragedy of being Black was through entry into the social and cultural milieu of the
European. All his efforts to make himself at home in the world were aimed to develop those features of personality and behavior, which would insulate him against his hatred of his own damning color. Fanon observes that in the absence of such protective qualities, qualities synonymous with a "White mask," the indigenous person has no semblance of ego strength.

The situation which the indigenous person finds himself in leads to some form of neurosis. In writing about the situation of the Black Antillean, Fanon explains:

The Negro is in every sense of the word a victim of white civilization. It is not surprising that the artistic creations of Antillean poets bear no special watermark: These men are white. To come back to psychopathology, let us say that the Negro lives an ambiguity that is extraordinarily neurotic. (Fanon 1967, 192)

In Fanon's analysis, the white mask syndrome was more true of the way the African petty bourgeoisie reacted to the colonial experience. Driven by the need to establish a sense of personal identity, the native intellectual finds himself caught up in a desperate attempt to achieve mastery of the cultural practice of the colonizing power. The reason for this reaction on the part of the native bourgeoisie would seem to be the fact that their status has brought them closer to the culture of the colonizing power. Fanon explains:

In order to assimilate and to experience the oppressor's culture, the native has had to leave certain of his intellectual possessions in pawn. These pledges include his adoption of the forms of thought of the colonialist bourgeoisie. This is very noticeable in the aptitude of the native
intellectual to carry on a two-sided discussion; for he cannot eliminate himself when confronted with an object or an idea. (Fanon 1963, 38)

The Inferiority Complex

Closely connected with the "White mask syndrome" is the inferiority complex that plagues the African person because of the experience of being colonized. Fanon claims that the sacking of the local culture, undertaken by the occupying power, finally leads to cultural atrophy. The destruction of the colonized people's original methods for solving its relationship with nature, achieving the means of survival and recording that victory would, in itself, be debilitating enough. But added to this is the corrosive influence of colonial racism that justifies the usurpation. Fanon observes that, tragically, the colonized often come to view their own cultural style through the denigratory perspective of the European, and come to consider it as inferior.

Closely related to this feeling of inferiority is the feeling of guilt that the African has about his condition. Having accepted their inferiority, the dominated race comes to accept its condition as caused by its own failings, thereby assuming a burden of guilt for its suffering. In turn, this inferiority and guilt provide further impetus to the process of developing the "White mask syndrome."
Self-Hatred and Intercommunal Violence

The condition of being under stable and unchallenged colonial rule reduces the African to a state of helplessness. Fanon observed that, being impotent to challenge the colonial power, the colonized people often become ill with self-hatred and self-loathing. While he viewed self-hatred as a condition found in all the colonized, Fanon saw more propensity for intercommunal violence in the peasant class. Fanon sees this propensity to violence as rooted in the emotional hypersensitivity found in the African due to the experience of being colonized. He argues:

In the colonial world, the emotional sensitivity of the native is kept on the surface of his skin like an open sore which flinches from the caustic agent; and the psyche shrinks back, obliterates itself and finds outlet in muscular demonstrations which have caused certain wise men to say that the native is a hysterical type. (Fanon 1963, 44)

Cultural Deficiency and Cultural Withdrawal

In his book A Dying Colonialism, Fanon describes the colonial personality as essentially a portrait of persons made deficient, of whole peoples instilled with fear, and degraded through the destruction of their natural means of sociability. This cultural deficiency leads to a form of cultural withdrawal. An example of this can be seen in Fanon's description of the situation of the Algerian woman who retreats back into the confines of the home and avoids wider social contact, especially with the imposed French culture.
Fanon documents the effects of this cultural withdrawal on the personality of the Algerian: the denial of the capacity for innovation, and all sorts of inhibitions. On the positive side, however, Fanon saw as a possibly creative aspect of this withdrawal the fact that it could be an act of resistance, a protest against the destruction of culture by the colonizer.

Following his sociocentric approach to the etiology of the colonial personality, Fanon saw liberation from this condition as necessitating a bilateral approach. The first aspect of this approach involves a process of self-reflection similar to that associated with psychotherapy. The second approach requires a change in the socioeconomic situation in which the African lives. Included in this is a change in the spheres of education and popular culture, a change that will bring the African to feel good about his or her culture.

Unfortunately, Fanon died at a very young age (36 years of age). It would have been interesting to see how he would develop his theory as years went by and as some changes took place in the situation of the colonized African. There are, indeed, many questions that one reading Fanon’s work would have liked him to address more at length. McCulloch, who has done an extensive study of Fanon’s writings, concludes his evaluation of Fanon’s work thus:

The more obvious flaws in The Wretched and Masks highlight the fact that Fanon’s life’s work was left incomplete. As it stands his theory is essentially a series of giant fragments which remain as the residue of an immensely productive life. If he had lived, Fanon’s next work written...
from the vantage point of hindsight would have been more extraordinary than the works he has left us. (McCulloch 1983, 212)

There can, however, be no denying the fact that in his discourse on the colonial personality Fanon has clearly identified for us some of the most important consequences of colonialism on the African psyche, dynamics that tend to largely remain unconscious to the unreflective mind.

Steve Biko and the Mentality of the Oppressed

Steve Biko was a Black South African who was very instrumental in the founding and development of the South African Black Consciousness Movement. He is chiefly known outside South Africa by reason of the manner of his death - he died a violent death in the detention cells of South Africa. The movie Cry Freedom, which has been seen by many throughout the world, was an attempt to portray the remarkable life of this son of Africa.

Biko's ideas and the South African Black Consciousness Movement have their origin in the early sixties. In the aftermath of the Sharpville massacre of 1960 (in which about sixty nine Black South Africans who were protesting against the so-called "pass laws" were killed by White security forces), a time in which Black political activities had seemingly died down following the banning of both the ANC and the PAC (the then two well-established liberation movements), the inextinguishable spirit of the African was once again
demonstrated. The espousal of African cultural values and Black political aspiration that took place around this time gave birth to a new movement and a philosophy that was to be the driving force behind the Black struggle for a long time to come.

What distinguished the South African Black Consciousness Movement from other liberation philosophies was that it conceived of liberation in more holistic terms, as affecting every dimension of Black existence. To underscore this, Biko defined the concept of Black Consciousness as "an attitude of mind and a way of life" (Biko 1978, 91). As an attitude of mind, it made Black people see themselves as independent and complete in themselves, making them free to express and affirm their full humanity. It also made them aware that the strongest tool in the hands of the oppressor was the mentality of the oppressed, for, as Biko puts it,

If one is free at heart, no man-made chains can bind one to servitude, but if one's mind is so manipulated and controlled by the oppressor as to make the oppressed believe that he is a liability to the white man, then there will be nothing the oppressed can do to scare his powerful masters." (Biko 1978, 92)

As a way of life, Black Consciousness examined critically the oppressive status quo of the apartheid system by using Black values. It addressed itself to the authenticity of Black history, culture and religion. It rejected White supremacy and affirmed Black humanity. Black Consciousness thus sought to liberate Black South Africans from both psychological
alienation and physical oppression.

What Biko saw as at the center of the mentality of the oppressed was a deep inferiority complex that the Black South African had come to have as a result of being a victim of the oppression of apartheid. In particular, he saw this feeling in the Black person as resulting from the tendency by Whites, now and in the past, to depict Blacks as of an inferior status. He argues: "Our culture, our history and indeed all aspects of the black man's life have been battered nearly out of shape in the great collision between the indigenous values and the Anglo-Boer culture" (Biko 1978, 92).

Noting that the logic behind White domination in South Africa was to prepare the Black people for a subservient role, Biko observes that they have, to a large extent, "succeeded in producing at the output end of their machine a kind of black man who is man only in form" (Biko 1978, 28). To underscore the extent to which this process of the dehumanization of the Black person has advanced, Biko continues to use even stronger words: "All in all the black man has become a shell, a shadow of man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity" (Biko 1978, 29).

Biko is, in addition, more explicit on the role played by the Christian missionaries in the process of bringing about the inferiority complex in the Black person. While they were the first White people to relate to the Blacks in a human way,
they were still part of the culturally alienating process that was an essential part of colonization. Furthermore, Biko saw the influence of the missionaries as having an even more far-reaching impact because, as they were in the vanguard of the colonization movement's campaign to "civilize and educate" the Black "savages" and introduce the Christian message to them, their teaching touched the very soul of the African person. As Biko explains,

A man who succeeds in making a group of people accept a foreign concept in which he is expert makes them perpetual students whose progress in the particular field can only be evaluated by him; the student must constantly turn to him for guidance and promotion. . . . Only he can tell us how good our performance is and instinctively each of us is at pains to please this powerful, all-knowing master. (Biko 1978, 94-95)

Accordingly, Biko saw as the starting point of the Black consciousness program the liberation of the Black person from this psychological oppression. Having identified the fact of the inferiority complex of the Black person as the first truth, he goes on to explain:

It becomes more necessary to see the truth as it is if you realize that the only vehicle for change are these people who have lost their personality. The first step therefore is to make the black man come to himself; to pump back life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity, to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth. This is what we mean by an inward-looking process. (Biko 1978, 29)

Closely connected with the inferiority complex, if not flowing directly from it, is a fear which Biko saw as eroding
the soul of the Black people in South Africa. He again saw this fear as deliberately built up by the apartheid system through a myriad of civil agents - police, army men in uniform, security police or even the occasional trigger-happy White farmer or store owner. As Biko saw it,

It is a fear so basic in the considered actions of black people as to make it impossible for them to behave like people - let alone free people. From the attitude of a servant to his employer, to that of a black man being served by a white attendant at a shop, one sees this fear clearly showing through. (Biko 1978, 76)

Biko is, however, quick to point out another aspect of this fear which may not be readily observable to an outsider. This fear goes only skin deep. It usually hides underneath it an immeasurable rage that often threatens to erupt. Biko continues to explain:

Powerlessness breeds a race of beggars who smile at the enemy and swear at him in the sanctity of their toilets; who shout 'Baas' [Boss] willingly during the day and call the white man a dog in their buses as they go home. (Biko 1978, 78)

Echoing Fanon's observation on the phenomenon of intercommunal violence among the colonized peasantry, Biko observes that often the Black person vents this mounting anger in the wrong direction - on his fellow Blacks in the townships.

Again like Fanon, Biko observed that, as a way of escaping from the deep-seated inferiority complex, some Blacks embark on a process of running away from themselves, finding solace only in close identification with White society. In commenting on the situation of the Black intellectuals who
would go to any length to become part of what he refers to as "the black-white mixed circles", Biko explains:

They have been made to feel inferior for so long that for them it is comforting to drink tea, wine or beer with whites who seem to treat them as equals. This serves to boost up their own ego to the extent of making them feel slightly superior to those blacks who do not get similar treatment from whites. (Biko 1978, 23)

Unfortunately, Steve Biko, like Fanon, did not live long enough to develop his ideas further. With the banning of the Black Consciousness Movement by the White South African government and the subsequent violent death of Steve Biko himself on 12 September, 1977, the movement was forced to go underground, something that caused the momentum that the Black Consciousness concept had gained in the minds of the Black community to lessen remarkably.

Although his work admittedly remains incomplete (after his banning in March of 1973 he could no longer travel, speak in public, or write for publication), Steve Biko nevertheless did identify for us some of the far-reaching consequences of colonialism and the Christian missionary activity on the psyche of the African person. It still remains to be seen how much influence his ideas will have in the formation of the so-called new South Africa that we hear talked about a lot these days.
Other Contemporary Voices

Contemporary authors reflecting on the situation of the African person, both in Africa and in the diaspora (notably the African in America), a situation that has come as the overall result of the history of colonialism, continue to point out some mental disorders that plague the African person as a result of living in this situation. Some psychiatrists in Africa have identified psychological disturbances in the African that have their origin in the fact of being caught between two cultures, the indigenous African culture and the Western culture. Some American Black psychologists have come up with a list of mental disorders found in the African American as a result of being a minority in the dominant Eurocentric culture. We will now look more closely at some of these voices.

Bell, in his discourse on mental disorders in Sub-Saharan Africa, alludes to some disorders which he terms "cultural conflict illnesses," disorders that accompany rapid sociocultural change. Among these he mentions the phenomenon of "malignant anxiety." This form of mental maladjustment was first observed among marginal Africans, those individuals who had repudiated or were rejecting traditional values and had not acquired new ones. This aggressive and hostile behavior is most frequently found in places inhabited by transients - labor camps or hastily constructed shanty towns on the outskirts of cities.
Bell also refers to psychiatric disturbances found among African expatriates. He notes that some educated Africans coming from the United States or Europe may experience mental distress on their return home. He quotes a study done on some Liberian students which showed that within a few months of returning home the students exhibited abnormal behavior. The finding of this study was that the students were experiencing an identity crisis, the pain of cultural conflict, a tense inner struggle between traditional Liberian and modern American values. Renato Kizito Sesana, in his address to the annual conference of the AFRICA FAITH AND JUSTICE NETWORK dedicated to "The African Synod" (September 19-20, 1991), echoes this finding. In talking about the clash between the two cultures that the African has to constantly live with, he explains that the resulting conflict exists "in the very minds and souls" of the people. He continues:

Since these kinds of conflicts and difficult choices are cropping up several times a day in the life of many Africans, it is no surprise that mentally strained and 'disturbed' people are increasing in African towns.

Na'im Akbar, reflecting on the condition of the African American, provides a list of mental disorders found among African Americans, disturbances he sees as rooted in the history of slavery and the experience of oppression. He classifies these under the three classes of Alien-Self Disorders, Anti-Self Disorders, and Self-Destructive Disorders. We will now look more closely into these.
The Alien-Self Disorders

These disorders are represented by Africans who, as a consequence of being an oppressed minority in the dominant Eurocentric culture, become alienated from themselves, from their natural African orientation. They are a group whose most prevalent activities represent a rejection of their natural dispositions. They have learned to act in contradiction to their own well-being and are, as a consequence, alien to themselves. Commenting on this same phenomenon, Amos Wilson defines this alienation as

to have lost remembrance or accurate knowledge of and identity with one’s true, undistorted self, historical self and culture, and important segments of reality. Loss of sense of self. The irrational feeling that one is someone else, that one’s body is grotesque. Feeling of aimlessness, normlessness, purposelessness, hopelessness, meaninglessness; of being unmotivated by one’s own self-originated needs and values; of being compelled or retarded by unknown, unknowable, but irresistible forces. (Wilson 1993, 132)

The Anti-Self Disorders

These are African American psychological disturbances which not only manifest characteristics similar to the Alien-Self Disorders, but also contain the added ingredient of hostility, covert and overt, toward Africanity and all things related to it. African Americans who are afflicted with this class of disorders have so internalized the dominant culture’s negative view of African culture to the point where they project negativism and hostility toward Africanity. Citing
Frantz Fanon, Akbar sees this group as representing the true "colonized mentality." According to Akbar, the dangerous aspect of this group is that, unlike in the Alien-Self Disorders, they feel quite comfortable with their alien identification. Wilson, underscoring the social dimension of this disorder explains:

But self-hatred is not only an individual reaction. It becomes part of a social system, because the individual who hates himself hates other people who remind him of himself. And therefore, when he looks out at his sisters and brothers he also looks at himself; and if he questions the adequacy and competence of himself, he questions the adequacy and competence of his sisters and brothers. (Wilson 1993, 74)

The Self-Destructive Disorders

This class of disorders refers to behaviors on the part of many African Americans which represent faulty and destructive attempts to cope with the difficult situation in which they find themselves. Unlike the other two categories of mental disorders, these behaviors simply reflect the condition of being overwhelmed by the oppressive situation. They more represent direct victimized states reflecting the vicious condition of "survival-at-any-cost" mentality. African Americans afflicted with this class of mental disorders can represent the deteriorated condition of the so-called "jungle-parasitic" and "dog-eat-dog" type of orientation. Accordingly, Akbar identifies Black-on-Black homicide and crime as an acting-out of the Self-Destructive Disorders. He sees the
conditions experienced by the afflicted African Americans as having made them enemy forces to their immediate selves and to their extended selves in the African American community.

Writing on the hidden rage of successful Blacks in America, a rage which arises from their experience of racism, Ellis Cose (Newsweek November 15, 1993) echoes some of these psychological problems. He mentions among other things the inability to fit in, which many successful Blacks experience; low expectations, coming from internalizing the expectation of failure that lingers in many a Black person; shattered hopes, coping fatigue, identity troubles, self-censorship and silence, and collective guilt.

**Different Voices but One Message**

From Fanon to Akbar, we hear the same message echoed. The experience of being colonized and oppressed leads to a particular form of psychopathology in the African. The process through which this psychopathology develops is explained in an almost identical way in all these different sources. The starting point is the internalization by the oppressed Africans of the dominant culture's view of the inferiority of African culture and Africanity in general. This in turn leads to the development of an inferiority complex (Fanon and Biko). As an unconscious attempt to escape from this situation, the oppressed Africans resort to identification with the dominant European-American culture (Fanon's "White mask" and Akbar's
Alien-Self Disorders). This leads to the "cultural split" referred to particularly by Bell and Kizito Sesana.

The feeling of inferiority also leads to the phenomenon of self-hatred referred to by almost all the different writers (particularly Akbar's Anti-Self Disorders). From this results the tendency to self-destruction identified again in all the sources used above. The end-result of all this is an impoverished sense of self which result in cultural deficiency.

