



Jung Journal

Culture & Psyche

ISSN: 1934-2039 (Print) 1934-2047 (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ujun20>

Encountering the Other

The White Shadow

Karen H. Naifeh

To cite this article: Karen H. Naifeh (2019) Encountering the Other, Jung Journal, 13:2, 7-19, DOI: [10.1080/19342039.2019.1600976](https://doi.org/10.1080/19342039.2019.1600976)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19342039.2019.1600976>



Published online: 13 Jun 2019.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 436



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Encountering the Other

The White Shadow

KAREN H. NAIFEH

My own confrontation with my cultural shadow began in 1963 when I started dating my husband-to-be, an Arab-American. I was born in Texas to second- and third-generation Northern European Americans, but I grew up in the army. Because my family moved around a lot, I was not as deeply embedded in the cultural values of one place as I might otherwise have been, although I was certainly embedded in the cultural values of the military. But the army was integrated, which meant that the army schools I attended and the military housing I lived in were all integrated, unlike the situation in most of the United States during my childhood. I took for granted going to school with and living near people of color, and we children all played together. Still, there was a belief system of superiority/inferiority in the background. Back in Texas racism was far more prominent, but I spent relatively little time there until I was sixteen. My family was not overtly racist, and I observed them treating individuals of other ethnic backgrounds respectfully. However, there was an underlying rule that “you are nice to them but you don’t socialize with them and you certainly don’t marry them.”

I went to college at the University of Texas at Austin, where I met my Lebanese-American husband. My immediate family had no problem with my dating a man of color, but I remember feeling a sense of fear and dread about potentially being shamed, derogated, and even ostracized by my white Texas community. I was also so deeply in love that I couldn’t imagine giving him up; I remember just giving over to the love, accepting that the white community might see me as “tainted,” and deciding not to worry about the reaction of others. Then I experienced discrimination from another quarter, as his family was totally opposed to the marriage, wanting him to marry a Lebanese girl, not a white girl. I experienced considerable ostracism and shaming, from his mother primarily. I felt erased by her. It was a very painful and harrowing time for me. Thankfully our marriage made it through that ordeal.

My next big lesson regarding the other came in 1967 from Mickey Leland, a black activist in Houston with whom my husband and I became colleagues and friends. Mickey was on fire with the civil rights movement; he was a force to be reckoned with, and knowing him changed me. He insisted we learn about racism, oppression, and a new way of being in a multicultural world. He was the first person to confront me about my unconscious racism and about what I recognize today as my white privilege; I began to wake up to what was going on regarding race in the United States.



More recently, growth has come from being on the supervisory faculty at the Women's Therapy Center in Berkeley, California, a relational psychodynamic, social justice-oriented internship program where I've been since 2011. That is where I began to confront systematically my own more unconscious racial micro-aggressive beliefs and actions and to become more fully aware of my white privilege and white fragility. I found that the more I could stay with my discomfort and shame, the freer I felt. And I became more open to hearing people of color talk about their experiences; I could let it "sink in"; I could tolerate hearing their truth. The result was an expansion in my sense of well-being and peace. My greater openness to the suffering of other groups due to white privilege and institutional oppression, and my awareness of the negative impact of these forces even on white people, are the impetus for this article. I am writing now in the conviction that Jungian psychology may offer a way to move forward a process of increasing white resilience, thereby helping to make inroads into entrenched societal racism.

Fanny Brewster, an African American Jungian analyst, in her new book *African Americans and Jungian Psychology: Leaving the Shadows* (2017), names shadow phenomena at work in maintaining racial bias in the United States. Brewster also discusses Jung's cultural shadow as it manifested in his writings about Africans and African Americans and the impact of that on us as analytical psychologists: "Jung's failure to deepen his theoretical conversation regarding race, culture, and conscious awareness in these areas, that is, beyond his own theory of the collective unconscious, has left the practice of American Jungian psychology regarding African Americans and race without direction" (2013, 71).

In spite of Jung's encounter with the spirit of the depths that he described in *The Red Book* and his reverence for other cultures, he remained very much a man held by the spirit of the times in which he lived. Eurocentrism, even unconscious patronizing racism, is evident in Jung's writings, as seen in his many comments about the African cultures, people of African heritage, and "primitives" in general. From our perspective in the twenty-first century, we can see Jung's unconscious bias, whereas he seemed blind to it.

