

NOTES ON WHITE SUPREMACY

Essaying an Archetypal Account of Historical Events

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My point with these pages is rather simple, but we shall traverse a tight and sinuous course getting there. Even going fast, it will take a while. So that we know where we are heading, I'll summarize before setting out.

Our culture, by which I mean the imagination, beliefs, enactments and values collectively and unconsciously shared by Northern Europeans and Americans, is white supremacist. Inescapably white supremacist, in that superiority of whiteness is affirmed by our major texts and is fundamental to our linguistic roots, and thus our perceptual structures. We tend to see white as first, as best, as most embracing, and define it in superior terms.

Moreover, *horribile dictu*, I shall present evidence showing a similar supremacy of white in black African beliefs, enactments and values, which suggests that dilemmas in society attributed to ethnic bigotry have sources that are fundamentally difficult to modify. "Fundamentally difficult" because the fantasy of supremacy, I hope to show, is archetypally inherent in whiteness itself. If this can be shown, I would also be offering a paradigmatic example of archetypal priority in human affairs. This implies that human affairs may be affected by an archetypal psychologizing which is at the same time a therapy, in this case a therapy of racism at its structural roots. So the immediate purpose of these remarks is to differentiate this archetypal—that is, geographically distributed, temporally enduring and emotionally charged—structure inescapably intrinsic to whiteness,

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and indicate a psychological mode of ameliorating the archetypal curse of supremacy beyond the usual and necessary societal measures.

Status of Color Terms

In 1969 Brent Berlin and Paul Kay¹ of the Berkeley anthropology department published a universal scale of color terms that claims a differentiated evolution from paired white and black, then red, followed by green/yellow or yellow/green, blue, through brown to purple, pink, orange and gray—eleven in all. Their hypothesis is twofold. First, all languages follow this scale, that is, if they have only four terms these will be white, black, red, and green-or-yellow, and if a fifth and sixth, these will follow the universal scheme, e.g., yellow (or green) and blue as sixth. Second, this scale projects an evolution in color linguistics from primitive few to sophisticated many color terms. Their research with ninety-eight languages claims to have established semantic universals, or archetypes, of color terms.

Since 1969 anthropologists and linguists have attacked this thesis. There are counter-instances² from Samoan, Uto-Aztec, Hopi, Vietnamese, etc., regarding the order of color terms in the scale. That white/black always comes first and is always present has not been controverted.

Berlin and Kay present black/white as opposed. That the findings regarding white/black *as opposites* have not been contested indicates something important about the unconscious universality in "white" anthropology of a perspective which, when it sees white and black, sees them as opposed. Later on in these notes we will examine the relation between oppositional thinking and whiteness. Now our concern is only with the placing of white in this worldwide survey: that it comes first, is virtually universal (all languages have a term for it), and that it is paired with black.

Three Meanings of Whiteness

The Indo-European root of *white* means "to be bright," and brightness as shining, lustrous serves to cover many of the reported meanings of white in the Berlin-Kay study. For instance, the *Oxford English Dictionary's* first definition of white states:

Of the colour of snow or milk; having that colour produced by reflection, transmission, or emission of all kinds of light in the proportion in which

they exist in the complete visible spectrum, without sensible absorption, being thus fully luminous and devoid of any distinctive hue.

White, however, also means blank, pallid, ashen, colorless. The Greek *leukos* describes snow, silver, silver/gold, gray dust, pale yellow, white hair, fair skin, sun, light, aether, sheen of glassy water, clear voice, happy day.³ Latin distinguishes *candidus* (our candid, candidate), "a glistening, dazzling white," from *albus*, "dead white, not shining."⁴

To escape the philological and etymological traps of "root" and "true" meaning, we use an archetypal approach, distinguishing three main constellations in our cultural tradition as if each were a perspective governed by an archetype. The assumption here is that how white is seen and spoken about express fundamentals of the psyche.

A. The first of these is the whiteness of heaven or white as perceived through the archetypal perspective of the heavenly, spiritual father, familiar to us mainly in Christian contexts.

This "heavenly" convention appears established already in ancient Greece: Priam sacrifices a white ram to the sun. Hera wears a headdress white as the sun, and in the tragedies we find phrases for white-winged birds of dawn and radiant white-horsed day.⁵ The common Greek phrase *leuke eméra*, "a good day," means literally a bright, happy, white day.⁶ Such are the days high on Olympos where the Gods dwell (*Od.* 6 : 4445). Plato says, "White is the color most proper for the Gods" (*Laws* 12 : 956a). A priest in a fragment from Euripides says (fr. 472 : 16-19): "Wearing white robes / I shun the generation of mortals / and not touching a coffin / I have kept myself from eating the flesh of animals." White means ritual purity and spiritual sanctity, admitting neither the blackness of death nor the redness of flesh. For Aristotle (791a) the air, if pure, is *leukos*. Air takes on color only when sullied by matter. The constellation in Aristotle's thought of white, air and purity on the one hand and matter as negative, mere potential and the locus of decay on the other yields that narcissistic definition of God that stalks our western centuries like a white ghost—God whose activity is immortality (286a), who cannot be injured or wronged (109b), is better than humans (116b) utterly self-sufficient (1245b, 1249b), needing no friendship (1244b, 1159a), that *actus purus* by which God is defined also in St. Thomas and Leibniz, "fully luminous and devoid of any distinctive hue," as the *OED* says of white.

Christian texts continue this first sense of white, though we find it in Daniel 11—"to purge and make white"—and in Psalm 51—"Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." The apogee appears in the Apocalypse

in Revelations, a book shot through with whiteness, chapter on chapter—clouds, horses, angels, elders, thrones—as the transfigured Jesus in the Gospels is white (which makes some wonder what color he may have been in his quotidian form). As white and wheat are cognate, the wheaten wafer commutes into the whitened body of the God.

The heavenly sense of white extends beyond our western-northern Greco-Judeo-Christian conventions. Dominique Zahan, the major expert writing in French on Central and West African peoples, states that white for Black Africa—the Bambara, Hausa, Baranga and others—refers to the world beyond. Human beings descend from heaven where all things are white, which accounts for the idea that black babies are supposedly white for a few seconds after birth. According to Zahan, an albino in Black Africa is blessed by celestial lightning, initiates are smeared with white indicating their union with the divine, and abnormal creatures are blanched in boiling water to prepare for their return to heaven. Peace, order, joy, abundance, the ancestors, home—these are all characterized by white.⁷

Victor Turner lists twenty-three meanings of white in Ndembu. These include: goodness, strength, purity; free of misfortune, of death, of sorrow, of ridicule; ancestors; laughter; fertility; to sweep clean, wash; to make visible or reveal.⁸

... whiteness, more than any other color, represents the divinity as essence and source, as well as sustenance. Whiteness as light streaming forth from the divinity has, in the sense we are considering here, a quality of trustworthiness and veracity. . . . White is also unsullied and unpolluted. . . . Behind the symbolism of whiteness, then, lie the notions of harmony, continuity, purity, the manifest, the public, the appropriate, and the legitimate.⁹

