'SHADOW SELVES'

Jung, Africa and the Psyche

Jo Collins
University of Kent, UK

Africa

collective unconscious

degeneration

Fanon

Jung

universalism

Swiss psychologist, and erstwhile discipline of Freud, Carl Gustav Jung was excommunicated from the psychoanalytic movement in 1913 for delving into the occult and for challenging Freud's sexually based notion of the libido. He went on to develop his own psychological method – analytical psychology – in which 'Africa' was decisive. For Jung, Africa and its inhabitants represented the 'primitive', the unconscious, 'the other', which then enabled him to conjecture about the nature of the European psyche. Jung's visits to Tunisia and Algeria in 1920, and Kenya and Uganda in 1926, were, in effect, fact finding missions to enable him to consolidate his theories. These theories were premised on a polarization between the European and 'the other', where the dualisms of 'civilized' and 'primitive' societies were mapped onto the conscious and unconscious, respectively. Nevertheless, his autobiographical ruminations in Memories, Dreams, Reflections *(published just after Jung's death in 1961) and his theoretical writings show that he found these African environments to be problematic, troubling and difficult to comprehend: the African surroundings are depicted as unnerving, disease-ridden, or swarming with hidden threats and would not sit comfortably with his theoretical postulates. This essay not only considers the shortcomings of Jung's realizations of Africa, but also questions the ramifications of such notions within Jungian thinking, when taking into account the imbrication of Jung's theories in contemporary imperial discourses.*

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

interventions Vol. 11(1) 69–80 (ISSN 1369-801X print/1469-929X online)
 DOI: 10.1080/13698010902752764

> In Europe the Negro has one function: that of symbolizing the lower emotions, the baser inclinations, the dark side of the soul. In the collective unconscious of *homo occidentalis*, the Negro – or, if one prefers, the color black – symbolizes evil, sin, wretchedness, death, war, famine.
>
> (Fanon 1986: 190–1)

According to Frantz Fanon, the legacy of Jungian psychology is one which polarizes the world into European and Negro, whereby the 'Negro' acts as a receptacle for what is disavowed from within the European self. Certainly, Jung's theories on the collective unconscious involved a bifurcation of the primitive and the civilized, the unconscious and the conscious, where Europe and the European were coded as conscious and civilized in opposition to Africa.[1] Nevertheless, Jung seemed oblivious to the implications involved in this bifurcation; he saw Africa as a key to unlocking the secrets of the psyche. Jung believed that Africa would provide 'a psychic observation post outside the sphere of the European' (Jung 1995: 273), wherein he could encounter the living remnants of the unconscious mythologies which the European had forgotten. For Jung, Africa would give access to the archaic and universalistic collective unconscious: a storehouse of atavistic memories, primordial images and mythologies which united all human beings, but which the European, in his advanced state of civilization, had substantially forgotten.

Even if Jung was unmindful of the ideological ramifications of his thinking, his formulation of Africa was nonetheless implicated in contemporary imperialistic discourses which posited European superiority. Jung's notion of Africa was always already inflected by his schematic expectations of what he would find there and how this would reflect upon the European. Jung saw Africa as offering the possibility of objectivity in theorizing what it was to be European: he believed that in Algeria and Tunisia (and later in Kenya and Uganda) he would be able 'to see the European from outside, his image reflected back at him by an altogether foreign milieu' (Jung 1995: 266). By implication, within his project, the civilized European had transcended the degenerate state of the Africans and could survey them from a position of superiority. The Africans were, after all, people whose 'ego[s] ha[d] almost no autonomy' (1995: 270), while the experience of 'Africa' prompted Jung to reflect that 'I could not help feeling superior, as I was reminded at every step of my European nature' (1995: 273). Alongside this, Jung's conviction that Africa provided a transparent reflection of the European also proved problematic in practice. It is these unacknowledged fallacies incorporated in Jung's theories which lead him to encounter disorientation and fear in Africa. The ostensible 'otherness' of Africa in relation to Europe meant that it threatened the rational structures by which the European constructed social and psychic identities.

1 Unfortunately, this essay must forego a consideration of the impact of India on Jung's theories. Jung visited India in 1938, by invitation of the British Government of India. While for Jung, Africa had 'no culture', 'India gave me my first direct experience of an alien, highly differentiated culture' (Jung 1995: 305). For Jung, Indian culture was interesting as it represented an inversion of European culture.

