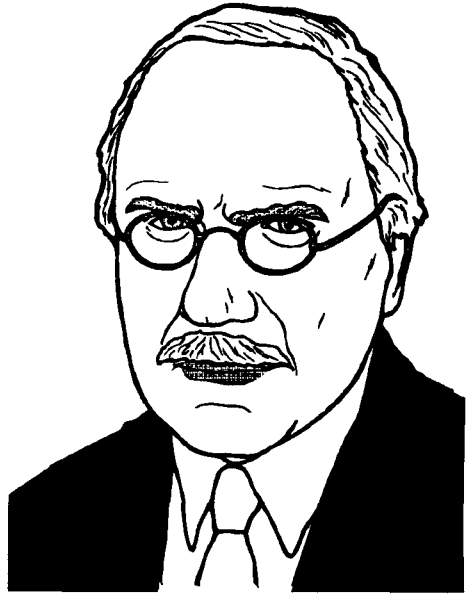


JUNG — A RACIST?



The Racism of Jung

Farhad Dalal

The concept of a racial hierarchy has existed for a long time. Rationalisations of the hierarchy have moved from evoking biblical authority and the story of Ham, to biology, to psychology. Psychological rationalisation contains two strands — the first being the ‘scientific’ notion of IQ, and the second being the psychodynamic notion of the ‘psyche’. It is the latter — in particular, that of Jung and his concept of the psyche — that will concern us.

Jung is revered for several things. He is said to be the father of ‘transpersonal psychology’. He is said to be the man who unified the human race through his concept of the collective unconscious, and then connected the human race to the greater

cosmos. It is said that he is the great equaliser, and the great unifier. It is said that his philosophy is that of balance and humility. And it is true that he has done these things, but only partially, and at a cost — the cost being not only a retention, but also a reinforcement of the status quo and the iniquities contained therein.

His attempts at ‘unification’ and ‘balance’ consist of several equations:

1. The modern black with the prehistoric human.
2. The modern black conscious with the white unconscious.
3. The modern black adult with the white child.

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It is this that constitutes the racist core of Jungian psychology and on which all else is based. The equations are where he begins; these are the ideas and beliefs that he accepts without question. As 'evidence', in order to substantiate these claims, I will use his own words extensively. On the whole, it will not be necessary to interpret passages, to find the 'hidden meaning'. Given that the words speak for themselves, it is curious to note the selective reading of Jung that has taken place. Amidst the accolades, the selective blindness of the Jungians is an interesting phenomenon in itself.

Let us begin with his concept of the primitive, and the psychology of this creature. Straight away, there appears to be a confusion here. Jung uses the word 'primitive' in two senses: first, as the prehistoric human, and second, as the modern black. But, as will become apparent, it is no confusion. To Jung they are all one. To be black is to be primitive.

The Prehistoric Psyche

The prehistoric human is said to exist in a sort of collectivity: 'if we go right back to primitive psychology, we find absolutely no trace of the concept of the individual . . . instead of individuality we find only collective relationship or what Levy-Bruhl calls "participation mystique"'. In volume 6 of Jung's *Collected Works*, he defines participation mystique as follows: 'the fact that the subject cannot clearly distinguish himself from the object but is bound to it by a direct relationship which amounts to a partial identity. The identity results from an *a priori* oneness of subject and object. PM (participation mystique) is a vestige of this primitive condition.'

It can be seen that his model for the

prehistoric human is much like that of the object relations model for the very young infant who has not begun to separate out from the mother. The prehistoric human is said to be *undifferentiated* — that is, *the thinking and feeling functions are concreistic*. According to Jung, the four functions have not yet separated out. Concretism is 'the antithesis of abstraction . . . the meaning of concrete is grown together . . . Primitive thinking and feeling are entirely concreistic; they are always related to sensation. The thought of the primitive has no detached independence but clings to material phenomena. It rises at most to the level of analogy. Primitive feeling is equally bound to material phenomena. Both depend on sensation and are only slightly differentiated from it. Concretism is therefore an archaism.' And, at the risk of being too pedantic, here is his definition of archaism: '[it] designates the oldness of psychic contents or functions . . . qualities that have the character of relics. We may describe as archaic all psychological traits that exhibit the qualities of primitive mentality . . . The relation of identity with an object, or participation mystique, is likewise archaic.' These definitions are his building blocks; the words have very particular meanings — meanings which are used in insidious and surprising ways to bolster the racial hierarchy. The prehistoric human does not think as such: 'The instinctive sensuousness of the primitive has its counterpart in the spontaneity of his psychic processes: his mental products, his thoughts, just appear to him as it were. It is not he who makes them or thinks them — he is not capable of that — they make themselves, they happen to him, they even confront him as hallucinations.'

In summary, the prehistoric human is not conscious of self as opposed to Other,

has no individuality, his/her relationship to the world is collective. In the psyche there is no differentiation, the four functions have not separated out, with the consequence that thought and feeling are tied to sensation. There is no will or volition; thoughts and feelings just happen. On what does Jung base this theory? According to him, 'Powell says, "The confusion of confusions is that universal habit of savagery — the confusion of the objective with the subjective." Spencer and Gillan observe: "What a savage experiences during a dream is just as real to him as what he sees when he is awake." What I myself have seen of the psychology of the Negro completely endorses these findings.'