“An Ashanti priest will . . . dress in white as if death does not touch him.”¹⁰ Among the Nilotic Mandari, “White is the beneficial colour, used to express preferred moral and intellectual qualities, to represent high status. . . .”¹¹

That Black Africa could be converted to the white Christ, accept salvation through a white redeemer—accept the very idea of needing salvation from sinful darkness to eternal light—seems given as much by the supremacy of white as by supposed superiority of theological doctrine. Conversion, we might say, was archetypally prepared. For the Cherokee, white represents “peace, happiness and the south”;¹² for the Navaho “natural goodness”;¹³ in Madagascar “white: light, hope, joy, purity”;¹⁴

on the Malay peninsula "white is generally an auspicious color."¹⁵ In the ancient magico-religious system embodied in Hindu philosophy, the three *gunas* that enter into all things are black (*tamas*), red (*rajas*) and white (*sattva*) which is the subtlest, the primal breath-energy (*prana*), the mind or consciousness, as well as "peace," "stainless," "serene clarity," "illuminated repose, benignity, and understanding."¹⁶

Such notions as these may have affected the perceptions of indigenous peoples worldwide when, for instance, it was reported to Moctezuma, "Our lord and king, it is true that strange people have come to the shores of the great sea. . . . They have very light skin, much lighter than ours." Possibly says Frederick Turner, Moctezuma "was thinking that perhaps these strange white beings from the east were the returning god Quetzalcoatl. . . ."¹⁷ What has happened to the dark animal suspicion that belongs to the encounter with anything strange? Does whiteness suppress instinctual awareness, banning from consciousness the very possibility of harm with white peace and white love and white unconsciousness, as the Navahos use white clay to drive away enemy spirits? "On the Atlantic coasts of Africa, the European ship met neither resistance nor surveillance."¹⁸

They saw a great boat appear on the wide sea. This boat had white wings flashing like knives. White men came out of the water and spoke words no one could understand.¹⁹

This particular arrival was met with fear and "flights of arrows," for white signified the other world beyond, and its fearful ghosts.

If conversion was archetypally prepared,²⁰ the conquests of Mexico and Peru, the colonialization of India and the Indies by a handful of "white" men (that is, Christian Europeans), the collapse of Native American societies and of so many different peoples of so many hues, continuing even to the cargo cults of the twentieth century, these genocidal and cultural catastrophes exemplify then not only the victory of linear history over cyclical myth, of technology over ritual, of monotheistic abstract order over polytheistic concrete life, of capitalism over barter, of belief in impalpable transcendence over animistic and aesthetic immanence, of alcohol over botanicals, of superego over id—then, in addition to all these reasons for ruin, we shall suppose an underlying archetypal account which colors all others, the a priori supremacy of whiteness.

B. The second group of meanings connotes innocence. We forsake the archetypal father in heaven for the archetypal child: guileless, simple,

without pollution, corruption, illness or evil. White as a lamb; harmless as a little white lie; pure as driven snow; lilywhite; the whiteheaded boy and white son who are the best, the favorites.

In contemporary psychological jargon, this sense of white supremacy appears as the innocent unwoundedness of "primary narcissism," a condition that imagines cure as an *imitatio Christi*: wounding, bleeding, descent the inevitable course of treatment, the analytical bitter sop, the soldier with his pike now analyst pointing out, penetrating insights.

Supremacy here connotes the beginning in heaven or elsewhere, spotless, before the Fall, prior to birth by blood to earth, the supremacy of perfection in the bright Garden, child of God, knowing all things save its own nakedness.

So alchemy gives white names to the *materia prima* or first condition. I have excerpted these from the more than one hundred terms for the *materia prima* in Ruland's dictionary of 1612: white moisture, white smoke, white magnesia. Tin, on account of its whiteness. Bride or Eve. Milk of Virgin; pure, uncontaminated virgin. Heaven, for it is light and bright. Lye, for it washes and cleans the metals. Urine of the white calf. Marble, crystal, glass—which are clear and intelligible. Spring. Moon. Garden. Silver. Whiteness. The Lamb.

These appear at the beginning of the operations which sophisticate the soul, operations which macerate, putrefy and dissolve this primary innocence. White is but a blank and ignorant page, the requisite stupidity at the start.

If heavenly whiteness maintains its supremacy by including all hues and unifying them into one self-same translucence (white is the entire visible spectrum undifferentiated by sensible degrees—*OED*), this second kind of supremacy maintains purity by exclusion. Innocence excludes: "innocent" literally denotes an absence of noxiousness; without harm or hurt—a privative notion of supremacy. Its confines, like a child's, are too small for differences which then must come from elsewhere, from others like Herod, the Romans and Jews, as if its kind of supremacy invites the spoiling attack upon it. For this perspective, white and black are not merely a pair but an opposed contradictory pair. Black becomes necessary to whiteness as that co-relative by means of which white takes on its defensive, exclusive definition as im-maculate, un-polluted, in-nocent. Because its purity necessarily constellates that which its purity cannot include, it cannot move unless it falls. Both perfect and precarious, it calls for help to

defend its supremacy, victim of its own exclusiveness experienced as victim of inferior others.

This kind of white supremacy appears in contemporary analytical theories that divinize an immaculate child who is led by others to its fall into sexuality; seduced, abused, perverted, abandoned. I am thinking of the innocent child archetype and its white supremacy that informs the theories of Alice Miller and Jeffrey Masson; and I am thinking of the childish idealization and disguised white supremacy of their followers, seduced by innocence and perverted from the darker paths of depth psychology by abandoning the polymorphic multicolored child for one innocuously, narcissistically white.

Because it is the effect of white, whether pigment, light or word, to unify differences, the first set of meanings—heaven, divine, spirit—and the second also lose their distinction. The notions of white derived from the child become spiritualized; childlike ignorance receives spiritual authority, the child protected by the father, innocence going about the father's business with a mission, innocence now a superiority, not a frail beginning or narcissistic blindness. Yet more, yet worse, the spirit becomes absolute, that is, absolved from the woundings of doubt, guilt, sin, shame, self-awareness. (Self-sameness hardly promotes self-awareness. Hence Jung defines individuation as differentiation, not unification.)

The adamant spiritualization of innocence together with the arrogance of the spirit regarding its own ignorance—this doubling of the two supremes generates a consciousness numbed by its own light. It cannot feel that purity may be murderous. “The Murder of the Innocents” also means *by* the innocents, by those who are supremely innocent of their own murderousness. “White massacre” and “white terror,” it has been called.²¹ What this white consciousness doesn't know or feel or see can't hurt it, so it thrives on repression and idealized projections.