Conclusion

Colonialism has inflicted deep psychic injuries on the African. The voices cited above are among the few who have been able to name some of these psychic injuries. This psychological woundedness continues to be part of the experience of many Africans for various reasons. Firstly, Africans, as a group, still have not recovered from the experience of the trauma of colonialism. Africans in Africa are still reeling under the colonial impact that has upset the whole structure of traditional African life. Africans in America still struggle with the consequences of their experience of slavery which was part of the colonialist campaign.

Secondly, contrary to what many of us often think, colonialism, in the form of neo-colonialism, is still very much a present reality. While most of Africa has become
politically independent, Africa remains colonized economically and culturally, a condition which some writers reflecting on the African situation see as leading to what they refer to as the "anthropological pauperization of the African person." The "African Report" presented at EATWOT's Second General Assembly at Oaxtepec - a report presented jointly by theologians from both independent Africa and South Africa - refers explicitly to this anthropological pauperization and explains it thus:

If we define pauperization as the fact of becoming or making poor, namely being deprived of all that we have acquired, all that we are and all that we can do, we shall recognize that Africa is subjugated to structures which result in complete pauperization: political, economic, and social. When it is not a matter of being deprived of all that we own, but rather of all that we are - our human identity, our social roots, our history, our culture, our dignity, our rights, our hopes, and our plans - then pauperization becomes anthropological. (cited in Martey 1993, 38)

Commenting on the history of the African American, referring particularly to the history of colonialism and slavery, Wilson suggests that we should look at this history as psychohistory, i.e., the psychological result of undergoing certain historical experiences. As such, this history remains part of the present and, if not dealt with, will be part of the future. Warning against the danger of social amnesia, he argues:

Simply because we choose to forget a traumatic event, simply because we choose not to learn of a traumatic history and a history that may make us feel ashamed, does not mean that that history is not controlling our behavior. Simply because we don't know our history, and may have not heard of it, does not mean that the history does not control
our behavior. (Wilson 1993, 34)

The healing of the psychological woundedness of the African will come about only when the history of colonialism and its present effects are courageously addressed and dealt with. There is still a need for the psychological establishment to develop more concern and interest in the psychological situation of the African that has come about as the result of colonialism.
CHAPTER III
REFLECTING WITH PSYCHOLOGY

In the previous chapter we have laid out the problem of the psychic injuries that plague the African as a result of the experience of being colonized. We have also noted that unless these psychic injuries, and all the things that keep them in place, are courageously addressed and dealt with, they will continue to remain part of the experience of the African well into the future. However, before they can be dealt with psychotherapeutically, these psychic injuries first need to be conceptualized in a language that renders them accessible to psychotherapy. This is the task that faces us in this chapter. The question we will try to answer is: How can we make sense psychotherapeutically of the psychic injuries of the African person?

With Graham’s psychosystems approach and Black Psychology as my basic theoretical framework, I have decided to focus on a few psychological concepts which, in my view, show themselves to be directly applicable to the process of rendering the psychological woundedness of the African in a language accessible to psychotherapy. These concepts are: internalization, splitting, self and its dynamics, and system and power. My hypothesis is that these psychological terms,
when extended to apply to the dynamics of larger systems, can help to name some of the dynamics involved in the colonial psychopathology of the African.

**Internalization**

Internalization is one of the major concepts in psychoanalytic and developmental theories. It occupies a central place in psychoanalytic propositions concerning psychic development, structure formation, modification of aims, and adaptive processes. Schafer, who has written extensively on the concept of internalization, explains:

> Psychoanalytic conceptions of narcissism, object love, sublimation, and the ego ideal; of defense, anxiety, guilt, and shame; of loss, trauma, delay, and reality testing: all of these depend in part on the conceptualization of internalization. (Schafer 1990, 1)

For this reason, Schafer goes on to affirm the important place of internalization in any theory of psychopathology and psychotherapy. He continues to explain:

> Furthermore, to be complete, any discussion of psychopathology and of normal development must refer to inadequate, faulty, or optimal internalizations. And to be satisfactory, any theory of technique must take into account the therapeutic modification of internalized influences and characteristics and the new processes of internalization set in motion by treatment. (Schafer 1990, 1)

However, important as it is in psychoanalytic thought, there is no far-reaching and exact consensus on the meaning and usage of the term. One is confronted with a complexity that can be bewildering at times, especially to the student
who is receptive to all he or she reads. Hamilton, in his
discussion of the usage of this term in Object Relations
Theory, echoes this reality of confusion. The concept is
mostly dealt with under the headings of incorporation,
introjection, and identification. Both Schafer and Hamilton do
a good job in teasing out the different shades of meaning
associated with these terms and in showing how they relate to
each other.

In general, internalization refers to any process of
including something new within the person. Quoting Freud,
Schafer describes the process thus:

> A portion of the external world has, at least partially, been taken into the ego and thus become an integral part of the internal world. This new psychic energy continues to carry on the functions which have hitherto been performed by people in the external world. (Schafer 1990, 8)

This is how psychoanalytic theory explains the development of
the superego in the child. Punitive and regulatory parental
voices are taken in through the process of internalization and
become an inner voice. This is also how Object relations
Theory views the development of inner object representations.
From its relationships with the significant others, the child
develops both a sense of self and a pattern of relating to
itself, to others, and to the world.

Schafer provides a comprehensive definition of
internalization which, among other things, clarifies the
different aspects of the process:

Internalization refers to all those processes by
which the subject transforms real or imagined regulatory interactions with his environment, and real or imagined characteristics of his environment, into inner regulations and characteristics. (Schafer 1990, 9)

This definition brings out a few things about the process of internalization. First, it points to the fact that the subject plays a role in the process, even though his doing so may be in response to considerable environmental pressure. Secondly, in some instances of internalization, like in a child's experience, the environmental influence may be partly or entirely imagined. Finally, the "inner" in the definition indicates that the stimulation and impact of the regulation does not depend on the actual presence, action, or emotional position of the external object that was one party to the original interaction. Rather, the subject locates the previously external regulatory agent within some self-boundary.

Internalization is the primary and comprehensive process of taking in. The other terms - incorporation, introjection, and identification - refer to the different forms that internalization takes. Incorporation refers to the most primitive form of internalization. In this primary process, owing to its concreteness, the idea is not differentiated from the deed. Incorporation may therefore be said to refer to those instances where one has taken a part or all of another person or thing into one's self corporeally. Describing it as a psychological "eating" prior to the development of clear
self-other boundaries, a process in which the object is taken in and disappears inside the nondifferentiated self-other matrix, Hamilton gives as examples of incorporation the experience of the infant sucking warm sweet milk at the breast and cannibalism fantasies (Hamilton 1992, 68).

Introjection refers to the form of internalization where object representations are constituted as introjects. Hamilton defines an introject thus: "An introject is an internal object-image sufficiently vivid to have emotional power in the internal world. It is an object-image that is taken in, embraced, and held in tact, rather than devoured" (Hamilton 1992, 69). Unlike in incorporation, there is here a differentiation between the real object and its representation.

Finally, identification refers to yet another form of internalization where one modifies the subjective self or behavior, or both, in order to increase one's resemblance to an object taken as a model (Schafer 1990, 16). Since it is more or less integrated into the self representations, an identification can be said to represent a higher degree of internalization than both introjection and incorporation.

The process of internalization is by no means restricted to individual psychodynamics. It takes place in larger systems and groups as well. Theorists and researchers who are concerned with social processes and history point to the existence of this phenomenon in larger processes. Feminist
writers, for example, emphasize women's internalization of the derogatory images and uses of them that pervade our male-dominated societies. Jean Baker Miller brings this out clearly in her discussion of the relationship between domination and subordination. She explains:

Tragic confusion arises because subordinates absorb a large part of the untruths created by the dominants; there are a great many blacks who feel inferior to whites, and women who still believe they are less important than men. This internalization of dominant beliefs is more likely to occur if there are a few alternative concepts at hand. (Miller 1975, 11)

The same theme is echoed by contemporary contributors to general social theory who in their writings on historical and cultural topics emphasize the internalization of ideologies and thus modes of comprehending the world and being in it. They present internalization as a process that, among other things, enables the oppressed and exploited to accept and even to idealize the socioeconomic and ideological system in which they and their oppressors are serving as participant-victims. Paulo Freire discusses this more at length in his Pedagogy of the Oppressed. In emphasizing the need for the oppressed to acquire a critical awareness of oppression, he explains that "one of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings' consciousness. Functionally, oppression is domesticating" (Freire 1993, 33). Later on, in explaining how well the oppressed come to internalize the myths propagated by the oppressor over time, Freire gives this
rather amusing example told to him by a teacher who worked with a group in New York:

A group in a New York ghetto was presented a coded situation showing a big pile of garbage on a street corner - the very same street where the group was meeting. One of the participants said at once, "I see a street in Africa or in Latin America." And why not in New York?" asked the teacher. Because we are the United States and that can't happen here." (Freire 1993, 138)

So deep had this participant internalized the myth propagated by the dominant culture that he had become blind to reality.

When explained this way, it becomes easy to see clearly how the phenomenon of internalization is at the root of the colonial psychopathologies identified by Fanon, Biko, and the other authors cited in the previous chapter. The inferiority complex, the alienation and self-hatred, the "White mask syndrome," and all the other psychological problems that face the African person as a result of the experience of being colonized all result from the fact that the African has, under the dehumanizing domination by the colonizing powers, a domination which has often included intense indoctrination and brainwashing, internalized the dominant colonial culture's denigration of Africanity and all that goes with it. Thus, any therapeutic intervention meant to change the situation of the African person must address itself directly to the phenomenon of internalization.

**Splitting**

The second psychological concept I would like to look at
is what can be referred to as the phenomenon of the split personality which comes as a result of the dynamics of splitting, one of the central mechanisms in psychodynamic theories. St.Clair, in a synthesis of Otto Kernberg's theory, provides a comprehensive definition of splitting:

Splitting is both a defensive activity and a normal function that occurs during development. It is an activity by which the ego sees differences within the self and within objects or between the self and its objects. A defensive measure, splitting involves an unconscious phantasy by which the ego splits off unwanted aspects of the self or splits threatening objects into more manageable aspects. (St.Clair 1986, 128)

The well known story of Dr.Jekyll and Mr.Hyde would represent an example of an extreme case of splitting where there is a clear divide between two aspects of the same personality. A less extreme example of splitting might be the frequent tendency to see persons in terms of all good or all bad characteristics, without seeing both aspects as being present in the same person.

Cashdan gives a developmental understanding of splitting, according to which the process of splitting goes through four phases - maternal splitting, imaginal splitting, self splitting, and identity splits. Maternal splitting refers to the phase of splitting where the infant divides the world into satisfying and unsatisfying sensations and comes to view the former as good and the latter as bad (e.g., when milk is flowing, the breast is good; when it is not, it is bad). Thus, the mother who provides the milk comes to be split into the
good and the bad mother, good when she responds to the needs of the child and bad when she does not. Imaginal splitting occurs in the inner representations of objects that the child later on develops. Since the mother has been experienced as split in the previous phase, her inner representation remains split. In the third phase, splitting takes place in the formation of the self. This is the time when the inner representations of childhood undergo one final transformation in which they are no longer experienced as inner entities but as part of one's own being. The last phase of identity splits is a phase of self-development that extends from childhood throughout one's entire adulthood. Splitting here takes place in the many identities that one establishes out of relationships with others. These identities—parental, sexual, marital, career, ethnic, cultural, and religious—eventually become subselves that always run the risk of being split from each other.

Like internalization, splitting does not take place only on the level of individual psychodynamics. It is a dynamic found in larger systems as well. Otto Kenberg is reported to have made the comment that groups of people often show more primitive psychological functioning with regards to splitting than do their individual members, as can be seen from the abounding evidence of splitting in entertainment, religion, and public life (Hamilton 1992, 79). Here splitting is no more only motivated by inherent destructive tendencies. It is
equally motivated by loyalty to good internal objects and the
good people with whom we identify. It plays an important role
in the establishment of love relationships, family fealty,
loyal friendships, patriotism, and dedication to a cause.

However, apart from the situations in which splitting can
be said to be a normal part of human interactions, there are
situations in which it comes as the unwanted effect of living
in an oppressive environment. In such situations, splitting
comes as one of the psychopathologies that have their origin
in the oppressive and dehumanizing environment. Bell Hooks, in
discussing the situation that many African American college
students often have to reckon with, points to one such
situation where splitting comes as a result of the attempt to
deal with a difficult situation. In their attempt to enter
into the mainstream, Black college students often resort to
assimilation into the White culture. However, since they can
never succeed to be fully White, this very effort promotes and
fosters serious psychological stress and even severe mental
illness (Hooks 1989, 67). At the center of this psychological
stress are feelings of alienation and despair, feelings of
loss of identity and meaning.

Paulo Freire, in his Pedagogy of the Oppressed, talks to
the same reality. In talking about the "fear of freedom" which
often afflicts the oppressed, he traces it to the fact that
the oppressed are split within themselves, a condition
resulting from their internalizing of the prescriptions of the
oppressor. As a result, they are not one but two in themselves. He explains:

The oppressed suffer from the duality which has established itself in their innermost being. They discover that without freedom they cannot exist authentically. Yet, although they desire authentic existence, they fear it. They are at one and the same time themselves and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalized. The conflict lies in the choice between being wholly themselves or being divided; between ejecting the oppressor within or not ejecting them; between human solidarity or alienation; between following prescriptions or having choices; between being spectators or actors; between acting or having the illusion of acting through the action of the oppressors; between speaking out or being silent, castrated in their power to create and re-create, in their power to transform the world. (Freire 1993, 30)

Many of the colonial psychopathologies identified in the previous chapter point to the phenomenon of splitting in the African psyche. Splitting is implied in Fanon’s discussion of the White mask syndrome. The reason why the native bourgeoisie is more prone to develop the White mask syndrome is because they, by virtue of being much closer to the cultural practice of the colonizing power, have become more split within. Let us quote Fanon again:

In order to assimilate and to experience the oppressor’s culture, the native has had to leave certain of his intellectual possessions in pawn. These pledges include his adoption of the forms of thought of the colonialist bourgeoisie. This is very noticeable in the aptitude of the native intellectual to carry on a two-sided discussion; for he cannot eliminate himself when confronted with an object or an idea. (Fanon 1963, 38)

Biko echoes the same reality of splitting when he talks about the fear which he saw as eroding the soul of the Black
people in South Africa, "a fear so basic in the considered actions of black people as to make it impossible for them to behave like people — let alone free people" (Biko 1978, 76). Coupled with the immeasurable rage hidden underneath it, a rage that often threatens to erupt, this fear leads to a split in the oppressed Black people. As Biko explains, "Powerlessness breeds a race of beggars who smile at the enemy and swear at him in the sanctity of their toilets; who shout 'Baas' [Boss] willingly during the day and call the white man a dog in their buses as they go home" (Biko 1978, 78).

Bell and Renato Kizito Sesana are more explicit on how this inner split leads to psychopathology in the African person. Bell identifies concrete mental disorders, among which is the phenomenon of "malignant anxiety, disorders that he traces back to the split caused by the cultural conflict that is part of everyday life for many Africans. It does not come as a surprise to Sesana, who sees the cultural conflict as existing "in the very minds and souls" of the Africans," that this situation often leads to all sorts of mental disorders. For, as he explains, "Since these kinds of conflicts and difficult choices are cropping up several times a day in the life of many Africans, it is no surprise that mentally strained and 'disturbed' people are increasing in African towns" (Address to the annual conference of the AFRICA FAITH AND JUSTICE NETWORK, September 19-20, 1991).

Splitting is also at the root of Akbar’s Alien-Self
Disorders. Being a minority in the oppressive Eurocentric culture, many African Americans come to have a split personality as they become alienated from themselves in their attempt to fit in the situation.

**Self and Its Dynamics**

This is another psychological concept that shows itself to be directly applicable to the process of naming what is involved in the psychological woundedness of the African. Self is a difficult term to define and conceptualize, in part because many disciplines - theology, psychology, philosophy - approach it from different levels of experience and viewpoints. Usually, the particular method used by a theorist to view and observe individuals gives a different vantage point and suggests a different way of defining the self. In the use of the term here I will follow the definition and usage of the term employed in Self Psychology and, recently, in Graham's psychosystemic approach. When joined together, these usages give us a fuller understanding of the self and its dynamics.

Following the approach of Kohut, Self Psychology commonly defines self in a broad sense as "the center of the individual's psychological universe" and, describing it more in terms of awareness and experience, as "a unit, cohesive in space and enduring in time, which is the center of initiative and a recipient of impressions" (St.Clair 1986, 149). To
emerge and develop, such a self needs to be embedded in a matrix of relationships from which it experiences self-sustaining responses or selfobject experiences, to use the Self Psychology term for it. Wolf, who has done an indepth study of Kohut's theory, sees such selfobject experiences as necessary for the emergence, maintenance, and completion of the self. He explains:

The theory of psychoanalytic self psychology postulates that selves come into being and stay whole in consequence of a person having sustaining selfobject experiences. The self cannot exist as a cohesive structure - that is, cannot generate an experience of well-being - apart from the contextual surround of appropriate selfobject experiences. (Wolf 1988, 14)

In the development of the child it is usually the parent or the caretaker who evokes in the child a selfobject experience that leads to the age-appropriate structuring of the self. For example, a mother, in addressing and caring for and responding to her child, creates for the child a selfobject experience that leads to the structuring of the potentials for self-organization. The emerging self, when it achieves a degree of cohesion, is experienced by the child as a sense of selfhood.