Let me clarify this point as it will occur again and again: Jung is using the modern African as evidence for his theory on the prehistoric human, and is thus stating that the modern African is primitive, is prehistoric. As I shall show, Jung accepts this view without challenging it in any way. To him it is a self-evident truth, the *a priori* postulate on which all else is based.

So how does Jung perceive the modern black? The Arab, the Indian the African, the Chinese? How does he perceive the non-European?

Loath as I am to use the negative category 'non-European', I am forced to do so because it is a category implied by Jung. The fact that this category exists at all reveals something of Jung's perception of the hierarchy of races. As will become clear, the races are seen to be on a spectrum of evolution. But there is a sharp discontinuity in two places in the continuum: between the animal world and the human, and between the European and the non-European. Often I will use the term 'black' to denote non-European. Jung

further compounds the schism in the manner of his writing. His use of 'we' consistently denotes the European; the Other is always 'they'. It is difficult to locate a use of 'we' that implies all of the human race.

The Modern Black Psyche

Emotion

According to Jung, blacks are steeped in emotion, cast hither and thither on a sea of psychic forces which they do not recognise or understand, and as a consequence of which they have no control over themselves, unlike Europeans. In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, he states of the North African desert tribes: "These people live from their affects, are moved and have their being in emotion. Their consciousness takes care of their orientation in space and transmits impressions from the outside, and it is also stirred by inner impulses and affects. But it is not given to reflection; the ego has almost no autonomy. The situation is not so different from the European; but we are after all somewhat more complicated. At any rate the European possesses a certain measure of will and directed intention.'

But even their emotional life is different from that of the European. The non-European has not managed to separate out from the world, object and subject are not differentiated, feelings are concrete. Jung supplies us with a story, or 'evidence', in support of this: 'An incident in the life of a bushman may illustrate what I mean. A bushman had a little son whom he loved with the tender monkey-love characteristic of primitives. Psychologically, this love is completely autoerotic — that is to say the subject loves himself in the object. The object serves as a sort of erotic

mirror. One day the bushman came home in a rage; he had been fishing as usual, and caught nothing. As usual the little fellow came to meet him, but his father seized hold of him and wrung his neck on the spot. Afterwards, of course, he mourned for the dead child with the same unthinking abandon that had brought about his death.'

I will take issue with this passage on several grounds: First, there is the small point of Jung comparing the bushman with a monkey. This is basic to an ideology that creates a hierarchy of races and uses Darwinism as a justification for it. The bushman is less evolved than the European and, therefore, closer to the animal world. Second, it brings up the more general issue of the dangers involved in creating theories of personality types, character types, or racial types, be they psychological or whatever. Certain behaviours and characteristics are said to belong (by definition) to certain types. So, when type 'A' exhibits behaviour that is outside the defined norm for that type, then it is said that 'A' is behaving like 'B'. For example, a man is acting like a woman, or like a child. What is said is that the behaviour exhibited by this 'A' is more appropriate to type 'B'.

How and why certain behaviours come to be associated with certain categories of people is an interesting issue in itself, but one that cannot be pursued here. It is enough to say that the process is not a neutral activity; it builds a cage around the oppressed, and always militates against them, defining them from the outside. And once the theory is built, and particular characteristics are allocated to certain categories, then any deviation (by any member of the hierarchy) is labelled

pathological. For example, from the tone of the story it would be reasonable to assume that such a thing could only happen to a 'primitive' — never to a white man; if it did, then it would be said that he is acting like a primitive. The image of the white man has been kept pure.

The act of a European man murdering his child is labelled pathological. Such a man will be defined as mentally sick and, depending on one's philosophy, needing treatment or punishment. Basically, he is said to be acting out of character. The bushman's act, on the other hand, is said to be 'natural' and in keeping with his psychology. Therefore it is not pathological. More, it would be pathological for him to be otherwise. Now, because it is natural for this particular bushman it must therefore be true of all bushmen. The generalisation conforms with racist ideology, whilst pretending to confirm it. The conclusion only follows if one starts with an *a priori* gradation of races. The dangerous thing is that the conclusion purports to be the outcome of a scientific process of neutral observation and deduction. Jung is fond of this manoeuvre, and uses it often.

So much for the bushman. Jung does not allow him the ability to love as an adult, but only as an infant that has not yet separated out from its mother. A prerequisite to saying 'I love you' is the move away from identity, a separation and a distinction between the 'I' and the 'you'. The poor bushman has not even this.

Another example of the use and misuse of character/racial types occurs in Jung's essay on 'Archaic Man'. He notes that when he asked the mountain tribe of Elgonyi the meaning of a certain ritual (spitting on their hands and holding them up to the

sun), they could not give him an answer. Next to this he places the story of an imaginary Mr Muller running around one morning at Easter, 'hiding coloured eggs and setting up rabbit idols'. Mr Muller is also unable to give an answer, to give meaning to his actions. It is possible to give a historical explanation in each situation — that the original symbolic meaning has been forgotten by each party. Jung eschews this possibility. His analysis of the Elgonyi is that 'it became clear to me that they only knew what they did and not why they did it. And Mr Muller? Well: 'Mr Muller is stunned. He does not know, any more than he knows the meaning of the Christmas tree. And yet he does these things, just like a primitive. Did the distant ancestors of the Elgonyi know any better what they were doing? It is highly improbable. Archaic man everywhere does what he does, and only civilised man knows what he does.'

