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Seeing Jung's Shadow in a New Light: Decolonizing the Undisciplined Depths

Daniel Boscaljon

Independent Researcher, Cheyenne, WY 82001, USA; daniel@alchemy-of-love.com

Abstract: This paper explores two paths that depth psychology, particularly the work of C. G. Jung, offers to the project of decolonizing knowledge. Jung was a complex intellectual pioneer who embodied and projected the limiting colonialist scientific presuppositions of his time also spent much of his career attempting to become familiar with the undisciplined domain of the Unconscious that offered access to ways of thinking that erased disciplinary boundaries that would separate psychology, religion, and science. Offering a close reading of Jung's early work demonstrates how colonizing forms of knowledge perpetuate themselves through a self-legitimating mythic structure. Acknowledging Jung's later work, which explored psyche as both "material" and "spiritual", illustrates the potential that depth psychology offers for an undisciplined approach to thinking and reality. The focus throughout will be on the Shadow, one of the core archetypes in Jungian psychology. The first section, which associates Jung's colonial bias with his ideas about rational consciousness, is followed by a second section that provides a critique of Jung's colonialism, highlighting the implicit violence that accompanies Jung's story about rationality. The third section provides an overview of different ways that shadows can be used, building on other depth psychological modes of exploring the unconscious. The paper concludes with a description of how embracing Shadow invites the concept of an undisciplined playfulness back into a decolonized, experiential approach to knowledge. This presents an improved version of the Shadow based on a framework of participation, rather than polarization, which opens a mode of belonging that bridges rifts that colonialism created. This demonstrates how depth psychology opens a path toward decolonizing knowledge and moving toward a consciously undisciplined form of experiential understanding.

Keywords: Jung; the Shadow; decolonization; mythology; theology; transdisciplinary; depth psychology; archetype; religious studies

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1. Introduction

Jungian psychology was principally informed by beliefs rooted in European assumptions about people, culture, and the world. This cultural framework foregrounds distinctions and emphasizes the importance of individuals over connections to collectives. Jung, like many leading minds in his milieu, valued "civilizing", scientific forms of consciousness characterized by intellectual clarity over other embodied and embedded ways of thinking and knowing. European civilization entailed perpetuating an unjust social hierarchy, which was impressed on Jung; as Freire (1995) notes, "the result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressors. . .in turn dehumanizes the oppressed" (p. 26). Sensing how this constellation of biases distorted Jung's thinking opens fresh approaches to his psychology, including the foundational domain of Shadows. A decolonizing foundation enables a more loving and co-creative approach to Shadow work, revealing deep connective experiences instead of stark polarizations and unearthing the best potential of Jung's initial vision. In other words, what follows is consistent with Jung's own appreciation of the Shadow as holding valuable elements of the psyche that need to be recovered and integrated. This article will work to recover the potential value of the Shadow from some of the unfortu-

nate cultural and colonial connotations that cause the theory (and sometimes Jung) to be discarded into the cultural Shadow.

The potential value of Jung's work remains particularly important for contemporary scholars for two reasons. First, his sense that the deep psyche wishes to reveal itself to willing listeners provides a useful alternative to the hermeneutics of suspicion popularized in part through Freud (and Lacan and Zizek): Jung's approach to the unconscious depths embraces an attitude of curiosity toward the other more consistent with the values of decolonization. Second, his interdisciplinary approach—weaving together mythology and science—seems an often-overlooked forerunner of undisciplined and transdisciplinary approaches to scholarly research. Although many of Jung's ideas have become popularized—like personality types, complexes, and archetypes—much of his work has been relegated to the margins, in part due to his tendency toward rather arcane sources, but also due to the tendency for Jungians to write and publish primarily for others already steeped in the tradition. Because work produced by Jung and those influenced by him tends to reject many of the artificially rigid and reductive assumptions that divide the current academy, re-engaging with this tradition seems particularly useful when considering approaches for undisciplining the academy. This can especially be seen in the recent emergence of Jungian Arts-Based Research (JABR), with its emphasis on transdisciplinary approaches. Building on Nicolescu's work on transdisciplinarity, this approach affirms a distinct ontological, logical, and complexity axiom that challenges contemporary Western academic approaches. JABR practitioners generally affirm with Nicolescu that there are different levels of reality and perception, the importance of the *included* middle for moving among levels, and that each level of reality or perception is complex, existing as what it is in relation to all other levels (Rowland and Weishaus 2021, pp. 122–23). Affirming Nicolescu's axioms as an alternative to the foundation of contemporary Western approaches to knowledge-making would go far toward undisciplining the academy.