Here are generated those conundrums of evil in western theology (since there is no place for the non-white either in heaven or child), the racial bigotry in society, and the denial of *Geisteskrankheit* in psychiatry (the spirit cannot be sick, it has been argued, only the human mind or soul). And here is generated the negative cast to the unconscious, the very definition of the unconscious which we shall take up further on. Moreover this white supremacy is reinforced, nay promulgated in our culture, as the essential nature of God by the union of the Father with the Son. So of course our culture suffers from “white love”: love both as a patriarchal

command and as a childish innocence, a bland love of candid commitments, ever subject to and surprised by incursions of yellow choler, deceit and jealousy, scarlet inflammations and the black depths of hell.

C. The third convention locates white in the context of anima. Robert Graves's *The White Goddess* is the classic amplification for this theme. Jungians are familiar with the symbolic association of white with anima from Jung's alchemical writings on Luna and the *albedo* (*CW* 14), a topic I have treated in two long essays.²² In brief, this convention equates white (*leukos, leuki*) with female, soft, vulnerable beauty. It appears in Homeric and Classic Greece and even earlier in Egyptian painting where it was customary to depict the female flesh in white. In Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazousae* women take over the city; one heroine stands all day in the sun to acquire a manly appearance (suntanned) by losing her "whiteness."

In Homer Penelope is fair, Hera is white-armed, Aphrodite shows white arms, and the Maenads white limbs and white feet. Helen, Arete, Andromache, Nausicaa are all white-armed, and for Sophocles Antigone is white. For Euripides Medea's neck, Iphigenia's neck, Phaedra's neck, Alcestis's flesh, Glaucus's foot and neck—all are fair, pale, white.²³ (Shakespeare's Juliet, Rosalind, Marina, Helen, Helena, Hermione and Rosalind each have white hands, Ophelia a white bosom.) Even Dionysos in the *Bacchae* (1.457)—to emphasize his softness and vulnerability—has fair skin (*leukos*) which to Pentheus means effeminacy.

Leukos as effeminacy appears also in the Greek term "white-livered" (our lily-livered) meaning cowardice.²⁴ To the Greeks white-livered also meant simple-minded, silly, foolish (that is, naive) emotions, since the liver is both the seat of darkblooded passions and of black bile in Greek imaginative physiology. A white-livered person, to fatten the metaphor, would have no stomach for fight (would show the white flag, the white feather, throw in the towel), no guts, no balls, thus suggesting that effeminacy or anima-dominance corresponds with a childlike naivete in regard to darker (black, blue and red) passions; no passion for darkness.

Despite the anima meanings of beauty as fair-fleshed, bright-skinned and radiant, white here no longer implies an innocent child-like supremacy. White here no longer signifies divinely immaculate, without bruise or blemish. The inferiority is retained, not cast off, because the anima sense of white is self-weakening. Whether called effeminacy, softness or vulnerability, this notion of white admits a mortal inferiority within itself. The soft white spot (*Iliad* 22: 321-25) at Hector's throat is

the place Achilles aims to strike his mortal wound. Anima white remembers disease and death.

This vulnerable whiteness parallels the whitening in alchemy. The albedo is both hard as silver and soft as down: a firm hardening of the reflexive mind, the mind a polished objective mirror without a beam of its own intentions, together with a quickly warming, gently yielding vulnerability in soul.

Supremacy—even if not in the heavenly and spiritual sense^A or the childlike and innocent sense^B—may nonetheless still be implied by anima whiteness.^C For the experience of the psyche's whitening is usually one of comforting ease, a lifting of the burdensome nigredo where all was occluded. During the nigredo the psyche feels a downward pull into its heaviness and a backward attraction into the past, remembering traumas. We experience memories traumatically: we explain ourselves with materialized reductive accounts and define reality depressively as hard, unimaginative and degrading. Reflections made in a mirror darkly.

The albedo lightens the mood, as putting white around small areas of color in a painting washes the colors out, leaching away their intensity. Now one rests content on the moon, supreme in one's lustrated psychological distance, Luna the Queen, all conflicting hues faded into the equanimity of white, the psyche so beautiful, everything metaphor, so apparent, so resonant. The smug, smooth supremacy of anima-fusion. Leucothea, the white goddess, saves the distressed at sea;²⁵ "the association of white with deities who bring calm is related to the whiteness of calm itself."²⁶ The very essence of white, the shape of the atoms of which it is composed, according to the atomist theory of Democritus, is "smooth," "shadowless" and "translucent."²⁷ "That whiter skin of hers than snow, and smooth as monumental alabaster," says black Othello (V,2,4) overtly of Desdemona, but as well describing an idolized anima whose smoothness presents no dark faults, no rough edges.

"... the *albedo*, which for many alchemists was the climax of the work" (CW 14, §388), delivers one over to the smooth white notion of wholeness where, as Jung says, "all becomes one" (ibid.). The shadow of the primary white, those tinny, milky, calflike conditions, become imperceptibly blended within the smoothed lunar unity. All the while believing oneself having achieved the opus, one is actually back again at the ignorant beginnings of the prima materia. Delusions induced by supremacy. To obviate this dreamy enchantment of soul by its own lunatic potential, a lunacy not experienced as mad but as chalk cliffs in the

moonlight, so various, so beautiful, so new, alchemical advice says to increase the heat toward yellow and red. *Circulatio*: move back down and around. *Iteratio*: repeat, yet again and again. For the true alchemical white bears blackness within it, the blues of memory and regret,²⁸ as it intends toward a further dawning, a waking-up to itself by yellowing. It is not sheer white, mere white, in fact, no longer purely white at all.

A yellowed white that is more complex than pure, stained and thus able to stain, "to tincture" as the alchemists said, rather than merely to reflect, a contagious white that goes out of itself, spreading, recalls a fourth set of meanings: white as sick. I refer especially to the Biblical Hebrew *laban* instanced in the descriptions of leprosy in Leviticus, evoked by Coleridge in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*: "Her lips were red, her looks were free, / Her locks were yellow as gold, / Her skin was white as leprosy." I refer also to the phlegmatic humor in ancient medicine—cold, moist, inert—still with us today in the fear of milk products and excessive mucus, and also in medical language: leukemia; "the whites"; candida; tuberculosis once called the "white plague"; and the white-skinned, white-boned, white-haired, white-spittled specter of old age. We seem now a long way from the supremacy of white with which we entered into this essay. But the conclusions are yet to come.

A Moral Conclusion

Precisely this pallid leprotic aspect leads to the moral of these notes. "Moral" because issues of shadow necessitate a moral style of rhetoric. (One sure way to recognize shadow in the room is that discourse takes on a moral tone. "Should" not only trumpets the superego, it announces the fear of shadow.) The moral of these notes concludes that *white casts its own white shadow*, has its own disease, which as white is indiscernible and especially indiscernible to consciousness defined in terms of light.