This presents a logical tension in Jung's theories, whose universalizing impulse here runs up against and is subverted by the historical and colonial contingencies of the context within and about which Jung was writing. Jung's ahistoricism is problematic, as Farhad Dalal argues, not least because Jung uses 'the modern African as evidence for his theory on the prehistoric human' (1998: 265). For Dalal, Jung also infantilizes and pathologizes non-Europeans by being unable to recognize his own projections (272), and problematically resorts to biological essentialism to consolidate his arguments (274). Dalal's forceful assertion that Jung's theories are racist supports the need to re-evaluate Jung's pretensions to theoretical universalism and for an investigation of Jung's 'othering' of Africa. Such an enquiry is necessary as the irreconcilability of Jung's contradictory impulses to locate a universal collective unconscious and to posit the inferiority of the Africans has been substantially overlooked by Jungians, who have tended to sidestep the imbrication of Jung's theories in contemporary imperial discourses.

'It Is All Too Much': Difficulties in Conceptualizing Africa

> You want me to tell you something about Africa. You know, that is not easy at all. There is too much to tell and that would not be much worthwhile, and then there are a few things and I don't know exactly what to say about them. (Jung, writing to Mrs Wickes, 9 August, 1926; in Adler 1973: 44)

Jung visited Africa twice, journeying to Tunisia and Algeria in 1920, and Kenya and Uganda in 1926. His immediate impressions of Africa in his letter to Mrs Wickes suggest an experience of otherness which is largely unfathomable.[2] This sense of Africa as perplexing is borne out in Jung's letter to Emma from the Grand Hotel, Sousse, North Africa on Monday 15 March 1920, in which he writes:

> Unfortunately I cannot write coherently to you, for it is all too much. . . . [Here you] no longer think of yourself; you are dissolved in this potpourri which cannot be evaluated, still less described. . . . This is all nothing but miserable stammering; I do not know what Africa is really saying to me, but it speaks. (Jung 1995: 405)

Jung's letter reveals the difficulties he encounters in engaging conceptually with North Africa, which ostensibly threatens him with a pervasive sense of disorder and incoherence.[3]

Jung sought to contain and domesticate his African experiences in his autobiography. Here, experiences of alterity are explored and sanitized. One such example is the *n'goma* dance which Jung acquiesces to observe, after

2 It was only between 1957 and 1959 that he retrospectively committed the experiences into narrative form; these will be explored in the following section.

3 Sousse (East Tunisia) was a French protectorate (although 1920 saw the establishment of the Tunisian nationalist organizations Destur and Neo-Destur). It seems that there is a certain degree of homogenization in Jung's representation: that a bustling port is as inexplicable as later experiences in the bush. This suggests that Jung's feelings are inflected by a pre-existing stereotype, a fantasy vision of Africa.

being approached by 'the blackest Negroes I had ever seen' (1995: 300) (a troupe of Bari tribesmen)[4] while travelling into Sudan. While Jung records that he and his 'English friend ... sprang to our feet and mingled with the dancers', his unease is not dispelled. He remains, as a 'civilized European', an anxious outsider. He writes: 'the natives easily [fell] ... into a virtual state of possession ... excitement began to get out of bounds. ... The dancers were being transformed into a wild horde, and I became worried about how it would end' (1995: 301). Jung's action is to take charge: he attempts to disband the *n'goma*:

> I called the people together, distributed cigarettes, and then made the gesture of sleeping. Then I swung my rhinoceros whip threateningly, but at the same time laughing, and for lack of any better language I swore at them loudly in Swiss German that this was enough and they must go home to bed and sleep now. (Jung 1995: 301)

Jung's ridiculous behaviour registers a failure to communicate with 'the other'. While he records that his gestures 'seem[ed] to have struck just the right note', the dancers 'vanish ... into the night' and continue 'howl[ing] and drumming in the distance' (1995: 302). Jung has no authority here, the threat of Africa (represented by the entranced/unconscious dancers) which he believes he has dispelled, lingers, by his own admission, in a more concealed and obscure locale.