According to Self Psychology, experiencing the self-evoking and self-maintaining selfobject function is needed by selves as long as a person lives. As an adult, one still needs selfobject experiences, although their form will be different from those appropriate for a five-year-old. For example, an adult might no longer need the extent of physical touching and
holding that a child requires, but may get his or her selfobject experience from reading a novel, or from hearing a certain piece of music. Religious experiences, group experiences, scientific and philosophic insights, and the like, can be counted among the variety of selfobject experiences that function to maintain selfhood in adulthood (Wolf 1988).

What accounts for the well-being and sickness of the self? Using a spatial metaphor, Self Psychology views the self as a bipolar structure (Wolf 1988, St. Clair 1986, Hamilton 1990). One pole of the self is constituted as a precipitate of mirroring selfobject experiences, while the other pole emerges from idealizing selfobject experiences. To become cohesive and healthy, and to maintain its well-being, the self needs to be embedded in a milieu that constantly meets these basic needs of mirroring and idealizing. Mirroring needs are met when, for instance, adequate confirmation for the child's innate sense of vigor, greatness, wonderfulness, and perfection is provided by the caregivers. Idealizing needs are met when the caregivers allow themselves to be experienced by the child as images of calmness, infallibility, and omnipotence. Failure by the selfobject environment to meet these needs can lead to all kinds of psychopathologies in the self. For example, prolonged lack of stimulating responsiveness from the selfobjects of childhood may result in understimulated selves, while prolonged lack of the opportunity to merge with the calmness of an
omnipotent selfobject may result in overburdened selves.

The psychosystemic understanding of self is in many ways very similar to that of Self Psychology. The self is here also understood to emerge and to develop in the context of a network of relationships. Graham explains:

The self is variously connected and comprises a rich array of multiple influences. However, the self is not only a network of connections. By definition, the self is the qualitative and unique expression of the psyche, which emerges from reciprocal transactional processes within individuals and between individuals and their environments. (Graham 1992, 78)

For the self to develop into a healthy and well-balanced self, there are needs that must be satisfied by environmental experiences. Without such needed environmental experiences, which are essentially transactional processes between the developing person and his or her familial world, the sense of self is forever diminished and impaired. Graham enumerates some of the factors he considers important in the development of a healthy self:

For a positive, well-differentiated and full self-experience to emerge, the infant must have a sense of continuity of being, based upon parental protection from excessive internal and external stimuli. There must be a range of bodily and relational stimuli that evoke quiet satisfaction as well as joy in the infant. The child must experience a growing sense of himself or herself as an actor or agent, whose efforts at mastery are praised and positively attested by the significant others in her or his world. Finally, there must be an embryonic sense of well-being and worthwhileness that flows from the positive experience of these elements taken together. (Graham 1992, 79)
As true in Self Psychology, the psychosystemic understanding of self also views these exchanges between the social world and the emerging self as necessary throughout the life cycle, although they are most formative in childhood.

However, the psychosystemic view adds a few new things to the understanding of self and its dynamics. First, it sees the body as the primary basis for connecting with our worlds and for generating our sense of selfhood.

The body constitutes both the boundary and the connection between the human being and the other units of experience to which he or she is related. Further, the body is the means by which the world has access to the psyche. (Graham 1992, 73)

For this reason, the condition of the body affects the sense of selfhood that one develops. For example, people whose bodies are abused early in childhood often develop a poor sense of selfhood. In the same way, the reaction of the environment to the size, shape, and color of one's body has a great influence on the sense of self that emerges. Applying this to a larger group, Graham gives the following illustration:

People who are stuck in poverty and who are victims of racism and other situations of social inequality are faced with less opportunity for meaningful social support and the positive concept that it generates. This in turn makes them more susceptible to a variety of emotional and physical difficulties. Thus, the self is meaningfully connected to its body and environment, even as these are connected to the self. (Graham 192, 75)

Secondly, the psychosystems approach sees the connection between persons and their worlds as mediated by a variety of
levels of consciousness. Both the larger social system and the subsystems of psyche and body, which together structurally organize the human person, have conscious and unconscious dimensions. According to Graham, "there is a dynamic interplay between consciousness and unconsciousness, with each having a potentially creative relationship to the other" (Graham 1992, 76). The well-being of the self requires a constant interplay between the different levels of consciousness. An individual, for example, who is cut off from the repressed unconscious material runs the risk of not functioning well. He is deprived of the energy that remains imprisoned in the unconscious, and he runs the risk of being controlled by the unconscious material. Applying this to larger systems, Graham explains how "individuals and cultures are diminished when the connections between their social, mythological, and racial experiences are kept out of awareness by not being fully thematized in literature, art, and history" (Graham 1992, 77).

So far we have been talking about self primarily in the context of the individual self. However, groups like individual persons do have a self. This group self is made up of the sum total of the shared ambitions and ideals of the group and is concretely embodied in the comprehensive cultural heritage of the group. Defining culture as "the means by which humans collectively receive, synthesize, and transform the influences of their world upon them" and as "the embodied representation and preserver of the outcomes of the
interactions between humans and their multivalent world" (Graham 1992, 58), Graham sees a close similarity between the role played by culture in a group and the dynamics of the psyche in the individual. The group self emerges as the sense of selfhood that the group comes to have as a result of its interactions with its multivalent environment. And just as with individual selves, this process may result in various psychological states in the group self. Thus, a group self may be cohesive or fragmented, well-balanced or understimulated, etc.

Using the Arab-Israeli conflict as an example, Wolf shows how groups like individuals have a history that has shaped their hopes and their fears and distorted their ambitions and ideals. Accordingly, he suggests that the conflict between the two groups may be explained by, among other things, the fact that the Arab self feels threatened in its very existence by the presence of the Jewish state in their midst. They see this presence as an obstacle to their attempt to reconstruct their splendid and glorious past. The Jewish self, on the other hand, has, after a long time of political powerlessnes, achieved a strong and cohesive group self. They therefore cannot relinquish this healthy and cohesive group self for fear of returning to their fragmented condition (Wolf 1988, 82-83).

Thus, the sense of group selfhood goes a long way in influencing people in their actions. This prompts Wolf to
suggest a rather paradoxical solution to the narcissistic rage of group selves caught in situations such as this. He explains: "One is left with the seemingly paradoxical suggestion that real peace - not the peace of surrender but the peace of mutual empathic understanding - comes from strengthening, not weakening the enemy’s self" (Wolf 1988, 84).

Now how does this understanding of the self and its dynamics help us to make psychological sense of the psychic injuries of the African person? Many of the psychopathologies that trouble the African can be traced back to the wounding of the African self that has taken place as a result of the traumatic experience of being colonized. Colonialism was, among other things, a direct attack on the African self. It involved the invalidation of the African people’s entire way of life, including the denigration of their language, dress, food and all accepted social mores. Furthermore, as we saw in Fanon’s analysis of the situation, in colonialism the indigenous peoples were not simply dominated but were subjected to drastic reification. They were reduced to an aspect of the natural landscape and, like the trees and the camels that constituted the natural background, were viewed as a force to be pacified, not reasoned with. Thus, colonialism brought into question the very humanity of the African.

The end result of this process of dehumanization has been, in the case of South Africa, the kind of African
described by Biko as "a shell, a shadow of man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity" (Biko 1978, 29).

In terms of the self and its dynamics, this impoverishment brought about by colonialism has resulted in a weak and unhealthy African self. The phenomena of cultural deficiency and cultural withdrawal which Fanon identified among the Algerians can be traced back to this weakening of the group self. The colonial personality is essentially a portrait of persons made deficient, of whole peoples instilled with fear, and degraded through the destruction of their natural means of sociability. It is not difficult to see how this condition can lead to cultural withdrawal.

Wilson talks to the same reality when he discusses the phenomenon of apathy found in many Africans. Such apathy is the "attitudinal-behavioral" product of the social-emotional conditioning of colonialism in all its past and present forms. Particularly, the feeling that the dominant culture does not represent their values, aspirations, and their experience as a group often leads many Africans to apathy, which is essentially a form of conditioned helplessness (Wilson 1993).

To date, it is the experience of many Africans, in Africa and elsewhere, that Africanity and all that goes with it does not receive good mirroring from the dominant Eurocentric culture. From the kind of education the African receives to
leisurely conversations with the average Westerner, one does not escape the communicated sense of the inferiority of African culture. To add to the White-oriented education received, the whole history of the African Society is often presented in a falsified way as nothing more than tribal battles and internecine wars. No wonder the African child learns to hate his heritage in his days at school. So negative is the image often presented to him that he tends to find solace only in close identification with the White society (Biko 1978).

I myself have had a direct experience of this during my stay here in the United States. Conversations and questions that are otherwise innocent and well-intentioned have at times left me feeling not so good about Africa and African culture. Africanity is not presented as something that can be idealized by the dominant Eurocentric culture, both in Africa and here in the United States. I think Christian missionaries working in Africa have to shoulder some of the blame for feeding into some of the negative assumptions about Africa and Africanity in general. In their desire to impress their communities and friends back home, and perhaps to elicit some donations toward missionary work, they have often presented an exaggerated if not distorted picture of African people and the African situation. It seems the more "primitive," dangerous and dismal one paints the situation to be, the more of a hero one appears to be to the people back home.
Thanks to family therapy, it is now commonly accepted knowledge that certain forms of pathology and symptomatology are integrally related to the arrangement and functioning of the family as a system. In such forms of pathology the troubled individual is seen as manifesting a dysfunction in the family system as a whole and is accordingly regarded as the symptomatic member in the system. And we now understand that, as Graham explains,

> While symptoms and crises are carried by individuals and felt keenly by them, they are not to be regarded only as the individual's problems. They emerge within and regulate the larger systemic elements and structures of the individual's world. (Graham 1992, 92)

Accordingly, family therapy has enabled us to come up with diagnostic and therapeutic interventions that take this symptomatic interplay between the person and the family system into serious consideration.

However, with all its otherwise helpful insights into the dynamics of the family system, family therapy has, by and large, ignored the question of the role played by power in the family system. Feminist family therapy (Goodrich et al. 1988, Goodrich 1991) has done a good job of calling traditional family therapy into question in this regard. The main critique centers around the way systems theory is employed in traditional family therapy. The observation is that systems theory is used in a way that is both too abstract and too concrete to generate any challenge to the traditional power
arrangements. As Goodrich puts it, traditional family therapy uses the systems theory in a way that "focuses entirely on the moves rather than the players" (Goodrich 1991, 17-18). As such it leaves the question of who has power over whom, and with what regularity unexplored.

In explaining the nature of feminist family therapy, Goodrich points to other ways in which traditional family therapy ignores the question of power.

Our thesis is that family therapy has accepted prevailing gender roles, ignoring their oppression of women, and accepted a traditional family model, ignoring its oppression of women. This failure to notice has resulted in theory, practice, and training that are oppressive to women. (Goodrich et al. 1988, 13)

As all these factors - gender stereotypes, family model, and power relations - are ultimately connected to and have their origin in the wider culture, feminist family therapy sees the goal of therapy as the kind of change that will transform the social relations which define men’s and women’s existence.

Power plays an important role in human functioning, both in pathology and in optimal growth and development. The arrangement and distribution of power in a system has a far-reaching effect on the condition of the system as a whole, as well as on each subgroup or individual within the system. Defining power as the bi-polar ability to influence and be influenced, Graham points to this interplay between the arrangement of power in a system and symptomatology. He argues:
When crises occur, there is always an imbalance of power needing attention and correction. Imbalanced power is dangerous and destructive when the imbalance leads to victimization, chaos, and permanent unjust situations. (Graham 1992, 138)

Graham further goes on to elaborate on the different ways in which power arrangements can lead to pathology. First, power leads to pathology when it is victimizing. Power is victimizing when a "person or group is coerced into becoming the receptor of the influence of others quite apart from their own desires, needs, and aspirations" (Graham 1992, 140). Second, power arrangements lead to pathology when they are chaotic. Such arrangements of power exist "when there is little or no viable means of validating or fulfilling the needs, aspirations, and desires of certain persons or groups in the social system" (Graham 1992, 140). It is not difficult to see how people who are at the receiving end of victimizing and chaotic power arrangements can end up developing all sorts of pathology. They are subjected to a dehumanizing situation that is sure to affect them physically, psychologically, and otherwise.

While dehumanizing power imbalances may be found in any system, it is in the larger systems of society, nation, and world order that they often have quite a devastating influence on the part of those who are at the receiving end. To be sure, unbalanced power arrangements have a negative effect on those who wield the power as well. But it is those who are victims of the unjust power arrangements who suffer the most. Graham,
in talking to this reality, explains the distinction between the pain of the oppressed and that of the oppressor very well. He argues:

To be sure, the oppressor suffers and knows pain. But the nature of the pain differs and is not of the same social or moral status. The pain of the oppressed is largely the pain of the victim and exploited; the pain of the oppressor is that of the perpetrator and exploiter. The one lives by despair and shame; the other by violence, pride, and anxiety. (Graham 1992, 170)

Particularly in larger systems, unbalanced and dehumanizing power arrangements tend to establish themselves into a system which soon becomes self-perpetuating and self-reinforcing. Talking to this reality, Web-Watson sees the power to define which operates through the socializing institutions of the society as the main means through which the system perpetuates itself. She explains:

Of particular relevance is the tendency of power to become theology, the tendency of power to drive intelligence underground, the tendency of power to become its own language and system of communication, the tendency of power to spawn imitators, and the tendency of power to create a favorable environment for itself. (Web-Watson 1991, 55)

And when power arrangements achieve such a systemic status they become an entity that has, as it were, a life of its own. The individuals in the system, while their actions and behaviors still have some influence on the established system, become engulfed in something much bigger than themselves. Elaborating on the nature of systemic power, Graham explains:
Systemic power transcends the will, values, behaviors, and personal relationships of individuals within the system, though it accounts for and is influenced by these as well. Thus, it takes only a few individuals in strategic positions to act powerfully as agents of the intact social system - even when they disagree with many of the elements comprising their social system. (Graham 1992, 147)

Obviously having the American situation in mind, Web-Watson echoes this observation. She argues:

The system is structured in such a way that it does not matter who (of whatever gender or ethnicity) holds the title of authority. The system (as if it were a being) continues to do its thing. And by using sociological evidence, we see that the thing it does is a European-American male-dominated, male-defined thing. (Web-Watson, 56)

Power, especially when it has become systemic, can also operate in ways that are more covert than overt. In such situations, a group continues to exercise power without accepting responsibility for it. Such covert unjust power arrangements can be even more dangerous as they exist as unaccountable and intractable. Graham offers four different ways in which power can be unaccountable and intractable. These cluster around projective bonding, triangling, internalizing blame, and discounting oneself and others.

Projective bonding refers to the largely unconscious identification with a power center outside oneself. Such identification can often be the only choice in a situation of oppression. Hamilton gives as an example of this phenomenon the reaction of prisoners who often take on the characteristics of their captors. Their deprived state and
resultant increased need open them to internalizing and identifying with the aggressor. In that way they can deny their helplessness and identify with the power of the aggressor (Hamilton 1990).

In triangling, the tension resulting from power exchanges is reduced and moderated by involving a third person or subsystem. In such situations the triangled person or group of persons is subjected to an unjust situation of unbalanced power arrangements. Because such triangled power arrangements amount to a failure to openly resolve conflict, they remain intractable and unaccountable.

Internalizing blame is another way in which unjust power arrangements can remain unaccountable and intractable. In this phenomenon, which falls under the general theme of internalization as discussed above, "a 'false consciousness' occurs in which the oppressed wrongly believe that they deserve their situation" (Graham 1992, 143).

Discounting, the fourth expression of unaccountable and intractable power, "refers to attitudes, messages, and behaviors that keep the needs, aspirations, and perspectives of one person or group in a disadvantaged relation to some other individual or group" (Graham 1992, 144). In such situations, the aspirations of the disadvantaged are frustrated by someone with greater power, or someone with less power who uses passivity or helplessness to control. In the context of personal relationships in marriage and in the
family examples of discounting would be failure to listen, minimizing the feelings and thoughts of others, intellectualizing, and scapegoating.

Now, how does this understanding of the dynamics of system and power help us to understand the psychic injuries of the African that come as a result of colonialism? To summarize, what we have learned about the dynamics of system and power is that power arrangements in a system lead to pathology and symptomatology (particularly on the part of the disadvantaged) when they are victimizing, chaotic, and unaccountable and intractable. And we have seen that power can be unaccountable and intractable in four different ways, namely, projective bonding, triangling, internalizing blame, and discounting. What power arrangements are involved in the situation of colonialism? And what impact do such power arrangements have on the colonized? My answer to these questions is that the power arrangements involved in the colonial system are victimizing, chaotic, and unaccountable and intractable. As such, they are at the root of most of the colonial psychopathology of the African identified in the previous chapter.

