

Between Stereotypes and Hermeneutic Quest. C.G. Jung's Approach to "Primitive Psychology"

I would like to thank Marianne Müller for her kind invitation. I am going to divide my talk in three parts: a brief contextualization, an analysis of some Jung's statements especially from the 1920s on the issue of the so-called "primitive psychology," and some final considerations. I will also quote some passages from Jung's unpublished manuscript "Afrikanische Reise" ("African Journey"), from which stem the chapters in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* about his journeys. For the permission to consult and quote it, I thank Thomas Fischer and the Foundation of the Works of C.G. Jung, Zurich. Unless otherwise specified, the translations of unpublished and published sources are mine. I wish to thank Donatella Buonassisi for her insightful collaboration in reviewing the manuscript and Suzan Rood Wilson for her much appreciated willingness to review the text. Not unnecessarily, I wish to underline that this contribution is to be considered as a work in progress – freely delivered from a personal stance – on the subject I was kindly invited to talk about. It does not have the presumption of objectivity nor of exhaustiveness.

The 'fashionability' of Race psychology on the Eve of XX Century: an Overview

In the *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, published between 1902 and 1905, "Race Psychology" is designated "the science of evolution of mind in animals and man." This definition echoes the tendency, inaugurated by Linnaeus, to establish classificatory chains among different species, animal *and* human species, in accordance with the assumption that "natura non facit saltum" ("nature does not make jumps"). In the words of George L. Mosse, 'racism' became in modern times "a secular religion based upon science and history: it laid claim to the best of two worlds, that of science, which provided new 'truths' from the eighteenth century onward, and that of history, which forged a link to traditions which were fast dissolving in the modern world."¹ Thus the discourse about race, known as race (or racial) psychology, strongly permeated the whole of the XIX century. Subsequently, the first 3-4 decades of the twentieth century saw an intense exploration of this subject pursued by natural and social sciences, such as anthropology, ethnology, sociology and, of course, psychology. Racial views, in many aspects, were fashionable, because from the scientific debate they permeated the common opinion. According to the Italian historian Emilio Gentile, "racism appropriated the morality of the middle classes ... , in the same way as it took possession of nationalism and basically of all those ideas that seemed to have a future." And – he observes – "this was its strength: neither Morel, nor Lombroso, nor Nordau were racists, but their ideas became the core of racist thinking". The 20th century took up the legacy of the previous century "in which two traditions had converged: the mystical idea of race ...; and that tradition which sought to give an academic respectability to the racial classification as scientific."²

In Europe, the preponderant racial current was the one that mingled together anthropology, social thinking and eugenics. Simultaneously, the influence of Darwinism and, specifically, Social-Darwinism, improved the racist concern for hereditary factors and eugenics. In fact, race psychology cannot be viewed as a

¹ George L. Mosse, *The Culture of Western Europe. The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Third Edition, Westview Press, Boudler & London 1988, 85.

² Emilio Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista (1918-1925)*, (1975), Il Mulino, Bologna 1996, 85-86.

'school'. Instead, as Richards points out, "It was in fact quite heterogeneous, although a core tradition for research on black-white differences in the intelligence of school persisted throughout."³ In the US, the so-called 'Negro education' became a much debated topic in social educational sciences and "constituted a major component in the so-called 'Negro Question'" to which psychology "offered an ideologically 'neutral', respectably scientific route for readdressing the intractable difficulties from a new angle – one that located the source of the problem safely at the individual psychological level, in the 'Negro' psyche itself" (ibid.). Race differences were usually considered an aspect of *Völkerpsychologie* or "Folk Psychology," a research orientation bordering around anthropology-psychology, which aimed at defining not only the interactions between the individual and the community, but also at exploring the developments of different stages of mankind to higher forms of civilization. In a similar manner as for the entire racial discourse, folk psychology was largely substantiated by comparativism that, from linguistic to mythological studies, spread within and without the academic discourse.

Medical and psychological disciplines in a broad sense were profoundly involved in these anthropological purposes and increasingly established themselves as social-cultural and social-critical hermeneutic tools. Approximately from the middle of the nineteenth century, medical (especially psychiatric and later also psychoanalytic) categories were applied to the understanding of society as a whole to a hitherto unknown extent. Thus, the damage of the alienation of industrial civilization (the urbanization, the so-called "electrification," etc.) was read through concepts such as "Nervosität," "Hysteria," "Entartung" or "Degeneration," whose increasing popularity was reinforced by their social-Darwinistic scientific patina. This 'pathologization' of the reflexive discourse on civilization was accompanied by a longing for a return to a sort of 'Rousseian' original and pure stage attributed to the "primitive", the "sauvages/wild" people: all that seemed to substantiate the distance between the so-called "Naturvölker" and "Kulturvölker". From this social-cultural congeries, eugenics theories took progressively foot as "collective hygiene," "folk hygiene" or, definitely, "racial hygiene" (which, as well known, would have reached its peak with Nazism).

Although as soon as 1899 (the same publication year of the Freud's *Dream Analysis*) Joseph Conrad's successful *Heart of Darkness* had contested the distance between white and indigenous populations – which was also to raise questions about colonialism and imperialism – and academic research at the beginning of the new century scientifically proved the unsustainability of racial differences in front of the evidence of a puzzling amount of physical, cranial and other differences among members of the same ethnic group, the discourse about race was continuously and successfully used for political scopes on the basis of alleged scientific proofs. In a book which aimed to justify the Italian campaign in Ethiopia Lidio Cipriani, director of the Anthropological Institute and Museum in Florence affirmed:

"Researches conducted on the brain of the African and on its physiological and psychological functions reveal the existence of a mental inferiority which is impossible to modify and which excludes the possibility of its development in our own manner. The Africans are particularly unadapted to assimilate European civilization. Since this depends upon the characters of the race, which are transmissible, then, with crossing, it is necessary to develop certain eugenical norms, above all for Europeans living in

³ Graham Richards, *Race, Racism and Psychology. Towards a Reflexive History*. Second Edition, Routledge, London/New York 2012, 77.

contact with the Africans. In this connection the important observations which have been made on the Negroes into America since the seventeenth century have the greatest value.”⁴

According to Richards, the argument that “‘race’ is an unscientific category, a myth for rationalization oppression and injustice ... only becomes prominent in the late 1930s, bolstered both by the spectre of Nazism and by invocation of contemporary developments in genetics” (Richards 2012, 82). On the one side, “Anglophone social and cultural anthropology was, by the 1930s, theoretically at least, anti-racist, although when working in the field, British anthropologists were certainly inclined to compromise with the racist assumptions and agendas of colonial administrators” (ivi, 184). On the other side, a genuine interest for customs and mentalities of indigenous colonized people grew. Anthropology and ethnology contributed to change and relativize the idea of the objective superiority of European culture. In the forefront we can remember here the French Sociological school and especially Durkheim, Mauss and Lévy-Bruhl who were going to offer several insights to Jung. In America especially Franz Boas, to whose influence on Jung we will return to later, contributed to a critical assessment of racial views.

Psychoanalysis between Folk-Psychology and Haeckelian recapitulation’s theory

Modern ethnology was born – one may say – when Bronislaw Malinowski arrived in 1915 on the island of Kiriwina in Papua New Guinea. Malinowski’s conception of “participatory observation” implied the assumption of the viewpoint of the indigenous, and therefore may recall Freud’s notion of “empathy” (“Einfühlung”), which, according to the father of psychoanalysis, properly allows to approach another “soul life” (“Seelenleben”).⁵ In fact, psychoanalytic schools played a pivotal role in allowing, theorizing and debating the so-to-say discovery of the “primitive mentality” *also* within the ‘civilized’, European psychology. Freud’s and Jung’s studies on primitive mentality [from now on this and analogous expressions are mostly reported without quotation marks] show the wish to reestablish a (re)connection with what was believed to represent the primitive, as an original, primordial status, with all its ambivalent fascinations and projections from the stance of a ‘superior’ culture. This was done on the basis of the coeval anthropological sources and equipped with the theoretical hermeneutics of that time. As brilliantly pointed out by Celia Brickman in *Aboriginal Populations in the Mind*,⁶ the Darwinist, Lamarckian and Haeckel’s theories largely influenced the whole epistemology of the psychoanalytic discourse about the ‘primitives’.

In presenting one of the foundational texts of psychoanalysis, *Totem and Taboo* (1913), Freud described it as a “first attempt” to apply “notions and results of psychoanalysis” to unresolved problems of folk-psychology. Admittedly, Freud found major inspirations both from Wundt’s folk-psychology and the studies of C. G. Jung (in fact, *Totem and Taboo* may be considered as an answer to Jung’s *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*). According to Brickman, “because the details of *Totem and Taboo* lean so heavily on the social evolutionary conceptions of the nineteenth-century anthropology that Freud adopted, whenever its account is invoked, so is the racial scale to which these anthropological conceptions were indexed. In these

⁴ Lidio Cipriani, *Un assurdo etnico: L’Impero etiopico*, L. Bemporad, Firenze 1935, 177.

