

The South Africa Collection

No.1: Reflections on the South African Situation

The South Africa Collection

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A collection of seminar ideas, insights and reflections on the dynamics of South Africa. Subjects range from the complexity of polarisation to the role of world citizen in the Global Village; from unconscious sexual fears and guilt in the black/white relationship, to the dynamics of the Jewish community in the Cape; from paranoid processes and the need for personal integration to the paradoxical psychosis of religion; from the cultural fixation of the expatriate communities to the realistic hope of inter-racial cellular networks; from the application of Catastrophe Theory to the insights of Systems Analysis.

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REFLECTIONS ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION

South Africa is a global cauldron, a seething crucible in which is being forged the being of tomorrow's world.

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Parameters of splitting in the South African situation: You have black and white, but it is not that simple. You also have Colour, and alongside Colour you have Asian and Malay, which are not black and they are not white, but they are not mixed race, they are ethnic entities and sub-entities, whereas the Coloureds are seen as non-entities. Colour covers a multitude of shades of miscegenation, already hidden in the histories of other sub-entities. The white however may split into English and Afrikaans-speaking, rich and poor, male and female, communist/capitalist, in-group/out-group, good and bad, liberal and conservative, powerful and impotent. Other sub-entities likewise may split into other groupings - Xhosa and Zulu, the fathers and the comrades, the conservatives, conformists, the radicals, the revolutionaries.

So splitting within the South African culture is multi-faceted, each grouping forms its own in-group bonding, its out-group anathema, and its boundary armour. Each grouping has its own projection mechanisms, its idealisation that 'in' is good, and 'out' is bad. Each in-group uses the out-group to dump the unacceptable parts of the in-group.

Splitting is not simply of persons from persons, but of parts of persons from other parts of the same person. Splitting is intrapersonal, not just extra-personal. Indeed extra-personal splitting within the social system is an externalisation of the splitting of the intra, so blackness is a condition of repression of parts of people - it represents the foetal unconscious as the black part, the repressed, contained, enslaved victim, the source of displacement, splitting, projection and scapegoating within society as a whole.

Disintegrated persons generate a disintegrated society. The social psychosis is a construct of the group in power, so the disintegration of apartheid is a construct of the psychosis of the dominant white minority. It is a sign of white sickness, of human sickness. There is a projection and denial of the black side of the white and of the white side of the black. If black is the symbol of the foetal unconscious, the contained, then white is the symbol of the persecuting cervix, crushing, containing, and yet in the laager all this was reversed. And we have reversed foetal dependency. The circling Zulu impis are seen as the crushing environment, in defence against which the wagons formed the laager wall, protecting the vulnerable foetal interior from violent onslaught.

Splitting into certain parameters is so clear that we are going to miss certain other parameters like the left/right split, the psyche/soma split, the cutting off of significant analysis, the acting out in body language and the outlawing of synthesis.

Personal integration and social integration are mutually interdependent necessities in the generation of tomorrow's world.

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The pronoun 'we' as South Africans includes all parts of all persons and all parties of the province.

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There is an enslaved part of every person, a victim at the heart of every victor and the slave mentality may be generated by the giving away of power to others just as much as being imposed by the taking away of power by others. So dependency in the Christian church may be an enacting of slavery which castrates and impoverishes those who take part in it. If the people give away their power to their pastors and to God, if they are continually seeking some messianic leader who will take over their responsibility and lead them through the wilderness then they themselves have become slaves, and in their acted enslavement enslave others in turn. So the theologically dominated becomes the humanistically dominating. The in-group which denies, represses and projects its victim parts into the victim Christ, victimises others with impunity.

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Need to explore the Jews as a group able to take ideological and practical initiatives yet castrated in their capacity to do that precisely by that which generates in them also the condition of being the victim, the castrated one, in circumcision. We need to go deeper to resolve the roots of splitting in the human psyche and in so doing to resolve the phenomena of the symptoms of splitting in human society.