Graham includes colonialism as one of the examples of victimizing power arrangements, putting it alongside rape, battering, incest, sexism, and ageism. Colonialism, particularly in its first phase, involved victimizing power. Indigenous African peoples were first subjugated militarily
and economically, and then dehumanized through a method that involved the domination of their economic and cultural life. I often liken this phenomenon to the crude experience of violent rape. The colonizers "raped" our people, reducing them to a state of helplessness where they were not able to defend themselves. Bujo talks to this dehumanization of the African by the colonizers:

The Europeans regarded themselves from the outset as superior to the unarmed Africans whom they now met for the first time. The blacks were of course the vast majority, but socially, politically and economically they were treated as a minority. . . . The general attitude of the whites was that there was nothing in Africa which really deserved the name of "human". . . . the Africans were just cheap labour, tools which the colonisers could use to become rich. (Bujo 1992, 39-40)

Thus colonialism from its inception was characterized by victimizing power arrangements, arrangements from which the Africans have not recovered.

Having started off on a wrong footing, colonialism inevitably led to chaotic power arrangements in which the conquered African people found little or no viable means of validating or fulfilling their needs, aspirations, and desires. The genius of the colonizers, if one can call it that, was their deliberate and systematic campaign to turn the Africans into foreigners in their own land. Most notable among the various means they used to achieve this was their drawing of frontiers, their erosion of the power of traditional chiefs, and their campaign against traditional religion. Pointing to the divisive consequences of the drawing of
frontiers, Bujo explains:

Right across Africa frontiers were drawn without any reference to the ethnic distribution of the people, or to customary law. . . . From one day to the next, tribes and clans and even families found themselves split by new boundaries. The Europeans had issued their decree, and henceforth people must beg permission if they wanted to cross frontiers to visit their relatives. (Bujo 1992, 40)

In the same way the authority of traditional chiefs and traditional religion was undermined and eroded. Under the colonial regimes, traditional chiefs lost their independence, and were required to act simply as the agents of their new masters and to advance their interests. If they objected to this role, they were often sacked. With regards to traditional religion, the colonial governments waged vigorous campaigns against polygamy, the cult of the ancestors, and other (often misunderstood) aspects of African traditional religion. It was particularly in this area that the missionaries acted as powerful allies to the secular authority.

The end result of all this was that the Africans found themselves living in a situation which did not only hinder the validation and fulfillment of their needs, aspirations and desires but was often hostile to them. This puts into perspective the phenomena of cultural deficiency and cultural withdrawal identified by Fanon in the previous chapter. Cultural deficiency is the natural result when whole peoples are instilled with fear and degraded through the destruction of their natural means of sociability. Cultural withdrawal is also bound to follow when the culture of the conquered
indigenous peoples is not represented in the current social system.

It is tempting to think of this chaotic power arrangement as a thing of the past. But the fact of the matter is that African culture has continued to be eroded by the ever-expanding dominant European-American culture. In Africa and elsewhere Africans are still by and large foreigners to the culture that informs the social structures governing their day-to-day lives. The politico-economic systems under which they live, the education they receive in their schools, and the news media to which they are constantly exposed are all things that have been imported from Europe America and do not represent the culture of the African. This is even more so for the African person in the diaspora (notably the African person in America) whose engulfment in the dominant Eurocentric culture is more direct and immediate.

However, the power arrangements which are of an even more troubling nature, and which have a far-reaching influence on the life of the African are the unaccountable and intractable colonial power arrangements in which the colonialists continue to exercise enormous power over the African while disowning their responsibility. In Africa the colonizers, with the help of the missionaries, did a good job in transforming the situation created by colonialism into a well-established system which, true to the nature of a system, has continued to exist, perpetuating itself from one African generation to the
next. The continuing and ever-deepening financial dependence of many African nations on the West, among other things, contributes to keeping the system firmly in place. It is not difficult to see how the power arrangements of the resultant colonial system are unaccountable and intractable in all the different ways mentioned above: projective bonding, triangling, internalizing blame, and discounting.

In the colonial system, projective bonding on the part of the African has taken the form of largely unconscious identification with the dominant European-American culture. This identification continues to have a strong influence on the attitudes, belief systems, feelings, and behaviors of many an African people. Having internalized the denigration of their culture by the dominant Eurocentric culture, many Africans have come to be convinced of their inferiority and have come to believe that the only way out of the predicament of being African is to be closely identified with the colonial culture. In church circles, it is common today to hear missionaries complaining that Africans do not like their culture, that instead they want to follow the Western way. Interestingly, only very few of these "concerned and sympathetic" people seem to appreciate the fact that the strong pull to Western culture which the African experiences is the result of the success which they and their predecessors, working in conjunction with the colonizers, have achieved in turning the Africans against their culture and in
convincing them that to be "civilized" is to embrace Western culture. Unfortunately, the disadvantaged Africans are again blamed for something whose doing they had no control over, and the missionaries who should rightfully shoulder a good part of the blame come out as the good guys.

It is the dynamic of projective bonding that is at the root of the phenomenon of the White mask syndrome identified by Fanon in the previous chapter. Fanon's observation was that, having accepted the Western culture's judgement on his culture, the indigenous person, as a defence against the burden of his race, would imitate the European's manner of speech, dress, and when possible seek out White sexual partners. In other words, for the indigenous person convinced of the inferiority of his culture, the only escape from the tragedy of being Black was through entry into the social and cultural milieu of the European.

In the colonial system, the covert power arrangement of triangling often takes the form of the common practice of "divide and rule", which Freire explains thus:

As the oppressor minority subordinates and dominates the majority, it must divide it and keep it divided in order to remain in power. The minority cannot permit itself the luxury of tolerating the unification of the people, which would undoubtedly signify a serious threat to their own hegemony. (Freire 1993, 122)

In order to consolidate its power, the oppressor group divides the oppressed by establishing a select group among the oppressed through which they control and dominate the masses.
Thus, a triangle of power is formed through which the oppressor group exercises power over the oppressed masses without being accountable for it.

In most of independent Africa, this kind of covert power arrangement has often taken the form of the alliance between the West and the indigenous rulers. We have seen in the previous chapter how Mazrui sees the struggle presently going on in Africa as, among other things, a result of the fight put up by indigenous African culture against this pact. We quote him again:

It is as if the indigenous ancestors have been aroused from the dead, disapproving of what seems like an informal pact between the rulers of independent Africa (the inheritors of the colonial order) and the West - a pact which allows the West to continue to dominate Africa. (Mazrui 1986, 12)

In South Africa, the triangling power arrangements in which the White minority government uses one Black group to destabilize and control the oppressed Black masses is by now a well-known fact. With the scandal, which some people familiar with American politics have jokingly termed the "Inkatha-gate scandal" (after the well-known Watergate incident), in which the South African White government was convincingly shown to have "used" the Zulu-dominated Inkatha Freedom Party to destabilize the Black liberation movement, President F.W. De Klerk's government finally had to admit to its dirty tricks of playing the divide and rule game.

The Church as an institution does exhibit some triangling power arrangements too. For example, it is not uncommon for
those in power to appoint to positions of authority in the local churches those who willingly follow the way laid down by the system. In this way, the system continues to exercise power and control in the local churches through these willing representatives.

Internalizing blame, the third form of unaccountable and intractable power arrangements, is also evident in the colonial system. Both Fanon and Biko allude to this reality when they talk of the feelings of inferiority and guilt that plague the African. The dominated African people, after a long time of living in an atmosphere that belittles and denigrates them, come to accept their condition as caused by their own failings as a people, thereby assuming a burden of guilt for their suffering.

Finally, discounting, the fourth common expression of unaccountable and intractable power, can also be seen in the colonial system. Again Graham rightly includes colonialism as one of the examples of discounting power. He explains:

> On a larger scale, racism, colonialism, and various forms of oppression are extreme forms of discounting: those in the disadvantaged position are commonly blamed for their condition, while those in power are excused and justified. (Graham 1992, 145)

I have already mentioned above how the dominant Eurocentric culture is characterized by attitudes, messages, and behaviors that keep the needs, aspirations, and perspectives of the African in a disadvantaged position. The European-American structures which inform the social life of the African do not
only ignore the African experience but are at times openly hostile to it.

Thus, the system that has resulted from colonialism continues to keep the colonial psychopathology of the African in place. Furthermore, as the situation created by the unaccountable and intractable power arrangements continues to perpetuate itself and to become more and more complex, a vicious cycle develops between this situation and the resultant psychopathology in the African. Here is a concrete example: Through the phenomenon of projective bonding which comes as a result of the campaign by both the colonizers and the missionaries to "civilize" the indigenous people and to convince them of the "barbaric" nature of their culture, many Africans experience a pull to the Western way of life. Then they are blamed for having this attraction to Western culture (e.g., by some supposedly "enlightened" missionaries). And this in turn leads to another round of internalizing blame which further deepens the feeling of inferiority and self-loathing. As a way of escaping this feeling of inferiority, they intensify their projective bonding with Western culture. The tragic thing is that with every round in the vicious cycle the psychopathology deepens.

Conclusion

Psychology, especially when freed from the individualistic orientation that characterizes many current
psychological theories, can help us to understanding the psychopathology of the African which comes as the result of colonialism better. While the psychological concepts used in this chapter had their origin in psychodynamic theories and in family therapy, they can very well apply to larger systems when expanded. Indeed my conviction is that the processes that take place in microsystems largely mirror those of the macrosystems and vice versa.

Furthermore, the psychosystems approach helps us to appreciate better the close interplay between individual psychodynamics and the systems in which the individuals are embedded. In the context of colonialism, this helps us to see more clearly how the colonial psychopathology of the African person is kept in place and continually reinforced by the colonial system which continues to dominate and control the structures that inform the social environment in which the African lives his or her daily life.

Indeed, on close look it is not difficult to see how the many colonialism-related psychological problems that plague the African person are perpetuated and reinforced by the system that has resulted from colonialism. The inferiority and guilt complexes which characterize the way many Africans feel about themselves and their situation as Africans are kept in place and reinforced by the system that continues to discount African culture and the whole African experience. So is the split in the African self continued to be kept in place by the
fact of being forced to struggle for survival in an environment alien to the needs, aspirations, and perspectives of Africans as a group.

On close look, one can also see how the phenomenon of the so-called Black-on-Black violence talked about a lot these days, particularly in the context of South Africa and The United States, is itself largely the result of the interplay between intrapsychic dynamics and the social environment. First, having internalized the dominant culture's denigration and discounting of everything Black or African, many Africans come to project negativism and hostility toward themselves and their kind. Add to this the frustration that results from the condition of being overwhelmed by the oppressive social situation, and the direct victimized states reflecting the vicious condition of "survival-at-any-cost" mentality, then you have the ingredients for self-destruction which can deteriorate to the condition of the so-called "jungle-parasitic" and "dog-eat-dog" type of orientation (Akbar 1991). While the oppressed Africans have to be made aware of their responsibility to refrain from self-destruction and to develop more positive ways of coping in the oppressive system, the primary and root cause of this self-destruction is to be located in the system which subjects the African person to such a dehumanizing situation.

However, psychology is only one paradigm that I use as a pastoral counselor in my reflection on the situation of the
African in the world. The other, equally important, paradigm I draw from is that of theological reflection. The next chapter will be devoted to this kind of reflection.
CHAPTER IV

REFLECTING WITH THEOLOGY

As a pastoral counselor, my approach to healing and growth is informed by two basic paradigms, namely, insights from social sciences (particularly psychology) and Christian theology. The present reflection on the consequences of colonialism and Christian missionary activity on the African psyche would, therefore, not be complete if I stopped at the level of psychological reflection. The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on the same problem using the paradigm of Christian theology. The question we want to ask ourselves in this chapter is "What does Christian theology have to say about the woundedness and brokenness of the African psyche and about the system of colonialism which brought about this brokenness and continues to keep it in place?"

This reflection will be informed in a very significant way by the theologies that reflect on the situation of the marginalized in society, the "theologies from the underside" (Thistlethwaite and Engel 1990). Black theology is naturally the closest to the problem we discuss in this thesis as it explicitly reflects on the situation of oppression in which Blacks as a group find themselves. A lot of reflection has been done in this area by Black theologians in the United
States and in South Africa. The other kind of theological reflection relevant to the problem under discussion is found in African theology. There is a discussion going on about the relationship between African theology and Black theology (Martey 1993, Cone 1993, Mbiti 1993, Tutu 1993). It is not my intention in this chapter to enter into this discussion. The approach I take here is that both these theologies address themselves to the complex situation of the African person. As such, they both have something to say about this situation. Latin American liberation theology and feminist theology also provide good insights as they both also reflect on the situation of the marginalized.

There are a few theological themes that the problem under discussion seems to readily pull out from Christian theology. In this chapter I intend to look more closely into four of these: the sinfulness that characterizes the whole situation in which the African person finds him- or herself, the presence and activity of God in this situation, the call of the oppressed to liberate themselves and to become subjects of their own history, and the Trinity as a source of inspiration and hope.

A Sinful Situation

The first thing that almost immediately stands out clearly from Christian theology is the sinfulness of the whole situation in which the African person finds him- or herself.
To understand this, we first need to explain what sin is. Sin is not always an easy thing to explain. This is so because right from the original usage of the term in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures it is a complex concept with a meaning ranging from simply "missing the mark" to the serious sin of breaking the covenant with God. And yet at close look there is a central understanding in all of Scripture that constitutes the essence of sin. O'Connell, at the end of his short summary on the meaning of sin in Scripture, points to this central meaning. He explains:

In the biblical understanding, then, the reality of sin is not directly connected to any particular action in itself. Rather, the focus of attention with regard to sin is the meaning of the action, the significance of the action for God and persons, and the effect of that action on their relationship. Sin is the failure to love God and to serve God. No matter how it happens to manifest itself, its reality remains the same. (O'Connell 1990, 79)

However, this central meaning not withstanding, the idea of sin has, through the history of Christian tradition, supported a variety of theological conceptions. This is understandable when one recalls that there is a level of complexity in the meaning and usage of the term in the Scriptures. This also becomes understandable when one realizes the fact that sin, as the believer's word for things not right in the world, will inevitably be used differently as changes take place in our vision of the world, in our presumption of how things should be, and most of all in our understanding of ourselves as human persons.
In most of traditional (Catholic) Christian theology sin was viewed primarily as an action by which one refuses to do what one knows to be the will of God (O’Connell 1990). Thus, disobedience to God seemed to be the key-word in the understanding and explanation of the meaning of sin. As the law was seen as the exclusive manner by which the will of God was mediated, disobedience to God generally had the sense of disobedience to the law. As a consequence, sin was defined in a legalistic context in which the transgression of even small precepts of the Church could be labeled as grave sin. Haring, in suggesting a new way of looking at sin, points to the limitation and the potentially dangerous application of this understanding. He explains:

Disobedience to God could have an acceptable meaning when the emphasis of mediation was on the covenant, and when law was intimately connected with the gift of the covenant, and with the covenant relationship. However, after the horrible experience with "obedient" christian citizens under Hitler, when the most atrocious cooperation with unheard of crimes (e.g., the holocaust) was excused by "having simply been obedient," the definition of sin as disobedience is no longer helpful in our social and cultural context and at this historical juncture. (Haring 1988, 96-97)

Writing from the feminist perspective, and discussing sin and evil in the context of liberation from sexual and domestic abuse, Mary Potter Engel offers a similar critique of the traditional understanding and usage of the word "sin." Pointing implicitly to the influence of patriarchy on Christian doctrines and to the church’s collusion with society in the victimization of women, children, and elders, she shows
how the traditional understanding of sin can contribute to keeping the oppression of women and other "socially designated sacrificial victims" in place. For example, in talking about the attitude of traditional Christian spirituality toward the emotion of anger, she explains:

Anger and vocal, vehement resistance have traditionally been identified as sinful or anti-Christian. It is particularly women, children, and other powerless individuals who are expected to imitate the meek and mild Jesus in this regard. They are told to deny what is happening to them and to dissolve their anger. Instead of dissolving anger, which results in great harm, they should be encouraged to redirect "this natural and healthy psycho-physical response to situations in which these capacities are being frustrated."... If we encourage victims to channel their anger toward its correct object, we will contribute to their recovery and social transformation. (Engel 1990, 156)

To open up space for this healthier understanding of the emotion of anger, Engel, accordingly, suggests a shift in our view of sin as anger and resistance to that of moral callousness - the participation in and perpetuation of violence against the vulnerable by otherwise good and moral persons - as the primary sin in this context.

This ignorance and acceptance, taking violence against the vulnerable for granted, giving in to numbness, is what the scriptures call "hardening of heart," one of the surest signs of having wandered off away from God (Engel 1990, 157).

After using many other examples to illustrate her point, Engel's conclusion is that it is not useful to reduce sin to a single root metaphor or definition. To speak adequately of the experience of sin, what is needed is a more comprehensive
and descriptive definition that always remains provisional. She uses the metaphor of the mythical monster who grew two new heads for everyone severed to illustrate the reality that sin always has more than one meaning. I find myself in agreement with Engel’s critique. Indeed, human experience is so vast and so complex that it must always be looked at from different angles. This becomes even more imperative when the definitions in question have been formulated by those in power, those who have a stake in maintaining the status quo.