This paper provides an introductory review of Jung's essay "Archaic Man" to indicate both how colonialist bias informed Jung's perspective and how it racialized his understanding of Shadow. After demonstrating an alternative, inclusive foundation for how thinking might explore Shadows, this paper concludes with a brief survey of new possibilities this approach would open. This paper participates in the process of "writing up" Jung, which, following Bennett (2020), involves identifying the influences embedded in and affecting an author's "perceptual, ideological, social positional, and body capacity styles", not to call them out, but to find potential allies, carrying "those efforts forward without losing the capacity to sing better alternatives". This paper demonstrates *writing up* by identifying colonizing influences in Jung's work on the Shadow, showing the untouched healing potential within his insights. Connecting the healing potential of the Shadow with Jung's later work on the psychic basis of reality indicates an underutilized point of access for contemporary researchers interested in direct experiences or undisciplined explorations of a complex reality.

Despite some of his cultural limitations, Jung's work offers a welcome resource and perspective to the contemporary study of religion. His work involving how symbols allow people to access the depths and references to Eliade and Otto, provide a psychologically primed parallel to the work of Tillich—although Jung's work was more radical, willing to conceive of God as a symbol for a psyche that provides the ground of ultimate reality. Jung's approach to religion, which sees numinous symbols as manifestations of the collective unconscious, makes the psyche—not God—the ultimate ground of religious experience. Because Jung's approach to the psyche integrated research into religion, alchemy, quantum physics, and mythology, using his sense of psyche as a ground for religion quickly obviates some of the disciplinary boundaries that too often limit research within religious studies.

2. The Myth of Archaic Man

In its beginning, Western myths made up the origin of the order and organization of society. Myths are stories whose implicit premise—an *arche*—offers criteria for making

distinctions and assigning value. Mythic foundations generate value-laden distinctions. Power structures built on these distinctions create hierarchies, which perpetuate and protect the initial implicit distinction. As Deleuze (1990, pp. 254–55) illustrated through his analysis of how myth functions: if the *arche* is "reason", the important distinction created as a mythic foundation becomes "being rational", and authorities then judge others' worth based on their relative rationality. In practice, the relationship of foundation and evaluation is as circular as the structure of a myth. The foundation is valuable because it empowers the distinctions that create hierarchies: those who are evaluated positively are seen as worthwhile because they share in the qualities of the foundation. Foundations and distinctions (with implied evaluations) form the basis for truth in knowledge systems based on them, enforced by a hierarchical proximity to the foundation.

An *arche* has a paradoxical relationship to truth: it provides a foundation for other judgments without support. Miller (1992) argued that the worth of an *arche* is inarguable because "the very principle whose superiority one intends to prove would have to be intuited at the beginning because it alone could provide a basis for one's argument", that led him to speculate that "the real but repressed purpose of every universe of meaning is to construct a system of defenses around a primal prejudice which is treated as an absolute principle so that its ungrounded character can be disguised" (p. 14). The "primal prejudice" provides the basis for evaluating things within its world but cannot evaluate itself relative to other *arches*.

Appreciating the role of foundation and evaluation in myth provides a way of assessing how Jung wrote. One useful example is the essay, "Archaic Man". Jung (1933, p. 125) started by defining "archaic" as "primal—original". The use of the first-person plural conscripts readers into a different category, "civilized man", distinguished because "our mental capacities are more differentiated". The first paragraph employs this distinction, aligning the reader with the "civilized" by assuming a shared desire to make distinctions based on differentiated mental capacities. Jung then defined his object of study as "archaic or primitive mentality", rhetorically equating the two terms, before asserting that "every civilized human being. . .is still an archaic man" who thinks based on assumptions. Jung explained that when "civilized" people evaluate "natives" as "prelogical", it is "because we start from assumptions wholly different from those of primitive man" (p. 126). This initial section acclimates readers to Jung's chosen *arche*—logical distinctions—*without* making evaluations. This implicitly reinforces Jung's authority to determine what is "logical" without risking a reader's resistance. He repeated this strategy (which also masks his primal prejudice) a few lines later stating the following: "primitive man is no more logical or illogical than we are. His presuppositions are not the same as ours, and that is what distinguishes him from us" (p. 127). Jung cannot argue for his primal prejudice of rationality, but he *can* positively associate the reader into a "civilized" *we* in distinction from the primitive/archaic person who lacks the ability to make logical distinctions.