The salient points are, first, when Mr Muller does exactly the same thing as the Elgonyi, he is said to be acting like a primitive. By definition, a 'civilised person' is not allowed to 'do' without knowing, and if he does, then he is not being himself. Second, he allows Mr Muller's ancestors the probability of knowing the meaning of that ritual. In other words, he is allowing his ancestors a history and knowledge. But the ancestors of the Elgonyi he fixates in ignorance, as he does the Elgonyi themselves. They would not know meaning if it came up and hit them in the face; they cannot recognise it, they do not need it, they do not seek it. Ignorance is bliss for the natives, that is. He has, in fact, used the parallel situations to drive a further wedge between two races. The two acts may appear the same, but, according to

Jung, they are completely different. Having cut out the heart of the bushman, Jung continues on his expedition. Here, he manages to see something positive in the African, describing it thus: 'All in all, Negroes proved to be excellent judges of character. One of their avenues to insight lay in their talent for mimicry. [Like monkeys again?] They could imitate with astounding accuracy the manner of expression, the gestures, the gaits of people, thus, to all intents and purposes, slipping into their skins. I found their understanding of the emotional nature of others altogether surprising.'

But why the surprise? After all, emotion is all that he has allowed them — and then he is surprised that they are good at it? But, of course, he is surprised because their emotional ability is so stunted compared to that of Europeans, being concretistic. Here is evidence that contradicts his theory, but it does not shake it. Jung notes his surprise, and then hurries on, no doubt to neutrally observe some other primitive phenomenon.

It should be noted that the argument really needs to have begun further back, with an examination of the concept of race itself. As C.J. Robinson has pointed out in *Black Marxism*, the definition of a nation is based not so much on the homogeneity of those said to be of the nation but on the exclusion of certain others. The same could be said of the notion of 'race'.

Thought

So much for the emotional centre of the blacks. Jung alludes to their thinking process in the following story: 'the dream of an old chief, in which he learnt that one of his cows had calved, and was now standing with her calf by the river, in a particular

clearing. He was too old to keep track of his many cattle that pastured in the various open places in the forest, so he naturally didn't know that this cow was going to calve, let alone where. But the cow and the calf were found just where he had dreamt where they would be. These people are extraordinarily close to nature. Several other things happened which made it quite clear to me why they were so convinced that their dreams told the truth. Part of the reason is that their dreams often fulfil the thinking function over which they still do not have full conscious control.' And he sums up Arab culture in terms of 'the emotional nature of these unreflective people who are so much closer to life than we are'.

So, here are two telling examples of Jung's philosophy of balance. He says: 'These people are extraordinarily close to nature' and that they are 'so much closer to life than we are', but they also happen to be unreflective and do not have full control of their thinking function. A fine balance.

The logic goes something like this: in the beginning there is only the unconscious; consciousness grows out of the unconscious. It is hard work trying to stay conscious; it is tiring. The African, being new to this game, and being mostly unconscious, finds it particularly tiring. But let Jung speak: 'In early childhood we are unconscious . . . consciousness is the product of the unconscious. It is a condition which demands a violent effort. You get tired from being conscious. It is a most unnatural effort. When you observe primitives, for instance, you will see that on the slightest provocation or on no provocation whatever they doze off, they disappear. They sit for hours on end, and when you ask them: "What are you doing? What are you

thinking?"', they are offended because they say: "Only a man that is crazy thinks he has thoughts in his head. We do not think." If they think at all, it is rather in the belly or in the heart . . . They are just about in the Homeric age . . . when the diaphragm was the seat of psychic activity . . . abstract thought does not exist for them.'

So one group says that they think with their heads, one with their stomachs, one with their hearts. But Jung does not perceive this neutrally, as a choice concerning the symbolic location of the self. No, if they say they do not think with their heads, then they do not think at all; in fact, they are actually psychologically unevolved. He even gives an indication as to how unevolved: they are in the Homeric age. Now that is scientific. In effect, Jung has cut off the head of the non-European. He does not allow them the dignity of thought, of will, of volition, of direction. He does not allow the non-European the luxury of choice, one of the elements of being human. 'Love' and 'Will', according to Jung, are the privilege of the European.

At this point, it would be productive to examine Jung's contention that the 'primitive' does not think with the head, but with the stomach or the heart. What is his evidence? On what grounds does he make such statements? The crux of his evidence, culled from his 'field work', is contained in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. See, for example, his discussion on the Pueblo Indians: 'I had the good fortune to talk with a non-European . . . He was the chief of the Taos Pueblos, an intelligent man, his name was Ochwiay Bianco . . .

"See", Ochwiay said, "how cruel the whites look . . . we do not understand them. We think they are mad."

I asked him why he thought the whites

are all mad.

"They say that they think with their heads", he replied.

"Why, of course. What do you think with?", I asked him in surprise.

"We think here", he said, indicating his heart.'

Hard as it is to believe, this is the sum total of his objective evidence: one conversation with one individual. All the rest is speculation and inference. This one conversation is repeated in various guises. Notice how the 'he' has become 'they'. For example: "The Pueblo Indians told me that all Americans are crazy"; "It was only with the first philosophers that the seat of reason began to be assigned to the head. There are still Negroes today whose "thoughts" are localised principally in the belly, and the Pueblo Indians think with their hearts'. Many more examples of the refrain can be found in his Collected Works.