Here, I am focused on the impact of the spirit of the times on *us*. Do we who identify as white unconsciously express attitudes, writings, actions that are offensive to the other? There are embedded forms of racism, and thereby oppression, that members of the dominant group learn not to see, to keep in the shadows. Further, what forces keep unconscious racial bias alive and active in our societies? One answer lies in a culture's shadow and the polarizations along the lines of culture and race that have existed since our country's founding that have contributed to the cultural unconsciousness white people harbor in their shadow. A central tenet of bringing culture's shadow into consciousness is understanding the creation and maintenance of the sense of other in the psyche.

Robin DiAngelo, a white American psychologist working to increase awareness of white privilege, writes:

White people in North America live in a social environment that protects and insulates them from race-based stress. This insulated environment . . . builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress, leading to . . . White Fragility . . . a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves, . . . [including expression of] anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. . . . Whites have not had to build the cognitive or affective skills or develop the stamina that would allow for constructive engagement across racial divides. (2010, 54, 55)

Here is an example from her article:

I am a white woman. I am standing beside a black woman. We are facing a group of white people who are seated in front of us. We are in their workplace, and have been hired by their employer to lead them in a dialogue about race. The room is filled with tension and charged with hostility. I have just presented a definition of racism that includes the acknowledgment that whites hold social and institutional power over people of color. A white man is pounding his fist on the table. His face is red and he is furious. As he pounds he yells, "White people have been discriminated against for 25 years!" I look around the room and see 40 employed people, all white. There are no people of color in this workplace. Something is happening here, and it isn't based in the racial reality of the workplace. I am feeling unnerved by this man's disconnection with that reality, and his lack of sensitivity to the impact this is having on my cofacilitator, the only person of color in the room. Why is this white man so angry? Why is he being so careless about the impact of his anger? Why are all the other white people either sitting in silent agreement with him or tuning out? We have, after all, only articulated a definition of racism. (54–55)

Something about white peoples' reaction to what DiAngelo calls "race-based stress" seems to evoke a much larger reaction than an individual's response to confronting his or her own shadow. In the invitation to put ourselves in the shoes of people of color, white people may begin to apprehend the dark forces that hold racism in place. These dark forces form a part of what I think of as *cultural*

shadow: what each culture acts out but would find unacceptable, even evil, if examined in the light of day. I propose that if we can begin to recognize that the source of our discomfort lies in our cultural shadows and understand that, as in work on the personal shadow, staying present and engaged while doing our best to tolerate the discomfort, we will move closer to wholeness as individuals and as a nation. As Jung pointed out, “Without a tension of the opposites no forward movement is possible. The shadow is a tight passage, a narrow door, whose painful constriction no one is spared who goes down to the deep well. . . . what comes after the door is, surprisingly enough, a boundless expanse full of unprecedented uncertainty . . .” (1936/1954, CW 9i, ¶45).

The opposites here are what we are conscious of as white people and what we keep in our white shadows. We who identify as white need to go through the tight passage Jung describes, to the expanse awaiting us when we can incorporate our white shadows into consciousness. Then we will be able to invoke a generous *temenos* that welcomes culturally difficult, emotionally charged material and begin a true dialogue with the racial other.

Jung pointed out, “The [personal] shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real” (1959/1978, CW 9ii, ¶14). And “This confrontation [with the shadow] is the first test of courage of the inner way, . . . for the meeting with ourselves . . . can be avoided so long as we can project everything negative into the environment” (1936/1954, CW 9i, ¶44).

Perhaps humans never get to the point where confronting their own personal shadow does not require considerable moral effort, but culture’s shadow is more unconscious and is, therefore, much harder to grapple with; thus, we are even more likely to project cultural shadow into the environment, as the white man in DiAngelo’s example does.

In Jung’s diagram of the “geology of the unconscious” in his Analytical Psychology Lectures of 1925, he placed “clans” under the waters of the unconscious, “nations” below “clans,” and large groups such as “European man” below “nations” (Jung 1989, 133); that is, these layers are much further from consciousness. Each layer represents groups that hold sway in the life of an individual; each group has a culture unique to itself; and each culture has a characteristic psychology.