A few pages later, Jung (1933) shared a myth about the value of rationality. The effect of this emphasizes the importance of making rational distinctions and offers an implicit evaluation (beyond the initial distinction) that favors "civilized" over "primitive" people:

> *It is a rational presupposition of ours that everything has a natural and perceptible cause. We distinctly resent the idea of invisible and arbitrary forces, for it is not so long ago that we made our escape from that frightening world of dreams and superstitions and constructed for ourselves a picture of the cosmos worthy of rational consciousness—the latest and greatest achievement of man. We are now surrounded by a world that is obedient to rational laws. It is true that we do not know the causes of everything, but they will in time be discovered, and. . .will accord with our reasoned explanations. This is our hope, and we take it as much for granted as primitive man does his own assumptions. (p. 130)*

This developmental myth associates "natural" with "rational", telling the story of an "escape" from a fallen world of "dreams and superstitions" by virtue of constructing a rational cosmos as the "latest and greatest achievement". The civilized cosmos controls

"invisible and arbitrary forces", which are "obedient to rational laws" (the logic of law and control that compels obedience is part of a colonial mindset). Jung then invited readers to imagine the future viability of rationality: moving forward, knowledge will "accord with reasoned explanations". This future knowledge amplified his implicit primal prejudice. The myth's conclusion gestures to the archaic foundations of consciousness—the *arche* of presuppositions that allow both "primitive" and "civilized" people to take the world for granted. Although "primitive" and "civilized" share a foundation of presuppositions, Jung determines, *logically*, that rational presuppositions are better than "arbitrary" ones. Civilization importantly helps people (like the reader) become more rational, closer to the *arche*.

Jung (1933) also used his primal prejudice to undermine the "primitive" on the archaic basis of "the projection of psychic happenings". Primitive "villagers" associate a person's soul with a dead crocodile. Civilized people project differently: they "presume that the psychic processes of other people are the same as ours" and, in fact, "attribute to 'the other fellow' all the evil and inferior qualities we do not like to recognize in ourselves" and "injure him by means of moral verdicts", attacking what "is usually our own inferior side" (p. 142). Jung uses this archaic basis to evaluate the importance of making mental distinctions: "The simple truth is that primitive man is somewhat more given to projection than we because of the undifferentiated state of his mind and his consequent inability to criticize himself" (pp. 142–43). Perhaps ironically, these pages demonstrate Jung's point, attacking "the other" (native villagers) by projecting onto the "primitive" a lack of self-criticism that he seems unaware of repeating. Ultimately, one could suppose, Jung's "differentiated" mind would allow him to rationally realize what he's done. The arche of distinctions allowed Jung to imply that even if being civilized is no better, the "primitive" person's irrationality is nonetheless worse.

The end of the essay layers racist and colonialist terminology onto the *arche* of rational distinctions. Jung (1933) argues that "identifications" induced by "projection of psychic happenings" make people a "component" rather than "master" of the world. Jung then explicitly names "Primitive man, in Africa" who "does not dream of regarding himself as the lord of creation", in contrast with "civilized man who strives to dominate nature" through the "discovery of natural causes", which rely on rational distinctions (p. 144). Domination occurs through imperatives such as civilized man "must strip nature of psychic attributes in order to dominate it" and "must take back all his archaic projections" to "see his world objectively" (p. 145). This mode of seeking *natural* causes as a way of exerting dominion names the heart of colonialist epistemology, a mode of thinking that began before Jung and was literalized in the European project of installing colonies in other geopolitical spaces. Jung concludes by associating both scientific materialism and Christian belief with the contradictory, archaic mind, leaving himself as the logical spokesperson for those who "grow out of many-sided contradictions and achieve a unified personality", farther from the less developed (contradictory) mind—whether in Africa or in Europe—and thus closer to the rational *arche* that bestows mastery. This is not surprising as "logic as such is a symptom of caste hierarchies. Without doubt, these hierarchies oppress most humans" (Morton 2016, p. 72).