The above discussion on the understanding and usage of the concept of sin points to the need to always be clear on how one understands the word when using it. It therefore behooves me to explain how the word is understood and used in the context of my reflection on the situation of the African in the world. First, in my usage of the word I am influenced by the definition of sin that Donald Capps gives in his book *Deadly Sins and Saving Virtues*. After having defined sin as "an orientation to life which is potentially or actually harmful" (Capps 1987, 1), he goes on to show the three ways in which this can happen. The orientation to life is sinful when it is an impediment or threat to human community. And he understands human community to include every form of human interaction, including close interpersonal relationships, small groups and informal alliances, institutions, and national and international relations. The orientation to life is sinful, secondly, when it is an impediment to God’s own
intentions for the world. And the orientation is an impediment to God's intentions when, either knowingly or unwittingly, it frustrates God's intentions for the world, and when it evidences no disposition to ascertain what those intentions may be either in the long run or in specific, immediate contexts and situations. Finally, the orientation to life is sinful when it inhibits and even destroys the essential well-being of the individual. Capps' understanding of well-being is worth quoting in full:

By well-being, I have in mind the health or wholeness of the individual in the various interrelated domains of personal existence: the psychological (including one's emotional, perceptual, and cognitive life), the physiological, the interpersonal, the societal (which involves one's relationship to human community as a whole), and that of the spiritual health of the individual (which involves one's sense of living "in concert" with God and God's intentions for the world). (Capps 1987, 2)

Capps concludes his definition of sin as an orientation to life by distinguishing between the different forms which such an orientation can assume. He explains:

Any orientation to life may range from a relatively permanent disposition to life, to an attitude that is relatively amenable to change, to a transitory impulse, which is the most unstable orientation. We act on dispositions, attitudes, and impulses. (Capps 1987, 2)

Matthew Fox, in his discussion of sin in the light of the four paths of creation-centered theology (the Via Positiva, the Via Negativa, the Via Creativa, and the Via Transformativa), is the other significant influence in my understanding of sin in this discussion. In the light of the
Via Positiva, sin is, among other things, the failure to trust oneself which leads to the refusal to grow and to expand into full acknowledgement of one's "royal personhood." He sees a concrete example of this in what some feminist writers (Christ 1980) have referred to as "a uniquely female form of sin through self-negation." He explains this sin as follows:

This sin consists of the refusal to love oneself well, the refusal to celebrate both one's dignity and one's responsibility. When people sin in this way they become suckers for hero-worship, for projecting onto others their own dignity as images of God. Whether these others are matinee idols or religious ones, whether alive or dead, makes no difference. The sin of refusal to acknowledge one's own dignity remains the same. Without healthy self-love there will be no other love. (Fox 1983, 120)

Defining it as the misuse of good rather than the privation of good, Fox, in his discussion of the Via Creativa, views sin as the misuse of the greatest good of the universe, which is that image of God in humanity, our imagination. He sees this sinful tendency as embodied in the sadomasochism that characterizes Western civilization. He sees this as essentially a dualism between power and powerlessness lived out as a way of life. Power in the powerful can generate "a kind of willed ignorance, a moral stupidity, about the inwardness of others, hence of oneself," while powerlessness in the powerless can lead to "lassitude, self-negation, guilt, and depression" (Fox 1983, 120).

Noting that the marginalized in society are the ones who suffer most from this kind of arrangement, Fox sees all liberation movements as a positive reaction to this dualistic
arrangement of power. As he explains, "the primary sin . . . when it comes from the outside is sadism; but from the inside, the internalizing of the sadist's message, there happens the sin of masochism. Of acquiescing to the lie that 'I can't'" (Fox 1983, 234).

Finally, my understanding of sin in this discussion is influenced by Bernard Haring's understanding of sin as alienation. This is a paradigm that gets at the core of the reality of sin and is comprehensive in its description of this reality. Haring shows how the understanding of sin as alienation encompasses all. He explains:

Sin is alienation from the God of love and covenant, and it manifests itself as a relational concept, as: alienation from the truth of self, refusal to know oneself in the light of creation and redemption, refusal of the life-giving knowledge of Jesus and the Father. Sin is alienation from the history of salvation and alienation from the Redeemer, from the healing and liberating power of God. Sin is alienation from the others and from the Other. Sin is also a cosmic alienation, breaking away from the life-giving ecological order. This sin is brokenness, breaking away from all life-sustaining and liberty-sustaining relationships. The sinner, as the story of the prodigal son symbolizes, is going away from home into an alien, hostile land. (Haring 1988, 97)

Having defined sin as alienation, Haring goes on to point out the many sins of alienation that abound in our world. Among these, he gives prominence to unjust socio-economic structures which sinfully alienate the working-class, the poor, the jobless from their inherited, God-given right to healthy participation. He also points to the not easily recognized sin of alienation from the reciprocity of
consciences which is not seldom found among church officials. He explains:

Individuals and groups in church and society alienate themselves into self-sufficiency, make claims of authority without caring for shared experience and shared reflection, and are not open to the experience and competence of people "not in authority." (Haring 1988, 98)

In conclusion, the understanding of sin I come up with from these sources is that of sin as an orientation or an action or a situation that alienates a person from self, from others, and from God. As such alienation is harmful to the person, sin can therefore also be understood as an orientation or an action or a situation that is harmful to the well-being of a person or a group of persons. In reality, there is often a connection between orientation, action or behavior, and situation. Often sinful orientations get translated into sinful actions or behaviors which in turn lead to the establishment of sinful situations. This order is also reversible: sinful situations when accepted and internalized can lead to sinful orientations and sinful actions or behaviors.

In defining sin in this comprehensive way, I put myself in line with the understanding of sin found in Liberation Theology, according to which sin, as something which is opposite to liberation, is not merely a private matter but is also eminently a sociopolitical reality, namely, an oppressive situation in which there is no fellowship, no mutual caring among people, and no room to live as a whole human being in
freedom and joy (Maimela 1986). Described in this way, sin includes both personal sins and the collective sins of larger systems.

To return to the main topic of our discussion in this section, we now need to show how the situation in which the African finds him- or herself as a result of colonialism is sinful according to the understanding of sin explained above. To answer this question, we need to look first at what colonialism has done to the psyche (or soul) of the African. Secondly, we will also need to look at the actions and behaviors of the colonizers in their conquering and subjugation of the indigenous African peoples. Thirdly, we will have to look at the situation created by colonialism, a situation that continues to influence the life of the colonized Africans up to this day. In other words, we will need to look at the system (social structures, policies, and practices) that has resulted from colonialism and continues to shape the life of the colonized Africans.

We have seen in the previous chapters how colonialism has left the African psyche broken in many ways. We have identified the different aspects of the colonial psychopathology - the inferiority complex, the self-hatred, the White mask syndrome, the cultural deficiency, and the cultural split - which continues to plague many an African person up to this day. Psychologically, we have seen how this all amounts to holding the psyche (or soul) of the African
captive in many ways. In the light of the understanding of sin explained above, this brokenness of the African psyche clearly shows itself to be a sinful condition that has come as a result of being subjected to the sinful situation of colonialism. Thus, to use Donald Capps' vocabulary, colonialism has created in the African psyche an orientation to life (primarily a feeling about self) which is harmful to the well-being of Africans, both as individuals and as a group. And this is sin.

This is the kind of sin that Matthew Fox sees as against the Via Positiva, the sin that "consists of the refusal to love oneself well, the refusal to celebrate both one's dignity and one's responsibility" (Fox 1983, 120). For the situation of the African, however, such a sin has to be viewed more as a situation imposed from the outside - by the colonial system - than as a deliberate refusal from the Africans themselves. But, however it has developed, the situation, as it now exists has to be named for what it is, namely, a situation of sin.

Discussing the situation of the Black South African in particular, Buthelezi, in his discourse on *The Theological Meaning of True Humanity* sees colonialism as having led to the condition of alienation in the African person. Explaining that, in the light of Christian faith, the human person was at creation given the gift and the responsibility to share in the governance of creation under God, he sees the colonial situation as having alienated the African from this God-given
dignity. He explains:

When we speak of an authentic man, we are not thinking of one with a 'colonised' humanity, who is the object of 'dominion' by other men, but of one with a 'post-colonial' humanity, that is one who has been redeemed to share with others the God-given 'dominion' over creation. By 'colonised humanity' we mean a state of existence in which the selfhood is crushed by external factors and circumstances or is subject to pressure from outside to direct itself in such a way as to serve interests other than those of self. The extreme example of 'colonised humanity' is found in conditions of slavery. We may also define 'colonised humanity' as a state of existence in which the selfhood becomes alienated from its 'human house'. The selfhood is placed under 'house arrest'. (Buthelezi 1973, 101)

Extending the "human house" of the African to include his or her culture, particularly the African understanding of humanity as encompassing the wholeness of life, an understanding that is far healthier than the dualistic approach of the Western mind, Buthelezi sees this sin of alienation as including the African's alienation from his or her culture. He explains:

The naked truth is that the African Christian lives at the fringe of life. He has been a victim of selective giving and withholding. He has not been allowed to realise the potential of his humanity. In other words he has become alienated from that wholeness of life which in his religious tradition helped him not to live as a split personality. (Buthelezi 1973, 102)

Paul Valley, in his book Bad Samaritans, discusses at length how colonialism has, right from the beginning, involved actions and structures that are sinful, sinful in the sense that they do harm to the well-being of the colonized peoples of the so-called Third World. Valley distinguishes between
three phases of colonialism and points out the sinfulness involved in each phase. The first phase of colonialism is the subjugation and plunder of Africa by the colonizers using guns and horses which the indigenous people had never seen. This included the slave trade which transported millions of Africans across the Atlantic. The sinfulness of this phase of colonialism was the direct conquest, the enslavement, and the destruction of the indigenous people's lives and well-being.

The second phase of colonialism was the phase of the organizing of the resources by the colonizers. This organizing involved, among other things, the occupation of the land of the colonized Africans by settlers from the colonizing countries and the rearrangement of the indigenous people so that they could easily be available to work in the mines and plantations that were meant to provide the industrialized world with raw materials. The other development in this phase of colonialism was the turning of the colonies into markets for European industry. To secure these markets a number of protectionist measures were instituted which had the effect of maintaining the colonized countries in a state of inequality. "Here then is a second structure of sin: an inequality between nations built on a series of actions which, in terms of conventional morality, were reprehensible" (Valley 1990, 91).

Another problem built into the structures of the colonized countries in this phase of colonialism, something which continues to create problems for present-day African
countries, was the building up of an indigenous elite class. An important aspect of the process of the second phase of colonialism was the campaign by the colonizers to turn selected indigenous people into honorary Europeans who would rule on their behalf. Thus, the colonial education system was geared to building a class of unimaginative but obedient administrators and concentrated on Westernizing the most able of the indigenous people. It is not surprising therefore that after independence these elites continue to look to Western models of development and to extravagant Western symbols as proof of their new nationhood (e.g., huge dams, power stations, high-rise capitals, extravagant military expenditures, etc.). Often what is called for in the situation of many African countries is an indigenous model of development that meets the needs of the local people.

Valley sees the Church as having played a key role in this process. While there were great benefits in the spread of a basic network of primary education throughout much of Africa, in doing so the Church also set up a more long-term problem in the attitudes it molded.

The effects of this in the post-independence period were to be damaging. By alienating the brighter pupils from their own culture and often making them scorn it, the Church created a future leadership whose values were alienated from the people they would be called upon to serve. Often the process was unconscious. Pupils sought to imitate the lifestyle and attitudes of teachers they admired. The result was a colonial elite who mimicked the colonists to such a degree that . . . they became more European than Europeans. (Valley 1990, 101)
Valley sees this as another structure of sin involved in the system of colonialism. He explains:

Here then is a . . . structure of sin: the confusing of the essential values of the gospel mission with Western cultural assumptions. These were to pervert the development of the poor and entrap them in notions of inferiority - and us in notions of superiority - which today still act as barriers to a full recognition of the people of the Third World as our equals before God. (Valley 1990, 102)

The third phase of colonialism is the present phase of neo-colonialism in which the colonizers continue to control and to plunder Africa and other so-called Third World countries "at arms' length." Under this present system rich countries maintain their advantage over Africa and other poor nations by three distinct methods - the mechanism of modern international trade, the multinational companies, and the whole international financial system - all of which have devastating effects in both human and environmental terms. Valley identifies three structures of sin that characterize this phase of colonialism. The first is the protectionism which is essentially a network of deliberate restrictions which maintains and increases the gap between the rich and the poor and inhibits them for proper self-development. The second is the method of operation of the multinationals which is not rooted in mutual benefit and true partnership, but is instead rooted in an unequal power which seeks the highest possible profits based on the exploitation of the cheap labor and undefended fields in the colonized countries. The third
structure of sin in this phase of colonialism is the refusal of the rich nations, which have become rich largely by exploiting the colonized countries, to make just concessions to the poorer economies. Valley refers to this as "an edifice of privilege held together by greed and by the fear which underlies self-interest" (Valley 1990, 122).

Included in the third phase of colonialism is the activity by rich countries which goes under the name of aid to Africa and other so-called Third World countries. Valley demonstrates convincingly that, all too often, what is called aid is not aid but something more base in disguise. His conclusion at the end of his discussion of the issue of aid brings this out clearly: "Aid, therefore, as at present constituted, is a thoroughly impure system which offers far less than it promises. Often, as we see, it is not aid at all but a loan, a form of investment or a tool for manipulation" (Valley 1990, 83). Valley again sees this as another structure of sin in the system of colonialism.

Not aid itself but the fact that there are many things which are not aid but which masquerade as it. The evolution of such a system has created among the general public a sense that something is being done when often it is not. Were this realisation more widespread there would undoubtedly be a far greater demand that the situation should change. (Valley 1990, 84)

Thus, the situation in which Africans find themselves is sinful in the fullest sense of the understanding of sin explained above. It involves orientations, actions or behaviors, and a situation (systemic structures) all of which
have the effect of alienating the Africans as a group from their self and from their God-given right to freedom and dignity, thus doing harm to their well-being.

The Presence and Activity of God in History

If Christian theology presents us with the "bad news" of the sinfulness of the whole situation in which the Africans as a group find themselves, it also presents us with the good news that God is present in this situation, constantly working to bring about freedom and liberation. This is the message that we find in both the Old and the New Testaments: God works in and through history. In talking about the social context of divine revelation in the Old Testament, Cone explains:

The Old Testament is a history book. To understand it and the divine revelation to which it witnesses, we must think of the Old Testament as the drama of God’s mighty acts in history. It tells the story of God’s acts of grace and of judgement as he calls the people of Israel into a free, liberated existence. (Cone 1975, 63)

This is very clear in the decisive event of the Exodus through which God revealed himself as the savior of the oppressed. God heard the cry of his people and took their history into his own hands, and liberated them from their slavery.

Using the story of Jacob and Esau, Song takes this theme further and shows that the history that God embraces is the ambiguous history of our world. Jacob’s act of cunning and deception was a very ambiguous doing. Through it he played a trick on both his brother Esau and his blind, old father. And
yet the Bible tells us that this most ambiguous act was incorporated into God's plans for his people (Song 1990, 70).

Thus, the God of the Old Testament is a God who is deeply involved in the ambiguous history of the people, working for their salvation. In the biblical point of view, therefore, history and revelation are inseparable. To see the revelation of God is to see the action of God in history (Cone 1973, 53).

This view of God also characterizes the New Testament understanding of God. The fundamental reality proclaimed in the whole of the New Testament is the good news that "God has become incarnate in Jesus the Christ." "The Word became flesh" (John 1:14). In commenting on this reality, Song points out that the basic significance of the incarnation is the fact that God has entered human history. He explains:

We come, then, to the birth of Jesus, the Word become flesh. At once we are thrust into history; not a celestial history, but a terrestrial history; not a divine history, but a human history; not a history out of context, but a history in a particular context. (Song 1990, 72)

Furthermore, from the outset, the New Testament conveys the message that the Jesus story is not simply a story about a good man who met an unfortunate fate. Rather, in Jesus God is at work, telling his story and disclosing the divine plan of salvation (Cone 1975). At the center of this plan of salvation is the liberation of the poor and the oppressed. Accordingly, Jesus is pictured as the oppressed one, who views his own person and work as an identification with the humiliated condition of the poor. The poor were at the heart
of his mission.

The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me, he has sent me to announce good news to the poor, to proclaim release for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind; to let the broken victims go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19 NEB)

Not only does God espouse the cause of the poor. In both the Old and the New Testaments God is shown as aligning himself with and acting through the poor. It is this realization that has led Liberation Theology to believe in the "preferential option for the poor." In his presence and activity in history God has elected to "use" the poor and oppressed as the vehicle for his liberating activity.

Approaching this topic from the viewpoint of history-making and history-makers, Brueggemann shows how in the Old Testament God's work of history-making (God's liberating activity) was done through the voice of the marginalized embodied in the message of the prophets.