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We also need to go higher in levels of integration to understand each individual person as a world citizen, an entity in their own right within the human species. It is as the dignity of the individual member of homo sapiens is recognised as a global characteristic that the Coloured, the White, the Black, the Jew, the Malay, the Hindu, the Indian, Xhosa and the Zulu each find their equivalent id-entity, not as a member of some warring sub-group that dis-identifies all others but in collaboration with all sub-groups and none, equally having the same id-entity so outlawing nonentities from the human experience.

The understanding of world citizenship and the integration of world boundaries is essential if the dynamics of South Africa are to be effectively resolved, for at the moment the shattering of every system is itself projected into South Africa in order to defend the world as a whole from handling the implications of integration within the global village. What South Africa represents within a province, the world represents within a globe and as such South Africa can lead the world into tomorrow if it can recover its id-entity and throw off the sense of becoming the victim of the world's psychotic projections. As such it would seem that Cape Town is the key to the health of the province, Wynberg the key to the health of Cape Town

and St. John's the key to the health of Wynberg. Here is a unique point of yield within a conflicted social system.

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A paranoid system will unite around negativities, complaints, and the throwing off of a persecutory rule. When that is achieved the paranoid community refocuses its paranoia, its splitting, its projection, its defences and reincarnates the very system it has sought to overthrow. We need to move in a different way, not by internalising and acting out paranoid dynamics but by producing a consensus around positive future goals, instead of present negative complaints, to be united for not united against, to move up level in such a way that each member of society can see the form of society as the responsibility of the total society, so that we do not say 'we are rich - they are poor', but the total population is included in the 'we' who say 'we are alienated into rich and poor', 'we are conflicted between black and white', 'we are torn into many warring factions, each struggling for supremacy'. So a meta-view of the social system lifts us above the warring faction and allows integration across boundaries, whereas the existential view forces us to identify our own interests within the group interest and to see all others as out-members, de-personalised, threatening. Such a raising of the level of integration demands raising the level of integration of persons and that in turn demands a structure of human maturation, widespread, crossing all cultural and racial and ethnic and belief and ideological boundaries and effective in its task performance.

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What would appear to be required is a mosaic of transformer groups, a multi-dimensional 'Cell-net' in which each cell is itself a transformer, a place of human growth, of development, of maturation, of goal searching, of personal transformation and of social transformation, linking the energies in flows moving from inside to outside, from outside to inside, building up into major national grid lines in which power is shared, flowing from one area to another. The sort of thing I have in mind at this stage is a set of non-entities, i.e. groups of 9 dividing into 3 threes, operating as co-consultants, co-counselling, each pair enabling the development of the out-member in the tripod, the triads themselves relating to each other as 3 threes, three triplets, a tetrahedron of tetrahedrons, a human pyramidal structure capable of sustaining massive stress and therefore facilitating major maturation within the social system, even though that system militates against the process. At the inter-cell level each triad could relate to two triads from other sectors, so that the inter-cell would be a rich mix, allowing the inter-group transformation, the boundary de-construction, the withdrawal of projection and the integration of the psychotic material. Such a system might be initiated within the churches but must transcend the churches, for indeed the churches themselves are as much sources of the dynamic of disintegration in society as any other sector. The seed must die if the fruit is to be born, and if in so doing the churches themselves go into demise, leading into the fullness of the humanity of the totality of integration, both intrapersonal and interpersonal within the society of tomorrow's world, then so be it. Perhaps with Bonhoeffer we can move towards religionless Christianity, and the celebration of humanism within the wholeness of our world.