Since the albedo phase is essential to if not equivalent with the *unio mentalis*, we feel we are of one mind, spooky doubts, darkened suspicions, internal dissension dissolved. We feel cleansed of shadow in the supremacy of white. Hence some alchemists believed the work stops here.

However, as Navaho white clay drives away enemy ghosts, so the "moral aspect of whitening"²⁹ may in fact be that self-deception in which the ghosts are driven out by blending in, formulated in philosophy as the "identity of indiscernibles." Although the differences between white and its shadow are not perceptible (e.g., we can't see the shadow in our bright

ideas, good deeds, true beliefs, honest motives, beautiful feelings or any of the other Christian virtues which ennobled the conquests, glories, triumphs and spoils of the Christian mission), they are there nonetheless. Christ and Caesar indiscernible. As Leibniz argued, intrinsic differences even if indiscernible nonetheless exist.³⁰ The shadow of white may be white but still shadow. The moral task now becomes not do good and be true, harmonize and integrate, but *diakrisis*. "Discern or perish."³¹

Discernment conceived by an unsophisticated fantasy of "differentiating the opposites" removes white's shadows to the black at the other end of a spectrum of extremes. As a Jungian, I always imagine that extremes touch, for this was one of Jung's favorite maxims. More than touch: mingle, intertwine, conjoin, so that all white angels are at the same moment white devils, the healing *pharmakon* of white love also a poison, and white magic or white maenadism (E. R. Dodds) no less magic or maenadic because they are white. Let us define evil not as the absence of good (*privatio boni*) but the very presence of good, in all ways and forever, inextricably coincident. "There can be no consciousness without the perception of differences," says Jung (*CW* 14, §603). Consciousness to deserve the name mustn't shirk awareness of the blinding propensity intrinsic to each particular event nor escape through the dodge of opposites which permits one side to be right and white, therefore immoral and unconscious. Consciousness is at once fundamentally clarifying *and* self-deceptive, so when white appears in dreams or thought or life be glad and beware.

All lustrous moments in therapeutic practice, whatever the brilliance, the smoothing of trouble, cleared perceptions and saving transfigurations through insight, suffer the delusional snow job of white supremacy which forces distinctions into oppositions, splitting white and black; "... schizophrenics showed higher preference for white" in the color pyramid test, and "the incidence of white as a pathognomic sign of schizophrenia has also been reported" by other investigators.³²

Differences neither compete, contradict nor oppose. To be as different as night and day does not require an opposition of night and day. "White and black," says Jean Buxton of the Mandari, "are *used* [my italics] in conflict situations or where opposition is to be stated."³³ They are pragmatically opposed for a functional or aesthetic purpose, like laying a black stroke on a white field to make a strong statement. But this pragmatic use to underline conflict does not entail an ontic necessary opposition, that in their nature and being black and white are opposites.

Berlin and Kay claim white and black as language terms appear always *together*. It is Berlin and Kay who declare the terms opposed, applying their white (un-)consciousness to the linguistic material. That separation, that apartheid, forces inherent distinctions of shadow within each to become extrinsic, white losing its shadow in blackness.

Black, we may note, does not show this inclination toward supremacy. We saw that in Black Africa as reported by Zahan it is white that carries the meanings of special, heaven, good, divine, while black as reported by Victor Turner connotes disease, sorcery, bad luck, suffering, work and death—rather like our black plague, black magic, blacking out, black ball and black list. (These “inferior” meanings of black for people called black would be expanded and further differentiated were that the object of these notes.³⁴ Further, in painter’s language, “shade”³⁵ distinguished from hue, tint, intensity and value means mixed with black; here too black welcomes a sense of shadow. And I am told that American black vernacular is full of shades for so-called black people: yellow, brown, dusky, coffee-colored, blue-black, even pink. We may speak in a literary style of white complexions as ruddy, pearly, tanned, peaches-and-cream or sallow, yet white collapses to the one category. Whites are not vernacularly grouped in competitive subsets. (The nickname “red” refers to rufous hair and freckles.) My point is that only white has this built-in supremacy which annihilates its shades.

That whiteness does not admit shadow, that its supremacy rejects distinctions and perceives any tincture as dullness, stain, dirt or obscurity has been remarkably described in Tanizaki’s little book *In Praise of Shadows*. The Japanese novelist brings out the failings and destructive soullessness of our white napery, gleaming silver and bright glassware that sterilize eating; the dazzling electrification that hardens and stiffens our interiors; the white porcelain toilets in white-tiled cubicles which make our dark excrements only more smelly, alien and repulsive; our bleached white book papers inviting no meditative calm; our white hospitals in which human illness becomes obscene.

By “inherent distinctions of shadow” within white, I mean the differentiation of innocence, for instance, into shadings—the demivierge, ignorant of biological sexuality but corrupt in charm; the young innocent, without shady intentions but white-lies aplenty; the good innocent, pure as driven snow and cold as ice, or filled with the milk of human kindness and a mouth full of pap. I think of the white lamb’s wolfish neediness, of the white Goddess who is as well a demon of death, of the white noise

from the White House. And I think of the white powders, white pills, white papers, white sprays, white 'dust,' white smoke, and whitewalls that appear in dreams to eradicate insects, anesthetize feeling, eliminate or hystericize sensations, justify wrongs, and establish the perimeters of our interior defensiveness. I mean also a differentiation of the heavenly. There are millions of stars, each heavenly body with its own place and grade of light, and in ancient thought endless numbers of archons, angels, spirits, each characterized with its own translucence. Why are there so many angels, and why so tiny that they can dance on the head of a pin if not to force intense concentrated noticing of their individual differences, each unlike each, differences lost when we whitewash events with simple, pallid words like good, spirit, love, child, conscious, anima, whole, heal, help—the words that carry forward the white mission of psychology. Angels, each with a name and face and voice, are crucial for distinguishing the varieties of whiteness. Without angelic distinctions, white consciousness becomes unconsciousness, that is, insane. The loss of the white angels is the fall into the white race.

"Discern or perish"—if consciousness is differentiation as Jung says, then each white will be differentiated by the image which presents it. Which *sort* of white in this dream, in that behavior: deathly? bridal? lamblike? milky? Which *shade* of white: blinding? ashen? silvery? When, where, and how does it appear: as an unwritten page, assuaging aspirin, the handle of a clipping scissors, the long dress of a dead woman? Each white bears its specific triumph and specific threat together; that is, each white offers one of the supremacies together with the shadow specific to that supremacy.

A Psycho-Historical Excursion

"White casts its own white shadow." This conclusion may be bettered to say, "white sees its own shadows in black," not because they are inherently opposed but because it is archetypally given with whiteness to imagine in oppositions. To say it again: *the supremacy of white depends on oppositional imagining.*

When the perception of white here entails simultaneous perception of black there, we have what is commonly called projection. Projection, however, works two ways. The second reverses the first: perception of black there results in identification with white here. This psychological rule became the historical case. The "white" identity of nor-

thern-western Christian men begins (in English) only after their arrival on the shores of West Africa, mid-sixteenth century.