⁵ See for instance Sigmund Freud, “Die zukünftigen Chancen der psychoanalytischen Therapie” (1910), *Gesammelte Werke* 1910-1919, Vol. VIII, 104-115.

⁶ Celia Brickman, *Aboriginal Populations in the Mind. Race and Primitivity in Psychoanalysis*, Columbia University Press, New York 2003.

ways the colonialist tenets of social evolutionary thought continue to circulate throughout psychoanalysis.”⁷
 Let’s recall the famous first lines from *Totem and Taboo*:

“There are men still living who, as we believe, stand very near to primitive man, and whom we therefore regard as his direct heirs as representatives. Such is our view of those whom we describe as savages or half-savages [Wilden und halbwilden Völker]; and their mental life must have a peculiar interest for us if we were right in seeing in it a well-preserved picture of an early stage of our own development. If that supposition is correct, a comparison between the psychology of primitive peoples, as it is taught by social anthropology, will be bound to show numerous points of agreement and will throw new light upon familiar facts in both sciences.”

In his effort to open the way to a sort of universal anthropology, Freud not only borrowed many insights from the theories about “savages” by Tylor and Frazer, but was also strongly indebted to the Lamarckian doctrine of the inheritance of acquired characteristics and to Haeckel’s recapitulation hypothesis, according to which ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny (Brickman 2003, 51ff.). By means of these “socio-evolutionary axioms,” the life of “savages” as a “well-preserved picture of an early stage of our own development” could be used to interpret the Western history and specifically “reconstruct the history of the present-day European tendencies” (ivi, 67). Symmetrically, Freud’s famous definition of female sexuality as “dunkler Kontinent” or “dark continent” endorses the consistence of the psychoanalytic approach with colonialist theories.⁸ Brickman also recalls a number of articles concerning “The Negro” that appeared in 1914 in the early volumes of the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* in which the authors, moving from the assumption that individual development relives the history of race, “arranged their clinic material to demonstrate that black peoples regressed more quickly and easily to psychosis because of their lower position on the sociocultural evolutionary scale. These articles ... featured remarks that characterized Africans as ‘the raw material of civilization’; ‘submission to despots’ as their ‘racial characteristics’; and slavery as ‘the most wonderful thing’ because it had introduced the Negro to the ability to engage in sustained work and to the ideals of Christianity” (Brickman 2003, 87).

In fact, the very popular (yet equally debated) Haeckelian theory was consistent with the idea (well-spread in social sciences and in particular in religious studies), of a connection between “sauvage,” child and psychic illness. In that way, and following the lines of philosophical contention well summarized by Nietzsche’s motto “myths are dreams of humanity,” psychoanalysis carried on (and reformulated in psychological terms) the idea that the individual development relives the ‘racial’ history of mankind. Freud’s conviction that the regression of psychic illness – or, in psychoanalytic terms, the regression to a state of infantile libido – would hatch a sort of picture of the primitive, ancestral past was subsequently reformulated by Jung with the notion of collective unconscious as depositary of ancestral memories. However as far as the collective unconscious and symbols are concerned, Jung provided a compensatory implication for both of these with respect to conscience, as well as a prospective connotation that could provide a new value to the concept of primitive.

Jung: from his published texts

⁷ Brickman 2003, 53. Until the point that Freud had been considered, for instance, by Frank Sulloway a “crypto-biologist” or, by extension, a “crypto-racist” (ibid.).

⁸ In this regard cfr. Ranjana Khanna, *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism*, Duke University Press, Durham 2003.

Like Freud and many others, Jung shared the coeval ethnocentrism and the idea of the superiority of the European civilization, which was considered – and in fact still was – at the center of the world. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the approach to the ‘Naturvölker’ was influenced on the one hand by the (post-enlightenment) viewpoint that elevated reason as a chief achievement of humanity and considered the resulting accomplishments of civilization – not wrongly in this regard – more advanced with respect to other ‘uncivilized’ people. On the other hand an approach (which we could define *cum grano salis* post-romantic) sustained by the well-spread comparativism in social sciences, contributed to explore with increasing seriousness the specificity of languages, customs, myths and rites of the ‘exotic’ or ‘primitive’ peoples that until then had been colonized and considered ‘wild’ and inferior *tout court*.

In the second edition of *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido* (1925), Jung discusses the “fantastic activity of the ancient spirit” [phantastische Tätigkeit des antiken Geistes] as capable of providing a “picture of the universe ... which corresponds to the subjective fantasies.”⁹ In this regard he maintained that: “naive antiquity saw in the sun the great father of heaven and of the heavens, and in the moon the fertile good mother”¹⁰ and in relation with this “childish condition” he said that “low races [niedrige Rassen], like the Negroes, see the locomotive as an animal and call a drawer the child of the table.”¹¹ Furthermore, he agrees with Freud’s distinction between the “Progression” of “watchful thinking,” [wachen Denkens] and the “Regression” of unconscious and dreaming thinking. Also, quoting Abraham’s researches, he states “a parallel ... between the fantastic-mythological thinking of antiquity and a similar way of thinking in children, lower races of humanity [niedrig stehender Menschenrassen] and dreams.”¹² He goes on to express his conviction that the (Haeckelian) assumption that ontogeny corresponds to phylogeny is valid also for psychology.¹³ Jung also agreed with Abraham conviction that “the myth is a piece of overcome infantile psychic life [Seelenleben] of people.”¹⁴

Jung deduced the relevance of mythological presuppositions and their function in modern human psyche, which he considered characterized by logical thought. The idea that “the fantastic thought (is) a peculiarity of antiquity, of the child and of the lower human races [niedrigstehenden Menschenrassen]”¹⁵ was

⁹ “ein Bild des Universums, das der Realität nur sehr entfernt, ganz aber den subjektiven Phantasien entsprach“ (*Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*. Zweite Auflage, Franz Deuticke, Leipzig/Wien 1925, 22 [herein referred to as *Wandlungen II*]).

¹⁰ “die naive Antike sah in der Sonne den grossen Himmels- und Weltvater und im Monde die fruchtbare gute Mutter“ (ibid.).

¹¹ Wir kennen diesen Zustand des Geistes – he went on – aus eigener Erfahrung, es ist ein kindlicher Zustand (...) ebenfalls wissen wir, dass niedrige Rassen, wie die Neger, die Lokomotive für ein Tier ansehen und die Schublade das Kind des Tisches nennen (Mitteilung von Dr. Oetker)“ (*Wandlungen II*, 22). Cfr. Karl Oetker, *Die neger-Seele und die Deutschen und Afrika. Ein Kampf gegen Missionen, Sittlichkeits-Fanatismus und Bürokratie vom Standpunkt moderner Psychologie*, Lehmanns Verlag, München 1907, 278.

¹² “eine Parallele ... zwischen dem phantastisch-mythologischen Denken des Altertums und dem ähnlichen Denken der Kinder, dem [Denken] niedrig stehender Menschenrassen und dem des Traumes“ (*Wandlungen II*, 24).

¹³ “Dieser Gedankengang ist uns ... wohlbekannt aus der vergleichenden Anatomie und Entwicklungsgeschichte, die uns zeigen, wie Bau und Funktion des menschlichen Körpers durch eine Reihe embryonaler Wandlungen entstehen, welche ähnlichen Wandlungen in der Stammesgeschichte entsprechen. Die Vermutung, dass auch in der Psychologie die Ontogenese der Phylogenese entspreche, ist daher rechtfertigt. Mithin wäre als der Zustand des infantilen Denkens im Seelenleben des Kindes sowohl wie im Träume nichts als eine Wiederholung der Prähistorie und der Antike“ (*Wandlungen II*, 24-25). This thought was also in the footsteps of Nietzsche’s conviction, expressed in *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, which Jung subsequently recalls: “Im Schlafe und Traume machen wir das ganze Pensum früheren Menschentums durch“ (ivi, 25).

¹⁴ Karl Abraham: “Der Mythos ist ein Stück überwundenen infantilen Seelenlebens des Volkes“ (*Traum und Mythos*, 1909, 36, in *Wandlungen II*, 26). He also quoted Freud: “Die Untersuchung dieser völkerpsychologischen Bedingungen (Mythen usw.) ist nun keineswegs abgeschlossen, aber es ist z.B. von den Mythen durchaus wahrscheinlich, dass sie den entstellten Überresten von Wunschphantasien ganzer Nationen, den Säkularträumen der jungen Menschheit entsprechen“ (Freud, *Sammlung kleiner Schriften zur Neurosenlehre*, II, 205, cit. in *Wandlungen II*, ibid.).

¹⁵ “dass das phantastische Denken eine Eigentümlichkeit der Antike, des Kindes und der niedrigstehenden Menschenrassen [ist].“

at the basis of his hermeneutic exploration of the fantasies of Miss Frank Miller – and shows a psychological-epistemological model that was going to run throughout his entire work.