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We must be acutely on the look out and alert to the pressure to regress away from the boundary of conflict in an attempt to unify in some deep mystical oneness of regressive idealisation those elements whose pain has to be worked through into the beyond of tomorrow, rather than withdrawn from into the bliss of yesterday. So the anxiolytic containment of alcoholism, in parallel to the opiate function of spirituality, the regressive drives of the charismatic movement, or the transpersonal mysticism of the new therapies, all drain energy away from the boundaries at which the conflict must be resolved and worked through, facilitating a pseudo-unification of parts, at the expense of the disintegration of the whole. The direction of regression must be reversed in order to work back out through the crucis, through the crisis, through the cervix, into the world of reality, sustaining in that crucible the integration of disparate parts, rather than the unification and homogenisation of regression.

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I suspect that in the Coloured community there is a massive predominance of fertilisation trauma right at the heart of its cellular being. Most of the miscegenation would have occurred in conditions of dominance by the white male over a subject victim female and the coloured community is in the majority situation the product of a rape and of generations of rape victims then breeding and interbreeding with each other. The fundamental experience is of the sperm attack on the good ovum, the black mother rules, the white invader precipitates the traumatic impingement and it is only as that trauma itself can be overcome and relieved that the DNA structures in the very core of the molecular heart of the nucleus of the cells themselves can be integrated and accept the id-identity of Colour as itself beautiful. It is imperative to disown as script the nuclear disintegration represented by the rape of the maid by the master. In primal terms we will probably see the loss of id-identity at a cellular level within the Coloured community representing fertilisation and implantation trauma predominating over the fundamental splitting into fighting factions, epitomising perinatal impingement for those for whom their fundamental conception is itself whole. I would expect therefore alcoholism, drug abuse, suicide, regression to the point of annihilation to predominate in certain cultures within the Coloured community, matched also by violent flip/flop conversion reactions from one side to the other as the very cellular tissue of being experiences this sense of being torn asunder by warring factions.

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Somewhere behind all the defences is the most intense loss dynamic. I think there are indicators in the title and subject matter of Cry, The Beloved Country and Naught For Your Comfort, as if something pristine and beautiful has been lost because of the white invasion and therefore the task is somehow to turn the clock back to the time before the whites arrived (see Allan Boesak). I sense that the heart dynamic of St. John's Wynberg is also fixated loss

focussed around dynamics as Bruce Evans left. Deep River also handles loss in the sense that the Coloured community has lost its home, its land and is clinging on to the old church as a defence against dealing with the change and the loss that has been enforced upon it. Such political restimulations must reach very much deeper into the unconscious, dealing with pre and perinatal loss and deprivation of maternal bonding, ultimately loss of the idealised womb world itself. This underlying sense of Paradise Lost generates a regressive, religious drive, which is totally unrealistic and is a compensation and denial of the real losses that have actually occurred, which have to be worked through if the realities of the present situation are to be engaged with any sense of effectiveness.

I wonder how far terror of retribution for rape forms an unconscious core within the white community in South Africa? My sense is that miscegenation is not simply the responsibility of the English-speaking garrisons but also of the Afrikaner white population, in which case the knowing the African only as a maid, with all the rape and forced sexuality that is involved in that history, out of which has come the Coloured population, must raise the most phenomenal Oedipus complex and primal guilt in the white population, particularly when they have to unpick that history and recognise that the people that they took and used in this way were equally human beings as themselves. They were not animals, they were not lesser beings, for whom there were no moral sanctions against this kind of behaviour and the anger of the black male at the misuse of the black female by the white overlords is somewhere intensely deep and centres around this issue of rape and primal intercourse. Alongside that goes the issue of the guilt about massacre and theft of land from comparatively defenceless indigenous peoples. The unconscious spectre is that if these peoples re-emerge with power they will do back to us what we did to them, which was act out our primal talion on a defenceless environment. This is the psychotic rage of the foetal impingement writ large into the social system and now, because projected outwards, is faced on the boundary as a danger of re-introjected talion rage, as the environment acts out against the laager in parallel dynamic. I think we can apply Lloyd DeMause material on the Foetal Origins of History, and in particular on the dynamics of war to this situation.