The Old Testament presents to us a very different characterization of history-making. Of course, it would be easy enough to say that it is Yahweh who is the decisive history-maker, and there is truth in that. Certainly the Old Testament centers on the conviction that Yahweh is the decisive history-maker, but Yahweh is not a history-maker in a "supernaturalist" sense. Yahweh's way of history-making is through the process and agency of human interaction. More specifically, the history-making process in ancient Israel is done through the voice of marginality which is carried by prophetic figures and those with whom they make common cause. (Brueggemann 1987, 55)

We find the same view in the New Testament. Jesus espouses the cause of the poor and proclaims: "The last shall
be first and the first last" (Matt. 20:16). However, in identifying with the poor and oppressed God is not presented as affirming and upholding the condition of poverty and oppression per se. If anything, Jesus' message and miracles are essentially about the liberation of the poor from their condition. God's preferential option for the poor and oppressed would seem to be more an option for the voice of the poor and marginalized, the voice that keeps audible and powerful the hidden, personal, dangerous, subversive sounds that permit the historical process of liberation. It is this voice that functions "to disclose, to open, to reveal, to permit the exercise of free choice and the practice of new possibility" (Brueggemann 1987, 56).

This realization of the centrality of the voice of marginality in God's activity calls for a new theological commitment and orientation based on the belief that it is among the struggling poor that God is found especially at work. This realization also calls for a new approach to the Bible, namely, the re-reading of the Bible from the point of view of the struggles of the poor and oppressed for freedom. It is this realization that has led Black Liberation Theology to the understanding of God as not an abstract theological idea but as relating to the concrete historical suffering of the poor and oppressed (Maimela 1986, 106).

This therefore is the good news that the Bible and Christian theology proclaim to the colonized African person.
The sinful situation of bondage and alienation is not the final word. God is present and active in the process and is "speaking peace and liberation for his people."

The Call to Freedom and Subjectification

In presenting us with this good news, Scripture and Christian theology also reveal to us an important aspect of the Christian vocation, namely, the call to participate in God’s work of liberation and to become agents of our own liberation and that of others. Maimela sees this as the vocation of the whole Christian community. He therefore calls upon the Christian Church to abandon its false neutrality (which is nothing but an implicit support for the ruling and economic elite), to move out of its position of ghetto power, and to shake off the protection given it by the beneficiaries of the unjust status quo. (Maimela 1986, 107)

It is for this reason that I find myself in agreement with Black Liberation Theology’s approach to call and inspire men and women to engage themselves in the struggle to change the social realities of this oppressive and life-denying world, creating a situation where people live in freedom, dignity, and peace. I therefore see the call to freedom and subjectification as including the call to affirm and to grow in the human ability to intervene and recreate the world within the all-embracing context of God’s ongoing and forward thrusting creative activity of transforming the world. I therefore again find myself in agreement with Liberation
Theology’s belief that one of the tasks of Christian theology is to teach people to believe in themselves and in their creative ability to shape and complete the world.

In this respect, the tendency in traditional Christian theology to belittle human creativity and its contribution on the grounds that human beings cannot bring about God’s kingdom on earth needs to be challenged and overcome. Without denying the important insight that the building of the kingdom is ultimately God’s work, the correct understanding of the Christian vocation must include the awareness that our creative involvement with and in the guidance of God in overcoming sin and its destructive consequences is not futile, and not totally unnecessary and irrelevant to the final victory that will arrive with God’s coming kingdom. "Rather this victory emerges out of the partial historical victories which God and committed Christians now win against evil, oppression and lovelessness" (Maimela 1986, 112).

Talking in a different context, namely, that of "christological construction," Jacquelyn Grant emphasizes the Christian call to subjectification - the call to freedom and dignity which manifests itself in the ability to talk as a subject. She understands Jesus’ question addressed to his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" (Mark 8:29), as one that calls for the subjectification of those to whom it is addressed. "This subjectification of the disciples relocates the central subject of this passage. No longer is it Jesus,
but the one(s) who answer" (Grant 1990, 202). In the context of the overall Christian call I am talking about here, I think this subjectification of the disciples by Jesus can also be understood as containing the call to freedom and dignity on the part of the disciples, the kind of freedom and dignity that manifest themselves in the commitment to become agents in the process of history-making, thus joining with God in his liberating activity.

Addressing herself to the situation of Blacks and women, Grant explains how "historically the power to be subjects has been carefully and conveniently kept out of the hands of nonwhites and to a lesser extent out of the hands of women" (Grant 1990, 202), something that has meant that essentially they have been defined by the political and theological status quo. Grant, furthermore, observes that it has been within this context that theologians have presumed, "in the interests of truth and universality, to answer the christological question in a once-and-for-all fashion, that is, for all times and for all peoples" (Grant 1990, 202).

Grant, accordingly, sees the remedy for this situation as consisting in the subjectification of these marginalized groups of people. This subjectification will require of Blacks and women that they respond to God's call in Jesus from the context of their particular experience of marginalization. In so doing, they will be responding to the Christian call to freedom and dignity.
Thus, in the eyes of Christian theology, the colonized Africans are not only presented with the good news that God is present with them in their predicament. They are also presented with the call to become subjects who are agents of their (and others’) liberation.

The Trinity: Our Inspiration and Our Hope

Christian theology does not stop at presenting us with the call to freedom and subjectification. In the belief in the Trinity it provides us with a source of inspiration and hope. First, it offers us a vision of the kind of life God is calling us to live as God’s people who are called to participate in God’s life. Second, by reminding us that through faith we have been incorporated into the life of the Trinity, and that the trinitarian God is constantly at work to transform the world into a place where God’s kingdom is realized, Christian theology provides us with an eternal and inexhaustible source of hope.

At the center of Christian faith is the belief in the God who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Thus, according to Christian faith, in the beginning there is not the solitude of One, but the communion of three in which the eternal Persons co-exist one within others so that "a dynamic of life and love unites them in such a way that they form themselves into an integrating, full and complete union" (Boff 1988, 23).
Christian theology sees the trinitarian life of God as offering us a vision of the kind of life we are called upon to live. Liberation Theology, in particular, views the Trinity as providing a vision for community, societal, and international relations. Viewing the vision of the Trinity as calling for a critical attitude to personhood, community, society and the church, Boff explains:

In the light of the Trinity, being a person in the likeness of the divine Persons means acting as a permanently active web of relationships: relating backwards and upwards to one's origin in the unfathomable mystery of the Father, relating outwards to one's fellow human beings by revealing oneself to them and welcoming the revelation of them in the mystery of the Son, relating inwards to the depths of one's own personality in the mystery of the Spirit. (Boff 1988, 149)

In the context of communal and societal life, the belief in the Trinity means that human beings cannot just concentrate on their own interpersonal relations to the exclusion of the wider, structural relationships with society and history. For the Christian who has been incorporated into the life of the Trinity,

personalization through communion must not lead to a personalism alienated from the conflicts and processes of social change, but must seek to establish new, more participatory and humanizing relationships. (Boff 1988, 149)

In the same way, communities have to place themselves within a greater world, extending from the most immediate larger system of the neighborhood to the largest system of the entire world order. In the light of the faith in the Trinity, no community or group can exist as a closed and reconciled little
world of its own. In the eyes of the trinitarian God "'communitarianism' is close to anarchy" (Boff 1988, 149).

This vision of trinitarian life poses many challenges to the present configurations in communal, societal, cultural and international relations. In particular, the trinitarian vision of life passes a clear judgement on the colonial system that continues to hold Africans and other peoples of the so-called Third World captive, keeping them under the stigma of dependence, first on the imperial colonial powers, then on expansionist European capitalism, and presently on multinational capitalism.

The trinitarian vision presents a clear challenge to this situation. In the Trinity there is no domination by one side, but convergence of the three in mutual acceptance and giving. Therefore a society that takes its inspiration from trinitarian communion cannot tolerate class differences, that is, dominations based on power that subject those who are different to those who exercise that power and marginalizes the former from the latter. The sort of society that a serious commitment to the trinitarian vision would bring about is one characterized by fellowship and equality. Thus,

only a society of sisters and brothers whose social fabric is woven out of participation and communion of all in everything can justifiably claim to be an image and likeness (albeit pale) of the Trinity, the foundation and final-resting place of the universe. (Boff 1988, 151)

When translated into concrete terms, this vision calls for a radical change in which the one-sided patterns of
domination and subjection that characterize the present societal configurations are replaced by forms of community based on mutual respect and free agreement. Included in this radical change is the need for decentralization of political and economic power, something that will ensure the availability of space for personal and group expression.

The Christian belief in the Trinity, however, does not provide inspiration only in the sense of offering us a vision of the life we are called upon to live as God's people. It also reminds us of our incorporation, through our faith in the Trinity, into something much bigger and much more mysterious, namely, God's own life and God's activity in the world. It reminds us that our daily experiences, our struggles to follow our conscience, our love and joy, and our bearing the sufferings of the world and the tragedies of human existence are ultimately taken up into God's own process. In the same way, the struggle against social injustice, with efforts at building a more human form of society, and the sacrifices and martyrdoms that these endeavors so often bring ultimately become part of God's own life and activity in the world.

In this way, our belief in the Trinity constitutes an eternal and inexhaustible source of hope and meaning. The realization that our struggles for life and liberty are ultimately also those of Father, Son and Holy Spirit gives us further motives to continue struggling and resisting, knowing that our efforts are "inscribed in eternity, in the heart of
the absolute Mystery itself" (Boff 1988, 158).

Thus, to conclude, the belief in the Trinity passes a clear judgement on the colonial situation in which the African finds him- or herself by showing this situation to be contrary to the vision of life God is calling us to. More importantly, however, the Christian belief in the Trinity functions as a tremendous source of hope and motivation to the oppressed Africans.

Conclusion

Christian theology, looking at the situation of the African in the broader context of Christian faith, has helped us to throw some more light on this complex reality. The section on sin has left us with no doubt that the complex reality of colonialism and its consequences on the African psyche is a reality characterized by sinfulness. On the positive side, the other three sections - God's presence and activity in history, the call to freedom and subjectification, and the Trinity as our source of inspiration and hope - have, each in its own way, lifted our spirits and given us impetus by reminding us of God's presence with us in our struggles and of our call to join with God in the process of the transformation of the world.

Having reflected with both psychology and Christian theology on the reality of colonialism and its consequences on the African psyche, we are now ready to move on and address
ourselves to the healing process of the psychic injuries of the African. This will constitute the subject-matter for our next chapter.
CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HEALING PROCESS

In the previous chapters we have reflected both psychologically and theologically on the consequences of colonialism on the psyche of the African person. Some concepts from psychology have enabled us to cast this woundedness of the African person in psychotherapeutic language. Christian theologies from the underside have reminded us of God's liberating presence and activity in which all are called to participate. For the oppressed Africans, this good news of God's presence and activity instills hope and provides an impetus to work towards changing their situation. For our reflection to be complete, we now need to move the discussion forward and look into the healing process, focusing in particular on the implications for healing that can be drawn from the reflection done in the previous chapters.

The healing process that would seem to be called for by the above reflection is one that is consciously and deliberately holistic in its approach. It is for this reason that I again find Graham's psychosystemic model of pastoral care and counseling appealing. The five identifiable principles that characterize his model of caregiving, in my view, provide the kind of model that is capable of responding
adequately to the concern for healing in the African person. Consequently, the implications for the healing process to be discussed in this chapter will be greatly influenced by Graham's five principles of caregiving. Let us recapitulate Graham's five principles. The principle of organicity places the patterns of interconnectedness in the very center of the diagnostic and therapeutic process. The principle of simultaneity underscores the important fact that change is effectively brought about by responding to the organic relationship between persons and their worlds simultaneously. The principle of conscientization reminds us of the impact of the social order upon personal difficulties, and the need to assist those seeking care to devise ways of addressing the destructive elements in the social order. The principle of advocacy underlines the need for the caregiving community to make its influence felt in the field of public policy-making. Finally, the principle of adventure talks of the need to always be hopeful.

With this model of caregiving in the background, I have identified a number of implications for the healing process that would seem to be called for by our reflection on the predicament of the African person. First, there is clearly a need for a sociocentric approach to both diagnosis and therapy. Second, consciousness therapy (or conscientization) must become a central part of the therapeutic process. Third, the therapeutic process must have as its main goal the
empowerment of the oppressed that will finally result in making them subjects of their destiny. Fourth, as a lot of brainwashing and indoctrination has been done in the name of evangelization and theology, there is a need for some kind of "faith work" which will have as its final goal the liberation and subjectification of the oppressed Africans, giving value and legitimacy to their own theological voice.

A Sociocentric Diagnostic and Therapeutic Approach

What comes out clearly in the above reflection is that the colonial psychopathology that plagues the African person is of a sociocentric origin. Fanon, Biko, and the other sources cited in identifying the different psychic injuries of the African are all united in locating the origin of this woundedness in the social experience of oppression in its different forms - colonialism (and slavery for African Americans), racism, and discrimination.

Amos Wilson, in his discourse on The Political Psychology of Black Consciousness, convincingly shows the sociocentric origin of much of African (Black) psychopathology. He explains:

Sociopathology precedes psychopathology. Collective pathology precedes individual pathology. That is, diseased social interactions between groups generate diseased social interactions within groups, and furthermore, diseased social interactions within groups generate diseased psychological interactions within individuals who are their constituents. The discontents of individuals reflect the discontents of groups; and
these, the discontents of the societies and cultures they constitute. The Great Chain of Discontents inextricably binds together individual, group, society, and culture. (Wilson 1993, 101)

For this reason, particularly in dealing with the psychopathology of the African, diagnosis and therapeutic interventions will be effective only to the extent that they address themselves to the social origin of this pathology. For, as Wilson continues to explain, addressing himself more directly to the situation of the Africans in America,

Disturbances of thought, emotions, motivational and values priorities, and psychological processes in Blacks are the unavoidable outcomes of their oppression by Whites. To be oppressed is by definition to have one's thought processes disturbed; emotions impaired; motives and values inverted; and one's body functions imbalanced. (Wilson 1993, 102)

Consequently, implicitly pointing to the need for the therapeutic process to address itself to social change, Wilson goes on to assert unequivocally that there can be no full healing for the Africans as long as the situation of oppression remains unchanged. In his own words,

There can be no "normality" of consciousness and conduct for Blacks as long as they remain dominated by Whites - merely socially acceptable or unacceptable adjustments to the ever-changing demand characteristics of White supremacy. (Wilson 1993, 102)

Speaking from the point of view of feminist therapy, Worell and Remer come to the same conclusion. In explaining their The Personal is Political principle, they explicitly name the external environment as the main source of clients' problems. Thus, they conclude, "the primary source of a
client's pathology is not intrapsychic or personal, but rather is social and political" (Worell and Remer 1992, 92). Accordingly, Worell and Remer propose a form of therapy that gives priority to identifying dysfunctional environmental factors rather than concentrating on intrapsychic factors. Furthermore, the focus of such a model of therapy needs to be on changing the unhealthy external situation and on changing the internalized effects of that external situation, rather than on helping the client adapt to a dysfunctional environment. While Worell and Remer address themselves to the situation of women in relation to the oppression of patriarchy, the observation they make here is directly applicable to the situation of the African person who suffers from the oppression of colonialism and racism.

This understanding of the sociocentric origin of psychopathology calls for changes in both diagnostic and therapeutic practices. There is no question that the model of psychotherapy espoused by the mainstream psychological establishment is one that tends to focus on individual psychodynamics, and recently on family system dynamics. As far as the diagnostic practice is concerned, there needs to be a reframing of pathology. A new understanding in which individuals are not blamed or pathologized for thinking, feeling, and behaving in ways that are congruent with living in an oppressive society is called for. Such an understanding of psychopathology will view the "symptoms" of the oppressed
as strategies for coping with an unhealthy environment. The recognition that there is not something inherently wrong with them will, in turn, empower the symptomatic oppressed to make changes in themselves and in their environments.

Another important aspect of the diagnostic practice is the labeling and categorization of psychological disorders. Here too there needs to be a change. The naming of symptoms has again tended to focus on the individual and to ignore the environmental origin of certain forms of psychopathology. Worell and Remer discuss some of the observations made by feminist therapists in this regard. In calling for new diagnostic categories, feminist therapists rightfully accuse the DSM-III-R for not paying attention to the environmental origin of certain disorders. For example, the new category of "Abuse Disorders" suggested by some feminist therapists would directly point to the existence of sexual and spouse abuse, thus focusing clinicians' attention back on the situational cause of the symptoms. Again, the diagnostic category of "Oppressed Artifact Disorder," proposed again by some feminist therapists to name the cumulative effect of everyday, continual experiences with institutionalized sexism, would lead therapists to focus on the sociocentric origin of the disturbance.

In the same way, the explicit connecting of African sociocentric psychopathology to the environment from which it originates would focus the attention of the therapists on the
external causes of the symptoms. For example, let us consider the phenomenon of the so-called Black-on-Black violence. As long as it is named this way, this problem will be viewed as a "Black problem," and the blame for this behavior will be laid solely on the symptomatic Blacks. However, when this phenomenon is named in a way that explicitly identifies its sociocentric origin (e.g., when it is referred to as the "Self-Destructive Disorder Resulting From Living In An Oppressive Situation"), that would immediately bring the focus to be on the oppressive environment of racism and discrimination rather than to continue viewing the phenomenon as solely a "Black problem."