3. "Between the Idea and Reality. . .Falls the Shadow"

One place where modern uses of myth stumble is in moving from invented concepts to the concrete world (Midgley 2011). This frequently occurs in thinking that originates from colonialist foundations, which carries forward the presuppositions of colonizing bias. Problems occur when invented concepts are maintained when they are not reflected in concrete reality. Mbembe (2017) argued, "European discourse. . .had a way of thinking of classifying and imagining distant worlds. . .based on modes of fantasizing". Although "it sought to develop forms of knowledge aimed at representing [other worlds] objectively", European discourse "evaded what it claimed to capture", maintaining a "fundamentally imaginary" relationship with other worlds (p. 12). Further, the fantasy of whiteness

"functioned to transform Whiteness into common sense" (p. 45). Beyond presuppositions, Mbembe argued that "consciousness of empire has always been the tremendous will to ignorance that, in every case, seeks to pass itself off as knowledge", adding that this ignorance "destroys in advance any possibility of an encounter and a relationship other than one based in violence" (p. 70). Jung's developmental myth problematically masks its ignorance as superior knowledge. Its emphasis on reason, which focuses on discerning and articulating difference, also devalues the potential for relational belonging or kinds of knowing that emerge through direct encounter or experience.

The rigid, "rational" distinctions forming the "civilized" *arche* of Jung's implicit value system inform his psychological project. Brewster (2019) argued that two theories were foundational to Jung's psychology. Levi-Strauss's theory of opposites (which corresponded to logical, rational distinctions) allowed a foundational "civilized" contrast away from the notion of *participation mystique* (the "primitive" mode of relating to the world through projections) that Jung took from Levy-Bruhl (Brewster 2019, p. 63), whose theories also argued that Africans, carriers of emotions and instincts, were unable to reason (p. 41). These theoretical foundations were useful to Jung's sense of the psyche as complementary; additionally, the use of tension—being pulled between opposites—was vital for Jung's process of individuation (Samuels et al. 1997, p. 102). Jung used opposites to map the unconscious, including archetypal pairs such as anima/animus and ego/Shadow. Problems begin when Jung's psychology employs racist and misogynist social hierarchies, when his imagined structures are categorically imposed on real people, and when his particular cultural attitudes are presumed as universal givens.

Jung's creation of the Shadow conforms to traits of colonialist bias. This becomes clear when comparing Jung's descriptions of the Shadow with Fanon's critique of colonialist language and thought. In Jungian terms, the Shadow is the "'thing a person has no wish to be'. . .the negative side of the personality, the sum of all the unpleasant qualities one wants to hide, the inferior, worthless and primitive side of man's nature. . .one's own dark side". (Samuels et al. 1997, p. 138). This sense of Shadow conforms to colonialist assumptions and relates to Jung's fascination with "other" cultures, including Africa, that he also strongly disavows. Fanon (2005, p. 6) wrote: "The colonial world is a Manichaean world. . .The "native" is declared impervious to ethics. . . the enemy of values. In other words, absolute evil", which might explain why Jung often referred to the Shadow as a "moral problem". Jung's repeated reference to Africanist persons as causing "infection" echoes Fanon's sense that white colonizers see "natives" as corrosive, destructive, and corrupting elements, such that values are "poisoned and infected" by encountering the colonized. Colonialist bias emphasizes how the customs, traditions, and myths of the colonized "are the very mark of this indigence and innate depravity" (pp. 6–7). Fanon recognizes violence in statements of the "supremacy of white values" (p. 8): it creates, in the "colonized intellectual", a "sentinel on duty guarding the Greco-Roman pedestal", which includes such doctrines as "individualism. . .where each is locked in his subjectivity, where wealth lies in thought". The sentinel can be seen as a psychic inhabitant similar to Freud's superego—a defender of rationality and cultural morality whose influence remains powerful but largely invisible. The "artificial sentinel is smashed to smithereens" once the "colonized intellectual touches base again with his people" (p. 10). Any thinker influenced by imperialism or whose thought emphasized the need for hierarchy, including Jung, would be a colonized intellectual. Europeans likely feared the influence of native culture because they implicitly recognized the fragile nature of the artificial sentinel. Fanon's work provides an initial strategy for decolonizing knowledge: the power of touch, which introduces the healing potential of direct experience, translated through the body, whose power surpasses the merely mental ideas and ideas or judgments about things that evolved through reading myths like that of Jung's Archaic Man.