Generally speaking, while Freud believed that the primitive, pre-civilized, regressive and sexual drives of the libido (and of the Id) would be 'tamed' by and in favor of the Ego, Jung rather emphasized the relevance of integrating creative and healing values of unconscious forces towards the experience of a higher, encompassing psychic level, the *Self*. The enhancement (and re-animation) of the instinctive and cultural primordial dynamism of the collective unconscious was aimed at counterbalancing the one-sidedness and the rationalistic narrow-mindedness that he ascribed to the Western mentality. To give an idea of this not unproblematic attitude, it may be useful to recall some passages from Jung's letter to Oskar Schmitz of May, 26, 1923, where he cautiously commented on the comparison made by his correspondent (in his book about *Psychoanalyse und Yoga* of that year) between analytical psychology and yoga methods. In this regard, Jung recalled the different antecedents of the Eastern and European peoples, referring to the Germanic tribes and argued the (historical and psychological, so-to-say psycho-historical) 'split' within the German psyche: "The Germanic man is still suffering from this mutilation. I have good reasons for thinking that every step beyond the existing situation has to begin down among the truncated nature-demons. In other words, there is a whole lot of primitivity in us to be made good." He further argued: "We cannot possibly get beyond our present level of culture unless we receive a powerful impetus from our primitive roots. But we shall receive it only if we go back behind our cultural level, thus giving the suppressed primitive man in ourselves a chance to develop."¹⁶

Thus Jung was addressing primitiveness as an essential component of the psyche, that has to be rediscovered and revived in order to compensate the unilaterality of the Germanic – and, by extension, European – psyche, in view of a new religious experience.

In *Seele und Erde* (translated as: "Mind and Earth"), 1927, Jung referred to the "greatest experiment in the transplantation of a race in modern times [which] was the colonization of the North America continent by a predominantly Germanic population" (CW 10, par. 94) and quoted Boas's inquires that had allegedly proved "that anatomical changes begin already in the second generation of immigrants, chiefly in the measurements of the skull." Jung relates that when he was in America, he was surprised to be informed that some "workers coming out of a factory" who appeared to have "such a high percentage of Indian blood" did not have, in fact, any "drop of Indian blood". This led him to reflect on the "mysterious Indianization of the American people".¹⁷

Then, commenting the intrapsychic dynamisms of the relation between white and blacks for Americans, he states, "It is natural that in the dreams of my American patients the Negro should play no small role as an expression of the inferior side of their personality. A European might similarly dream of tramps or other representatives of the lower classes (CW 10, 96). Thus, Jung's psychological concept of 'primitiveness' seems to encompass an inferior status both in evolutionary and in socio-cultural terms (so that the black individual ends up being an exemplification of an 'inferior' evolutionary level, and the underprivileged white individual an exemplification of an 'inferior' socio-cultural level). Subsequently Jung avers that if the black population should become a majority within a white population, this could cause the white man to "lose" himself psychically. It is easy here to recognize a sort of extension (or projection) of the black qualities to the unconscious and of the white qualities to consciousness, whereby the first one can, as analytical psychology

¹⁶ *Letters of C.G. Jung*, Vol. I, 1906-1950, 39-40. Later he added: "We must dig down to the primitive in us, for only out of the conflict between civilized man and the Germanic barbarian will there come what we need: a new experience of God."

¹⁷ *Ibid.* He subsequently mentioned the "childlikeness of the Negro" and "its charming as well as its more unpleasant form" (par. 95).

teaches, overwhelm the second one. At the same time, the unconscious may and should help the 'contracted' Western consciousness to develop. On the influence of black (on whites) he also says:



“This infection by the primitive can, of course, be observed just as well in other countries, though not to the same degree and in this form. In Africa, for example, the white man is a diminishing minority and therefore protect himself from the Negro by observing the most rigorous social forms, otherwise he risks ‘going black’. If he succumbs to the primitive influence he is lost. But in America the Negro, just because he is in a minority, is not a degenerative influence, but rather one which, peculiar though it is, cannot be termed unfavorable – unless one happens to have a jazz phobia” (CW 10, par. 97)

Thus, as long as the numeric majority of white people is maintained, black – in this perspective, ‘inferior’ – people do not provoke dangerous, degenerative psychic effects. (A “jazz phobia” may be psychologically resolved, but to associate a majority of people of color within a country to an objective danger for the psychic health of the white people, implies consequences that go far beyond a psychological perspective – as well as beyond Jung’s affirmations themselves. It may be worthwhile to note here that in 1910s Boas already lamented how the modern racist-biological-eugenetic movement was going to take the lead by placing at the center of the scientific discourse the “mentally healthy and the eradication of the inferior” (“geistig Gesunden und die Ausmerzung der Minderwertigen”).¹⁸ Hence Boas stressed that nationality is essentially made not by the “blood community,” but by the “community of feeling that creates an objective unity from the habits of everyday life, from the forms of thinking and feeling, in which the individual can informally act out.”¹⁹ However, Jung did not adopt (as far as we know) a position on Boas’ above mentioned contentions; rather, he was interested and bewildered by the results of his researches and inferences about physical transformations by the mystery of the earth – and the collective psyche.

In his article “Your Negroid and Indian Behavior,” published in 1930,²⁰ Jung dealt with the “Complications of American Psychology” (as the article would have later re-named, CW 10) from his stance as European. We find here considerations about the “childlikeness” of Americans, alongside to references to the way they laugh, move and chatter. In short, Jung seems to connote an American psychology and behavior with a sympathetic attitude towards its alleged youthfulness (and greatness). “An overwhelming influence of collective emotions – he noted – spreads into everything.” When he ventures into an explanation of the “American temperament” he moves from the assumption of the pervasiveness “by the most striking and suggestive figure – the Negro” and asks, “Now what is more contagious than to live side by side with a rather primitive people? Go to Africa and see what happens. When the effect is so very obvious that you stumble over it, you can call it ‘going black’” (“Your Negroid,” 195).

¹⁸ Franz Boas, *Kultur und Rasse*, Verlag von Veit & Comp. Leipzig 1914, 59.

¹⁹ “Was die Nationalität ausmacht, ist offenbar nicht die Blutsgemeinschaft innerhalb der europäischen Rasse, sondern die Gefühlsgemeinschaft, die aus den Gewohnheiten des täglichen Lebens, aus den Formen des Denkens und Fühlens eine objektive Einheit schafft, in der der Einzelne sich zwanglos ausleben kann. Für diese ist die Gemeinsamkeit der Sprache ein schwerwichtiges Moment, das uns viele Gefühlsgegensätze übersehen lässt” (Boas 1914, 131). Furthermore, Boas clearly stressed – already in 1915 – the groundlessness of the so-called “degeneration of our race” ascribed, for instance, to the “congestion in modern cities and other causes” by “advocates of eugenics” who would intend to “counteract by adequate legislative measures” (Boas, “Modern Populations in America” [1915], in Id., *Race Language and Culture*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago/London 1982, 26).

²⁰ Jung, “Your Negroid and Indian Behavior,” *Forum*, Vol. 83, N. 4, 193-199 (herein referred to as “Your Negroid”).

In presenting this (or his) concern of being “infected” or affected by a population placed at an inferior – primeval – level of civilization, Jung takes for granted that the “Negro” epitomizes a primitive level of the human evolution while providing his personal observations with an allegedly empirical connotation. He stated that “the white man is a terrific problem to the Negro, and whenever you affect somebody profoundly, then in a mysterious way something comes back from him to yourself. The Negro, by his mere presence in America, is a source of temperamental and mimetic infection which the European can’t help noticing, for he sees the hopeless gap between the American and the African Negro” (ivi, 196). Such a connection between the “Negro” with the primitive and an inferior level of development was also clearly based upon social evolutionary conceptions of the superiority and inferiority of races. Again: “Since the Negro lives within your cities and even within your houses [evidently thinking on servants, etc.], he also lives within your skin, subconsciously [interestingly enough, instead of “unconsciously” he said “subconsciously”, presumably in order to stress an inferior connotation of such a ‘contagion’]. Naturally it works both ways. Just as every Jew has a Christ complex, so every Negro has a white complex, and every white American a Negro complex.”

Moving from these premises, Jung warns against possible ‘contagions’ or ‘infections’ in favor of the allegedly inferior influence: that of the “Negro” in this case. By the way, in this quite rigid distinction, there is no place for mulattos and similar categories which do not belong to the ‘completely white’ or ‘completely black’ category: Jung seems decidedly (and unilaterally) to stress the interrelated dichotomy between “white” and “black,” without taking into consideration the influence of Indian indigenous people. Moreover, the following consideration about what would have been called “Lactification” by Frantz Fanon results equally moving from the standpoint of a white man – embedded in a colonialist mentality: “The Negro, generally speaking, would give anything to change his skin, so, too, the white man hates to admit that he has been touched by the black.” Jung’s observations on the influence of black people in the US also show a complete lack of analysis of the reasons – slavery, *in primis* – for the diffusion of the black population in the country.