These lower levels in Jung’s “geology of the unconscious” have only recently begun to receive attention. Our current understanding of the relationships between personal, cultural, and archetypal shadow in the unconscious is quite vague. Here, I am not attempting to provide answers, but rather to open up discussion about and exploration of these various layers of shadow. I think we can say that every layer has an archetypal aspect, for example, the mother and father archetypes in the family layer. I propose that through cultural shadow, archetypal shadow can take hold of the ego collectively (a cultural manifestation of archetypal shadow), resulting in atrocities with which we are all familiar. The atrocities committed during the Holocaust, for example, while led by Hitler, were a cultural phenomenon; something quite powerful and transpersonal took over the German people, something in their cultural shadow (Goldhagen 1997). The atrocities toward African Americans during and after slavery in the United States is another example. Ordinary, otherwise “good” people collectively participated in evil acts toward those they viewed as other.

Although Jung did not go into any detail about the influence of each stratum or layer on the development of the personality, post-Jungian writers Thomas Singer and Samuel Kimbles (2004), then Singer (2010), and then Kimbles (2014), continued to focus on specific aspects of these lower layers, which they call *cultural complexes*. Their contention is that in addition to our personal shadow aspects, we all have cultural shadow aspects. Kimbles's and Singer's descriptions of cultural complexes include the following:

- A cultural complex expresses itself in powerful moods and repetitive behaviors—both in a group as a whole and in its individual members.
- Cultural complexes function in an involuntary, autonomous fashion and tend to affirm a simplistic point of view that replaces more everyday ambiguity and uncertainty with fixed, often self-righteous and sometimes extreme attitudes to the world.
- A cultural complex accumulates experiences that validate its point of view and creates a store-house of self-affirming ancestral memories.
- Cultural complexes have archetypal cores; . . . making them very hard to resist, reflect upon, and discriminate. (Singer 2010)

A View of Jung's Cultural Complex

We can see the cultural complex at work in Jung in a dream he talks about in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*:

An American Negro. In the dream he was holding a tremendous, red-hot curling iron to my head, intending to make my hair kinky; that is, to give me Negro hair. I could already feel the painful heat, and awoke with a sense of terror. I took this dream as a warning from the unconscious; it was saying that the primitive was a danger to me. . . .

The only thing I could conclude from this was that my European personality must under all circumstances be preserved intact. . . . The trip [to Africa] revealed itself as less an investigation of primitive psychology . . . than a probing into the rather embarrassing question: What is going to happen to Jung the psychologist in the wilds of Africa? This was a question I had constantly sought to evade . . . It became clear to me that this study had been not so much an objective scientific project as an intensely personal one, and that any attempt to go deeper into it touched every possible sore spot in my own psychology. (1961, 272)

I believe Jung is saying that for him, the threat of losing his identity as a white European was totally intolerable to his ego and he refused to go further. His interpretation about the "primitive" being dangerous to him was actually, in my view, a sign that he, as a European man, was not able to withdraw his projection of the primitiveness and inferiority in his own cultural shadow from the black man. The fact that the man in the dream was an African American might also reflect Jung's discomfort with being around Americans, whom he belittled for taking on "negro" characteristics. The African American man in his dream was going to give him a "negro" characteristic as well. Jung resisted exploring what this shadow aspect might uncover in his psyche, fearing it might expose a threat to his European personality. Here we see how much stronger culture's shadow is than individual shadow—Jung simply could not face it.

If we look at the dream, the threat does not appear to be to his life, but to his hair, to give him the hair of an African. If we take hair as symbolic of power, then Jung may fear having his power taken away. The curling iron is gigantic and red hot (phallic?). The barber wants him to experience being “negro,” and Jung cannot tolerate and be curious about what that would be like because it feels far too dangerous to him. In his reaction we could postulate the presence of the archetypal other, perceived as able to totally obliterate one’s own sense of self.