Jung's Manichean cosmology, rigidly divided into the conscious and Unconscious, required the use of an excluded middle to make clear distinctions. Jung's understanding of the Shadow develops based on this division. The Shadow is the personal unconscious

that contains what people wish to repress. Jung outlined three ways people relate to the Shadow: possession, projection, and passage. *Possession* occurs when, seized by inner forces, people become unable to control their actions—speaking and acting in ways contrary to their intention. As described above, *projection* occurs when the unconscious material is attributed to external others rather than disowned inner qualities. Because it constitutes a relatively accessible portion of the personal unconscious, the Shadow provides a *passage* to the larger Unconscious: "The meeting with oneself is, at first, the meeting with one's own shadow. . .a tight passage, a narrow door, whose painful constriction no one is spared. . ." (CW 9i, para. 45). The movement from possession to projection involves a process from unconscious identification to conscious disidentification, while using Shadow as a passage requires recollecting the projections and entering into a conscious relationship with them. This humbling, experiential passage is narrow as it disallows the kinds of hubristic inflation that occur through externalizing inner conflicts onto other people. Consistent with much of what makes Jung's work problematic, this passage is *intrapersonal* rather than *interpersonal*.

Much of Jung's writing on the Shadow remains unconsciously performative: Jung rhetorically rejected Shadow by describing it in privative and antagonistic terms. These connotations were amplified by association with Africanist people. Brewster (2017, p. 4) argued that Jung "identified African Americans. . .as being and carrying *the Shadow*—his principal archetype for all that is negative within the unconscious". She also provides quotations from Jung that indicate how his descriptions moved from idea to reality, beginning with the "dark characteristics" and "inferiorities constituting the shadow", including "an emotional nature, a kind of autonomy" and a "passive quality" based on "inferiority" and a "lower level of personality" associated with "uncontrolled or scarcely controlled emotions", who "behaves more or less like a primitive" and is "singularly incapable of moral judgment". Jung's disdain for emotion arises because it is "not an activity of the individual but something that happens to him" (p. 82), i.e., passion renders us passive. Feeling affected by outside forces thus becomes associated with *possession*, which allows Jung (1963) to disavow ownership of undesired traits by *projecting* the cause on racially distinct Others: as he writes concerning his time in Africa, "Without wishing to fall under the spell of the primitive, I nevertheless had been psychically infected" (p. 242). Jung repeatedly projected possession through contagion throughout his works: "The Negro by his mere presence is a source of temperamental and mimetic infection. . . Racial infection is a most serious mental and moral problem where the primitive outnumbers the white man" (CW10, para. 966). Jung places everything he does not want to be—weak, inferior, passive, or emotional—into the Shadow, which he then projects onto his fantasies about Africanist people. The language of infection reinforces an implicit warning against making physical contact, keeping the colonialist imprisoned by illusory anxieties.

Jung often paired anxieties about visceral infection with threats challenging his illusion of rational control, creating subdermal fantasies. Not only did he believe that "the coloured man . . .lives under your skin" (CW 10, para. 963), but Jung (1963, p. 245) also wrote "'going black under the skin'", was "a spiritual peril which threatens the uprooted European in Africa to an extent not fully appreciated". This anxiety connects to Jung's isolating insistence on rational distinctions: "The predominantly rationalistic European finds much that is human alien to him", and he feared his "European consciousness be overwhelmed by an unexpectedly violent assault of the unconscious psyche", which continues to project colonial violence onto external forces. He continues, highlighting the distinction created by difference: "I could not help feeling superior . . . being European gave me a certain perspective on these people who were so differently constituted from myself, and utterly marked me off from them". The extent to which Jung acknowledges his own Shadow concludes the paragraph: "I was not prepared for the existence of unconscious forces within myself which would take the part of these strangers. . .so that a violent conflict ensued. Jung connects this violent conflict to the emotion that lets "childhood memory suddenly take possession of consciousness", but renders this recovery of childhood and augmentation of a

situation as presaging a "relapse into barbarism". Associating "primitive" with "childhood" repeats Jung's developmental myth.

Notably, Bennett (2020) argued that making moral judgments tends to "colonize human sensibility", such that "*too wide* a swath of experience becomes subjected automatically to the *ranking* operation called judgment", which makes it easy to overestimate when hierarchizing is appropriate (p. 57). Judgment is a "particular regime of perception" that creates a sensitivity to differences as "*things to be ranked*" (p. 59). This is consistent with experiences that imagine connections by projecting them, rather than allowing feelings of sympathy. Sympathetic experiences occur when humans are open to the attractions and antipathies that flow through "an impersonal network in which persons participate but do not initiate or direct" (p. 22).