According to him, “It would be difficult not to see that the Negro, with his primitive motility, his expressive emotionality, his childlike immediacy, his sense of music and rhythm, his funny and picturesque language, has infected American behavior” (ibid.). He then goes on, “Such racial infection is a very serious mental and moral problem wherever a primitive race outnumbers the white man.” (Interestingly enough, the contrary is not argued, namely the case when the white man outnumbers the primitive man).

On the one side, Jung advocated a re-discovery and re-vitalization of the “primitive in us,” in order to re-animate the Western psyche. On the other side, his attitude was strongly tinged by his concern of the risk of infection or, specifically, of the white man becoming ‘black under the skin’. These ideas were informed by the assumption that, as it had happened with the fall of the Roman Empire, the “conqueror overcomes the old inhabitant in the body, and succumbs to his spirit ...” But then he added a phrase with an explicit negative connotation: “The conqueror gets the wrong ancestors’ spirits, the primitives would say” (ivi, 199). This conception of collective psychic balance can lead to an attitude of ‘neutral’ detached observation of “facts” while avoiding any judgment or assessment of the latter (“Facts are neither favorable or unfavorable. They are merely interesting. And the most interesting fact about America is that this childlike, impetuous, ‘naive’ people has probably the most complicated psychology of all nations”; ibid.) (Similarly, he compares the rites of secret societies of Ku Klux Klan and Knights of Columbus with those of “all primitive, mystery religions”; ibid.).

All in all, the picture of the American’s psychology emerging from Jung’s assertions is quite complex and even contradictory: a quite naïve, childlike population, but also one striving for greatness and with a marked one-sidedness. Would such a mindset be equally considerate towards, for instance, the subsequent decolonization movements?

Jung: from his unpublished manuscript “African Journey”

The manuscript “Afrikanische Reise” [Travelling in Africa] provides further elements in understanding Jung’s impressions not only about indigenous people, their lives, customs and psychology, but also the relevance he ascribed to them (and, by extension, to the “primitive psychology”) for the development of the ‘civilized man’ (European and colonialist). This manuscript was presumably written in ca. 1925/26 after Jung’s “Bugishu Psychological Expedition” to Kenya and Uganda that brought him to study the Elgoni; an exact date has not been established so far.²¹

Amongst the different themes covered in the manuscript, I wish to pay particular attention to a very few points. First of all, Jung insisted on the psychological and epistemological relevance to respectfully approach primitive cultures and mentalities:

“To me, it seems highly unlikely for a white person to penetrate in a sensitive way in the secrets and strangeness [Fremdartigkeiten] of the primitive mind [or properly “spirit”: orig. “Geist”] without being personally deeply affected. Insofar that the European spirit yields in the twilight to its primeval spirit, it becomes also entangled in the dark fabric of its unconscious historical prerequisites. Our cultural spirit does not soar rootless in the space of an abstract world of ideas, but remains – even at its brightest and loftiest heights – a building constructed on the vestige of all what our ancestors erected”.²²

For Jung America represented “the spectacle of a mutual racial influence on a large scale” where the white man is numerically superior to the indigenous man, while in Africa, he claimed, “man and nature overwhelm the white [man] as superior power [Übermacht]”. Moreover, he stressed the importance of being respectful, as well as refraining from selfish robberies, with regards to what he called the “secrets” [Geheimnisse] of the primitives. The mystery, he wrote, has the function to maintain the tribe, protecting it from the other, from the foreigner, for “of course, tribal cohesion is a vital necessity under primitive circumstances”. In this regard, Jung hoped that the colonial and predatory character of the white man would not deprive the indigenous of their secrets and their identity:

²¹ The title of the manuscript “Afrikanische Reise,” which is deposited at the C.G. Jung Archive at the Swiss Federal Technical School in Zurich under the signature Hs 1055: 256, is somewhat misleading as it is not specifically dealing with Jung’s expedition to East Africa. Rather, it presents a much wider range of psychological and cultural observations on native and colonial populations from his trips to North and East Africa as well as in the US. A thorough analysis of this manuscript may provide insights into the understanding of the later published texts mentioned above, namely “Mind and Earth” (1927) and “Complications of American Psychology” (1930). In regard to Jung’s African expedition see the detailed, intriguing essay by Angela Graf-Nold, “The cousins Sarasin described very nicely...’ C.G. Jung’s trip to Africa in context of his contemporaries. Or Jung’s Africa-complex,” Lecture at the IAJS Intern. Conference “Spectre of the Other,” Cape Town, July 28th 2017, unpublished. I thank Angela Graf-Nold for placing her manuscript at my disposal. See also Blacke W. Burleson, *Jung in Africa*, Continuum, London/New York 2005 – so-to-say a journey into Jung’s journey – which also provides excerpts from the section about ‘Africa’ within Jung’s Protocols, the typed notes taken by Aniela Jaffé during her interviews with Jung that provided the basis for MDR. Burleson considers Jung’s “psychological expedition” to East Africa, supported by the British Foreign Office, “more properly a ‘safari’ following a well-established circuitous route” and an “archetypal journey repeated by countless Europeans in the early decade of the twentieth century” (Burleson 2005, 15). “The book,” he also writes, “could have been titled Africa in Jung” (ivi, 18). Cfr. also the works of Laurens Van der Post, especially his *Jung and the Story of Our Time*, Pantheon Books, New York 1978 (first publ. 1976) and Frank McLynn, *Hearths of Darkness: The European Exploration of Africa*, Carroll & Graf, New York 1992.

²² Orig.: “Es erscheint mir unmöglich, dass ein Weisser die Geheimnisse und Fremdartenigkeiten des primitiven Geistes verständnisvoll eindringen kann, ohne selber im Tiefsten davon affiziert zu werden. Denn in dem Masse, als der europäische Geist sich dem Zwiellicht des primitiven Geistes ergibt, verfängt er sich auch im dunkeln Gewebe seiner [eigenen] unbewussten historischen Vorbedingungen. Unser culturlicher Geist schwebt ja nicht wurzellos im Raume der abstracten Ideenwelt, sondern ist, auch auf seiner hellsten und luftigsten Höhe, ein Gebäude, errichtet auf den Überbleibseln alles dessen, was unsere Ahnen gebaut haben.“

“I hope these little tribes will preserve their religious secrets for as long as possible so as to allow our subsequent descendants to approach this piece of living antiquity. It is enormously impressive to listen to people whose mental disposition [geistigen Disposition] is nearly 2000 years old. As precious as their criticism of the white man was to me, the more I also felt necessary to get to know their central ideas, which enable becoming acquainted with an independent spiritual position beside our white culture.”²³

Jung also reflected on the fact that the criticism of the American Indian has not to be understood as a “mere opposition to the white usurper,” for, according to him, they are facing the white man not only as “enemy and oppressor, but also as a problem.” A problem that – to a large extent – was to remain inexplicable for them. Jung gave quite a lot of thought to the puzzlement of the indigenous populations concerning the white man’s persuasion that thinking was a matter of the head. For the white man, he said, it is difficult to conceive something different than the head as the center of thoughts and the heart as the organ – so to speak – of feelings and emotions. However, Jung was under the impression that, thanks to its unintellectual approach, a primitive mentality is better suited to grasp the reality of the “totality of the psyche”. Jung’s corresponding (and much debated) stance in regard to the alleged lack of consciousness of the primitive could also imply an essential capacity to directly comprehend the religious experience. Later on he would say with respect to this issue: “Unconscious as he [the primitive] is of himself (for he cannot consider himself as object) he does not perceive his thoughts as his own creation, but rather as something superordinate [Übergeordnetes].” This may well recall Jung’s repeated exhortation to consider dreams and the dynamics of the objective psyche as well – not as something made by the subject, but as a “mere, undiscovered portion of nature.” Differently from the ‘primitive,’ this attitude can prove to be quite difficult to attain for the Westerner. Far from being a passive attitude, this kind of consciousness pushes the primitive to be, so to say, efficient in front of the unknown. In fact, he wrote: “The religious idea [Vorstellung] dominates the consciousness and the psyche of the primitive, leading him to act out the corresponding actions [Handeln]. To a certain extent, this (religious) idea, by living a life of its own at the cost of him [the primitive], takes his soul into its service and uses it to express itself. This leads to cultual acts or rituals [cultische Handlungen].”