The above discussion alludes to an even deeper problem involved in the present diagnostic practice. To date, the psychology that informs the mainstream model of psychotherapy - and therefore the present diagnostic practice - is one that has emerged from the White, middle class, male, Eurocentric, and Western perspective. For this reason, in so far as it reflects the one-sided view of the dominant White class, a view that focuses, for the most part, on the individual, ignoring the political social circumstances, the present diagnostic practice is a political act that, wittingly or unwittingly, favors the sociopolitical status quo. Wilson, in his discourse on what he calls "The Politics of Diagnosis," gives extensive consideration to this reality. He openly views the present diagnostic practice as a process that is
inherently social in nature, whether it is being done by the psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or anyone else. Being a social relationship, psychological diagnosis is a political affair! It is a part of the political system! (Wilson 1993, 87)

Referring to the role that the present diagnostic practice plays in maintaining the status quo, Wilson further explains:

Thus, when an individual is labeled in an unjust and unequal society, and is labeled by the very people who maintain its injustice and inequality, then the very diagnostic process itself, and the very labels attached to the victims of that society are the very means by which repression is carried out in that system. (Wilson 1993, 88)

To illustrate this process, Wilson uses the example of the so-called "criminal-type," a label that the dominant group in society often gives to criminals. In its criminals, the establishment finds evidence of a criminal nature which it describes as the product of: "broken homes; un-caring, rejecting or permissive parents; alcoholic, criminal, or absent fathers; disorganized or ghetto neighborhoods; moral laxities; skewed values" (Wilson 1993, 89). While these may indeed be the kinds of people prone to commit crime, what this labeling conveniently leaves out is the fact that, in the final analysis, especially in the case of the many young Black males in the United States and in South Africa who end up exhibiting criminal behavior, a greater part of the blame has to be attributed to the overall system of oppression that "creates" such behavior. When the sociocentric origin of the so-called criminal-type is ignored, an interesting game develops: The oppressive system creates the criminal type.
Then, through diagnosis, it tests the individual and finds exactly what it has created. However, attributing this behavior entirely to the individual, it punishes the "career criminal," leaving itself untouched (Wilson 1993, 90).

In the light of this observation, it is crucial that the present diagnostic practice be remedied in at least two ways, if it is to address adequately the sociocentric psychopathology of the African. First, as we have mentioned above, pathology that is of a sociocentric origin has to be named in a way that explicitly and directly relates it to the environmental causal factors. As the tendency in traditional (Western) psychotherapy has been to focus on the individual, this reframing of pathology may be facilitated by developing a diagnostic process which first factors out all environmental sources of problems before applying diagnostic labels which focus on individual pathology (Worell and Remer 1992). Second, and this is most important, the psychological establishment, in diagnosing problems of the marginalized and oppressed groups, should do so in collaboration with these oppressed groups. Better still, the psychological establishment should listen to how the oppressed diagnose their problems, instead of unilaterally imposing diagnostic labels that have the effect of perpetuating the pathology.

The understanding of the sociocentric origin of many of the psychic injuries of the African person also calls for a new therapeutic approach. In dealing with such psychic
injuries, the ultimate goal of therapy should be to initiate social change, to create a society in which oppression - colonialism, racism, sexism, etc. - does not exist. Again talking from the point of view of feminist therapy, and addressing themselves primarily to the situation of women, Worell and Remer emphasize this.

Thus, change of our institutions (the family, schools, religion, the work-place, economics, laws, political structure, etc.) is crucial, since these are the means by which society perpetuates sexism and oppression. Mental health cannot be achieved solely by women acquiring healthier behaviors. Society must be changed and women from all groups must have increased social power as well as increased personal power. (Worell and Remer 1992, 93)

Again what Worell and Remer say here about women is directly applicable to the situation of the oppressed African.

But how does one go about incorporating the goal of social change into therapy? One thing that becomes evident right away is the difficulty to integrate such a goal into the present individual focus of most of mainstream psychotherapy. Worell and Remer suggest as one way to accomplish this integration the approach of viewing social change as having a continuum of levels - from large, macro-levels to smaller, micro-levels. An example of a macro-level social change would be a change in sociopolitical policies. An example of a micro-level social change would be an individual confronting his or her immediate oppressive environment, as in the case of a woman confronting her boss about discriminatory or sexist practices in the workplace. Macro-level changes are better
accomplished by working together as a group for social and political change, while micro-level changes are brought about by changes in the individual. However, micro-level changes made by individuals can often result in macro-level societal changes. In my view, such a continuum of levels of social change has the advantage of offering many different openings to effect change on the pathogenic environment to both client and therapist.

An important final note. In my view, the above discussion should caution us against the rapidly growing medicalization of problems that are sociocentric in their origin. The Chicago Tribune (December 12-15, 1993) ran a potentially enlightening series of articles linking violent behavior with brain chemistry. While this discovery deserves to be hailed as a significant breakthrough in the treatment of those (in my view, comparatively few) individuals in whom proneness to violent behavior is in fact biologically based, there is enough reason to be concerned that, especially when used in the context of a psychotherapy that focuses on the individual, and by those who are part of the dominant group in society, it can accelerate the process of the medicalization of problems which may be accurately defined as derivative of social, political, and economic difficulties. Such a process would again pass the blame on to the victims of such sociopolitical situations - labeling them "mentally ill," and "organically deficient" - instead of focusing on the need for political and
economic redress. One would particularly have to keep this possible danger in mind when dealing with the sociocentric psychopathology of the African.

**Consciousness Therapy**

(Conscientization)

Oppression, in its many forms (colonialism, racism, discrimination, etc.), unconsciously conditions the consciousness of its victims and produces a pathological consciousness. This is what Fanon, addressing himself to the situation of the colonized African, refers to as the "colonial personality." Biko, reflecting particularly on the situation of the oppressed Black South Africans, calls this pathological consciousness the "mentality of the oppressed." Akbar sees the particular mental disorders found among African Americans as specifications of this pathological consciousness. Wilson, approaching the same matter from the point of view of the repression of African-centered consciousness, views the pathological consciousness produced by the experience of oppression as essentially a state of unconsciousness representing itself as consciousness. He goes on to explain:

Eurocentric consciousness, the mortal enemy of African-centered consciousness which it displaces and represses, imposes on its African hosts the dream states of sleepwalkers and somnambulistic wanderers in the dark of night. (Wilson 1993, 111)

All these sources implicitly point to an almost identical process through which the pathological consciousness of the African develops. Subjected to dehumanizing oppression, the
Africans unconsciously internalize the oppressor's view of the inferiority of the African and African culture. They come to harbor feelings of inferiority which in turn lead to the phenomenon of self-hatred and self-loathing (Akbar's Anti-Self Disorder). As a way of escaping these unwanted feelings, the oppressed Africans develop a strong (mostly unconscious) desire to identify themselves with the oppressor-culture (Fanon's White mask syndrome, and Akbar's Alien Self Disorder). The end-result of this process is that the African self is impoverished, leading to the phenomenon of apathy, which is essentially a form of conditioned helplessness (Wilson 1993). On the cultural level, such apathy often leads to what Fanon refers to as cultural withdrawal and cultural deficiency, phenomena which are essentially a portrait of persons made deficient, of whole peoples instilled with fear, and degraded through the destruction of their natural means of sociability.

It follows from this that any meaningful process of healing for the African person must, of necessity, include the healing of consciousness. It is for this reason that I have entitled this section "Consciousness Therapy." The traditional term of conscientization, in my view, does not seem to explicitly capture this process in its fullness since it would seem to specifically focus on the need to "become aware." To be sure, a major educative, therapeutic, and politically liberating milestone is reached when the oppressed Africans
become poignantly aware of how the various institutions and practices which define Eurocentric culture are utilized to control African people's minds and behavior; . . . foster the kinds of behavioral ineptitudes and deviations often labeled as "deficient," "anti-social" or "mental illness; maintain African unawareness of the social games and rules by which that culture transforms and dominates African consciousness and behavior; conditions Africans to avoid thinking and behaving in ways which expand their self-consciousness and behavioral repertoire; impair Africans' ability to master their own conduct, increase their self-reliance and self-sufficiency; impair their ability to acquire the intellectual and social skills, the critical intelligence to solve the problems of their lives, the material and capacities to determine their own future intelligently. (Wilson 1993, 112)

However, what the title "Consciousness Therapy" implies is that the process has to go further than this. In addition to achieving awareness, healing of the pathological consciousness of the African calls for more. Wilson again explains:

African peoples can best successfully counter the hegemonic interests of Eurocentric society by reclaiming their African-centered consciousness, identity and social interest; by founding their consciousness and behavior on an accurate perception of, and respect for, reality and a passionate love of truth; on a knowledge and acceptance of their African heritage; a dedicated passion to achieve and maintain conscious, thoughtful, voluntary self-control; their ability to first love themselves; to maintain affectionate relations and positive regard among themselves; the achievement of a collective, cooperative, unifying consciousness and behavioral orientation and; on the ability to engage in productive prosocial, proactive, rather than counterproductive, self-defeating, reactionary, activities. (Wilson 1993, 112)

Consciousness therapy therefore denotes a process that goes beyond simply acquiring awareness, and that has as its goals the transformation of consciousness and a deep
commitment to work toward changing the oppressive situation in which Africans as a group find themselves.

Some Black psychologists (Cross, Parham, and Helms 1991) and other writers reflecting on the situation of the minority groups in the United States (Sue and Sue 1990, and Worell and Remer 1992) provide us with a very useful model of cultural identity development which throws some light on the process of consciousness development and healing. This cultural identity development model can be of great help in the "Consciousness Therapy" process. While it may not be applicable to the situation of each and every individual African, it nevertheless can be a very useful guide as it denotes a process that has shown itself to be common to all oppressed groups. I will now offer a brief summary of the stages of cultural identity development suggested by the different theorists.

The model usually consists in four or five stages. I will stress a four stage summary: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization. The pre-encounter stage is characterized by the tendency to devalue oneself and one’s culture and the unequivocal preference for dominant cultural values over one’s own. In the case of the African person, this takes the form of the tendency to value Eurocentric or White lifestyles, value systems, and cultural or physical characteristics and to view with disdain those of his or her own cultural group. This is the stage characterized
by Fanon's White mask syndrome and what Akbar refers to as the Alien-Self Disorder.

Transition to the encounter stage is brought about by an event or a series of events resulting in increased awareness. Denial begins to break down, and this leads to a questioning and challenging of the attitudes and beliefs of the first stage. The "encounter" that takes place at this stage has the effect of "pulling the rug" from under the feet of the person operating with the Stage One identity. In the case of the African, in this stage he or she becomes aware of what the dominant Eurocentric or White culture has done to him or her. He or she begins a frantic, determined, obsessive and extremely motivated search for African identity (Cross et al. 1991). However, the individual in this stage still is in conflict between the disparate pieces of information or experiences that challenge his or her Stage One self-concept. The person feels less internally secure and seeks authentication through external validation (Cross et al. 1991).

The immersion-emersion stage is initially characterized by withdrawal from the dominant culture and immersion in one's heritage. The African person in this stage seems dedicated to reacting against Eurocentric or White society and rejects Eurocentric or White social, cultural, and institutional standards as having no validity for him or her. Desire to eliminate oppression of one's group becomes an important
motivation of the person's behavior. On the affective level, this stage is characterized by feelings of guilt, shame, and anger. The person feels guilty and shameful over the fact that in the past he or she "sold out" his or her racial and cultural group. This is often coupled with a strong sense of anger at the oppression and feelings of having been brainwashed by the forces in White society (Sue and Sue 1990). This anger is directed outwardly in a very strong way toward oppression (colonialism, racism, and discrimination). Although the initial part of this stage involves total immersion and personal withdrawal into one's own culture, the latter segment of this stage represents emergence from the reactionary, "either-or" and racist aspects of the immersion experience. The person's emotions begin to level off, and psychological defensiveness is gradually replaced by affective and cognitive openness (Cross et al. 1991).

The fourth stage, internalization, is characterized by the development of an integrated, more positive self-image and the adoption of a pluralistic, non-racist perspective. This stage signals the resolution of conflicts between the "old" and "new" world view. As a result, tension, emotionality, and defensiveness are replaced by a calm, secure demeanor. Ideological flexibility, psychological openness, and self-confidence about one's cultural identity are evident in interpersonal transactions (Cross et al. 1991). However, internalization involves more than a positive feeling of self.
It also includes assertive behavior within a social context. The African person who has reached this stage has a strong commitment and desire to eliminate all forms of oppression, with an eye on affecting change for the benefit of his or her cultural group rather than just for him- or herself.

There are obviously many questions that this model of cultural identity development leaves unanswered. For example, issues of possible class, age, gender, and so forth, are not adequately addressed in this model. Again, the first stage of this model presupposes interaction with an oppressive society. What happens in those individuals who come from an environment that holds a very positive and favorable view of their own culture? Will they move through the pre-encounter stage as presented in this model?

However, these unanswered questions notwithstanding, this model of cultural identity development can be of great value in providing some guidelines to the consciousness therapy process when used with caution and flexibility.

Empowerment Therapy

In discussing the issue of System and Power, we have seen how the system of colonialism has brought about serious imbalances in power arrangements. These power imbalances lead to pathology in the African in different ways. First, they do this by victimizing the African. Colonial power arrangements have created a situation in which Africans as a group are
coerced into becoming receptor of Eurocentric or White influence quite apart from their own desires, needs, and aspirations. This was particularly the case in the early stages of colonialism. Second, colonial power arrangements lead to pathology by being chaotic, that is, by creating a social system in which there is little or no viable means for the Africans to validate or fulfill their needs, aspirations, and desires.

We have also seen how, especially when they have been transformed into a system, imbalances in power arrangements can operate in ways that are more covert than overt - projective bonding, triangling, internalizing blame, and discounting. And we have duly noted how such covert power arrangements can be even more dangerous as they exist as unaccountable and intractable.

Again, in discussing the notion of Self, we alluded to another power-related pathology in the African. We identified the wounding of the African self that has taken place as a result of the traumatic experience of being colonized. We pointed out how colonialism was, among other things, a direct attack on the African self, an invalidation of the African people’s entire way of life that has resulted in an impoverished and unhealthy African self.

What the above observations suggest is that, in dealing with the colonial psychopathology of the African, any meaningful healing process will, of necessity, have to include
some form of empowerment. But what exactly does this imply? This is what we intend to elaborate on in this section. We will make some suggestions as to what should be included in such an empowerment process.

To begin to change the imbalanced power arrangements inherent in the oppressive system of colonialism, and to deal with the pathology that results from such power arrangements, the Africans as a group need to, in my view, be empowered in primarily two ways. We, first, need to mobilize the capacity for boundary setting and, second, to recognize and mobilize the attending rage (Graham 1992).

Boundary setting requires and promotes greater differentiation on the part of the victim. In the case of the oppressed Africans, boundary setting would mean pushing for clearer boundaries between them and the dominant Eurocentric or White culture. Such boundary setting does not, however, necessarily need to lead to separatism. The purpose of boundary setting is to protect from further abuse while letting in the positive elements of the dominant culture. Graham sees an illustration of this kind of boundary setting in the life and work of Malcom X. He explains:

Through advocating self-help and self-protection, he [Malcom X] attempted to mobilize the black community to protect itself from further injury by the white man’s system. He attempted to neutralize those abusing power in relation to blacks and to increase the power of self-determination on the part of blacks. Further, he held the white man accountable for his abuse. He did not allow the black man to blame himself for what has happened to him. (Graham 1992, 153)
Graham, accordingly, laments the fact that too many people responding to Malcom X's message missed its positive thrust and focused only on the rage and separatism that accompanied it. "In psychosystemic terms, the rage and separatism were necessary forms of agential power in a system that kept blacks in an exclusively receptive mode" (Graham 1992, 153).

An especially important place where Africans need to set a boundary is the area of selfblame. In this regard, the ideology of individualism which tends to view failure as always the result of personal ineptness or misbehavior, and therefore as a sign of moral inferiority, must be seen for what it is, namely, an ideology. Africans need to be empowered to perceive the sociocentric origin of their colonial psychopathology. In that way, they will come to view their oppression-related stress as a problem to be solved, as a manageable challenge and a heroic opportunity rather than an overpowering, onerous burden (Wilson 1993, 115).

Another area where boundary setting needs to take place is the naming and categorization of African mental disorders. We have seen above how there is a tendency in the mainstream (Western) psychological establishment to construe the psychopathological symptoms exhibited by Blacks under the alienating processes of Eurocentric or White domination as resulting from intrapsychic or familial problems rather than as effects of living under oppression. For this situation to be transformed, Africans need to assert their right and power
of self-definition in this regard - in categorizing and classifying the world and the nature of their being in it; of prescribing treatments for their behavior and establishing the conditions of their lives (Wilson 1993).

The second way in which Africans as a group need to be empowered to deal with the imbalanced power arrangements is to recognize and mobilize the attending rage. One thing that would seem to commonly characterize Africans both in Africa and in the diaspora, especially those who have become aware of how the world order operates, is the rage they experience at the world order that oppresses them while leaving them no other option but to continue being active players in the game in which they are doomed to be always among the losers. When owned and integrated, rather than disowned or acted out in ways that are self-destructive, this rage can mobilize deeper analysis and strategic action in changing the worldwide imbalances in power arrangements (Graham 1992).