Human bodies are attuned to receive environmental information. Bennett (2020) outlines how our surroundings inform us: fragments of experience stir the senses—a small portion of which reaches conscious awareness. Pleasure encourages openness, but being overwhelmed can make receptivity "feel more and more dangerous and exhausting, in more and more realms of life (p. 64). Social regimes perpetuate anxiety, a "more-than-human force, kin to gravity or barometric pressure, operating within and without" (p. 84). Anxiety makes sensitivity and openness seem threatening. The colonialist influences of Jung's time encourage insensitivity, which results in what Brewster (2017, p. 44) described as a profound lack of empathy in Jung's writings. This lack of empathy is connected to the fear of losing control (through passion). It also connects to Jung's choice to encode emotions as inferior through associating them with the feminine in a rigid gender binary.

The oppositional pairs Jung introduced (including the Unconscious and consciousness, primitive and civilized, passive and active) provided a platform that problematically supported racist beliefs. The pairs were implicitly evaluated on a hierarchy coinciding with a developmental myth that evaluated the latter term as superior. Further, the "dark" Shadow was easily literalized and associated with the "dark" skin of "primitive" people, which enabled whiteness to correspond to consciousness and civilization. The basis on opposites also meant that emotion, which Jung understood as antithetical to reason, corresponded to the Unconscious. Brewster (2017) noted that "Racial inequality proved to be a very strong and steadfast expression of the opposites. Skin color was an obvious choice for separation of different ethnic groups" (p. 89). By associating the Shadow with Africanist people, Jung relied upon widespread cultural prejudice to amplify his theory. "In Jungian psychology, the Other served well as an opposite with all the characteristics necessary to enhance the intelligence, worthiness, and value of European culture"; however, "African Americans did not construct an 'Other' of less value, as did White Americans" (p. 120). Jung's myth of white rational superiority, based on fantasies about Africanist differences, protects against his feeling emotion or connection to others. This, in turn, allows him to maintain his colonialist hierarchy of values and to create a disembodied system of knowledge based on it.

4. "Flare Up Like a Flame and Make Big Shadows"

Starting with Plato, who encouraged sacrificing shadow play for solar enlightenment, thinkers have avoided shadows or have embraced Shadow only for a chiaroscuro effect that exaggerates differences. A fresh appreciation for Shadow requires seeing it in a different light. Other traditions of soul work, including contemporary approaches, use softer modes of consciousness: they invoke the intimate flickering of uncertainty aligned with living souls rather than a desire for shadow annihilating illumination. Such approaches to Shadow involve *participation*. Nondual perspectives refuse to create or perpetuate an Other. Instead, Shadow becomes a *shape* "less stable than *entity*, less mentalistic than *concept*, more haptic than *literary figure*", that has the efficacy of the body's creative agency and the soul's virtual potential (Bennett 2020, p. xi). Here, Shadow serves less as a gatekeeper to our darkest nightmares that need to be integrated, its dominant feature in Jung's process of individuation, than as a bridge to the suffering of others. Shadow softens what is often

a harsh light of judgment, covering over imperfections: where Jung rejected the promise of empathy, this approach to Shadow embraces it. We are born with Shadows, constant companions whose variations inspire a friendliness with what remains ungraspable. When we relate with our Shadow as a point of connection, rather than a site of refusal, our relationship with the inner world becomes less polarizing and one-sided.

The initial approach to anything determines how it opens; this holds true for explorations of Shadow and the underworld. Hillman (1979), whose work in archetypal psychology re-visioned Jung's initial insights, defined Shadow as "the interior darkness that pulls downward out of life and keeps one in relentless connection with the underworld" and advised that approaching Shadow like Hercules, attempting to violently seize and control, ends up being less illuminating than approaching like Ulysses, who comes to learn. One lesson is how things overlap: underworld shades inhabit the same space indistinguishably (p. 52), and like shadows in our waking world, they overlap and refuse clear rational distinctions: in the between realm of *metaxy*, things are "neither only human nor only divine, neither subjective nor objective, neither personal nor archetypal—but both" (p. 100). Shadow makes available experiences of the blended middle excluded by Jung's logic: taking back projections means "seeing myself mirrored in them, them mirrored in me. . .reflecting on the shadows we share" (p. 100). Learning from Shadow means keeping its mystery alive (p. 122), avoiding interpretive lights that banish it, or "exploit it for consciousness" (p. 117). In practice, this would mean engaging in epistemological humility, refusing to use language in a totalizing fashion. It would allow experiences of commonalities in a celebratory fashion—even while not grasping these points of connection as if they would persist, unchanging.