A Master-Slave Archetype

“Self and Other” or “Belongingness and Otherness” has existed throughout human history and likely long before humans evolved. I propose that it is an archetypal pattern, and that likewise, master-slave is an archetypal pattern. The master-slave archetype is an issue of power. There is always a rationalization for assuming one group or person is superior to another, and that the superior group therefore has the right to oppress the inferior group. After all, the colonization of people of color throughout Africa, Asia, and the Americas was justified based on the rationalization by Europeans seeking power through conquest that these were inferior groups that needed civilizing and conversion to Christianity.

In his *Politics* of 350 BCE, Aristotle takes it up:

Is there any one thus intended by nature to be a slave, and for whom such a condition is expedient and right, or rather is not all slavery a violation of nature? There is no difficulty in answering this question, on grounds both of reason and of fact. For that some should rule and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary, but expedient; from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule.

In spite of Aristotle’s conclusion, we see that from very early times there also existed the idea of slavery as an evil—“a violation of nature.”

By the nineteenth century the German philosopher Hegel, in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807/1977), wrote of the dialectic of the master and slave, essentially claiming that although one needs the *recognition* of the other for consciousness of self to exist, one must dominate the other to avoid the threat of being annihilated by the other. However, in that stance is the dependence of the self on the other, which eventually evolves into a reversal of roles. Hegel also held that slavery belongs to a necessary stage of history, has to be replaced by legal relations between equal “persons,” and that the abolition of slavery is accomplished as a result of the progress of reason and the consciousness of freedom (1807/1977).

Jessica Benjamin, a white psychoanalyst, has viewed this notion of master and slave through a psychoanalytic lens in terms of the nature of relationship between the sexes in her book *Bonds of Love*, where she talks about the relational paradigm of domination/submission versus the paradigm of mutuality. Benjamin writes that “domination and submission result from a breakdown of the necessary tension between self-assertion and mutual recognition that allows self and other to meet as sovereign equals” (1988, 12). The same principles can be applied to a racial or ethnic other.

Throughout human history the dominant paradigm could be said to be domination/submission—slavery in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome; the caste system in India; feudal lords and serfs in Europe; and colonization throughout Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Australia, for example. The idea that some human beings were meant to serve, to be the chattel of others, was a constant. That began to change in the West in the eighteenth century, as revolution began to foment in Europe and the American colonies. The idea that all people had certain inalienable rights, and even the idea of equality of all men, began to take hold.

Formation of the American White Cultural Complex

How then, did the newly formed United States of America, founded on the principle that *all* men are created equal, justify slavery? An unconscious process of splitting and dissociating had to occur. “The Story We Tell,” the second episode of the documentary *Race: The Power of an Illusion* (2003), demonstrates the ways in which, early in its history as a nation, those in power in the United States created a story that racial differences existed and that the white race was superior to all others, especially the black race, which was not even quite human. The story of race was created to keep in the shadows the political and economic rationale for oppression in a country whose founding principle was equality of all men. (It is important to note that slavery did not exist only in the South: some Northerners also held slaves, and slaves were part of the “wealth” of several Ivy League universities.) In the documentary, the case is made that wealthy Americans used the story of race to push moral implications of their enslavement of Africans into the shadows of the unconscious so they could have a ready workforce and still see themselves as good men who cherished the ideal of equality. Working-class European Americans, who were the existing “inferior” class, gained in prestige and power and now had a scapegoat upon which to project their own feelings of inferiority. The impact on the psyches of those who perpetrated this, and on those who went along with it, through psychological processes of splitting and dissociating, was to create a closed system that Singer and Kimbles (2004) have aptly called a cultural complex. Then, as in all complexes, this cultural complex proceeded to enlarge and strengthen itself against the growing objections to the institution of slavery. And the greater the evils of slavery that were perpetrated, the more the white people needed to push their own evil actions into the shadows and to project them onto those they subjugated. In her recent book, *The Origin of Others*, Toni Morrison remarks:

The necessity of rendering the slave a foreign species appears to be a desperate attempt to confirm one’s own [white] self as normal. . . . The danger of sympathizing with the [other] is the possibility of becoming a[n other]. To lose one’s racialized rank is to lose one’s own valued and enshrined difference. (2017, 30)

Key here is the meaning that is made of difference—“Race is never about how you look; it’s about how people assign meaning to how you look” (*Race: The Power of an Illusion*, 2003). From the founding of our country to the present, there has been a “mandate” in the unconscious of European Americans as a culture, created by the American white cultural complex, to assign meaning to African Americans and themselves: dark skin means inferiority; white skin means superiority.