In relation to the strengthening and healing of the wounded African self, Wilson and Baldwin have suggested a number of things which, in my view, deserve to be taken into serious consideration. The first thing that needs to happen in order to empower the African self is the reintegration of African history. In talking about the dynamics of the Self, we have mentioned how individuals and cultures are diminished when the connections between their social, mythological, and racial experiences are kept out of awareness by not being
thematized in literature, art, and history (Graham 1992). Thus, as part of the healing process of the African self, the true history and culture of the African peoples need to be rediscovered, reexamined, and reintegrated by the Africans as a group. Speaking to this need, Wilson explains:

The appropriate reclamation of African history and culture will provide Africans with a realistic and supportive vision of reality; with self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-confidence, self-acceptance and self-control; with the ability to form empowering affectionate relationships and the ability to engage in proactive, self-interested productive activity; and with a self-enhancing sense of purpose and existential meaningfulness. (Wilson 1993, 114)

The second thing that can be a means of strengthening the sense of selfhood among Africans is the valuing of African names. Many Africans, for various reasons, have, in the course of their lifetime, come to use as their first names European names. People of ancient times have always known the power contained in a name. Addressing himself to this reality, Baldwin argues:

Names are so intimately associated with one’s psychic identity that the powerful hold of psychological incarceration that they impose on us can never be effectively combated and escaped from without our confronting this issue head-on. (Baldwin 1992, 180)

I have had a personal experience of how significant the reclamation of one’s African name can be. Although the only name given to me by my parents was "Dabula," for a number of years I was known by the first name of "Anthony," a name I had given to myself when I joined the Catholic Church in 1976.
When I finally decided to go back to my original name and to use it as my first name, there was clearly a psychological shift in me that had the feeling of "coming back home to myself."

Another important way to strengthen the African self is the reinstitution of rituals. There was great wisdom in the rituals instituted and used by the African Ancestors. At closer look, it is not difficult to see how many of the rituals were therapeutic in many ways. Lost and forgotten rituals have to be retrieved, reexamined, and reintegrated into the current life of the African community. New rituals may also have to be instituted to commemorate significant events of recent years and centuries. It would, for example, be a psychologically healthy practice to have a ritual commemoration of the traumatic event of colonialism - and the experience of enslavement for the Africans in the diaspora. Such a ritual commemoration would be both an opportunity for a continued "national grief process" and a spiritual reconnecting with the source of strength that sustained the African Ancestors throughout the ordeal of colonialism.

Admittedly, these considerations may seem at first sight to be far-removed from the goals of psychotherapy as presently understood. Some may prefer to regard them as more long-term projects that are properly dealt with in the political sphere. However, if one appreciates the sociopolitical origin of the colonial psychopathology of the African, it will become clear
that the division between the personal and the sociopolitical which characterizes much of mainstream psychotherapy needs to be questioned. In the words of Baldwin,

If [as psychotherapists] we are going to bring a halt to the dangerously increasing momentum of contemporary African self-destruction we must immediately begin organizing ourselves around the priorities of establishing these kinds of African-centered cultural infrastructures of African Nation-building/maintenance. (Baldwin 1992, 183)

**Faith Work**

Any therapeutic work done in Africa would, outside any other considerations, have to include some faith work. Unquestionably the most obvious and pervasive of all of the characteristics that mark Africans as a group is their religious propensity. Indeed, it is not an over-statement to say that spirituality is deeply embedded in the African psyche. Speaking to this reality, John Mbiti explains that for the Africans,

Traditional religions permeate all the departments of life. There is no formal separation or distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and the non-religious, between the spiritual and the material areas of life. Wherever the African is, there is his or her religion. (cited in Baldwin 1992, 101)

However, in dealing with the colonial psychopathology of the African, especially in the case of the many Africans who have been "evangelized," there are other added reasons why it is necessary to include faith work in the therapy process. We have been duly reminded by some of the sources quoted in
previous chapters (Biko 1978, Bujo 1992, Valley 1990) that there was undeniably close cooperation between Christian foreign missionaries and the colonizers so that the process of evangelization was not untainted by the thrust to impose the Western culture on the evangelized Africans. This is what Paul Valley views as a "structure of sin," "the confusing of the essential values of the gospel mission with Western cultural assumptions" (Valley 1990, 102).

This observation points to the need for the healing process to include some "deconstructive" faith work. Africans who have accepted the gospel message need to be helped to identify the many ways in which this message has been confused with the imposition of Western values and practices, and has thus come to entrap them in feelings of inferiority about their own culture and values. A lot of work has been done in this area by both African theologians of inculturation and Black liberation theologians, and some progress has been made in advancing the process of inculturation and the psychological liberation of Africans from the distortion of the gospel message. What still needs to be done, however, is to explicitly incorporate these insights into the healing process of the colonial psychopathology of the African in which African psychotherapists are supposed to be in the vanguard.

In light of the Christian call to freedom and subjectification, faith work also needs to have a
"constructive" dimension. African Christians need to give voice to their own religious experience through critical and conscious theological reflection. Since the call to subjection is addressed to all, the work of theological reflection cannot be left to theological experts alone. Every African adult Christian must learn creative, contextualized theological reflection. This is crucial both to the healing process of the colonial psychopathology and to being a mature Christian. Underscoring the importance of theological reflection, Patricia O’Connell Killen argues:

Without critical and conscious theological reflection on the part of adults in the Church, the Church’s faithfulness to the gospel and its authentic witness to that gospel in the world diminishes. It even becomes counter-productive of gospel values. Why? Because our capacity to comprehend and faithfully live the Christian faith correlates directly with our capacity to notice, describe, and discover the revelatory quality of our human experience. (Killen 1993, 7)

Many writers on the subject of theological reflection (Whitehead and Whitehead 1980, Bevans 1992, Schreiter 1985) have offered different methods that can be employed in this process. Using these as a starting point, African counselors will need to create methods of theological reflection suitable for the African context and for use in the context of psychotherapy.

The Primacy of Group Work

The suggestions made above in connection with the healing of the colonial psychopathology of the African all point to
things that are best done in the context of group work. Consciousness therapy is best done through the medium of consciousness raising groups. Empowerment of Africans as a group is by definition primarily a group activity that needs to take place in the context of group work. Again faith work, both in its "deconstructive" and "constructive" aspects, is effectively done in the context of group work. What this all suggests is that in dealing with the colonial psychopathology of the African, group therapy and group work claim primacy over individual psychotherapy. Thus, unlike in mainstream (Western) psychotherapy, in the healing process of the African colonial psychopathology, individual psychotherapy comes to play an ancillary role to group therapy. The ultimate goal in the healing process of the African colonial psychopathology is social transformation. And people work toward social change more effectively together than alone (Worell and Remer 1992).

What this, by implication, means is that the counselor dealing with the psychopathology of the African (in Africa and elsewhere) needs to be particularly skilled in working with groups. It also means that his or her understanding of counseling or psychotherapy must encompass a scope much broader than that of mainstream (Western) psychotherapy which, by and large, tends to focus on the needs of the individual or of the smaller system of the family. In addition to being a counselor for troubled individuals, the counselor may find him- or herself called upon at times to be a group leader, a
consultant, a social activist, an advocate for the cause of the marginalized, a prophet, a nationalist, and sometimes even a "revolutionary." While an individual may actually never get around to being or doing all these things in his or her lifetime, the point being made is that all these different tasks need to be seen as part of what it means to be a counselor in dealing with the colonial psychopathology of the African.

**Conclusion**

In the light of the principles of the psychosystemic approach to pastoral care and counseling, we have pointed out a few things that need to be taken into account in addressing the colonial psychopathology of the African. The call for the adoption of a sociocentric approach to diagnosis and therapy is really a fleshing-out of the psychosystemic principles of organicity and simultaneity. Consciousness therapy and empowerment are activities in line with the principle of conscientization. We have also shown how advocacy, another important principle of the psychosystemic approach, must become an essential part of the role of counselor. Finally, the knowledge that God is ever present and constantly working in and with the marginalized, inspiring and empowering them to work for their liberation, constitutes the source of hope that opens the oppressed Africans to the possibility of adventure, the "expected but unpredictable gift of grace and fruit of hope" (Graham 1992, 47).
However, even when buoyed by this hope, the task that faces the individual counselor in addressing the colonial psychopathology of the African remains enormous. Faced with this big challenge, one can easily feel overwhelmed. Where does one begin? How does one take on the colonial system which has established itself worldwide? How does one bring the many Africans who have been "swallowed up" by the oppressive system but are unaware of the deeper implications of their predicament to a critical awareness? In answering these questions for myself, I have found profound wisdom in an African fairy tale I read about when I was in primary or elementary school. The version of the story known to me goes as follows:

Once upon a time there was a big monster that set out to destroy all the people in the village. Well known warriors went out to fight the monster in their attempt to defend the people of the village. But they were not strong enough for the monster which destroyed some and swallowed up others. Defenseless and not able to run away from the monster, all the people in the village, with the exception of one young man and his widowed mother, were destroyed by the monster, some crushed while many others were swallowed up by the fierce and greedy creature. One day the young man said to his mother, "Let me go to confront the monster and free my people who are languishing in its belly." After numerous attempts to dissuade him, his mother, seeing the firm determination in her son, finally reluctantly agreed. The following day the young man, armed with a match, a bundle of firewood, and a small knife, set out to confront the huge monster. The big monster, laughing at and ridiculing him, opened up its mouth wide and swallowed him.

Inside the belly of the monster the young man found his people weak and on the verge of dying with hunger. With the match and the bundle of firewood he had brought, he made some fire and used
the small knife he had brought with him to cut a piece from the inside parts of the monster. This he roasted and gave to the people to eat. Every morning he would cut a small piece, roast it, and give it to the people to eat. After some time, as the young man continued with this daily ritual, and as the people inside the belly of the monster were growing stronger and stronger with every new day, the fierce monster began to show signs of weakening. Unrelentingly, the young man continued with his daily ritual until one day, without him knowing it, he cut open the outer layer of the monster's skin, making a big opening for the people to free themselves from the monster's belly. By this time the monster was on its knees, showing clear signs of dying. The people came out running from the belly of the monster. Grateful for having been freed, they proclaimed the young man their king and paid respect to his widowed mother who had given up her son for the liberation of the people.

The system of colonialism, in my view, has all the features of the fierce and greedy monster of this fairy tale. There is therefore great wisdom in approaching the healing of the colonial psychopathology of the African as the young man approached the monster in the story. Unlike the strong and well known warriors of his time, he did not approach the monster head-on. His wisdom consisted in fighting the monster from the inside, in a rather unspectacular way, and through a gradual process - he cut a small piece each day.
EPILOGUE

Looking Back

The reflection done in this study has been influenced by a three-dimensional movement with a threefold thrust characterized by deconstruction, reconstruction and construction with regards to the understanding and application of psychotherapy and pastoral counseling. It is my conviction that the psychological and theological concepts employed by the discipline of pastoral counseling, especially when used and applied in the context of the situation of the marginalized groups, need to be reexamined in the light of such a three-dimensional process. We will now look briefly at what is implied in this three-dimensional process and at how this movement has influenced the reflection done in this study.

The focus of the deconstructive thrust is to critique and evaluate the concepts, theories, and practice of mainstream psychotherapy in areas of critical importance to the marginalized groups. The work of reconstruction consists in reexamining and reassembling the different concepts and theories by discarding what appears inappropriate in dealing with the situation of the marginalized and retaining that
which is not. The purpose of the constructive thrust of the three-dimensional movement is to introduce novel and sound alternative ideas, interpretations, and constructs. It is this three-dimensional movement that would seem to characterize the work done by Black psychologists, feminist therapists, and other psychologies that reflect on the situation of the marginalized.

As mentioned above, the reflection done in this study has been done with this three-dimensional movement in the background. Chapter one laid the foundation for the work of construction by outlining some of the problems specific to the colonized (Africans). In so doing, it put forward a form of psychopathology that calls for new constructs both in the theory and practice of psychotherapy and pastoral counseling. Chapter four was an attempt to point out some of the things that need to be taken into serious consideration in the work of construction.

In chapter two, we did quite a bit of reconstructive work using Graham’s psychosystemic model of pastoral counseling as our basic framework. We took the psychodynamic concepts of internalization, splitting, and self, which in their original context applied to individual psychodynamics, and reconstructed them to apply to larger systems and to reflect more clearly the interaction between the individual psyche and such larger systems in the psychological processes denoted and implied by these terms. We also reexamined and enlarged the
concept of system, usually associated with the family system in mainstream psychotherapy, showing clearly the connection between an oppressive system and psychopathology in those who are victims of such systemic oppression.

Interspersed throughout almost all of the chapters has been a constant deconstructive theme. Time and again we pointed out how mainstream psychology and psychotherapy, largely focusing as they do on the individual, cannot adequately respond to the colonial psychopathology of the African. We also pointed out at different places how mainstream psychotherapy often, wittingly or unwittingly, plays into the hands of the system by contributing, actively or passively, to the maintenance of the unjust status quo.

The chapter on theological reflection, in a slightly different way, also incorporated the three-dimensional process. The section on sin, by clearly passing judgement on the sinful situation brought about by the system of colonialism, had a deconstructive thrust. The other three sections, by inspiring and giving impetus to the Africans to join with God in changing their predicament, laid the foundation for the work of both reconstruction and construction, particularly in matters of faith and belief.

However, as I come to the end of this study, I have to humbly admit that in the work done here I have only managed to scratch the surface. I see myself as having succeeded in simply raising some of the questions which those of us in the
field of psychotherapy and pastoral counseling have to begin grappling with in addressing themselves to the psychopathology of the marginalized. I will therefore be adequately satisfied if those who have the time to read this thesis will be brought to the appreciation of the need, and indeed the urgency, to begin the process of grappling with these and other related questions.

Looking Ahead

There can be no more doubt that the situation of the marginalized, both in the industrialized countries and in the so-called Third World, calls for a new psychology and a new way of doing psychotherapy or counseling. This need can no more be ignored if the psychological establishment is to avoid seriously compromising itself. Edward Sampson, in an article on the challenges to psychology's understanding posed by Identity Politics, addresses the claim of the different marginalized groups to have their voice recognized and represented. He argues:

It is clear to almost everyone in psychology that if we failed to be responsive to new scientific discoveries, our legitimacy as a scientific enterprise would be significantly reduced. The thrust of identity politics, I believe, makes it equally clear that our failure to be responsive to the claims of the people who seek their own voice will also undermine our legitimacy. (Sampson 1993, 1228)

A growing number of voices in the psychological establishment echo this call for the development of a
psychology and a way of doing psychotherapy that will adequately address the situation of the marginalized. Moghaddam sees mainstream (Western) psychology as modulative in orientation. He describes modulative psychology as "not directly concerned with large-scale economic, technological, social, or political change, but deals with the consequences of such changes" (Moghaddam 1990, 22). As a result, Moghaddam continues, "In terms of political orientation, modulative psychology tends to be supportive of the status quo" (Moghaddam 1990, 22). In addressing himself particularly to the needs of the so-called Third World, Moghaddam calls for the development of an alternative type of psychology which he calls a "generative psychology." The explicit goal of this type of psychology will be to achieve fundamental and large-scale societal changes.

Addressing himself to the same idea of the development of a "psychology for the Third World," Sloan comes to a similar conclusion. He explains:

My personal conclusion about all this is that the first move toward Third World involvement by Western-trained behavioral scientists must be a self-purging of individualistic and scientific thinking. . . . This would entail a shift from "pure" research focusing on individual behavior to applied research/intervention of the sort normally associated with primary prevention programs, public health education, family systems approaches, community mobilization strategies, program evaluation, and even world systems analysis. These approaches adopt nonindividualistic perspectives, but they nevertheless hold quality in individual human lives as an ultimate value. (Sloan 1990, 16)

While I fully agree with these authors on the need to
develop this new orientation to psychology and pastoral counseling, I do not see this need as restricted to the "Third World situation." I instead see it as something called for in dealing with the situation of the marginalized groups in general, including those in the industrialized countries (e.g., women, gay males and lesbians, and African Americans). Furthermore, I think Western psychology is itself in need of being enriched by such a perspective if it is to adequately meet the needs of the Westerners themselves. Moghaddam points to one area in which mainstream (Western) psychology can benefit from the new approach to psychology, namely, the area of the multidimensional, rather than a unidimensional, conception of individualism-collectivism. He explains:

In first- and second-world psychologies, individualism and collectivism have been conceived of as opposite tendencies. . . . This picture of individualism and collectivism as opposite poles has led researchers to perceive cultures as being either more individualistic, and necessarily less collectivistic, or more collectivistic, and necessarily less individualistic. . . . However, from the perspective of certain third-world cultures, at least, individualism and collectivism need not be mutually exclusive. (Moghaddam 1987, 917)

In calling for the development of a psychotherapy and a form of pastoral counseling that will address themselves adequately to the colonial psychopathology of the African (as well as to the situation of the marginalized in general), I am therefore not alone. Nor do I think that in embarking on this endeavor psychologists and pastoral counselors will have to begin from the scratch. There is already a process in motion
all over the world whereby the different marginalized groups are working to change their situation. I think the call to both the psychology establishment and the pastoral counseling profession is to join in this movement.


Killen, Patricia O. "Assisting Adults to Think Theologically." *Pace* 22 (February 1993): 7-14.


VITA

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The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

4/6/87

Date

Director’s Signature