He is 'kinder' when he speaks of the (Asian) Indian's thought process. Notice the gradation — the Indian is definitely above the African. 'I am now going to say something which may offend my Indian friends, but actually no offence is intended. I have, so it seems to me, observed the peculiar fact that an Indian, inasmuch as he is really Indian, does not think, at least not what we call 'think'. He rather perceives the thought. He resembles the primitive in this respect. I do not say that he is primitive, but that the process of his thinking reminds me of the primitive way of thought production. The primitive's reasoning is mainly an unconscious function, and he perceives its result. We should expect such a peculiarity in any civilisation which has enjoyed an almost unbroken continuity from primitive times.'

So! It is 'continuity' that keeps certain races primitive. That makes continuity a bad thing.

History — Natural and Otherwise

Jung shows no consciousness of any history apart from European history. He shows remarkable ignorance of Europe's debt to Arab philosophers and universities, which gathered, preserved and added to Greek and other bodies of knowledge, whilst Europe went through the 'dark ages'. He ignores, for instance, Vedic mathematics and much more that works against the contention that the thought of non-Europeans is concrete, that they are incapable of abstract thought, that they are uncivilised. Arab culture is equated with prehistoric European culture: "These seemingly alien and wholly different Arab surroundings awaken an archetypal memory of an only too well-known prehistoric past which apparently we have forgotten'.

However, it is not just Arabia that he denies history to. In 1939 he had this to say about India: 'In all that flimsiness and vain tumult, one is conscious of immeasurable age with no history. After all, why should there be recorded history? In a country like India one does not really miss it. All her native greatness is in any case anonymous and impersonal, like the greatness of Babylon or Egypt. History makes sense in European countries, where, in a relatively recent barbarous and unhistorical past, things began to take shape. Castles, temples, and cities were built, roads and bridges were made, and the people discovered that they had names, that they lived somewhere, that their cities multiplied and that their world grew bigger every century.'

One really wonders what he is talking about. What does he mean by India having and needing no history, recorded or otherwise? The question is: why does he need to be blind to other histories? He was not unaware of vast Sanskrit and Pali books and libraries. He certainly pillaged them when he wanted to substantiate some of his more mystical notions. One is tempted to speculate further on the paradox that, on the one hand, he rubbishes the culture and emotional and mental faculties of the 'oriental' and, on the other, he uses their spiritual concepts freely, calls them advanced, and at times claims them as his own. In this next passage he reveals how culture-bound he really is: 'I must say that the Hindu man is too fond of ease and coolness. He weans a long piece of cotton cloth wound round and between his legs. The front of his legs is well covered. but the back is ridiculously bare. There is something effeminate and babyish about it. You simply cannot imagine a soldier with such garlands of cloth between his legs. Many wear a shirt over this or a European jacket. It is quaint, but not very masculine. The northern type of costume is Persian and looks fine and manly. The garland type is chiefly southern, perhaps because of the matriarchal trend which prevails in the south. The "garland" looks like an overgrown diaper. It is an essentially unwarlike dress and suits the pacifist mentality of the Hindu perfectly.'

This would be a joke if it were not for the fact it is on the basis of such 'evidence' that he builds his theories. His logic is quite zany at times — for instance, when he psychologises about a 'very characteristic defect in the Indian character, "deception"'. He assures us that Indians are very prone to it. Apparently, this 'defect' exists

because it is the only way they can preserve their privacy in a crowd, that is, it is 'natural' for the Indian to be deceptive. There is a hidden double message: it is natural for them to be like this, and at the same time it is a defect. The subliminal conclusion one is invited to draw is that all Indians are naturally defective; that it is in their nature to be defective . . . poor things. It is the Jungian version of 'original sin'.

Biology and the Collective Unconscious

It is apparent that, according to Jung, non-Europeans are primitive, have no history, exist in an emotional morass, have no will or thought; that things happen to them, that in the hierarchy of things they definitely reside below the white. Much of Jung's 'evidence' was collected when travelling, during which, he says, 'I could not help feeling superior because I was reminded at every step of my European nature. That was unavoidable: my being European gave me a certain perspective on these people who were so differently constituted from myself'. How does this great divide occur? What makes the European superior? And what does Jung mean by differently constituted? He suggests that 'though a child is not born conscious, his mind is not a *tabula rasa*. The child is born with a definite brain, and the brain of an English child will not work like that of an Australian black fellow but in the way of a modern English person. The brain is born with a finished structure, it will work in the modern way, but this brain has its history. It has been built up in the course of millions of years and represents a history of which it is a result. Naturally it carries with it the traces of that history, exactly like the body,

and if you grope down into the structure of the mind you naturally find traces of the archaic mind.'

He feints with the left when he alludes to history, but his real blow is biology and the different physical structure of the brain — so that if this 'Australian black fellow' were born in England, then he would not succeed as well as the 'English child' because their brain structures are different. And he isn't being racist, merely scientific — their brains are different because their histories are different, and no one can argue with that. Like the social scientists of the previous century, and the sociobiologists of this century, he also believes that there is a biological element to criminality: 'Once I talked to the head of a great institution in America for the education of criminal children . . . They have two categories of children. The majority of them . . . grow out of whatever their original evil was. The other category, the minority, become hysterical when they try to be nice and normal. Those are the born criminals whom you cannot change. They are normal when they do wrong.'