As the documentary also demonstrates, the misinformation that supported viewing African Americans as inferior, dangerous, and so on, only increased with emancipation. The Jim Crow laws that came into being reinforced the idea of the inferiority and dangerousness of African Americans and justified the horrendous acts that were perpetrated: beatings, torture, rape, murder, lynching of black people all occurred in the South with no repercussions. African Americans were still in bondage, still deprived of equal treatment, equal opportunity, and the vote by the threat of these kinds of violence. Such conditions were the prime motivation for the tremendous migration of African Americans out of the South and into Northern cities from 1915 until after the civil rights movement.

Even when emancipation came at the end of the US Civil War, the relational paradigm, the cultural complexes, and therefore the rationalization for “slavery” now expressed as racism remained. For people who had come to recognize themselves as superior simply because they were white and who had treated their slaves in ways they would have to recognize as oppressive and evil if they viewed the former slaves as equal to themselves, the shock of the reality that they were not superior and that they had perpetrated heinous crimes would be unbearable. Such realizations would have to be repressed and rationalized at all costs, pushed far into the shadows. The brief glimpse of evil would have redoubled the need to project it onto the subjugated to dispel the knowledge of their own evil. Further, one could say that within the archetypal paradigm of master-slave, letting go of the stance of master evokes the primitive (archetypal) terror of the threat of annihilation by the other.

Culture Shapes Consciousness

What else holds the old relational paradigm in place? Fanny Brewster has pointed out that “Culture shapes consciousness . . . [it] begins at an early age from initial child-rearing practices and develops later through other experiences, so that cultural consciousness permeates every aspect of life” (2013, 71).

I won’t get into an exploration of the origins and adaptive power of identification with the group, but it seems clear that the power of the culture one grows up in and identifies with is exponentially more powerful than that of an individual. The need to belong to a group is an extremely potent and primal force, ensuring survival. People are much more likely to go along with dominating, aggressive, or self-serving actions if they are “sanctified” by the group they belong to, especially since going against the culture’s belief system would almost always lead to expulsion, shaming, possibly even violence to the person doing so. Moral conflict about going along with or perpetrating evil acts is banned to the unconscious. One grows up within a culture, and that culture, including its complexes, is essentially “mother’s milk.”

In the film version (2011) and in the book *The Help* (2009), written by Kathryn Stockett, one can see these forces at work and examples of how the cultural complexes are maintained: intimidation; shaming; the threat of humiliation, ostracism, and even violence; along with the comfort, safety, and advantages coming from staying within the white culture’s complex, all operating to keep racism firmly entrenched.

In both book and film, the tremendous danger posed to the black maids who dare to tell their stories and the complete ostracism of the white woman who orchestrates the project are chilling to

witness. The maids suffer the threat of losing their jobs and being blackballed, of their husbands losing their jobs, of violence and incarceration. The white woman is ejected from her social groups, shunned or sabotaged by those she thought were friends, and rejected by her fiancé when he finds out she has spearheaded the writing of the book. The other theme in this film, however, is the courage that the maids demonstrate in telling their stories and having them published in the face of cultural complexes whose role is to keep them voiceless. And there is—vital for we who identify as white to see—the fear, ostracism, and pain that the central white character must confront and tolerate in order not to be devoured by the white cultural complex herself.

The situation in the South is more extreme and, therefore, more clear-cut, making it easier to see the cultural complexes at work. But we *all* suffer from the cultural complex of white superiority. Isabel Wilkerson, author of *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*, chronicles the exodus of almost six million African Americans over five and a half decades. It is clear from her book that the problems blacks faced in the North, although very different from the problems in the South, had their origins in the pervasive idea, which came from the weaving of the stories of race, of the inferiority of African Americans and of the superiority of white Americans, which had invaded the psyches of *everyone* in America.

Blacks were not allowed to live in most areas of the big Northern cities, and as more and more came north, they were forced to crowd into the areas designated for them.