The most arresting characteristic of the newly discovered African was his color. Travelers rarely failed to comment upon it; indeed when describing Negroes they frequently began with complexion and then moved on to dress (or lack of it) and manners. . . . Englishmen actually described Negroes as *black*—an exaggerated term which in itself suggests the Negro's complexion had powerful impact upon their perceptions. Even the peoples of northern Africa seemed so dark that Englishmen tended to call them "black" and let further refinements go by the board.³⁶

The first use of white to characterize an ethnic group occurs in 1604 (*OED*), after the perception of Africans as black. By 1680, says Jordan, "taking the [American] colonies as a whole, a new term appeared—*white*" (p. 95). Although Negro slaves were baptized and Negroes joined the church as full members (Massachusetts) as early as 1641, the most common term the settlers used for themselves during the seventeenth century was "Christian." "Christianity had somehow become intimately and explicitly linked with 'complexion'."

From the first, then, *vis-à-vis* the Negro the concept embedded in the term *Christian* seems to have conveyed much of the idea and feeling of *we* as against *they*: to be Christian was to be civilized rather than barbarous, English rather than African, white rather than black. (p. 94)

Oppositional thinking "from the first," as Jordan says. Thinking in black-and-white. Peoples identified *by* color become identified *with* color; Africans who did not perceive themselves as "blacks" become "blacks," a discovery of white consciousness. West African slavery begins psychologically not in the structures of black society, as hinted by Braudel,³⁷ nor even in the inherent supremacy of whiteness described above (A and B), but rather in the yoke of oppositional thinking. Even if calling oneself black reclaims with pride an African heritage and history of suffering, one nonetheless remains within the same archetypal construct of whiteness present in the mindset of the first traders. "Black" may be beautiful, but it is a white term. The Greeks, Hebrews, Romans, Crusaders, Venetians, Portuguese, Spaniards—none called themselves "white," none intruded into the human world of peoples the archetypal realm of color, inflating and deprecating humans with transhuman values—a mode of speech arising with modern consciousness and reaching its apogee in nineteenth-century colonialism: "red" indians as

savages, the “yellow” peril, the “white” man’s burden. Freedom from slavery here means freedom not merely from the white master and the mastery of whiteness; it means mastering the oppositional mind that sets white against color of any kind, the color bar, the essential constituent of whiteness.

The whitening of the West proceeded concurrently with the blackening of the rest. This blackening was stored inside the term *black* long before any English-speaking person touched the shores of West Africa.

As described by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the meaning of *black* before the sixteenth century included, “Deeply stained with dirt; soiled, dirty, foul. . . . Having dark or deadly purposes, malignant; pertaining to or involving death, deadly; baneful, disastrous, sinister. . . . Foul, iniquitous, atrocious, horrible, wicked. . . . Indicating disgrace, censure, liability to punishment, etc.”³⁸

A logic of opposites preserves white from these foul notions. White would have no deadly purposes, could not be iniquitous and wicked or liable to punishment. White folk are clean and censure-free,³⁹ as if white ethnic identity was itself a baptismal font assuring salvation, as if alone the language of white by virtue of its archetypal resonances could restore purity, eliminate sin and guilt and shame, as if the mixture of blood in half-caste and half-breed were the worst of all betrayals of white group identity⁴⁰ because it empirically destroyed the logic of opposites which declares that where white is there can be no colored admixture, the logic of the excluded middle lived socially. How else account for the moral unconsciousness, the incredible self-satisfaction and smooth justifications that accompanied the massacres by white Christians (despite their scriptures and ethical jurisprudence) in that holocaust prolonged through centuries our history books call the ages of discovery, expansion and the primacy of the West.

Not only did the northern-western mind uncover its white predilection while discovering West African peoples during the period 1550–1700; concurrently, it made discoveries in modern optics. Huygens, Kepler, Galileo, Descartes, Grimaldi, culminating in Newton’s *Opticks* (1704—though presented in writing and lectures some thirty years earlier), which finally reduced the spectrum of hues to fractured bits of white light.

Alchemy too flourished during these same one hundred and fifty years, yet that flourishing is better regarded as one of late summer ripe for fall: a huge harvest of literature, bounteous compendia, dissemination (Ruland’s

dictionary in 1612 and Agnolo della Casa's eighteen volumes [1592-1618] each with nine-hundred leaves, or Borel's bibliography in 1654 with 4,000 entries). Alchemy had itself attained the *multiplicatio*, the late stage in the processes it describes, and achieved the *exaltatio* influencing courts and kings. It was due for return to the base condition of the *prima materia*, the state into which it subsequently fell (until revived by Jung), rejected as fraudulent, worthless or "only the beginning" of the rising new sciences.

The new optics embodied other fantasies about the sensate world, displacing the alchemical importance of colors as revelations of essential nature with inherent psychological properties, the very manifestations of the divine, God's rainbow, guaranteeing His presence in the raiment of things. Alchemical colors are in the world, of the world, and tell about the world. After Newton and Locke (1690, first draft 1672), colors are refractions of light, neither a sign of mystery nor an essential virtue, rather a secondary effect produced in the human understanding by abstract laws. The subjective qualities of color were relocated in the literalized subject. No color in the world of things out there, only the mechanics of light. With Newton, white assumed supreme status, the equivalent of light, primary—and colorless.

Hail, holy Light, offspring of Heaven first-born!
 Or of th' Eternal coeternal beam
 May I express thee unblamed? Since God is light,
 And never but in unapproachèd light
 Dwelt from eternity. . . .

(*Paradise Lost*, III, 1666)

The coronation of white by the scientific paradigm removed it from the chromatic scale of alchemy. There it takes its value partly from its place within a process; there it could be loaded with inferior, vulnerable, and tangible descriptions such as we saw in the white names for the *prima materia*. "Eternal" and "unblamed" whiteness describes sheer supreme white, God and child indiscernible, self-reflection gone. White, risen to become God of the colors, became an invisible transcendent, a fantasy most welcome to contemporary deism in religion and the emerging enlightenment in philosophy.⁴¹ The coronation of white also suggested an easy equation: black = the deprivation of light (optics) = *privatio boni* (theology) = without the light of reason (philosophy). This equation in social history promotes missions to benighted natives, the moral justifica-

tion of slavery, and the identification of dark-hued peoples with brute and bestial nature, dumb, without intelligence (for which modern terms are still borrowed from this topos: "bright," "brilliant" and "quick").

The relation between colors and light has a mythical parallel in Plutarch's *On Isis and Osiris* (probably written in Delphi ca. 120 A.D.):

The robes of Isis are variegated in colour . . . the robe of Osiris, however, has nothing dark or variegated about it, but is of one simple colour, the colour of light; for the origin of things is unadulterated and the primal element which is spiritually intelligible is unmixed. (§77)

The reduction of iridescence to white light translates mythically into the subjugation of Lady Isis to Lord Osiris, visible things to invisible law, polytheistic variety to monotony. The brilliance of Newton's achievement with the prism demonstrates the nature of light at the expense of the light of nature, both the clarity of enlightenment and the illusion inherent in it.