One way to displace Jung's rigid division is by equating consciousness with a candle, shadow with soul. This centers subjective imagination, rather than objective perception, as primary when exploring Shadow's depths. O'Donohue (1997) advocates for "penumbral light" that intermixes light and shadow (p. 80). This protects from the "neon vision" he associates with the light of modern consciousness, "the harsh and brilliant white light of a hospital operating theater", and argues it is "too direct and clear to befriend the shadowed world of the soul" (p. 81). Candles "befriend the darkness" and "prompts the imagination into activity". This shadowed light dances and shifts, destabilizing the boundary between light, dark, and imagination. This "allows the darkness to keep its secrets. There is shadow and color within every candle flame", making "candlelight perception" the "most respectful" way to see the inner world (p. 81). Allowing the darkness to keep its secrets and retain its strangeness preserves its innocent wildness and protects it from the disciplines of consciousness awareness. Because the subjective imagination is primary, it reinforces the participatory experience of knowledge production. This kind of actively engaged exploration toward experiential knowledge would cause the inner sentinel to topple, upsetting the kinds of logic divisions maintained by the neon vision that replaces more innate ways to learn.

Identifying Shadow with soul also leads to a closer and more respectful identification of its value. Tarrant (1998) associated light and dark with spirit and soul, acknowledging that each has unique value alongside their interactions. Describing paying attention as "the most basic form of love" (p. 6), he advocated for attending to Shadow, a need to "pay the dark" and "save some place in our bright lives for confusion and melancholy" (p. 169), remaining sensitive to suffering. Tarrant's soul "loves to include and to learn; it is always trying to embrace things, to inhabit the brokenness of the world. Its light is made real by the surrounding dark. . .its gift is to make us less perfect and more whole" (p. 18). Wholeness involves empathy, kinship "with everything humble and rejected. If we accept [a beggar], we accept our own darkness and, at the same time, gather him into human company" (p. 72). Exploring the soul—the *psyche* of psychology—provides a way to become in touch with what we lose by focusing on the kinds of knowledge that make perfect sense. Allowing confusion and suffering creates an expansion of the self that grows through its relationships, not through extracted ownership.

Embracing shadow to gain awareness of commonalities informs soul work from traditional African cultures. Brewster (2023) discusses how "the unbroken unity of spirit and nature exists in African consciousness as one", which involves experiencing "unity between levels of consciousness", including nature, human groups, and the divine (p. 136). The traditional approach thus can be seen as achieving some of Jung's aims (uniting levels of consciousness) through a different (noncolonial) ontology and epistemology. This approach to consciousness evolves through shared experiences that expand the limiting, rigid boundaries of colonialist subjects. Shadow connects through *participation*, respecting both identity and difference. Premised on unity, rather than polarity, such participatory experiences with Shadow are informed by the convergence of many modes of awareness. The awareness of nature, others, and the divine as co-present contexts allows an acclimating way of becoming familiar with repressed or unconscious material, allowing it to stay safely in shadowed and shared consciousness until it is ready to enter consciousness (Dunlea 2019).

Jung's theory of archetypes, which we experience subjectively as numinous but which from the outside appear to be typical experiences (falling in love), provides a cosmological underpinning for these experiences. Le Grice (2021), drawing on Jung's work, considers "the psyche as the interiority of nature, in which we are embedded psychologically, just as we are physically embedded in the natural world" (p. 164). Jung ([1947] 1969) argued, "psyche and matter are two different aspects of the same thing" (p. 215). This parallels findings in quantum physics that show that energy and matter, as well as space and time, occur with a similar simultaneity. Arguably, this paradoxical point of indistinction between subjective and objective forms of experienced knowledge provides a shadowed zone of decolonized, undisciplined knowledge. Although different disciplines will translate these experiences through the specific lenses and vocabularies of their traditions, scholars who explore these depths find the freedom to make the kinds of connections that defy rigid intellectual boundaries. Connecting to this undisciplined heart allows for contemporary scholarship to fearlessly trespass over past presuppositions to enable an approach to the humanities—and sciences—that allows humans to participate as part of a greater whole.