Blacks in the North could already vote and sit at a lunch counter or anywhere they wanted on an elevated train. Yet they were hemmed in and isolated into two overcrowded sections of Chicago—restricted in the jobs they could hold and the mortgages they could get, their children attending segregated and inferior schools, not by edict as in the South but by circumstance in the North, with the results pretty much the same.

The unequal living conditions produced the expected unequal results: blacks working long hours for overpriced flats, their children left unsupervised and open to gangs, the resulting rise in crime and drugs, with few people able to get out and the problems so complex as to make it impossible to identify a single cause or solution. (Wilkerson 2010, 386)

Talking of Northern racism, Wilkerson says, “The very thing that made black life hard in the North, the very nature of northern hostility—unwritten, mercurial, opaque, and eminently deniable—made it hard for [Martin Luther] King to nail down an obvious right-versus-wrong cause to protest” (2010, 386).

To summarize, three things that I believe have kept (and continue to keep) unconscious racial bias alive and active in our societies are as follows:

- (1) The deep unconsciousness of cultural complexes formed by means of beliefs we are taught about the cultural other by our parents' and communities' child-rearing practices early in our lives
- (2) Fear of the emotional impact of becoming conscious of our own collusion in racial bias because in our cultural shadow linger remnants of archetypal shadow
- (3) Unwillingness to become conscious of and take back our own cultural and personal shadow material that we have projected onto people of color

Letting Go of Racial Bias

To me, there are two imperatives supporting our doing the hard work of letting go of racial bias and thereby emerging from the white cultural complex. One is the self-evident moral imperative due to the suffering it perpetrates on people of color; the other is that it harms white people as well. I believe it is important for white people to become more conscious of the negative impact on themselves of the trauma of slavery and the legacy of slavery. Then we can begin to comprehend the immense harm to *ourselves* that is caused by keeping institutional racial bias alive and active.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Harriet Jacobs, in her autobiography *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, writes: “I can testify, from my own experience and observation, that slavery is a curse to the whites as well as to the blacks. It makes the white fathers cruel and sensual; the sons violent and licentious; it contaminates the daughters and makes the wives wretched” (1861/2017). In spite of the strenuousness with which white culture keeps racism and oppression in place, the cost to society is enormous. In an article titled “Justice Delayed” in the August 22, 2016, issue of *The New Yorker*, Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, is quoted as follows:

I continue to believe that we’re not free in this country, that we’re not free at birth by a history of racial injustice. . . . there are spaces that are occupied by the legacy of that history that weigh on us. We talk a lot about freedom. We talk a lot about equality. We talk a lot about justice. But we’re not free. There are shadows that follow us.

All this applies to white people as well: we’re not free either, and there are shadows that follow us, *phantom narratives* to use Sam Kimbles’s phrase (2014), that live in white culture’s shadows and haunt us.

As Toni Morrison writes in her novel *Beloved*,

White people believed that whatever the manners, under every dark skin was a jungle. Swift unnavigable waters, swinging screaming baboons, sleeping snakes, red gums ready for their sweet white blood. In a way, he thought, they were right. The more colored people spent their strength trying to convince them how gentle they were, how clever and loving, how human, the more they used themselves up to persuade whites of something Negroes believed could not be questioned, the deeper and more tangled the jungle grew inside.

But it wasn’t the jungle blacks brought with them to this place from the other (livable) place. It was the jungle white folks planted in them. And it grew. It spread. In, through and after life, it spread, until it invaded the whites who had made it. Touched them every one. Changed and altered them. Made them bloody, silly, worse than even they wanted to be, so scared were they of the jungle they had made. The screaming baboon lived under their own white skin; the red gums were their own. (1987, 234)

Here is an immensely powerful depiction of the creation of cultural complexes and the projection of cultural shadow, with the consequent negative repercussions to black people *and* white people. Singer and Kimbles, in *The Cultural Complex*, note that “failure to consider cultural complexes as part of the work of individuation puts a tremendous burden on both the

personal and archetypal realms of the psyche . . . [and] does not allow for the freeing up of the tremendous energy held in the grip of the cultural complexes . . ." (2004, 33).