The White Unconscious

The convention informing geographical discoveries and the expansion of white consciousness over Africa continue to inform psychic geography. The topological language used by Freud for "the unconscious" as a place below, different, timeless, primordial, libidinal and separated from consciousness recapitulates what white reporters centuries earlier said about West Africa. From Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* to van der Post's *Venture to the Interior*, Africa and the unconscious allegorize the other place. (Psychology conveniently imagines white men projected their unconscious onto Africa but projection works two ways; geography's Africa appears as psychology's unconscious.) "Just don't stay in the tropical colonies too long; you must reign at home," writes Freud⁴² in 1911 to Jung, who himself made the African journey fourteen years later, describing the vast lands and dark peoples he encountered in language he applies as well to the immemorial unconscious psyche. Dream images such as forests and jungles, caves and oceanic deeps, cellars and swamps—any place without light, unmapped or trackless (without *methodos*) may casually be said by "depth" psychologists to symbolize the unconscious. Part of psychology's myth is that the unconscious was "discovered"⁴³ as its contents are "explored." Even the notion of the underworld as black rather than grayish, misty or invisible bespeaks white supremacy.

Moreover, the "discovery" of an unconscious separate from con-

sciousness, as a black continent separated from white penetration into it, maintains the very unconscious within white which the idea was invented to wound. For the idea of the unconscious follows from the idea of repression which Freud thought more important than (and even the cause of) the unconscious. "The unconscious" is first of all a pragmatic idea, a moral idea, aimed to correct repression, i.e., that unconsciousness of the northern-western mind about the limits of its awareness.

Rather than imagining the unconscious as a dark region discovered by Freud, the intrepid adventurer, let us consider him the social moralist, who presented a chastening idea in the language of a new place, an idea that had become morally necessary—and abhorrent—to white supremacy, since it limits its freedom (as a *Grenzbegriff*), corrects its Christianity (as Freud and Jung differently insisted), expands its ethnocentricity to collective universals and, by coloring its whiteness with variety, challenges its superiority and stains its innocence. It is this unconscious white consciousness that is the proper object of depth psychology, depth come home to roost, out of Africa; depth in Freud's sense of the omnipotence fantasy and Jung's sense of shadow: ever-present and always mine, the very me I am now, imagining myself eternal and unblamed. And so these notes restate Jung's insistence upon shadow and his moral anger over Albert Schweitzer's African mission. Not there, here.

Yet Jung's notion of shadow, like that of the unconscious, rises within the white topos we are describing. Though serving the aim of self-correction, the ideas of shadow and unconscious maintain the theory of opposites and locate consciousness with light, day, bright, active, etc. And so the entire modern psychological effort to raise consciousness, and the ego drafted to enact the endeavor, is one more manifestation of whiteness, perpetuating the very fault it would resolve. The project can never succeed since the unconscious it would redeem lies in the instrument of its intent, in the eye of its light.

Psychology assumes repression, projection and the unconscious are bedrock laws of the mind. They are fundamentals, however, only within the topos of their origins—the white North, the Christian West, modern history. That these notions are a priori to the northwestern soul is truly descriptive of that soul: it represses, it projects, it is hugely unconscious. That is how this soul identifies its consciousness, defends it and survives. As long as white consciousness maintains itself with metaphors of optics (maximum clarity and centralized focus) and symbols of sharpness (the knife of discrimination), where can the excluded animated others appear

except elsewhere as "projections," animisms, miracles, synchronicities. The unconscious becomes the vast excluded of psychoanalysis, a huge submerged iceberg, consciousness its little white pointy head.

If there is a history of consciousness, then there is a history of changes in the defense mechanisms on which this consciousness depends. As Bailey shows (below), projection indeed has its history in magic lanterns; and alchemy's notion of projection had nothing to do with our modern ideas about the unconscious psyche of the operator. Alchemy confined projection wholly to the *opus*: the throwing off or effusion of one substance upon another thereby effecting transmutation. These older notions were 'internalized' by modern psychology's fantasy of subjects throwing emotional veils over objects. Now at the century's close we recognize a post-modern experience of this same term. Projection is no longer confined to a subjective psychic activity which externalizes those fantasies incompatible with so-called consciousness. It is no longer merely a matter of the white mind laying its dark attributes onto black people.

We now experience projection to be the very essence of our high civilization; the white supremacy fantasy lies latent within its forward, upward thrust, its *wurf* or throw. Projection in every project, program, problem, prognosis, production, profession. What is not projection? By what criteria discern action from acting out? What does the white eye see on the horizon but the white heat of its own projected extinction? Projection now is not of the repressed; it refers to what is actually lived in our most deliberated projects. What we call consciousness today is simply projection. Even the one whose project is to take back projections, to integrate them in a wider whole, is also a "who" embraced by the same projective topos, a figure in the cave. The shadows dancing on the wall cannot be seized by the centered attention of more focused light, taken back as mine; they may be caught only fleetingly, peripherally, by a glance, a moment askance that respects their independence like a flicker off a rock and given with the rock. For no longer do we want to tell the dancer from the dance or be the squatters on the cave floor trying so sincerely not to project. "Who" is to say what is conscious, what projection, or whether the rockwall is more unconscious than the watching we. I turn my face to the wall; the wall is what I have.⁴⁴

Jung's *later* articulation of "the unconscious" coming from alchemy starts in the rockwall, in nature, not in the human mind. This "unconscious" is a dark field of small perceptions (Leibniz), of living sparks, scintillae, fishes' eyes—*lumen naturae*, the light of nature as islands of

consciousness. This “unconscious” offers a radical shift of metaphor with ethnic implications. As there is always and essentially shadow within light, so there is always and essentially light within shadow. Neither “conscious” nor “unconscious” can ever be literally such; in fact, “discern or perish” becomes impossible since that by which we discern itself requires discerning. There is no standpoint that is not unconscious. There is no light all white, no immaculate perception. We are all mulattoes of the mind.

And all things from beasts to buildings, phosphorescent, darkness glowing; and so all things showing blackness, whether imagined morally, racially or geographically, would flash their fishes’ eyes; brightness streaming from nearer than the firmaments of heaven, now closely, panluminously, in the sticks and stones that break white bones. “The unconscious” becomes again a destructively wounding self-description required for self-regulation, even self-preservation, limiting whiteness not by a dark surrounding opposed but now by the uneasiness occasioned by alternative lights. Fish everywhere, everything fishy. No longer the topological Africa of the mind down there; instead opacity, suspicion, irony, complexity, density and some quiet joy at being relieved of the white man’s burden of clarity.