It seems that this story is in some ways a metaphor for Jung's own idea of Africa and its relation to the psyche. Here the apparently threatening/African is also unconscious/animalistic, and must be subjugated to the conscious/civilized/European. However, as a metaphor, this incident also encapsulates the limitations of Jung's own approach. The process of conscious/civilized mastery over what is unconscious actually degenerates into incoherence in the attempt at communication – there is no certainty that the tribesmen have complied with Jung's demands or even that they have listened to him, or recognized what Jung was trying to convey by swearing in 'Swiss German' and swinging his rhinoceros whip about. Suppression is then not total; rather, there is a partial concealment of what is troubling. Indeed, this partial concealment is not only representative of the pattern of events that Jung describes, but also of what his description has omitted. It seems that Jung's autobiographical account does not tell the whole story. In a seminar given in 1934, Jung gave the following account of a *n'goma* dance:

> If you watch a ... Negro *n'goma* dance, where the rhythmic movement goes on for hours to the monotonous tone of the drum, you will get hypnotized, there will be a certain dimness of consciousness, a partial intoxication. The thing becomes more and more convincing, so that you are finally drawn into it, and if you are entirely in it you lose consciousness completely. And when such a performance is going on in

4 Burleson (2005): 191).

> the collective unconscious, you also fall under its spell, so that your mind is not as clear and settled and secure as before. (Burleson 2005: 198)

As Blake Burleson suggests, it seems that this description refers to Jung himself. This implies that Jung was not as detached from the African dancers and music as he indicated in his autobiography; it seems instead that he felt alarmingly affected by them. Jung was then not the objective observer represented in his autobiography; the experience of the *n'goma* seems more disconcerting and more complex than the autobiography discloses. Furthermore, this comment indicates that Jung's experience in Africa on some level led to his conceptualizing what happens when the 'civilized consciousness' is overwhelmed by its surroundings, jeopardizing the ability to make sense of the world. It is the term *collective unconscious* which is crucial here, as it also represents a means by which Jung theorizes Africa and how it affects the European.

'Going Black Under the Skin': The Psychic Dangers of Africa

> What is more contagious than to live side by side with a rather primitive people? Go to Africa and see what happens ... 'going black'. (Jung 1970a: 507)

Subsequent to his split with Freud in 1913, Jung, by his own account, spent the next five years preoccupied with an incessant stream of fantasies and dreams (1995: 201), from which he would attempt to formulate a new Jungian doctrine. Jung's explorations of dreams enabled him to develop his theory of the personification of unconscious contents in the archetypes (1995: 202), the shadow (1995: 205) and the anima (1995: 206), which in turn led to his theory of the collective unconscious. It was these incipient theories of the collective unconscious which had impelled his break with Freud, and now they came to 'replace ... the core of the Freudian doctrine' (Rosenzweig 1994: 217). These theorizations of the collective unconscious not only reflect Jung's relationship with Freud, they are also an integral part of his preconceptions of Africa, and his working through of uneasy experiences of Africa.

Before Jung had even travelled to Africa, he was already beginning to frame the idea that Europeans had substantially transcended the unconscious, unlike those in 'primitive' lands. For Jung, 'primitive man dwell[s] in his land and at the same time in the land of his unconscious. Everywhere his unconscious jumps out at him, alive and real. How different is our relationship to the land we dwell in!' (1970b: 26–7). Thus, in primitive lands, there was no apparent distinction between interiority and exteriority,

and unconsciousness was all-encompassing. However, how sustainable is this binary between primitive and civilized, particularly when 'the world of primitive feeling . . . lives on in the [European] unconscious' (1970b: 26–7)? And could Jung expect that by travelling to Africa he could reach comprehension of the unconscious? What Jung did encounter in Africa was the dissolution of his straightforward separation of the civilized and the primitive. He describes it in his autobiography as 'living on two planes simultaneously, one conscious, which attempted to understand and could not, and one unconscious, which wanted to express something and could not formulate it any better than a dream' (1995: 270). Thus, by subscribing to his own formulation of the psyche, Jung is confronted by the problem of the mutual incomprehension of the conscious and the unconscious, the radical unknowability of what he set out to comprehend.