One is reminded of the bushman whom we met earlier, who also was unable to change, as indeed the Arab, the Elgonyi and the Indian have been fixed since time immemorial, supposedly by their biology. (Similarly, Fanon tells us of the belief shared by French psychologists that Algerians were 'naturally criminal' — it was in their nature to be so. That 'badness is inherent' is an oft-repeated theme voiced by colonisers and oppressors everywhere.)

But what of any notions of human equality in all of this? Where does that lurk? Why, in the collective unconscious, of course. Let me draw out the implications of the above passage: the European brain, being 'more evolved', has access to the history of the

'primitive' by plumbing its own depths, but the brain of the 'primitive' has no such access, being less developed. In other words, the European brain contains the non-European brain. The collective unconscious is not a democratic concept, it is a uni-directional concept. The collective unconscious is the realm of concretism, participation mystique, non-differentiation, collectivity; the European has evolved and grown out of this stage, and has repressed it. The other races have not moved too far from this stage. Thus, the unconscious of the European is equivalent to the conscious of the non-European. In some passages it is not necessary to 'draw out' this implication: 'Our civilised consciousness is very different from that of primitives, but deep down in our psyche there is a thick layer of primitive processes which, as I have said, are closely related to processes that can still be found on the surface of the primitive's daily life.' The structure of the three-layered Jungian psyche consists of the collective unconscious, the personal unconscious, and the conscious.

He is even more explicit in the following passage (note how its tenor changes): 'Somewhere you are the same as the Negro or the Chinese or whoever you live with, you are all just human beings. In the collective unconscious you are the same as a man of another race, you have the same archetypes, just as you have, like him, eyes, a heart, a liver, and so on. It does not matter that his skin is black. It matters to a certain extent, sure enough — he probably has a whole historic layer less than you. The different strata of the mind correspond to the history of the races.'

So much for equality. We are all the same, but only to a certain point. True equality is reserved for the Europeans: They

[the contents of the collective unconscious] actually behave as though they did not exist in yourself you see them in your neighbours but not in yourself . . . That is like France and Germany. We Swiss people, you know, had a very good chance during the Great War to read newspapers and to study that particular mechanism which behaved like a great gun firing from one side of the Rhine in exactly the same way on the other side, and it was very clear that people saw in their neighbours the thing they did not recognise in themselves.'

I have been unable to locate a passage where he affords a similar dynamic of reciprocity between the European and non-European. He does allow the latter a dynamic, but the nature of that, as will be seen, is different.

Projection

Europeans are allowed by Jung to project their shadow on to other Europeans and non-Europeans, but how and where are non-Europeans to project their shadow? European projection is described thus: 'everything that is unconscious in ourselves we discover in our neighbour'. Now, the primitive is mostly unconscious, and so 'primitive man is somewhat more given to projection than we are because of the undifferentiated state of his mind and his consequent inability to criticise himself'. Their *modus operandi*, then, is projection, and they do so much of it that the split-off parts of their psyches appear to them to take on physical manifestations; they appear natural to them: 'Primitive man has so much psyche outside his conscious mind that the experience of something psychic outside him is far more familiar to him than to us'.

But the projection that the primitive does

is different in nature to the projection of the European. It is a 'primitive projection'. 'To the oriental, therefore, the world must appear different to the occidental, who animates it with his empathy.' (The oriental that Jung speaks of here is the Buddhist. Jung defines him and his interaction with the world as primitive.) The dynamic animation of the object for the oriental 'does not come from empathy, but from an unconscious projection that actually exists *a priori*. The term "projection" hardly conveys the real meaning of this phenomenon. Projection is really an act that happens, and not a condition existing *a priori*, which is what we are obviously dealing with here.'

To recapitulate on this particular part of Jung's thesis: The unconscious is projected out on to the world. The primitive is mainly unconscious, and so projects this 'material' out much more so than the European. The European is less unconscious and so has less 'material' to project. The primitive projects so much psyche and with so much more intensity, that she or he actually perceives inanimate objects as alive. The primitive's projection is not projection at all, but a kind of symbiosis. The implication is that the European has the possibility of 'owning' the projection as part of the self, of disengaging, of making the unconscious conscious. But non-Europeans exist in this '*a priori* condition' of participation mystique. Thus, the possibility of their being able to disengage is doubtful.

Given the equality of the white unconscious with the black conscious then, according to Jung, as a European, he has another avenue into the black psyche: through his own unconscious, that is, his dreams and his understanding of their symbolism.

It is certain that Jung himself feared the black man — he writes of ‘The fear of the “black man”, which is felt by every child’. It is also certain that the black man symbolised for Jung his primitive aspects — aspects that he was afraid of, despite his claims to the contrary. His error was in assuming that because the blacks symbolised the primitive to himself, therefore they were primitive. To put it another way, they (blacks) symbolise the primitive to him, because they are primitive. Jung is confused by his own projection, and cannot see past it. It is he who confuses object and subject. The following, a quotation from Jung, exemplifies his position, exposing his apparent humility as hypocrisy (and, once again, note the changing tenor of the passage from humility to unabashed judgement). ‘Dreams were the original guidance of man in the great darkness . . . When a man is in the wilderness, the darkness brings the dreams . . . that guide him. It has always been so. I have not been led by any kind of wisdom; I have been led by dreams, like any primitive. I am ashamed to say so, but I am as primitive as any nigger, because I do not know!’ There is a footnote from the editors of the *Collected Works* appended to the word ‘nigger’: ‘the offensive term was not invariably derogatory in earlier British and Continental usage, and definitely not in this case’. So, we are informed that Jung is definitely not being derogatory in this case. Let us take the editors at their word, and replace ‘nigger’ with something neutral: ‘black’. Then it will read like this: ‘I am ashamed to say so, but I am as primitive as any [black], because I do not know!’. It is an interesting statement, and one with many implications.