Repairing

Janice Gump, an African American psychoanalyst, writes in *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, "Institutional slavery in the United States, which lasted for centuries, has been denied to the extent that its affective and traumatic aspects remain widely undiscussed and unknown to many" (2010, 46). She also makes the important point that "Trauma leaves a void that can be filled only by the revisiting of it." If white people can begin to revisit some of that trauma as well, in the context of searching for a way to achieve some healing for whites as well as people of color, we may come closer to filling that void.

Jessica Benjamin points out, "The reciprocal [equal] relationship between self and other can be compared with the optical illusion in which the figure and ground are constantly changing their relation even as their outlines remain clearly distinct—as in Escher's birds, which appear to fly in both directions" (1988, 12). The difficulty, she says, is that we are asked to "look in both directions simultaneously" (12). I believe it is also a matter of moral courage in facing the harm done by the master to the slave and the inevitable deflation of giving up one's sense of superiority vis-à-vis the other. Deflation might feel like annihilation, but it is actually the blow to the supremacy of the ego that allows for the opening up of consciousness necessary for psychological growth.

We who are identified as white must do what Jung could not do—to tolerate becoming conscious of the qualities we project onto people of color that are in our own shadow and to tolerate the shame we will feel if we allow ourselves to see how we as individuals and as a society continue to support institutions of oppression, so that healing of this trauma can happen, for *everyone* concerned.

The Psychotherapy Institute, a clinical training organization in Berkeley, California, is intensely involved in such work. In their newsletter *Viewpoint* (January/February 2018) are several responses of participants at their Fall 2017 Symposium, "Confronting White Fragility," led by Robin DiAngelo. Responses of participants show the deflation of white entitlement and building of white resilience at work. The response of Nat Torrens, LCSW, was especially notable:

Relief. Then warm wash of shame. Gratitude. Glint of hope? As I sit in the audience as Robin DiAngelo speaks, I am by turns excited and nauseated. The energy in the room feels crackling. Fertile. Palpable. Alive. This woman knows the shape of it—the shape of us, our diagnosis, our liberal White syndrome, our grouped patterned behavior. This is the shape of my whiteawkwardness, my whiteavoidance, my whitecollusion, my whiteunskillfulness. My whitedefense . . . For example, I can hold my individual whitehomepurchase as an incredible gift . . . , but holding it in isolation spares me the discomfort—[DiAngelo] offered "moral trauma"—of seeing it as part of a larger Whitening of my former mostly Black neighborhood. This truth is incongruent with my self-concept as a good, moral being. . . . This fierce White woman modeled using her capacities at full throttle, and I left inspired; my biggest self called upon. What is the full stretch of my whitecapacity, and what is holding me back from it?

Conclusion

The intent of this article has been to demonstrate the role of cultural complexes, especially the white cultural complex, in keeping unconscious racial bias alive and active in our societies, even in those of us who believe we are not racist. It has also aimed to demonstrate the forces that created white cultural complexes—and those that make them so powerful and so seemingly impenetrable. Finally, I hoped to unveil the harm done to everyone, both black and white, by the absence of recognition of our white shadows.

For those of us with, as Jung says, the moral courage to confront our white shadows, there can be an enormous payoff. It can feel like putting down a burden you didn't know you were carrying. We long for deliverance from our shadow selves, but only by going through that tight passage, that painful constriction, may we emerge transformed, as individuals and as a nation. Let us as Jungians carry forward the tremendous contributions of both Jung and those who have moved his work forward; let us confront our white shadows and do the work required to begin to emerge from our white cultural complexes.

As an impetus, there are workshops and conferences on white privilege, white fragility, bridging racial divides, and related topics in most large cities in the United States. The C. G. Jung Institute of San Francisco's Committee on Diversity and Inclusivity sponsors intramurals as well as professional and community-wide programs on these topics. The committee is eager to aid other Jungian organizations in sponsoring such programs. Let us get involved and begin the work!