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Another thought on transformer groups: If each transformer is a triad of triads, then those triads could then inter-relate and swap membership with other transformer groups in their neighbourhood or indeed with other groups in other cultural or racial areas so that you are cross-fertilising the projections and dealing with deconstruction of phantasies at boundaries in the transformer network.

Transformers of course also bring into question the direction of energy flow and where the power is coming from. Normally there are generators in the system and then a large grid with a series of transformers taking the power down level by level. The question of course is where does the energy come from, where are the generators in this system? The phantasy is that the generator is God and that the power lines kind of transform the voltage down until it is tolerable for the people and it is power to the people from some other source of power down the lines of transmission. Next is the idea of course of power to the people being an internalisation of power from a source into which it has been previously projected, which means a re-internalising of power, a taking of power to the people, which slowly empties the

object which had previously carried the projection and de-energises the system, so bringing it to instability and change as the power base shifts from those in power to those out of power and those who were powerless then become the powerful, so emasculating those in power and we have a revolution, a flip/flop. This kind of conversion of course does nothing for the health of the system, it simply rearranges the deckchairs. The third way is to recognise that power has to be re-introjected from the places where it has been projected, owned as our own and that the generators are the individuals within their families, in their neighbourhoods and that as you link generators into transformer groups you can step up the power and we have then the process and energy flow of power from the people and the power of the people generated continuously upward in level, not by projection and dissociation which leaves the people impotent, but by the sharing of common people power throughout the social system in a balanced transformer network - bringing whatever level of power is appropriate to bear for problem-solving within a particular context.

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One of the main problems we face within religious systems is that they are precisely constructs of impotence. They facilitate the projection of power and of omnipotence into the Godhead and therefore perpetuate the sense of impotence and vulnerability, alienation, within the member. In so far as the power is the environmental power of the foetal boundary, this convulsing omnipotent womb in which we live and move and experience nascence of being, just so far does religion itself become the construct of castration. I don't think there is any way that the fundamental transformation of re-introjection and ownership of power among the people can actually be facilitated by a religious system, which in its fundamental structure, denies power to the people, places it in the Godhead and regulates re-introjection, while denying projection. We have to recognise that our experience of alienating and overwhelming power, both positive and negative, is a common experience of our primal history - it is not a metaphysical characteristic of our cosmos. The converse of this is that in our present situation we are not impotent foeti, nor are we omnipotent dictators, but we have some power in the context and acting corporately quite a lot of power to manage the reality of the boundary between the being and its dependence base in the geo-solar energy and chemical context in which we have evolved. Clearly if the transformation that we are seeking in human character is complete then the church itself will be transformed out of all recognition. Not only are we looking at the demythologising of its theology, but the deconstruction of its dynamic, the grounding of its psychotic symbol structure and the recovery from religion as a necessary precondition for the recovery from our politicisation.

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I think we could apply catastrophe theory to the process of change in the Province, though the parameters would have to be very carefully sorted out. If you treat them as apartheid and non-apartheid, or the power of the Afrikaner group versus the power of the black group, then the task is to shift upwards from the power of the black group to becoming powerful, instead of being impotent, which coincides with the destruction of apartheid, so the two parameters are very closely inter-linked. Now from our study of catastrophe theory, the application of increased pressure to move across the discontinuity between the catastrophe surfaces takes an

enormous amount of energy and leads to an unstable condition on the second surface. However, a different strategy would be to move off the folded surface of the catastrophe to the pre-folding phase and then move back on the upper plane, which does mean some kind of regression and egression strategy, an unpicking of apartheid from the point before the split at an ideological and process level, which then allows the thing to move forward in an annealed way. My sense therefore is that the whole issue of sanctions, violence and pressure is an inappropriate strategy for the generation of social change other than by a major catastrophic discontinuity within the social system. There is an alternative.