As we have seen, the racist backbone of Jung’s theory of the collective unconscious

is contained by the equation of the black conscious with the white unconscious. It is in the equation of the European child with the adult non-European that we will find the other component of his racist ideology: individuation.

Psychological Darwinism, and Determinism

Jung is, in some senses, similar to the biological determinists who spent considerable energy in attempting to measure some physical difference which would prove the hierarchy of races. To be more precise, they already ‘knew’ that the whites were superior; all they needed to do was to find the evidence to substantiate this and make it scientific. To this end, numerous parts of the anatomy were measured and weighed, and around these various theories were woven, which purported to explain the data and confirm the hierarchy.

One such theory was recapitulation. The theory of recapitulation ‘required that adult traits of ancestors develop more rapidly in descendants to become juvenile features — hence, traits of modern children are primitive characters of ancestral adults’. The next step was predictable. As Spencer put it: ‘The intellectual traits of the uncivilised . . . are traits recurring in the children of the civilised’. This is precisely Jung’s view on the subject: ‘He [the black] reminds us — or not so much our conscious as our unconscious mind — not only of childhood but of our prehistory, which would take us back not more than twelve hundred years so far as the Germanic races are concerned.’

Thus, as the scientists measured the femur and the weight of the brain, Jung

presumed to 'measure' the psyche's 'maturity'. His fundamental error was in thinking he could do this — an error he compounded by his means of 'measurement'. It should be understood that Jung began with the premise that the European child was equivalent to the non-European adult; it was not the outcome of a programme of research.

It would be as well to pause here and list the different investigative tools Jung used to access and 'explore' the psyche in order to 'measure' it. His methodology follows logically from his *a priori* acceptance of the supposed conclusions of the investigation: that is, the various equations of black and white. In other words, his investigative edifice is a tautology. He has two laboratories, the first being psychoanalysis of the European. Jung presumed that the data he gathered from the European unconscious gave him information about the black conscious. And, as he discovered more about European children and their faculties, so he presumed to discover more about non-Europeans and their faculties.

The second laboratory was Jung's bed: as he dreamt and discovered more about his unconscious and his 'primitive' aspects, he presumed he discovered the thought processes and the emotional life of the modern primitive — in other words, the non-European. But nowhere does he give a reason for, or proof of, this alleged connection — hardly surprising, given that the connection only exists in the minds of the racists.

Ah yes, you might say, but he did not just stay in bed or sit in his analyst's chair, he went travelling to see for himself what the Other was like. The mark of a good scientist? Perhaps, but he only saw what he expected to see. And having seen what he

expected to see of the non-European conscious, he presumed that he was collecting data on the European unconscious. This must have pleased him greatly; after all, as the European unconscious was being manifested in the black conscious it was so much more accessible! One did not have to spend years analysing the European to reach these prehistoric depths in the psyche. One merely had to travel to Africa.

His 'results' confirmed the already firmly held notion that the European was superior to all else. And so it happened: Jung believed that he had given a psychological proof of the equivalence of the non-European adult and the European child. Here are some examples of Jung's equations.

'When I was a child I performed the ritual just as I have seen it done by the natives of Africa; they act first and do not know what they are doing. Only long afterwards do they reflect on what they have done.'

'Consequently the sight of a child or a primitive will arouse certain longings in civilised adult persons.'

'The expression of religious feeling, the revival meetings, the Holy Rollers, and other abnormalities are strongly influenced by the Negro, and the famous American naïveté, in its charming as well as its more unpleasant form, invites comparison with the childlikeness of the Negro.'

It is possible to expand this list of quotations *ad nauseam*. The next section will examine the contention that the theory of individuation is a theory of recapitulation.

Individuation

Individuation for Jung is not only a concept of psychological transformation, but also of historical transformation. The former is explicit; the framework of psychological transformation being the inner

world of the individual. The latter, historical transformation, is implicit, and its framework is that of race and culture. It is the interrelation between the two, and the fact that one is explicit and the other is implicit, and so hidden to some extent, that places it in the field of recapitulation, and therefore makes it racist.

On the psychological level, Jung defines individuation as 'the process by which individual beings are formed and differentiated; in particular it is the development of the psychological individual as a being distinct from the general, collective psychology. Individuation, therefore, is a process of differentiation, having for its goal the development of the individual personality . . . individuation is practically the same as the development of consciousness out of the original state of identity.'

Simply, it is about separation, a journey from collectivity to individuality, from the group to the individual. And as we have already seen that, for Jung, the primitive (in his terms, both the prehistoric human and the modern black) is undifferentiated and barely conscious, so psychologically the black is a long way from the possibility of individuation. As Jung says, 'only a few are capable of individuating'.

He makes the following statement, supposedly historical fact, again without offering any evidence: 'The further we go back into history, the more we see personality disappearing beneath the wrappings of collectivity. And if we go right back to primitive psychology, we find absolutely no trace of the concept of the individual. Instead of individuality we find only collective relationship or what Levy-Bruhl calls participation mystique.'