Alchemy and Society

The alchemical appreciation of color recognizes shadows within any hue. The *rubedo* or reddening, for instance, may be the goal, equivalent to gold, the elixir, tincture and philosopher’s stone. As well red may be violently sulphuric, or a mercurial phase, or the primal crude earth of Adam. That is, red may describe conditions requiring sophistication and transmutation. Red may also float on the surface or come too fast and other such cautionary descriptions of the work going wrong. Although each of the main hues may be interpreted symbolically, more importantly they are aesthetically qualified, *perceived in imagistic context*, as colors in a painting derive their values from their relations with other colors. Josef Albers says:

We are able to hear a single tone.
 But we almost never (that is, without special devices)
 see a single color
 unconnected and unrelated to other colors.
 Colors present themselves in continuous flux,

constantly related to
changing neighbors and changing conditions.⁴⁵

The spectrum, a pantheon: "Never do the Gods appear alone," said Schiller. Polychrome, not monotone. (The Greeks *painted* their marble statues. In reverent awe we walk among their white remains, pleased with the purity; the originals would have been too gaudy.) What Albers calls the "continuous flux" of colors "constantly related" also suits the alchemical colors as a field of poetic metaphors for the transformations of soul and of nature which, as ensouled, displays its vivacity and intelligibility by means of colors.

Jung's turn to alchemy (publicly presented at Eranos Lectures in 1935 and 1936 when Jung had turned sixty) was a return to a colored soul and a colored world. It was also a return to that bifurcation in psychological history exemplified in the seventeenth century when white assumed its supremacy in science, geography, anthropology and moral philosophy, and when colonialism, black slavery, the Enlightenment and Protestant monotheism were emerging as dominants in northern-western consciousness. For only in the seventeenth century did we become truly "white." ("After about 1680, taking the [American] colonies as a whole, a new term appeared—*white*.")⁴⁶ Jung's move into alchemy re-opens these societal questions, offering both penetration to their archetypal depths and the possibility of their transmutation.

I find it curious that Jung attributes the beginnings of his alchemical research to one of his Italian dreams⁴⁷ in which a figure says to the dream ego, "Now we are caught in the seventeenth century."⁴⁸ That century saw a particularly Christian and eschatological reading⁴⁹ of alchemy—a white reading—and Jung's *Psychology and Alchemy* follows suit. So, too, Edinger.⁵⁰ But we may understand alchemy not only as a moralized recipe for a redemptive process after the Christian fashion. We may turn to Jung's alchemical work for re-immersion in history, perhaps to redirect its course.⁵¹ For it is in alchemy that we find a self-correction of those interlocking attitudes I have been belaboring in these notes—repression and projection, oppositional thinking or splitting, superiority, invulnerability, the self-blinding of idealization, praise of ignorance, heaven-sent surety—attitudes that are archetypally given with the supremacy of whiteness.

Alchemy provides a very different vision of the supremacy of white. Because its work is called an *opus contra naturam*, it sees (and hears) through what comes naturally, first, and easily to mind. Heavenly white,

innocent white and anima calmness are all too simple. The *opus contra naturam* sophisticates its own fundamentals—its elements, its metals and heat. (Not ordinary water or common mercury or direct fire—always metaphorical, imagined, reflexive, complicated.) Nothing naturalistically; everything psychologically. Hence the second white of the albedo which sophisticates the first and requires yet further transmutation.

Moreover, as Jung's great work shows, the opus aims to resolve the problem of opposites—that white devil we have been hounding throughout these notes. So, alchemy is a work against whiteness even as it strives to attain whiteness. Its way of resolving oppositional thinking is *not* by a balancing admixture of both, *not* by a golden mean between them and *not* by a transcendent third beyond them; but by desubstantiating the principle of opposition itself: the problem is solved because it does not arise. If inherent to white is supremacy and if supremacy maintains itself by denying shadow, then it is "only natural" to white consciousness to think and feel in opposites, to take them as ontologically fundamental, that is, literally. The ontological fantasy of reality as consisting of paired opposites is itself a manifestation of the white mind, and our affinity for this fantasy that mind's narcissistic defense against the wounds of self-awareness. Give up the opposites, and you can move beyond white supremacy.

In claiming archetypal priority for color, I am following not only Jung and the alchemists but also Victor Turner. After surveying the role of colors in archaic, ancient and anthropological contexts, he hazards the hypothesis that black, white and red are not only linguistically the basic color triad (cf. Berlin and Kay) or only basic to Africa (Zahan), but more: "Among the earliest symbols produced by man are the three colors" (Turner, p. 88). "They also provide a kind of primordial classification of reality." "Since the experiences the three colors represent are common to all mankind, we do not have to invoke diffusion to explain their wide distribution" (p. 90). "The point I am trying to make here is that the three colors white-red-black for the simpler societies are not merely differences in the visual perception of parts of the spectrum: they are abridgements or condensations of whole realms of psychobiological experience. . ." (p. 91). "By representing these 'forces' or 'strands of life' by color symbols in a ritual context, men may have felt that they could domesticate or control these forces for social ends, but the forces and the symbols for them are biologically, psychologically and logically prior to

social classifications by moieties, clans, sex totems, and all the rest” (p. 90).

Remarkable statements! The force of colors prior to social orders, prior to sex totems! The alchemical transmutation of the colors is one such ritual, a ritual that continues within psychoanalysis when conceived alchemically.³² Since the domestication (sophistication) of the colors is a transmutation of the very strands of life, life’s psychobiological dominants, alchemical psychology offers a mode of sophisticating the white affliction I conceive to be archetypally endemic in our civilization.

These notes remain merely diagnostic of the affliction rather than remedial unless we recognize that white, black and red as archetypal forces determining the mind can nonetheless be revisioned by it. A white mind can be inside a black skin, a red skin, any biological skin. And though we can’t get out of our skins, we can go out of our minds. Alchemy describes this breakdown of the white mind as the nigredo prior to and inherent within another white.

That second white, the albedo, results from the nigredo; the only candid now psychologically tainted and shaded. This white remembers its forebears, its drop of black blood, blue blood. Its whiteness is the complete presence of all hues, not their absence, including hues yet to be born. It is a complexity of values and tints, depending on components such as lead, zinc, tin, antimony and silver, on relations and locations and temperatures, demanding the most exquisite discernment of any eye desiring to see through the blaze of first sight. As the albedo (from *albus*, “dead white, not shining”) is inherently many-hued, so it is accompanied by the peacock’s tail with many eyes (polyophthalmic *cauda pavonis*). The second white cannot be perceived with single vision, that white-eyed mind which had to be broken to bits in the nigredo. The psychic supremacy of the albedo is inseparable from its psychopathology.