In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, we find the well-known report of Jung’s conversation with Ochwiay Biano, the Native American of the Taos Pueblo in New Mexico [also known as “Chief Mountain Lake”] referring the “cultual action” of the Pueblo’s ritual in honor of the sun at sunrise. In an unpublished passage of this Manuscript he states that this kind of “concretism” [Concretismus], as he called it, is also a form of affirmative answer, which provides the primitive with a capacity to better deal with the powerful forces of life, cosmos and unconscious. The same may be said about all forms of “cultual actions,” as for instance the Buffalo-dances of the Taos Pueblo Indians. Instead, we Westerners are accustomed to experience the cultual religious act as a “duty or a convention, an immediate emotional instigation or a kind of necessity.” Jung further stated:

“The devaluation of this relation turns the focus on what is invisible, that is, it is pushed towards the unconscious. This in turn reinforces the unconscious creating a characteristic perturbation or distress

²³ “Ich hoffe, dass diese kleinen Stämme ihre religiösen Geheimnisse so lange wie möglich bewahren, sodass noch unsere späten Nachkommen sich an diesen Stück lebendigen Alterthums freuen können. Es ist ungemein eindrucksvoll, diese Menschen aus einer geistigen Disposition heraus, die beinahe 2000 Jahre hinter uns liegt, reden zu hören. So werthvoll mir ihre Kritik des weissen Mannes war, so unerlässlich schien es mir auch, ihre centralen Ideen, die ihnen eine unabhängige geistige Stellung ausserhalb unserer weissen Cultur ermöglichen, kennen zu lernen.“

[Beunruhigung] in consciousness, an angst [Angst] of a still unconscious and unknown present or maybe presence; of an unknown God, who has to be called with new and unheard of names, and who must be reconciled with equally new, strange magical acts. It is therefore of tremendous psychological significance that Paulus begins his preaching in the Areopagus in Athen, right in the heart of an ancient civilization, with an allusion to the *Agnostos Theos*, the unknown God.”²⁴

Jung further pondered on the identification of the current western mentality with the conscious side of personality: because of this fact the Church, he continued, “is forced to require that one must believe in God.” In other words, “It has to artificially confer value to this idea or pump life [Leben einpumpen müsse] [into it].” This is indicative, Jung continues, of the loss of “our pre-psychological notions or images [connected with religiosity].” Therefore, he added, we are no longer able to be “seized” or “captured” [ergriffen], alluding to the inability of the ‘civilized people’ to stay in direct contact with the *numinosum*.

In this way Jung diagnosed the perturbation or distress [Beunruhigung] of modern Western man as a consequence of the “devaluation” of the “spontaneous affirmative answer” (to nature), which instead characterizes primitive cultures (or mentalities). Thus, the evolutionary path of our “civilized man” is directly connected to a psychological status of – one can infer – increased anxiety of the unconscious and even of God: that same God, Jung seems to hint, who, although still unnamed before the rise of Christianity, had been far more present in the daily life of pre-Christianized human beings. Therefore he stressed the importance of a lost “primeval” unintellectual religious aptitude in front of an enhanced civilization based on an excessive, unnatural rationality (and intellectualism). At the same time, he never failed to look at the primitive mentality from a (i.e. his) Christian perspective. This led him to identify a sort of Christian stance in the Pueblo Indians, “in contrast – he notes – to the clear, childlike gaze of Negroes.” He also wrote:

“It seems to me that by living with a primitive race [primitiven Rasse], the primitive in us is somehow brought to life. It would have to break into consciousness thereby bringing about a mixture and the subsequent humiliation of the cultural level. ... The North American protected himself ... by intensifying his Puritanism and with a matching legislation, (and) with a withdrawal of consciousness before a roused unconscious. Apparently he reacted ... with increasing security measures.”²⁵

And in relation to the American Southern states he noted: “The treatment of Negroes (especially in the Southern states) clearly shows how the white American projects many of his own mistakes on the Negroes, thereby acquiring a particularly clean conscience. Should he smell something evil, he can easily say, ‘It is the other...’”. Again, he wrote: “The American shares his good conscience [gute(s) Gewissen] with the Englishman,

²⁴ “Durch die Entwerthung dieser Beziehung wird der Schwerpunkt ins Unsichtbare d. h. ins Unbewusste verschoben. Dadurch wird das Unbewusste verstärkt, und es entsteht eine charakteristische Beunruhigung des Bewusstseins, eine Angst vor einer unbewussten und unbekanntem Gegenwart, vor einem unbekanntem Gotte, der mit neuen und unerhörten Namen angerufen und mit ebenso neuen, wie seltsamen magischen Handlungen versöhnt werden muss – Es ist deshalb psychologisch ungemein bezeichnend, dass Paulus seine Predigt auf dem Areopag zu Athen, so recht im Herzen antiken Cultur mit einer Anspielung auf den ἄγνωστος Θεός den unbekanntem Gott, beginnt.“

²⁵ “Es scheint mir nämlich, dass durch das Zusammenleben mit einer primitiven Rasse das Primitive in uns irgendwie zum Leben gebracht wird. Es müsste ins Bewusstsein einbrechen und dadurch eine Vermischung herbeiführen mit nachfolgenden Erniedrigung des Cultur-niveaus. ... Der Nordamerikaner schützte sich ... mit einem verschärften Puritanismus und entsprechender Gesetzgebung, mit einem Rückzug des Bewusstseins vor dem belebten Unbewussten. Er reagierte offenbar so, ... mit Vermehrung der Sicherheitsmassnahmen.“

but it seems to me that the American conscience is even better. The Englishman is a European and thinks too much [und denkt zuviel].”²⁶

Finally, I would like to recount some impressions about the bodily, corporeal differences between the so-called primitive and the white man. Jung stressed “the dignity and the self-confidence of the individual” [Würde und die Selbstsicherheit des Individuums] among the American indigenous and claimed that “it was not about a pose, but essentially about simple naturalness.” At the same time he did not spare a quite heartfelt critique of the whites:

“Compared with this [the behavior of the Indigenous man], the white man actually makes an unbalanced and unnatural impression: he either speaks too much, or too loudly, or too hastily or too unintelligibly or too presumptuously, or too politely. Likewise, his movements are somehow exaggerated, just like his facial expressions [or mimic art, “Mimik”]. His facial expression [mimic art] is definitely a bit hysterical compared to the Indian composure [“Gehaltenheit”]. Hysteria should not be confused with vivacity. If the white man remains serious, then his facial expression is such that even at 20 steps everyone must be impressed by his seriousness. He laughs immoderately or doggedly, he is over-emotional or creepy, ridiculously friendly or abominably cold. His mimicry seems to reveal that at heart he is at odds with everything he does. As a consequence, his feeling always has a fatal, sentimental – and thus – unlikely connotation; and in turn all [“und alles, was er thut, lässt”...] his actions are adamant ... For the most part the white man lacks naturalness [Selbstverständlichkeit]: He replaces this deficiency with hysteria!”²⁷

Final considerations

In 2009 Nicholas Lewin wrote:

“We need to be clear that our task is not to criticize Jung’s early attempts at cross-cultural studies and his ideas about race by the standards of modern anthropological scholarship; to do so would be anachronistic. Jung’s thinking should be judged by the standards of his time, but as we also want discuss how applicable his ideas may be for today, modern criticism needs to be given due recognition, but caution must be taken not to get caught in ‘politically correct’ fixations. Vocabulary change, and when Jung used the term ‘primitive cultures’ he did not have available the phrase ‘primary cultures’. Closely entangled with our modern sensitivities about the word ‘primitive’ is the issue of the race.

²⁶ ... a phrase that curiously recalls the title of the book by Parin, Morgenthaler, and Parin-Matthey (1963).

²⁷ “Im Vergleich damit schnitt der weisse Mann ungünstig ab. Er macht thatsächlich einen unbalancierten und unnatürlichen Eindruck: Er spricht entweder zu viel, oder zu laut, oder zu hastig oder zu unverständlich oder zu anmassend, oder zu höflich. Ebenso sind seine Bewegungen irgendwie einigermaßen übertrieben, genau wie seine Mimik. Seine Mimik ist entschieden etwas hysterisch im Vergleich mit der indianischen Gehaltenheit. Man darf Hysterie nicht mit Lebhaftigkeit verwechseln. Bleibt der weisse Mann ernst, so ist sein Gesichtsausdruck so beschaffen, dass schon auf 20 Schritte Jedermann von seinem Ernst beeindruckt werden muss. Er lacht unmässig oder verbissen, er ist effusiv oder bockig, lächerlich freundlich oder abscheulich kalt. Man merkt es seiner Mimik an, dass er im Grunde genommen mit nichts, was er auch immer thut, ganz einverstanden ist. Sein Gefühl hat daher immer einen fatalen, sentimental und daher ungläubwürdigen Beiklang, und alles, was er thut, lässt Nachdrücklichkeit durchblicken. ... Selbstverständlichkeit fehlt dem weissen Mann am meisten. Er ersetzt, wie gesagt, diesen Mangel mit Hysterie!”

There remains concern that when Jung was referring to the 'primitive' he was implying some form of racial slur."²⁸

As I have tried to argue in my presentation, it seems to me that we can definitely give a negative answer to this last question presented by Lewin. However, racial aspects in Jung's scripts during the 1920's imply, denote and entail a complex set of issues.