The possibility of knowing Africa necessitates for Jung immersion within otherness/unconsciousness which threatens the self. To be submerged in unconsciousness is to jeopardize the distinction between conscious and unconscious (for it is not possible to be conscious in the unconscious). Consequently, for Jung, the African bush, while providing a pathway to 'unconsciousness', also threatened the integrity of 'the civilized psyche'. In a lecture from 1928, Jung suggested:

> There is a sort of fear, a panic which is typical of the collective unconscious like the bush fear, a particular kind of fear which seizes you when you are alone in the bush. It is that peculiar feeling of going astray in the bush – the most terrible thing you can imagine, people go mad in no time – or you may develop the symptom of feeling yourself looked at on all sides, of eyes everywhere looking at you, eyes that you do not see. . . . Once, in the bush in Africa, I kept turning around in a small circle for half an hour so that my back would not be turned to the eyes which I felt were watching me. . . . You are forced in upon yourself and are bound to become aware of your background. (Jung 1984: 75)

What is evident here is Jung's aim to 'know' the unconscious *through* Africa is flawed: he cannot experience 'the unconscious' *as* Africa and go on to theorize it objectively. Instead, the ostensible unconsciousness of Africa has overwhelmed him, undermining the integrity of the (supposedly) civilized European consciousness, making him paranoid, illogical and disorientated. Jung's Africa is a disapproving and intimidating external presence which seems to be toying with him, almost mocking his pretensions to 'see the European from outside' (1995: 266). Thus the conventional distinctions of inside/outside, unconscious contents and conscious reality are problematized as Jung finds himself living simultaneously on conscious and unconscious planes.

Jung's writings on Africa are replete with warnings about the risks that Africa poses to the European psyche. In his autobiography, Jung writes that African peoples 'are so much closer to life than we are [which] exerts a strong suggestive influence upon those historical layers in ourselves which we have overcome and left behind' (1995: 272). However, this nostalgia for surmounted existence is dangerous as it represents the 'spiritual peril' of 'going black under the skin' and this threatens 'the uprooted European in Africa' (1995: 274). For the European, Jung suggests,

> the ... alien and wholly different ... surroundings [of Africa] awaken an archetypal memory of an only too well known prehistoric past which apparently we have entirely forgotten. ... To relive [this past] naively ... would constitute a relapse into barbarism. (Jung 1995: 274)

Here Africa is the disappearing point of history and European identity. Jung tells his reader that 'time slows down' and 'almost threatens to move backward' in the Sahara (1995: 268); he describes how in Kenya he encounters 'the stillness of the eternal beginnings', and figures whose 'world had been mine for countless millennia' (1995: 284). In trying to render Africa as the 'other' to Europe, Jung's narrative also establishes the context of interaction within which European values and paradigms will be problematized by the very 'otherness' to which it is schematically opposed.

'Psychical Infection': *Dis*ease in Africa

> What is going to happen to Jung the psychologist in the wilds of Africa? This was a question I had constantly sought to evade, in spite of my intellectual intention to study the European's reaction to primitive conditions. 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. (Jung 1995: 303)

Jung's autobiographical admission that his experiences in Africa were intensely personal (perhaps even symptomatic of his own complexes) must also be considered in light of his attempted schematization of Africa and its peoples as diametrically opposed to Europe. Jung's psychological theories not only suggested the ways in which he would experience Africa, his schema also shapes his retrospective descriptions of his experiences of Africa, in order to consolidate those very theories. Thus there is circularity in his theorizations.

By polarizing civilized/primitive, and conscious/unconscious, and aligning the two sets of terms, Jung not only creates a tautology, he also establishes

the precondition for his encounter of Africa as a space which is unnerving. He also posits binary terms that collapse back on themselves. This is demonstrated by a train of thought that Jung sets up in his 1931 paper 'Archaic Man'. In this paper, Jung suggests that unlike the European, the 'archaic man', 'has ... a smaller area of consciousness than we, and ... little or no aptitude for concentrated mental activity' (1970c: 54). Furthermore, 'Psychic happenings take place outside him [the archaic man] in an objective way. Even the things he dreams about are real to him' (1970c: 61).[5] This alternative vision of reality can lead to the European feeling disorientated in 'primitive' surroundings. For example, according to Jung, many 'primitives' have an 'incredibly accurate sense of direction' and 'after a short while in Africa' the European 'notice[s] things he would never have dreamed of noticing before' and 'fear[s] ... going hopelessly astray in spite of his compass' (1970c: 53).[6] However, surely here Jung is conflating the European's experience of the landscape with the 'African' perception of the same space, while also implying the dislocation concomitant with abandoning seemingly rational ('European') means of perception (the compass) for instinctive ('African') ones.[7] How is it that for Jung the European comes to see the landscape through the 'primitive' perception of reality? Read in terms of what Jung describes as the 'projection of psychic happenings' (1970c: 64), the answer is that the pervasive 'unconsciousness' of the people and landscape prompt the European to psychically regress. For Jung, 'every civilized human being, however high his conscious development, is still an archaic man at the deeper levels of his psyche' (1970c: 51). Jung's writing continually returns to the idea that even if civilized man has distanced himself from his archaic self, there is still the possibility that he might relapse into this state.[8] Thus, like Marlow's experience of the Congo tribesmen, there is a 'remote kinship' with what initially appears as 'alterity', and the experience of the African surroundings brings this to light (Conrad 1995: 63). What Jung is conflating in the above example[9] is African 'interiority' in terms of the psyche, and exteriority as 'unconsciousness' (i.e. the African landscape), suggesting that these are facets of the collective unconsciousness suppressed within the European, to potentially be reactivated. However, for Jung, the resurgence of this unconsciousness corresponds to 'going black under the skin'. The prevalence of unconsciousness in Africa and its peoples threatens to undermine the substance of the European identity.[10]