The evidence for this prehistoric participation mystique is found, as Jung informs

us many times, in the modern Negro, or the modern Indian.

This, then, is the historical component of individuation: the European race, having long ago left collectivity, is much more evolved than the black race. So an individual of European descent is much closer to individuation than an individual black, by virtue of race. It is that the European is superior, and not just 'differently orientated', as he says elsewhere. Therefore, in accordance with the theory of recapitulation, it is perfectly correct, and indeed necessary, that the European infant goes through the stage of being merged with the mother very early on, and that this reflects the stage in which the adult black is stuck. Moreover, given that the modern infant begins to separate out from the mother within the first few months of life, it is also an indication and a measure of how much more evolved the European is compared to the Other (in fact, by about 1,200 years, as Jung says earlier).

Individuation, then, is a process reserved for the white, the European. The important difference remains, that while the European infant is at least allowed to grow and have its shot at individuating, the blacks cannot, they are grown up already, they have reached their potential and have nowhere else to go. It is their race that is unevolved. If ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, then phylogeny also limits and defines ontogeny.

Living Together

Given this racial hierarchy, and given his various equations, Jung has certain ideas and explanations as to what happens when black and white meet. In the following passage, taken from an essay entitled 'Complications of American Psychology', Jung spends some time pondering the causes of these 'complications', and then

launches his ideas on the subject: "There is a much better hypothesis to explain the peculiarities of the American temperament. It is the fact that the states are pervaded by the Negro, that most striking and suggestive figure. Some states are particularly black, a fact that may astonish the naïve European, who thinks of America as a white nation. It is not wholly white, if you please, but piebald. It cannot be helped, it just is so.

"What is more contagious than to live side by side with a rather primitive people? Go to Africa and see what happens. When it is so obvious that you stumble over it, you call it going black. But when it is not so obvious it is explained as "the sun" . . . It is much easier for us Europeans to be a trifle immoral, or at least a bit, because we do not have to maintain the moral standard against the heavy downward pull of primitive life. The inferior man has a tremendous pull because he fascinates the inferior layers of our psyche, which has lived through untold ages of similar conditions . . . He reminds us not so much of our conscious as our unconscious mind — not only of childhood but of prehistory, which would take us back not more than about twelve hundred years so far as the Germanic races are concerned."

In this passage Jung develops a rationalisation and explanation for the Europeans' crimes against the colonised. And the 'blame', as such, is laid at the door of the colonised. So if there is some moral laxity — say, the master rapes a servant — it is because she has evoked these baser urges within this civilised person. If it were not for her presence, they would have remained dormant. Jung elaborates further on this theme: 'At the beginning of our era, three-fifths of the population of Italy

consisted of slaves — human chattels without rights . . . The slave and his psychology flooded ancient Italy, and every Roman became inwardly a slave. Living constantly in the atmosphere of slaves, he became infected with their psychology. No one can shield himself from this unconscious influence. Even today, the European, however highly developed, cannot live with impunity among the Negroes of Africa; their psychology goes into him unnoticed and unconsciously he becomes a Negro. There is no fighting against it. In Africa there is a well-known technical expression for this: "going black". 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". There are facts to support this view.'

Jung makes it quite clear that he perceives the darker races as some sort of disease, a highly contagious disease, that infects the white race. And, once infected, you are lost. It is a terminal disease, the 'technical' name for which is 'going black'. Let us not forget that this is science, and that 'there are facts to support this view'. And, alas, even Jung, though he knew of the disease, and the possibility of contamination, fell prey to it when travelling in North Africa: 'Without wishing to fall under the spell of the primitive, I nevertheless had been psychically infected. This manifested itself outwardly in an infectious enteritis'. As Jung says: 'Neither the pride of the Roman patrician nor the thick walls of the imperial palace availed to keep out the slave infection'.

In an abstract recorded by Otto Rank of a lecture delivered by Jung in 1910, Jung's views are succinctly summarised: 'Lecturer described a number of impressions

he had gained on two journeys in north America. The psychological peculiarities of the Americans exhibit features that would be accessible to psychoanalysis, since they point to intense sexual repression. The reasons for repression are to be sought in the specifically American complex, namely living together with the lower races, more particularly the Negroes. Living together with the barbarous races has a suggestive effect on the laboriously subjugated instincts of the white race and drags it down. Hence strongly developed defensive measures are necessary, which manifest themselves in the particular aspects of American culture.'

The argument runs thus: whites are superior. They have repressed their primitive instincts; they (the whites) are exposed to primitives, in the shape of Negroes. This evokes the repressed primitive instincts of the white person, and drags them down; in turn, this manifests itself in the 'particular aspects of American culture' — presumably segregationism. In other words, it makes sense to segregate, to isolate, so that the lower may not 'infect' the higher. This is nothing less than a rationalisation and justification for apartheid. He makes the point explicitly here: 'Racial infection is a most serious mental and moral problem where the primitive outnumbers the white man. America has this problem only in a relative degree, because the whites far outnumber the coloured. Apparently he can assimilate the primitive influence with little risk to himself. What would happen if there were a considerable increase in the coloured population is another matter.'