According to Pietikainen, Jung shared the stereotypes and convictions on race of his time. Moreover, the persuasion of the "mental superiority" of the white European in respect to non-whites was a truism, an unmistakable scientific fact both in its philosophical and popular versions."²⁹ While recalling that Freud too did not challenge the "prevailing evolutionary notion of superior and inferior races," Pietikainen answers to Dalal's affirmations³⁰ that Jung was a racist as follows: "One can reply to the effect that 'surely Jung was a racist, but the point is: who was not racist at that time?'" (ivi, 368). Jung was amongst several intellectuals (he here names Bertrand Russell, Julian Huxley, and Franz Boas) who at one point "came to modify their racial views and assumed a more egalitarian and relative attitude towards non-Western culture (...) Jung's more emphatically explicated egalitarian views after the Second World War and during the period of decolonization in the 1950s mainly expressed the growing tendency among the educated classes in Europe to view critically the Western imperialistic and colonialist policy" (ivi, 367-368).

Needless to say, there were (and still are!) different gradations in a racial mentality. Some thinkers were more attentive to – and aware of – this issue than others (clearly, Boas's position was much different from what Pietikainen's statement leads us to understand). Ashley Montagu, for instance, also did not wait for the end of World War II to firmly request that the term "race" be replaced with "ethnic group" because "when we speak of the 'race problem' in America, what we really mean is the caste system and the problem which the caste system creates in America." For the British-American anthropologist, "a class differs from a caste in that a greater degree of social mobility is ... permitted between castes. The caste is static, the class dynamic."³¹ Later, during the post-war period and with the decolonization processes, a new sensibility arose within and towards different native populations and it was in particular Frantz Fanon who represented the radicalism of the upcoming change. The Martinican psychiatrist and activist decisively linked the racial question with the class domination and gave voice to the anger and powerlessness of people of color in a new and shattering way.³² According to him, the colonial system had deprived the black people of any possibility to develop their own identity – as individuals and as a group ("The black man wants to be like the white man. For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is white"). Fanon's approach, while combining Marxism, phenomenology and existentialism, sought for a radical subversion of the structural asymmetry of the relationship between black

²⁸ Nicholas Adam Lewin, *Jung on War, Politics and Nazi Germany: Exploring the Theory of Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, Karnac Books, London 2009, 130-131

²⁹ Petteri Pietikainen, "National Typologies, Races and Mentalities in C.G Jung's Psychology," *History of European Ideas*, 24:6, 1998, 367.

³⁰ Farhad Dalal, "Jung: A racist," *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 4(3), 1988, 263-279.

³¹ Ashley Montagu, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*, Columbia University Press, New York 1942, 82. In 1950 Montagu was selected to draft, with few others academicians and scientists, the initial UNESCO *Statement on Race*. See that and the subsequent statements in: <http://www.honestthinking.org/en/unesco/index.html>.

³² Let me just quote a couple of passages from *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952): "I am black; I am in total fusion with the world, in sympathetic affinity with the earth, losing my id in the heart of the cosmos -- and the white man, however intelligent he may be, is incapable of understanding Louis Armstrong or songs from the Congo. I am black, not because of a curse, but because my skin has been able to capture all the cosmic effluvia. I am truly a drop of sun under the earth." Commenting the fact that *Black Skin, White Masks* represented "the sum of the experiences and observations of seven years," he observed that "regardless of the area I have studied, one thing has struck me: The Negro enslaved by his inferiority, the white man enslaved by his superiority alike behave in accordance with a neurotic orientation. Therefore," he continued "I have been led to consider their alienation in terms of psychoanalytical classifications."

and white (and the dehumanization of the first caused by the second). Yet only through a violent struggle can the Black free himself from a forcefully spurious identity image for, as he affirmed in *Black Skin, White Masks*, the black liberated without bloodshed resembles “those servants who are allowed once every year to dance in the drawing room.” Fanon's radical approach deconstructs the entire psychoanalytic language, and moves from completely different premises than Jung's.³³

While decolonization was struggling against – as it still is today – the patriarchal “white supremacy,” social sciences progressively abandoned many pillar-concepts. For instance, Haeckel's law of biogenetic recapitulation became “passé” – but not for psychoanalysis and analytical psychology, whose epistemological premises were largely indebted to it (still in 1949, Lévi-Strauss poignantly indicated the ongoing ‘spurious temptation’ of psychoanalytic, especially Freudian, authors to maintain the ‘archaic illusion’ of an identity between ‘primitive’ and ‘infantile’; Brickman 2003, 88). Two years after Jung's death, Paul Parin, Fritz Morgenthaler, Goldy Parin-Matthey published *Die Weissen denken zuviel*:³⁴ a cult book for the rebellious student movement, which would inaugurate ethno-psychoanalysis, i.e. “the product of a confrontation between psychoanalysis and the social sciences.”³⁵ The three Swiss psychoanalysts and ethnologists presented the results of a survey-expedition to the African tribe of the Dogon, where they conducted a psychoanalytic experiment using free verbal associations and narration, while remaining aware that psychoanalysis represents a Western theory “which is never true beyond postcolonial power relations” [“die nie jenseits von postkolonialen Machtverhältnissen wahr ist”]. They were also aware that language cannot be a neutral mechanism, but is a central meeting place for complex intercultural communication processes in continuous transformation. The psychoanalysts experienced and stated a fundamental incompatibility of the Dogon with the Christian worldview. They pointed out a clear relinquishment of the notion of “primitive” in the sense of a general, unhistorical category, as well as of the presumption to understand collective psychology *en masse*. In the conclusions they clearly affirmed, “We do not believe that today there is a valid mass psychology or folk-psychology [from their perspective, *Völkerpsychologie* may be equally translated as “ethnopsychology”] that allows us to directly examine a population (as a whole).” Furthermore, they finally admitted: “Psychology fails in its attempt to compare the personality of the Dogon as a whole with that of the Western or of the European

³³ For this reason too, he looked at the collective unconscious in a rather reductive way (“the collective unconscious, without our own to the fall of the genes, is purely and simply the sum of prejudices, myths, collective attitudes of a given group”) and thought that for Jung “the myths and archetypes are permanent engrams of the race”. Instead, his key concern was to point out that “collective unconscious is cultural, which means acquired”. See <https://www.fusionmagazine.org/frantz-fanons-black-skin-white-masks-and-the-social-sickness-of-racism/>. Cfr. the chap. 10 (“Frantz Fanon and Alice Walker on Humanism and Universalism”) in Michael Vannoy Adams, *The Multicultural Imagination. “Race”, Color, and the Unconscious*, Routledge, London/New York 1996, 159ff. However, it is worth adding that according to Fanon, “reacting against the constitutionalist tendency of the late nineteenth century, Freud [...] substituted for a phylogenetic theory the ontogenetic perspective. It will be seen that the black man's alienation is not an individual question. Beside phylogeny and ontogeny stands *sociogeny*.” Contextually, as it has been recently noted, Fanon's concept of “sociogeny” finds its explication in the diagnosis and analysis of colonialism (and its individual and societal effects) presented in his later *The Wretched of the Earth* (published in 1961, the year of his – and Jung's – death). Moreover, “If we read Fanon's sociogeny alongside Jung's collective unconscious, numerous interesting possibilities arise for thinking about the contexts of what we might call culture and thus healing within culture” (Rinaldo Walcott, “Multicultural crazy: diagnosis in Black,” in Roy Moodley, Stephen Palmer, eds., *Race, Culture and Psychotherapy. Critical Perspectives in Multicultural Practice*, Routledge, London/New York 2006, 32). The volume also includes a contribution by Dalal (‘Culturalism in multicultural psychotherapy’, in Roy Moodley, Stephen Palmer, eds., cit., 36-45).

³⁴ Paul Parin, Fritz Morgenthaler, Goldy Parin-Matthey, *Die Weissen denken zuviel. Psychoanalytischen Untersuchungen bei den Dogon in Westafrika*. 3. Überarbeitete Auflage. Mit einem neuen Vorwort der Autoren, Fischer, Frankfurt a. M. 1985 (first ed. 1963).

³⁵ Paul Parin, Fritz Morgenthaler, Goldy Parin-Matthey, *Fear Thy Neighbor as Thyself. Psychoanalysis and Society among the Anyi of West Africa*. Transl. by Patricia Klammer, University of Chicago Press, Chicago/London 1980, 372. On the issue cfr. Johannes Reichmayr, ed. by, *Ethnopsychanalyse revisited: Gegenübertragung in transkulturellen und postkolonialen Kontexten*, Paul Parin zum 100. Geburtstag, Psychosozial-Verlag, Gießen 2016.

... The differences between the Dogon and us become more and more obscure the more generally and further one grasps the manifestations of cultural contact.”³⁶

Now back to Jung: Jung’s reflection on the so-called primitive mentality was central for the development of his psychology – and anthropological perspective. Analytical psychology represents a system of comparative psychology intrinsically based on a continuous confrontation with different disciplines, therefore it shows at the same time this methodological stance and Jung’s acquisitions from the coeval stance of social and natural sciences, with their unavoidable limits.