NOTE

References to *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung* are cited in the text as CW, volume number, and paragraph number. *The Collected Works* are published in English by Routledge (UK) and Princeton University Press (USA).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aristotle. 350 BCE. *Politics*. Translated by B. Jowett. Classics.MIT.edu. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.html>.
- Benjamin, Jessica. 1988. *The Bonds of Love*. New York: Pantheon Books/Random House.
- Brewster, Fanny. 2017. *African Americans and Jungian Psychology: Leaving the Shadows*. New York: Routledge.
- . 2013. "Wheel of Fire: The African American Dreamer and Cultural Consciousness." *Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche* 7(1): 70–87.
- DiAngelo, Robin. 2011. "White Fragility." *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* 3(3): 54–70.
- Goldhagen, Daniel Jonah. 1997. *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Gump, Janice. 2010. "Reality Matters: The Shadow of Trauma on African-American Subjectivity." *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 27(1): 42–54.
- Hegel, Georg Fredrich. 1807/1977. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- The Help*. 2011. Directed by Tate Taylor. Screenplay by Tate Taylor based on the novel of the same name by Kathryn Stockett, New York: Press/Penguin Group, 2009. DreamWorks Pictures.
- Jacobs, Harriet. 1861/2017. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. San Bernardino, CA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Jung, C. G. 1936/1954. "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious." *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. CW 9i.
- . 1959/1978. "The Shadow." *Aion*. CW 9ii.

- . 1961. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. New York: Pantheon Books/Random House.
- . 1989. *Analytical Psychology: Notes of the Seminar Given in 1925*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kimbles, Samuel. 2014. *Phantom Narratives: The Unseen Contributions of Culture to Psyche*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Morrison, Toni. 1987. *Beloved*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- . 2017. *The Origin of Others*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Race, the Power of an Illusion*, “episode 2: The Story We Tell.” 2003. Directed by Tracy Heather Strain. Written by Tracy Heather Strain. California Newsreel.
- Singer, Thomas. 2010. “Playing the Race Card: A Cultural Complex in Action.” In *Sacral Revolution: Reflecting on the Work of Andrew Samuels*, edited by Gottfried Heuer, 252–260. New York: Routledge.
- Singer, Thomas, and Samuel Kimbles. 2004. *The Cultural Complex*. New York: Routledge.
- Stevenson, Bryan. 2016. “Justice Delayed.” *The New Yorker*, August 22, 38–47.
- Torrens, Nat. 2018. “Reflections on the Fall Symposium.” *Viewpoint*, Newsletter of The Psychotherapy Institute, January/February.
- Wilkerson, Elizabeth. 2010. *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration*. New York: Random House.

KAREN H. NAIFEH, PhD, is an analyst member of the C. G. Jung Institute of San Francisco, where she teaches in the internship and analytic training programs and is co-chair of the ad hoc Committee on Diversity and Inclusivity. Her analytic practice with adults is located in Berkeley and San Francisco. She is on the supervising faculty at the Women’s Therapy Center in Berkeley, California. She holds a doctorate in medical physiology as well as clinical psychology and was adjunct assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco, for eleven years, where she did research in areas of sleep, meditation, and biofeedback. Her areas of special interest are trauma, the shadow, and cultural diversity. *Correspondence: karenaifeh@sbcglobal.net*.

ABSTRACT

In spite of Jung’s encounter with the spirit of the depths that he describes in *The Red Book* and his reverence for other cultures, he remained, in some ways, very much a man held by the spirit of the times in which he lived. Eurocentrism, even unconscious patronizing racism, is evident in Jung’s writings. This article asks how, due to the impact of the spirit of the times on *us*, do *we* unconsciously express attitudes, writings, and actions that are offensive to the other? There are embedded forms of racism and thereby oppression that members of the dominant group learn not to see, to keep in the shadows. What forces keep unconscious racial bias alive and active in our societies? One answer lies in a culture’s shadow. This article utilizes writings of Jung and post-Jungians, such as Kimbles, Singer, and Brewster, as well as examples from philosophy, relational psychoanalysis, film, and literature that depict culture’s shadow. The relationship of culture’s shadow to Jung’s “geology” of the personality as diagrammed in one of his 1925 lectures is explored as is the connection of culture’s shadow to archetypal evil and to the formation of negative cultural complexes. These explorations are directed toward new ways of understanding the creation and maintenance of the sense of other in the psyche, furthering the work of bringing culture’s shadow into consciousness.

KEY WORDS

cultural complex, evil, Jung’s racist writings, master-slave, oppression, racial bias, relational paradigm, shadow