

AWARDS, HONOURS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Honorary Fellow of the Psychological Society of South Africa
- Humanities Book Award, Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) (2018)
- Lifetime Achievement Award, National Research Foundation (2016)

DEFINING MOMENT

In 1969, while completing his doctorate and simultaneously starting his career in clinical psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Chabani Manganyi's mentors had a hard time finding an internship programme for him. Most psychiatry hospitals in South Africa at that time catered for white patients and trainees only. Since there was no provision for clinical psychology training for blacks anywhere else in the country, Manganyi was admitted as an intern clinical psychologist at the Baragwanath Hospital's neurosurgery unit, even though there were no formal arrangements for the training of black clinical psychologists. Manganyi readily aligned himself with the non-surgical teams in the neurosurgery ward such as the speech therapy team, where he was welcomed without reservation. This inter-disciplinary partnership was highly successful. Four years later, Manganyi was appointed as the first full-time clinical psychologist at Baragwanath Hospital.

WHAT PEOPLE MIGHT NOT KNOW

During his high-school holidays, Manganyi had worked as a gardener at the home of one of the doctors at Elim Hospital on weekends and public holidays. "I watched them at work in the wards in their white coats, stethoscopes hanging around their necks." Little did he know that he would one day be a pioneering doctor at one of the country's biggest and busiest hospitals.

OVERCOMING ALL OBSTACLES

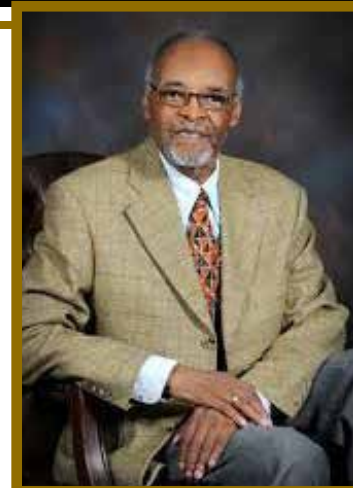
A clinical psychologist, writer, theorist and committed psychologist and intellectual activist during the apartheid years and beyond, Chabani Manganyi oversaw the transformation of the Department of Education when he served as the Director-General from 1994 to 1999. He served as Vice-Principal of the University of Pretoria (UP) from 2003 to 2006. In his latest book, he writes as follows: "I grew up in rural, traditionalist and non-literate Mavambe in Limpopo during the 1940s. As the years went by, I found myself facing an ever-encroaching tide of racial discrimination until the mid-1990s."

Despite obstacles, he managed to attend the then University of the North (now the University of Limpopo) and later, the University of South Africa (Unisa), to become one of the country's first black psychologists. By 1969, he had completed his Master's degree and subsequently pursued research-based studies in psychology. In 1970, he received his doctorate after submitting his thesis entitled *Body Image in Paraplegia*. At that point, he found his career prospects limited in apartheid South Africa, so he went to the United States where he completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the Yale University School of Medicine, where he began writing and publishing a number of journal articles and books.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, Manganyi published a series of monographs, the first of which was *Being-black-in-the-world* (1973), followed by texts on E'skia Mphahlele, Gerard Sekoto and Dumile Feni. In some of the works he incisively examined the effects of institutionalised racism which characterised South Africa at that time, including alienation and distorted individual body relations amidst a quest for freedom. Central to some of the texts were concerns regarding identity development in apartheid South Africa. Some of the early works were the first serious attempts by a South African psychologist to engage with the interface between the individual and society in the context of both symmetrical and asymmetrical relations of power, welcomed by many who were searching for a psychology better able to make sense of the internal and more explicit social realities of the lives of the majority of South Africans.

Significantly, some of the texts identified a number of critical imperatives for a more generative South African psychology. Arguably, one of the most important imperatives was his appeal that mental health services should be made more appropriate and accessible to all South Africans, a call which is still pertinent today.

Manganyi examined the effects of violence on individuals in *Mashangu's Reverie*, published in 1977, in which he explored the place of the Black Consciousness Movement. An antithesis of the dominant and racist cultural practices of the day, it is widely considered to be seminal in the field of psychology. The exploration of the phenomenon of violence is elaborated on in some of his



recent publications. His work has made a substantial contribution to South African psychology, a contribution which has still to be acknowledged.

On his return to South Africa in 1976, Manganyi accepted a professorship at the then University of Transkei in Mthatha, now part of the Walter Sisulu University, where he established the Department of Psychology and served as its first Chair. In 1980 he was appointed Professor and Senior Research Fellow at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) African Studies Institute. He spent the politically turbulent 1980s at Wits and established a part time clinical psychology practice in downtown Johannesburg. Referring to that period, he wrote: "In my practice, I concentrated on public interest psychology, specifically responding to the widespread demand at the time for expert evidence during political trials throughout the country and the scourge of escalating public violence (including the practice of 'necklacing')." In 1987, he secured funding for the establishment of the Political Violence and Health Resources Project at Wits. It was during this period that he presented expert evidence in mitigation of sentence in the trials of Robert McBride and Greta Appelgren and several others, including Joseph Lukhele and Mishack Magagula.

WORKING FOR A HIGHER PURPOSE

Between August 1990 and December 1992, Manganyi occupied the position of Vice-Chancellor and Principal at the University of the North (now the University of Limpopo). In 1992, when President Nelson Mandela was installed as Chancellor of the university, Manganyi was installed as Vice-Chancellor, becoming the first former student to occupy the position. His focus during that period was on transforming and democratising university governance whilst strengthening overall institutional capacity. When the democratic government

was established in 1994, Manganyi was invited by President Mandela and the Education Minister, Sibusiso Bengu, to accept the office of Director-General of Education, a position he held until he became Advisor to the then Vice-Chancellor of (UP). From 2003 to 2006, Manganyi was one of the Vice-Principals of the University of Pretoria (UP) and during that time he was also chairperson of the Council on Higher Education in Pretoria.

Manganyi's intellectual pursuits have not been limited to the narrow confines of psychology. In 2016 he turned the lens on himself to write a memoir and autobiography entitled *Apartheid and the Making of a Black Psychologist*, a recent winner of the ASSAf's Humanities Book Award in 2018. The autobiography illuminates the history of a country through sensitive, insightful, personalised accounts of the devastating effects of rural poverty, family dislocation, migrant labour and Bantu Education on entire communities. The memoir gains its authority from the author's skills as a psycho-biographer, as well as his restraint as a writer even as he recounts painful recurring episodes of personal and family suffering through the course of his life. Manganyi found even in the most oppressive circumstances – whether as a child being caned for missing school or an aspirant academic turned down for a job – opportunities for learning which advanced his career. He refused to yield to the many obstacles in his path as a black man and a psychologist.

His book is about ordinary black South Africans reaching great heights in their lives and careers. The book provides a retrospective account of time and place in the past, but also offers deep analysis of the issues of our time and into the future. This compelling text provides depth to the current rhetoric about race, racism and the meaning of higher education inasmuch as it is a story about the life of a remarkable psychologist, a human being and an intellectual.



Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)

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A. Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) Publications

C. ASSAf Policymakers' Booklets

2020

Legends of South African Science II

Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)

Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)

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