According to Richards, Jung’s description of primitive mentality was a mix of influences from “exotic images and traveler’s tales of strange and primitive peoples,” and a way to sympathetically understand the primitive mentality also through the coeval anthropological literature. However, it seems to him that Jung was “chronically unable to go beyond conventional Western ‘archetypal’ or ‘collective’ representations, and failed to see the immediate down-to-earth details of the actual situation in a way that contrasts to that – for instance – of Margaret Mead in Polynesia or New Guinea.” Contextually Richards stated that “for American whites, the African, the native American, and to some extent, the Polynesian, were part of the domestic landscape: the British and French had long been having direct dealings with non-European imperial subjects, but Jung, we should perhaps remind ourselves, was an empireless Swiss” (Richards 2012, 192-193).

Now, that Jung shared the Eurocentric (and colonialist) mentality of his time was inevitable. Furthermore, as Paul Roazen noted, “Just as Jung shared sexist prejudices toward women, it would not be surprising for him to have uncritically adopted many traditional stereotypes about Jews”³⁷ and, we can add, about black people. However, the question as to which extent this ‘affected’ his entire psychology is both a historical and a methodological one. If the former is to be considered in a differentiated way, in terms of specificity, extent, and severity of his ‘racism’, the second one implies the question: Is it possible, and if so how, to separate Jung's racist visions from his psychology? Could Jung’s perceived risk of “going black” under the skin be considered primarily as Jung’s personal fear (and resistance) in front of his fascination for the ‘primitive’, instead of an expression of a structural element inextricably embedded in his system, which would or should prove with Cartesian clarity its intrinsic racism?

The racial issue connected with Jung’s thought has to do with – in my opinion – an aspect that is and remains intrinsically related to the conception of the collective unconscious. The latter is, per definition, stratified and phylogenetically shaped, yet it belongs to the whole human kind. It is universal and racial and, if we want, democratic and aristocratic (*quod licet Jovi non licet bovi*). In terms of social-political interpretations, it can be considered in its emancipatory vocation,³⁸ but it can also be seen for reactionary purposes. The problem (our problem as later interpreters) lies then not only in its interpretations and applications, but also in

³⁶ Orig.: “Die Psychologie versagt beim Versuch, die Persönlichkeit der Dogon als Ganzes mit der des abendländischen Menschen oder der des Europäers zu vergleichen. Die Persönlichkeit und ihr Verhalten wird von zahlreichen Faktoren mitgeformt und bestimmt, deren Erfassung der Psychologie nicht möglich ist: von sozialen, ökonomischen und historisch-politischen Einflüssen, von Werten und Idealen. Betrachten wir die ‚äusseren Einwirkungen‘ auf das Volk der Dogon, drängen sich jedoch Vergleiche auf. Aber die Unterschiede zwischen den Dogon und uns werden desto undeutlicher, je allgemeiner und weiter man die Erscheinungen des Kulturkontaktes fasst“ (ivi, 612).

³⁷ Paul Roazen, *Freud and His Followers*, New York 1985, 292.

³⁸ It came to my mind here what Aimé Césaire, one of the founders, with Léopold Sédar Senghor, of the cultural, literarian, and political movement of the “Négritude,” stated in his famous ‘Discours sur la Négritude’ (1987): « Les chromosomes m’importent peu. Mais je crois aux archétypes. Je crois à la valeur de tout ce qui est enfoui dans la mémoire collective de nos peuples et même dans l’inconscient collectif. » (http://blog.ac-versailles.fr/1ere/nerval/public/LA_2_Cesaire_Discours_sur_la_Negritude.pdf). Incidentally, Césaire was amongst the thinkers who mostly influenced Fanon.

the hermeneutic difficulty of remaining aware of the coexistence and interrelation of these two aspects underlying, *volens nolens*, Jung's conception. One can recall in this contest Stanley Grossman's stance. Grossman speaks of how Jung's thought was strongly influenced by German Romantic philosophy, and the value this gave to the "Volk" (or "Völker") as depositories of an ancient wisdom. He defined Jung as a "partially racist thinker" in relation to his descriptions of "Negroes and Jews" (ivi, 116). However, he saw in Jung's theories a "more universal element ... , and this element was in the last resort more important. If Jung was interested in racial archetypes, he was even more interested in exploring the archetypes which were common to all of humanity. As far as race is concerned it would be more accurate to say that there were some racist components in this thought rather than to characterize its orientation as racist."³⁹

That said, in order to further depict the specificity of Jung's stance about race, I would like to use – for illustrative purposes only – two examples based on general assumptions related with the race problem made by two Swiss psychiatrists in the early 1930s. First, we will consider what the philosopher and brain researcher Auguste Forel wrote in his memoirs published posthumously in 1935. Forel is commonly considered the father of Swiss psychiatry; he was Bleuler's predecessor at the direction of the Burghölzli, and was a promoter of the women's vote in Switzerland. Forel argued that history teaches how great and noble cultures regularly fall under barbarism. And he asked himself:

"Is this always the case? No, because thanks to printing, steam and electricity, the speediness of exchanges is such that discoveries spread in a flash and are no longer lost. What is really new and effectively useful in our current scientific discoveries? To what extent is it based on primeval – hundreds of thousands or millions of years old – inheritance of our brain? And how much of it stems from the culture acquired by that very same brain and collected through the compendium of knowledge of our ancestors?" Then, in relation to the "Rassenfrage" or "question of race" he placed the question: "Which races are useful for the further development of mankind, and which are not? And if the lowest races are useless, how can they gradually be eliminated?"⁴⁰

Secondly, I wish to consider what the author and psychiatrist Charlot Strasser wrote in 1932 in a book about Superstition, Quackery, Soul Healing: "Whether one speaks for or against race, regardless of the fact that it is morally valued or depreciated, the uncertain findings as to heredity provide each and every theory on race with an apparent certainty. Every gap is filled by means of the scientific superstition of inheritance."⁴¹ Strasser compared "prejudice against race and gender, hypothesis on constitution and instinct constitution" to the inveterate "superstition of the born criminal (reminiscent of Cesare Lombroso's theory of the "born or inborn criminal") of innate dispositions or mental illnesses, of the inborn nature of temperaments and feelings". He

³⁹ Stanley Grossman, "C.G. Jung and National Socialism," in Paul Bishop, ed. by., *Jung in context. A Reader*, Foreward by Antony Storr, Routledge, London/New York 2003, 117. In this respect cfr. Mosse 1988, chap. 17 ("Freud and Psychoanalysis"), especially 273ff.

⁴⁰ Orig.: "Soll das immer so fortgehen? Nein, denn dank der Druckerei, dem Dampf und der Elektrizität ist die Raschheit des Verkehrs derart, dass Entdeckungen sich blitzartig verbreiten und nicht mehr verlorengehen. Was ist an unsern jetzigen wissenschaftlichen Entdeckungen wirklich und sicher neu und zugleich sozial brauchbar? Wieviel beruht auf alter, hunderttausend- oder millionenjähriger atavistischer Vererbung unseres Gehirns, wieviel auf der durch das gleiche Gehirn erworbenen und durch die Enzyklopädie unserer Vorfahren gesammelten Kultur?" (...) "Welche Rassen sind für die Weiterentwicklung der Menschheit brauchbar, welche nicht? Und wenn die niedrigsten Rassen unbrauchbar sind, wie soll man sie allmählich ausmerzen?" (Auguste Forel, *Rückblick auf mein Leben*, Europa Verlag, Zürich 1935, 158).

⁴¹ Orig.: "Ob man nun für oder gegen die Rasse spreche, ob man sie moralisch bewerte oder entwerte, die unsicheren Erkenntnisse über die Vererbung liefern jeder Theorie über die Rasse eine scheinbare Sicherheit. Mit dem wissenschaftlichen Aberglauben an die Vererbung wird je nachdem jede beliebige Lücke ausgefüllt" (Charlot Strasser, *Aberglaube, Kurpfuscherei, Seelenheilkunde*. 14 Vorlesungen, gehalten in der Volkshochschule Zürich, Winter 1931, Genossenschaftsbuchhandlung, Zürich 1932, 61).

would further assert that such “superstitions about racial characteristics” are particularly fruitful when there is a need – as was happening with Jews – for “a beloved scapegoat from ancient times”.⁴²

If we keep in mind these two positions, we see how Jung did not share either of them. Jung never ventured, as Forel, in general reflections on the more or less utility or usefulness [Brauchbarkeit] of single races for the history and evolution of humanity, nor did he question the meaning that so-called ‘inferior races’ might have in that global context. On the other hand, he never affirmed with the same clarity and decision of Strasser (perhaps because he did not think so), that any discourse on race, no matter if in valuing or devaluing terms, has to be understood as mere superstition (equally to the theory of the ‘born or innate criminal’) and ultimately represents a scapegoat that can be easily used for political agendas.