Now what sorts of things happen, how does the infection and the disease manifest itself? Well, the white American, because

he lives with the 'Negro', has really to repress his 'primitive' instincts — much more so than the European. This makes the American more unconscious than the European: 'We often discover with Americans that they are tremendously unconscious of themselves. Sometimes they suddenly grow aware of themselves, and then you get these interesting stories of decent young girls eloping with Chinamen or with Negroes, because in the American that primitive layer, which with us is a bit difficult, with them is decidedly disagreeable, as it is much lower down.'

So even the antibiotic 'repression' fails at times to keep down the disease. It is the prejudice which is more often voiced these days as 'they come over here, marry our sisters, tempt our wives'. Jung has rationalised and psychologised his fear with his concept of psychological layers. However, let him continue: 'Another thing that struck me was the great influence of the Negro, a psychological influence naturally, not due to the mixture of blood. The emotional way the American expresses himself, especially the way he laughs, can best be studied in the illustrated supplements of the papers; the inimitable Teddy Roosevelt laugh is found in its primordial form in the American Negro. The peculiar walk with loose joints, or the swinging of the hips so frequently observed in Americans, also comes from the Negro. American music draws its main inspiration from the Negro, and so does the dance . . . The vivacity of the average American which shows itself . . . in his extraordinary love of talking — the ceaseless gabble of American papers is an eloquent example of this — is scarcely to be derived from his Germanic forefathers, but is far more like the chattering of a Negro village. The almost

total lack of privacy and the all devouring mass sociability remind one of primitive life in open huts, where there is complete identity with all members of the tribe . . . This infection by the primitive life can, of course, be observed just as well in other countries, though not to the same degree and not in this form. In Africa, for example, the white man is a diminishing minority and must 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 unfavourable — unless one happens to have a Jazz phobia.' And elsewhere: "The Negro by his mere presence is a source of temperamental and mimetic infection . . . I am quite convinced that some American peculiarities can be traced directly to the coloured man, while others result from a compensatory defence against his laxity. But they remain externals leaving the inner quick of the American character untouched.'

And so the White American is saved after all. The venerable mask slips in passages like this: 'I was once the guest of a pretty stiff and solemn New England family . . . There were Negro servants waiting at the table. I felt at first that I was eating lunch in a circus and found myself diffidently scrutinising the dishes, looking for the imprint of those black fingers . . . I began to crack jokes . . . right behind my chair an enormous avalanche of laughter broke loose. It was the Negro servant, and it was the real American laughter, that grand, unrestrained, unsophisticated laughter revealing rows of

teeth, tongue, palate, everything, just a trifle exaggerated perhaps and certainly less than 16 years old. How I loved that African brother.'

Would Jung's infantilised 'African brother' have laughed so heartily if he knew what Jung really thought of him?

The infantilisation of the non-European by the European has occurred for two reasons, fear and guilt. It is a psychological rationalisation that allows the economic exploitation and colonisation of the black with a guilt-free conscience: children need to be looked after, they do not understand, and one cannot leave them alone as they might harm themselves. And, of course, children should do what they are told.

It is certain that blacks are feared — one may speculate as to why this is so. One line of thought proceeds obviously from the fact of exploitation they, the exploiters, fear any rebellion that would threaten, however slightly, the international economic edifice. Is it just mere coincidence that the economic metaphor is used so often in the description of psychic mechanisms?

Then there is also the mechanism of projection, where certain attributes are disowned by the white and projected on to the black. The blacks are then feared as the carriers of these unpleasant attributes. This is the root of Jung's psychic infection theory. His error is in not recognising the 'primitive' and 'prehistoric' aspects that he sees in the black as his own projection. He carries the infection within himself. It is because blacks are feared that they are infantilised, as a means of controlling and defusing that inner fear. The monsters from the Id are projected on to blacks, who are then infantilised, thus rendering the monsters harmless. One need not be afraid of children.

Conclusion

It is clear that Jung accepts and does not question stereotypes. What he does question is any deviation from the stereotypes. Blacks, for Jung, were inferior and not just different. The consequences of his theories, if true, are serious for any practising psychotherapist, and particularly, a Jungian psychotherapist, because the psychotherapist will have to deal very differently with black and white clients in order to remain within the Jungian framework and be consistent with it. But it would be a

mistake to assume that in the field of psychotherapy the charge of racism can only be levelled at Jung and his theories. I chose to focus on him because of his popularity, and because his racism is invisible to, and unacknowledged by, modern Jungians.

To conclude with some questions: Is it possible to rescue the concepts of individuation and the collective unconscious from their racist antecedents? When psychotherapists and analysts use these concepts, are they aware of their racist roots? If so, do they rationalise them away? Or do they accept them as facts?

Further Reading

Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, Norton, 1981

Carl Jung, *Collected Works*, especially volumes 6, 8, 9 and 10

Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*, Pantheon, 1963

Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, Zed, 1983

Jung and Racism

Michael Vannoy Adams

Farhad Dalal's article 'The Racism of Jung' is a reprint, with a few minor alterations, of 'Jung: A Racist', which previously appeared in two journals, *Race & Class* and the *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, eight years ago. As the author of a recently-published book, *The Multicultural Imagination: 'Race', Color, and the Unconscious* (reviewed on page 52), I have been

asked by the editors of *Self & Society* for my views on this controversial and important subject.

Although my book is much wider in scope than Dalal's article (I advocate an authentically multicultural psychoanalysis and present a historical, theoretical, and clinical account of the importance of 'race' or colour in the unconscious), it does

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