For Jung, the potential dissolution of the European in Africa is alarming and potentially irrevocable. In his writings he repeatedly refers to the threat of 'infection by the primitive' (1970d: 47) or 'racial infection' (1970a: 509), and his autobiography records instances of psychical contamination (1995: 270, 302). Theorizing 'psychical infection', Jung suggests: 'In Africa ... the white man is a diminishing minority and must therefore protect himself from

5 Jung's example to substantiate this claim is the Elgonyi.

6 This seems to be another reference to Jung's panic attack in the bush.

7 Here I am following Jung's schema in order to show its limitations. Jung homogenizes the 'outlook' of the primitive man, conflating (Arizona) Pueblo Indians, Kenyan Elgonyi tribesmen, Ugandan tribes and Australian Aborigines as somehow sharing the same worldview both within and outside their social groupings. For Jung, these tribes are linked through their 'collective unconsciousness', their proximity to the archetypal past.

8 This is a feature of Jung's writings even before his expeditions to Africa (e.g. 'The Role of the Unconscious' – Jung 1970b: 26–7 – and 'The Psychological Foundation of Belief in Spirits' – Jung 1977: 144). Jung's 'Archaic Man' aims to focus on 'primitive man' (Jung 1970c: 50), but Jung briefly outlines this theme, arguing 'it is not only primitive man whose psychology is archaic. It is the psychology also of the modern, civilized man' (1970c: 50–1).

the Negro by observing the most rigorous social forms, otherwise he risks "going black". If he succumbs to the primitive influence he is lost' (1970d: 47). However, if Jung believes protective measures can be taken to mitigate this threat in the form of rigid social behaviours he also considers degeneration to be inevitable. He suggests in another paper from the same year:

> the European, however highly developed, cannot live in impunity among the Negroes in Africa; their psychology gets into him unnoticed and unconsciously he becomes a Negro. There is no fighting against it. . . . It is no mere snobbery that the English should consider anyone born in the colonies, even though the best blood may run in his veins, 'slightly inferior'. (Jung 1970e: 121)

We are faced here with fundamental contradictions in Jung's arguments. Jung wants to posit the difference between Europe(ans) and Africa(ns), and yet the proximity of the European to Africa leads to the collapse between these distinctions as the European ostensibly becomes 'African'. These tensions are indicative of Jung's own ambiguous engagement with theorizing the collective unconscious. Jung believes that Africans and Europeans are fundamentally different, inasmuch as Africa must be different, 'past' and archaic in order for him to be able to discover the psychic contents lost to the civilized Europeans. However, if Africans and Europeans share a collective unconsciousness, then at some level there is a common origin, sameness.[11] This is fundamentally problematic for Jung – his universalist theory of the collective unconscious cannot accommodate his own historical and ideological prejudices. Thus we can speculate that his sense of unease regarding Africa and African people reflects not only his parochialism, but also the unacknowledged irreconcilability of this with his theories that aspire to universalism.