In analytical psychology, the question of historical assumptions and superiority (in terms of evolution) of the white man goes hand in hand with a strong criticism of the very same subject. In other words, the white man’s alleged superiority is continuously questioned. From an essentially dynamic and comparative (but also compensatory) perspective, Jung considers on one hand the so-called primitives morally less developed – as, etymologically speaking, they had less developed “mores” – with respect to the civilized populations. On the other hand, he relentlessly deems the latter as being characterized by a whimsical assumed superiority, completely unaware of their historical and religious /spiritual roots, to which – instead – the primitives are still connected. Thus the primitive (as a ‘category’) seems to represent a continuous call for the lost roots (of human kind).⁴³

So, one can then recognize in Jung’s stance a continuous dynamic oscillation which seems to presuppose in every superiority inferiority – and vice versa. From this perspective, the racism that transpires from various statements by Jung seems to be a basis of departure, not of arrival for his reflection. Jung does not try to validate the inferiority of the primitive (as black, American Indian, etc.), but rather to demonstrate the shadow of the self-believing superior civilized human being – in other words, the hidden and refused inferiority. On the other hand, the “representations collectives” are still very much alive in today’s civilized world, and can still lure to a “participation mystique” in particular in all those situations where mass psychology is at play, and the so-called pre-logical mentality contains the germs of a more direct relationship with the religious.⁴⁴ Psychologically, what the primitive represents constitutes, in Jung’s view, not a lack but the quintessence of what the civilized human being should rediscover, as it has lost or forgotten.

At the same time, it seems to me that the Jungian notion of empiricism and his deduction argumentations should be critically evaluated, especially when considering his assertiveness about alleged “Tatsachen” or facts (“Facts are neither favorable or unfavorable. They are merely interesting”; “Your Negroid,” 199). For instance, while mentioning the risk of “going black” for the European, we find such sentences: “It is no mere snobbery that the English should consider anyone born in the colonies, even though the best blood

⁴² Again: “Vorurteile gegen Rasse und Geschlecht, Konstitutions- und Triebkonstitutionshypothese“ (...) “Aberglaube an den geborenen Verbrecher, an den geborenen Gemüts- und Geisteskranken, an die Angeborenheit der Temperamente und Gefühlsanlagen“ (...) “Aberglaube an die Rassenmerkmale“ (...) “einen von alters her beliebten Sündenbock“ (Strasser 1932, 61).

⁴³ Speaking about the “minds of all unsophisticated people” with reference to Lévy Bruhl’s theory on the “participation mystique,” Jung stated, “We still attribute to the other fellow all the evil and inferior qualities that we do not recognize in ourselves” (*Archaic Man*, CW 10, par. 130), but as “projection is one of the commonest psychic phenomena”, he inferred that what we combat in it as well as in the diversity of “neighbor”, is “usually our own inferior side” (ivi, par. 131).

⁴⁴ In this sense, Jung recognized a profound psychological relevance to the ‘spontaneity,’ ‘naturalness’ and ‘naivety’ which he ascribed to the ‘primitives.’ For their alleged lack or scarcity of a consciousness would correspond to a form of unintellectual yet direct openness to the religious experience.

may run in his veins, 'slightly inferior'. There are facts to support this view."⁴⁵ Likewise, as above mentioned, Jung considered 'natural' that in the dreams of his American patients "the Negro should play no small role as an expression of the inferior side of their personality" (GW 10, par. 96).

Here it is worth remembering what Andrew Samuels affirmed in the famous Congress on Jungian, Freudians, and Anti-Semitism held in New York in 1989. For Samuels, "The main difficulty with Jung's work in the general area of national psychology is an unwarranted expansion of his psychology, and hence his authority as a leader psychologist, into complicate fields where psychology alone is an inadequate explanatory too. This problem is exemplified in his treatment of the question of national psychology."⁴⁶ Consequently Jung's "ideas on national psychology degenerate it in nothing more than typology" (ivi, 190). Samuels, therefore, invites us not to consider "defined or predefined" psychological differences among national (and among sexes, races, classes as well) for, he continues, "the analyst is not an authority or teacher who has a priori knowledge of the psychological implications of the patient's ethnic and cultural background. Rather he or she is a mediator who enables the patient to experience and express his or her *own* difference" (ivi, 200). On other occasions Samuels warns against the risk of over-psychologizing in depth psychology. Interestingly enough, Samuels' position differs from that of Adolf Guggenbühl-Craig's, who – in the same congress – considered Jung a "man of his time" also because he shared all the stereotypes and clichés of the Swiss bourgeoisie (including Anti-semitism).⁴⁷ Guggenbühl-Craig suggested not to stress the littleness of these historically-linked aspects, but to consider the greatness of Jung's psychology. The different positions of Samuels and Guggenbühl-Craig may represent – I would venture to say – two poles of the Post-Jungian (Samuels) approach to Jung's theory, which may be fruitfully connected and – perhaps even – integrated.

Possibly, one of today's challenges in the arena of analytical psychology could be the need to recognize (and differentiate) the historical-biographical aspect from the methodological one in Jung's ideas. This has been said with particular clearness by the Italian Jungian analyst Mario Trevi.⁴⁸ In this way we can preserve the notion of "persönliche Gleichung" or "personal equation" as an undeniable reference to the psychic, historical-cultural presuppositions at the individual and collective level; and as a methodological stance of analytical psychology, without forgetting that Jung in addition to sharing collective coeval opinions, prejudices and stereotypes, held an equally personal vision of the world, characterized by differences that have been largely overcome today: between Europe and the rest of the world, between "Kulturvölker" and "Primitiven", between East and West, between colonialists and colonized. In a 1957 seminar, when he was asked about the shadow of analytical psychology, Jung replied that he did not have an answer. And we can hardly blame him for saying so (for he wrote, in his preface to Neumann's *Origins of the History of Conscience* that only the followers can – and should – explore territories which have remained unexplored by the pioneers). Here, I would like to say that – let us call it – this shadow of Depth, and not only of Analytical, psychology, does show a certain tendency to pan-psychologizing, which could become, quite emblematically, a sort of psychological annexation or colonization – a kind of 'psychological neo-colonialism' – of events

⁴⁵ *Woman in Europe*, CW 10, par. 249.

⁴⁶ Andrew Samuels, "National Socialism, National Psychology, and Analytical Psychology," in Aryeh Maidenbaum and Stephen A. Martin (eds), *Lingering Shadows. Jungian, Freudians, and Anti-Semitism*, Shambhala, Boston/London 1991, 182-183.

⁴⁷ Adolf Guggenbühl-Craig, "Reflections on Jung and Anti-Semitism," in Maidenbaum and Martin 1991.

⁴⁸ Trevi strongly insisted on the necessity to take care and differentiate between analytical psychology's vocation as open hermeneutic system and analytical psychology's (and obviously Jung's) tendency to give it a doctrinal, closed feature; while the latter is, according to Trevi, linked with Jung's biographical aspects, the former represents his more fruitful legacy.

(considered as “Tatsachen” or “facts”) whose understanding requires other elements. Hence the need for a form of humbleness for psychology itself, based on a major collaboration with other disciplines and a mature receptivity for their researches.

Consequently, it is not to be taken for granted, that a (psychological and) hermeneutic system manifestly fruitful in the comprehension and resolution of individual psychic problems is equally fruitful in understanding and even resolving collective problems. In my opinion, a critical reassessment of the tendency of analytical psychology to read national, collective or socio-cultural dynamics in a mythological way is needed (alongside with the question concerning the connaturality of this tendency with it): the enantiodromic stance underpinning Hölderlin's verses, "Where the danger is, also grows the saving power" underlying Jung's interpretation of Nazism at least during its early years provided it with a quite confident, almost too confident perspective in the regenerative dynamics of social-political events, regardless of their mere concreteness. And the idea, as it comes out from the BBC "Face-to-face" interview, that a patient undergoing a crisis needs to lie down and wait it out does not imply moral justification (or lack of resistance and opposition) over the 'symptoms' of the social and political 'crisis'. One can face them also by rising and fighting, even with the strength of words and awareness instead of 'sublimating' the critical awareness by means of an enantiodromic vision which could run the risk of becoming a psychological yet crypto-metaphysical comfort-zone. So, the capability of recognizing constructive resources in – individual as well as collective – crises must not prevent us from fully acknowledging their sometimes irreversible negative nature (Jung's opposition to the conception of evil as mere "privatio boni" comes to the mind). One may think of the catastrophic ecologic crisis today. And that the inferiority complex manifests itself as a complex of superiority or that a former submitted (or colonized) population can later become an oppressor, should not be turned into a dogmatic *psychological* assumption in terms of consequent, too hasty psycho-historical conclusions about the dynamics of the "global history." Perhaps this has to do with the old dream of psychology (and of psychoanalysis) of defining, retaining and wanting an 'infallible science' – as it was once believed to be – in the realm of natural sciences.