5. "What Can Be the Use of Him Is More than I Can See"

Treasuring Shadow as a psychological resource instead of treating it as a passage opens riches that amplify the potential for imaginative transformations of identity. Shadow, bridging the gap between self and other, is at the heart of healthy psychological relationships. Rather than fixing them with objective certainty, Shadow blurs boundaries in a playful, participatory, but importantly temporary, fluid fashion. Imaginative participation is native to children, who recognize Shadow as a miraculous, inconstant companion, continually underfoot. The depth of Shadow generates the availability of half-unknowable twilight images. It provides a vital source and fertile ground for the imagination. Shadow exists at the boundary of opposites, providing a connection between seeming oppositions: like *pharmakon*, it contains the potential for both poison and remedy. What follows are sketches toward potential remedies.

Benjamin (2017) argued that inability to play is characteristic of dissociated intellectual functioning (p. 154), who developed "dissociative processes in the service of disconnecting, or tolerating the disconnection one has already suffered" (p. 229). Embodying Shadow is a way to imagine becoming an "embodied subject, not purified morally or physically, [that overcomes] the splitting into discarded and dignified", based on a "primal identification with the split off aspects of vulnerability and weakness rather than merely knowledge of 'right and wrong'" (226). Benjamin advocates an *arche* based on felt connection, not rational distinction. This relocates moral responsiveness as a felt experience, rather than an intellectual judgment—a useful movement from Jung's emphasis on rational distinctions that prioritized thinking over feeling.

Embodying Shadow also enables people to engage in an important kind of social activism connected to what Nash (2019, p. 114) described as the two key ideas of Black

feminism's radical love-politics: vulnerability and witnessing. Love's vulnerability entails a willingness to become undone in a vast sympathetic openness. This can "take the form of grief and mourning, desire and ecstasy, solidarity and empathy, and mutual regard" in ways that encourage seeing "ourselves as deeply embedded in the world, and thus as deeply connected to others" (p. 117). Staying in shadows also means witnessing "what is meant to be kept invisible, unnamed, unseen" by occupying a "particular vantage point on how structures of domination operate to marginalize, constrain, and injure certain bodies" in an act of noticing and naming what otherwise is normalized as "a practice of love, of tenderness, and of political world-making" (p. 119). When others are willing to become shadows and "name, to make visible. . .and describe and analyze structures of domination", it shares what otherwise is an "emotionally and politically taxing" burden (p. 119) traditionally shouldered by Black women.

The *flat depth* of shadow provides important metaphorical resources important for the work of establishing postcolonial identities and creating anticolonial resistance to unthinking rational dispositions. Ko (2019) called for an alternative to the clear distinctions of intersectional approaches to social justice (p. 79), wanting a "new imagination of how oppressions manifest themselves at the root" and revolutionize how oppression is understood (p. 77). Ko argued that seeing problems as multidimensional generates multidimensional solutions (p. 91). Shadows show how what looks flat, or singular, can enfold many dimensions and provide a way to explore it in depth. Learning the story of Jung's Shadows also shows how a solution comes in creating a new myth, *arche*, and understanding. A courageous integration of the Shadow through empathy and play provides a promise of healing and establishing a new, decolonized kind of social order—although what this might become remains unknown, hidden in the shadows of potentiality.

This potential change to the social order would correspond to two important shifts in knowledge practices. In general, playing with shadows opens up a range of transdisciplinary approaches whose embrace of traditional ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies would provide a more respectful approach to the unknown and the Other than what occurs through research predicated on a subject/object divide. This would include imminent, participatory ways of gaining direct knowledge as important for expanding human understanding. Such a shift would also change understandings of the potential importance of religion. Rather than being blinded by specific, literal illuminations of God, this approach to religion would look more to the shadowed depths of similarities than strict dogmatic differences. Such differences that intellectually illuminate a specific vision of God or allow enlightenment concerning a rigid truth historically culminate in a colonialist frame of mind. This frame of mind repressed certain aspects of reality (and oppressed cultures and people) as undesirable or unwelcome. Feeling comfortable with the depths and playing between rigid intellectual structures provides a refreshing alternative to past, problematic ways of creating knowledge.

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