'Resistance'? The Implications of Africa for Jungian Theories

> I took this dream [about an African-American barber in Chattanooga Tennessee] as a warning from the unconscious; it was saying that the primitive was a danger to me. At that time I was obviously all too close to 'going back'. I was suffering from an attack of sandfly fever which probably reduced my psychic resistance. (Jung 1995: 302)

Clearly, for Jung, Africa was dangerous: not only did it threaten his physical and psychical well-being, but also his formulation of a theoretical basis for the notion of the collective unconscious. The pervasive threat of 'going

9 And in the other examples of the *n'goma* dance and being lost in the bush.

10 Blake Burleson argues: 'In the 1920s, "going black" was considered an illness. Even before Jung had ventured into East Africa he had treated his patients who apparently had this "pathological" condition. These were colonial officials who returned home with "burned brains" (Jung, *Notes*, 197)' (Burleson 2005: 200). Burleson's analysis effectively sidesteps the imperialist/racial overtones of this concept.

11 Indeed, it is possible to argue that the point of cleavage between primitive and civilized cannot be mapped. How can a civilized identity be posited if it only comes into being from a timeless unconsciousness of primitivity which allows for no form of self-conception? The event of the split must pre-exist itself in order to bring itself into being – a theoretical paradox.

b(l)ack' is symptomatic of Jung's unease about the sustainability not of the distinction between 'primitive' and 'civilized', but of his own notions of what constitutes 'primitive' and 'civilized'. The historical insularity of Jung's scheme might be seen to pose problems for an approach which aims for inclusivity. Indeed, Jungian theorists have addressed the narrowness of Jung's approach to other races. Vannoy Adams, using this example of the dream where Jung is terrified by the African-American barber attempting to 'kink' his hair, suggests that Jung's shortcoming in his attitude toward Africans and African–Americans was his failure to analyse himself using his own theories (Burleson 2005: 200). For Vannoy Adams, there is a sense that 'the unconscious compensates [for] the partial, prejudicial, defective conceits of the ego' (1996: 78): thus by focusing on the openness of the unconscious, a less prejudicial interpretation of the dream can be achieved. Vannoy Adams reinterprets the dream by figuring the African-American barber as a creative and positive aspect of Jung's psyche (rather than a threat equated with 'Africanness' that wants to subsume him). However, while Vannoy Adams' interpretation shows awareness of and critiques Jung's prejudices, he does not go far enough. The clever manoeuvre of deploying Jung's theories to re-read and reinterpret Jung does not confront the historical embeddedness and geographical contingency of Jung's theories of the *European* subject as they were formulated in an African context. Instead, Vannoy Adams adopts an approach which myopically universalizes the particular, hence by implication (if not consciously) sustaining, by refusing to probe, the negative images of blackness, darkness and ideas of the primitive which have been seen to correspond to the unconscious (Campbell 2000: 191; Fanon 1986: 190).

This is precisely the narrowness of vision which Fanon drew attention to in *Black Skin, White Masks*, when he argued that the Jungian approach fundamentally ignored the ramifications of colonialism in its positing of a universal unconsciousness. Fanon points out that Jung's theories never consider the colonial contexts of the so-called 'primitive peoples' he observes (Fanon 1986: 187). Moreover, primitivity is a projection, a repudiation of that which the European cannot acknowledge about himself/herself. It is these historical contingencies which prove to be a blind spot for Jungian theorists investigating Jung's journeys to Africa. Blake Burleson defends Jung's notion of the 'primitive' as having a 'broader meaning' beyond a 'hegemonic sledgehammer to beat [the Africans] into political submission'. This broader meaning was the 'undifferentiated layer of the human psyche which had evolved out of the ubiquitous unconscious' (2005: 116). However, as we have already seen, this 'broader meaning' relied precisely on the equation of Africa and African with 'the ubiquitous unconscious' in order for Jung's fact finding trip to Africa to be worthwhile. Burleson does,

however, acknowledge Jung's imbrication in the contemporary imperialist discourses, suggesting:

> while the Jung safari was a product of an imperialist infrastructure and, as such and to some extent, embodied the prejudice and ignorance of the age, the journey was a seminal experience for one of the twentieth century's most significant individuals. ... That Africa, now clearly established as the ancestral home of the human brain, served as midwife for Jung's ideas on human consciousness is fitting, and perhaps fated. (Burleson 2005: 18)

It seems again that Jung has been redeemed by the authority of his ideas, which effectively allows a transcendence of the ramifications of ideological prejudice. But is it enough to suggest that because of their greatness Jung's ideas surpass the historical context of their genesis? While Burleson's account of Jung's journey in Africa sketches in a colonial backdrop, the impact of this context and its power relations on the theories Jung was formulating is never considered. The assertion of Jung's universalism also marks a resistance towards acknowledging fully the implications of his ideological focus: it is this resistance to contingency which is problematic.[12] Burleson and Vannoy Adams circumvent the relativity of Jung's writings, seemingly almost conflating the notion of a universalistic 'collective unconscious' with a sense that Jung's ideas themselves are universal, thus occluding a consideration of the alternatives to a white European formulation of the psyche.