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At some level within the Afrikaner unconscious is the terror of the virility of the negro male. Myths of the sexual prowess of the black man are common and I sense that there is some way in which the white male projects the repressed and denied areas of aggressive sexuality into the other race. Back behind this may well be the guilt-laden awareness that it was the unbridled extra-marital sexuality of the white males using the women captured as slaves which generated the majority of the Coloured population in the first place. The retaliation is both feared and desired. The disarming, emasculation, rendering impotent of the black male population so that they could not defend their females from such exploitation is institutionalised in the apartheid regime. It is epitomised by the unwitting comment of a white clergyman in reference to the black population "We only knew them as our maids". It is hardly surprising that fears of rape are currently being fanned by the ultra right wing Afrikaner groups. The video of black men sunning themselves on the grass in houses they have bought within a white suburb is used to stir up all kinds of fears for the safety of the white women in the surrounding houses.

Taking the usual path of reading symbolism of the part standing in for the whole, the deeper unconscious fears would appear to be something to do with breach of the common foetal unconscious boundaries, the rape of the womb by the whole person by the social group with all the intolerable crushing, implosion, violence, tearing, burning talion that is associated with that particular impingement when it is released uncontrollably into the social behaviour. I don't think there is any way we can deal with the presenting symptoms without digging right down to the roots of the unconscious causal core.

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An adaptation of the Cantonment or federated system that is being proposed for South Africa would be the setting up of a federal constitution of the United States of South Africa, the USSF. This clearly would be a two-level system with a network of interdependent sub-states, each with its own legislature, dealing with local affairs, each in name and process bound by the overall constitution to be non-racial and on the positive side actually intentionally inter-racial, encouraging mobility between areas and setting in place a long process of integration across conflicted boundaries, deconstruction of the reified and conflicted polarities. It would need norms which in the long term tend to the more equal distribution of wealth and privilege, resources, education, health services etc. It would probably need a philosophy not

simply geared to equal opportunity for all but to equal provision for potential fulfilment. This weighted policy would overcome the present discrepancies in the levels of achievement on the basis of which continued stratification and racial segregation and disempowerment would tend to continue. I think some such vision of the United States of South Africa could provide a positive nucleus of realistic hope, allowing rigidity to be withdrawn from the present polarised systemic conflict. The opportunity to draw up a new federal constitution provides the potential for change without the threat of disruption of the status quo while the change is in process. The process should allow dialogue at all levels and a synthesis based on a non-religious, non-racist foundation of commonly acknowledged human rights, of equal persons within the global village.

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Both the English and the Dutch represented the boundary managers or resource seeking agents of expanding colonial powers, maritime trading nations, scouring the world environment for the resources required to sustain the exponential growth and incorporation of their back home populations. As such they are essentially paranoid projection carriers. Taken as a whole the whites, i.e. Afrikaner and English, collude precisely in their exploitation of the environment, i.e. Coloureds, Blacks and Ecology. However in relation to each other each sees the other as part of the environment and so enters into a mutually exploitative struggle group across the balance of power, but dealing essentially with the issue of resources, seen in the labour market of the environment, the agricultural, energy and mineral resource wealth etc.

In this sense the whites are fundamentally different from the tribal black presence, since the black tribes do represent total systems in place, while the white groups represent boundaries of European systems, whose dynamics are determined by the back home systemic dynamics of the international relationships of Europe.

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I do not find it at all surprising that the most fundamentally conservative core institutions of both the English speaking and Afrikaans speaking white minorities, bitterly opposed to each other during the Boer War, when the black presence was not threatening, become mutually collusional in the present situation facing a common threat from the environmental majority. If this analysis is correct then I do not believe that South Africa has access to the causal parameters that determine the dynamics of its intra-national behaviour, splitting off of relationships between South Africa and the rest of the world deprives the sub-system of South Africa of any access to power for significant change. Conversely, it protects the rest of the world from having to own and deconstruct its projections into the colonial context of South Africa. The splitting off and denial of the shadow prohibits the integration of the whole.

David Wasdell,
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