All this is not to dismiss Jung's work out of hand, or to suggest that all its practitioners somehow unthinkingly reproduce Jung's own prejudices. Obviously Jung's theories are not static or self-same, but rather are continually revised and reworked. Nevertheless, pretensions to theoretical universalism in Jung's writings need to be examined, specifically with reference to the imperial contexts within which Jung's key notions were formulated. This raises serious issues, not merely about whether Jung can be rehabilitated from his own historical prejudices, but also about whether it is possible within the universalist remit of Jungian thinking to address the specific contexts within which these ideas were formulated. Indeed, what would it mean for Jungian thinking to engage with the particular and the historical? Are these two positions irreconcilable? While the work of Burleson and Vannoy Adams shows that it *is* possible for Jungians to approach Jung historically, what is also evident is that these works obscure the less palatable implications of Jung's approach. These works demonstrate that there are urgent ethical and theoretical obligations for Jungians to reconsider how Jung's writings partook of particular racial prejudices, and what the implications of this might be. Even if Jung aspired to chart the universal within psychology, his writings themselves were not ideologically

12 Another example is the *Journal of Analytical Psychology* review of Burleson's book by James Astor (2005). The review is more concerned with questioning the likelihood of Jung's 'going black' than considering the implications of such a theory.

neutral, and it would be negligent to consider them so. What represents the collective unconscious to one man may very well be 'cultural imposition' to another. Ideas are not fixed, but they do have historical resonance: their intellectual history or etymology can be mapped or excavated. Whatever their universalistic pretensions, ideas do not simply transcend ideology; those using them need to seek blind spots and resistances, to push beyond the obvious to confront what might be difficult to face; to look into the shadows.

References

Adler, Gerhard (ed.) (1973) *C. G. Jung Letters, Volume 1: 1906–1950*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Astor, James (2005) 'Book review: *Jung in Africa*', *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 50(5): 707–11.

Burleson, Blake W. (2005) *Jung in Africa*, London: Continuum.

Campbell, Jan (2000) *Arguing with the Phallus: Feminist, Queer and Postcolonial Theory, a Psychoanalytic Contribution*, London: Zed Books.

Conrad, Joseph (1995) [1899] *Heart of Darkness*, London: Penguin.

Dalal, Farhad (1998) 'Jung: a racist', *British Journal of Psychotherapy* 4(3): 263–79.

Fanon, Frantz (1986) [1952] *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann, London: Pluto Press.

Jung, Carl Gustav (1970a) [1930] 'The complications of American psychology', in *Civilization in Transition, Vol. 10: The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 502–14.

Jung, Carl Gustav (1970b) [1918] 'The role of the unconscious', in *Civilization in Transition, Vol. 10: The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 3–28.

Jung, Carl Gustav (1970c) [1931] 'Archaic man', in *Civilization in Transition, Vol. 10: The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 50–73.

Jung, Carl Gustav (1970d) [1927] 'Mind and earth', in *Civilization in Transition, Vol. 10: The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 29–49.

Jung, Carl Gustav (1970e) [1927] 'Woman in Europe', in *Civilization in Transition, Vol. 10: The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 113–33.

Jung, Carl Gustav (1977) [1919] 'The psychological foundation of belief in spirits', in *Psychology and the Occult*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 108–25.

Jung, Carl Gustav (1984) [1928] 'Lecture VI, 12 December 1928', in *Dream Analysis: Notes of the Seminar Given 1928–1930 by C. G. Jung*, William McGuire (ed.), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 69–82.

Jung, Carl Gustav (1995) [1962] *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, trans. Aniela Jaffé, London: Harper Collins.

Rosenzweig, Saul (1994) [1992] *The Historic Expedition to America (1909), Freud, Jung and Hall the King-maker*, St Louis: Rana House.

Vannoy Adams, Michael (1996) *The Multicultural Imagination: 'Race', Color and the Unconscious*, New York: Routledge.