“Supreme” here takes on a psychological sense—much like daylight invisible in itself, much like echoing or mirroring empty in itself and altogether dependent upon the other for its reflection, that peculiar, secondary and inferior dependency required for insight—a supreme reflection above all others: that mirroring of itself as merely white not red, *luna* and not *sol*, silver and not gold, phase and not end; a mortally wounding reflection of the albedo’s lesser rank, that it is a pale rider, a bodiless wraith, merely reflection and not the thick liquid pool, no matter how lovely, how lovable, an immaterial witness; and this supremacy of the

unachieved, the weakened, the dependent is psychology's own inferior sort of supremacy sometimes called "psychic consciousness."

Psychic consciousness has moved from the seventeenth century. Yet we have been reading alchemy as if we were still in Jung's dream, as if alchemy referred only to our private eschatology, the salvation of soul, the individuation process. Alchemy—just another Christian denomination. But alchemy's principal lesson is the materiality of the psyche and that the *opus* cannot be achieved alone within the individual person. Always it is the material that transmutes its colors, the matter that sophisticates; and my subjectivity cannot be distinguished from what's out there. Alchemical psychology draws the personal soul toward the soul of things, *their* interiority and traits, *their* likes and dislikes, what they are doing and how things are going. *Anima Mundi*. I find myself in their reflection, my luck or accidents with things, the weather, what the day is like. This is the whitening of the daily, *leuke 'eméra*, good day, white day, yielding to its supremacy, the psyche all around and myself colored by its conditions. The alchemical *opus* takes place *in vivo* as well as *in vitro*. There is the vessel of the world which too is psyche. Which too has eyes.

That I am being watched, and watched over, we feel most vividly at night when the dayworld sleeps. I do not mean only dreams and the soul's encounter there with the intentions of the others, nor do I mean only the child's night terrors and night companions. I refer to the African experience described by Buxton: "For the Mandari night and darkness have strong emotional overtones. . . . darkness is not disturbing simply because something may be lurking in the dark, but because the darkness itself is felt to be lurking—it 'looks' at us."³³ And the Navaho chant: "I am ashamed before earth; / I am ashamed before heavens; / I am ashamed before dawn. . . . these things are always looking at me. / I am never out of their sight."³⁴

This yielding to the image-pregnant materiality of the world is how I would today define "psychic consciousness." The world does not need the missionary; it is already converted, enlightened with its own opalescence. It is no longer Aristotelian or Cartesian or Christian dark matter given as blind data to the forming power of creative conscious intentions whether as the stuff for experimental physics, as slaves for colonials, as unconscious material to be made conscious. Today we will say psychic consciousness is not creative but created, and we the world's creatures. All we need do is open our eyes to its eyes.

Coda con brio
(*Tailpiece without Muffler*)

The seventeenth century gone and the twentieth departs. Styles of reflection reflect styles of centuries. Though Jung's formula, reflection equals consciousness (*CW* 11, §235 n.9; *CW* 8, §§241–43) may still hold, we have come to imagine reflection differently. "Post-modern" they call it. Leaving the twentieth means leaving the modern mode of reflection defined as bending back and away from the object toward interior subjectivity where images are formed that 'refer' in some way or other to the object. Yet to bend back and away in favor of the mind's deliberations and interpretations retreats from the other, the very ground on which reflection depends. So how do we know that what's going on in reflection refers to what's out there?

Faced with the paradoxical isolation of its reflections, modern consciousness invented the referent, insisted that its observations were indeed about the other, that its reflections truly reflected something literal, opaque, outside itself—the referent. But modernism could not escape the white of its own eyes: to be conscious was to be separated from and utterly untainted by anything but itself. Here lay the paradox requiring the scientific method, ever refining its objectivity to reach beyond the solipsism intrinsic to its style of reflection. For whiteness is supremely solipsistic, like the perfect child or Aristotle's God needing no friend, like the calm, smooth anima, self-satisfied, its delusions self-consistent, resting in a unified field on a coherence theory of truth. Extraversion, materialism, utilitarianism, positivism, projection itself—each shows the obsessive-compulsive agony of the white mind trying to get out of itself, desperately seeking the obscure object of its desire. A solipsistic history repeating the same moralistic shibboleth: Love thy neighbor; do unto others; connect, only connect; relate, relate. . . .

As modern psychology recognized this double delusion—that its reflective consciousness does not really require another and that this consciousness really does refer to another—it had to divide the mind. It had to invent the unconscious in order to remind consciousness that it could never be as white as it wished. The "discovery" of the "unconscious" came as a late stage of modernism, indicating its decline by turning its projective roots back onto itself. The "discovery" was actually a self-discovery, a backhanded welcoming of reflective consciousness's own delusional base, turning the delusion into irony and joke, a way to look back

over its own shoulder, to reflect its own downfall, to become "post." It forced white consciousness out of its supremacy, saying to it: "You can't know what you are talking about," asking, "What are you referring to?" And though post-modernism loves to deny the referent, this move does not deny what's out there. It does deny that consciousness is the way to it. Modern consciousness as white consciousness cannot get there, and what it finds is always dead. Having walled itself in, it blames it on the wall. (And how it listens for signals, pining for life somewhere in space!)

To deny the referent is merely to state that what's out there is not knowable as referent or ever to be referred to as referent—tied to my consciousness for its significance, as if on its own each thing were a dumb wall, irredeemably unconscious, signifying nothing. Rather, to deny the referent affirms the thing. What's there is a first class act *an sich*, playing dead to elude projections; a sparky, flickering thing with its own rights, proving its mercurial freedom by escaping every frame of reference into another and another, sheltered by its friends, other things, among which it lives its life and into whose company I may be allowed as a thing among things asleep by the wall.

Formerly, reflection meant placing an event against a background—systematic schema, symbolic meaning, mythical topos. Post-modern reflection displaces, shatters the confident prism, meaning untied to references, dislodged from backgrounds and structures, allowing new falls, free falls. Falling from the heaven of white certainty, out of the arms of the opposites. Through the looking glass and into the images. "Raising consciousness" now requires an *abaissement du niveau mental*; Lucifer, the has-been star, now guides the epistrophé because the way down is the way up. The knower becomes known through the statements of his knowing. Now it's the overseer in the woodpile, *is* the woodpile. Not projection, subjection. They've got their eyes on me; I am their referent, their text. "I" have fallen out of my mind, out of the twentieth century, no place to hide and everywhere to go. A goalless going, without a project, 'unconscious,' so that we can never ascertain arrival. The fall may be continuous but not abysmal, not a bottomless, horrific maw, and the traveling not labyrinthine; instead, a lovely continuing along and there is always that wall with its faces. Such could be consciousness in a post-modern psychic style. Post-modern optics—the study of scotoma, of blindness, of the ways in which the eye that sees cannot see itself. Epistemology—the study of how I am shown to and known by the sleepless Argus-eyes reminding my mind of their minds, and their constant minding.

White consciousness already feels itself fallen, feels itself shadowed, under surveillance, poisoned, exploited, assaulted and abused. Return of the slave, return to the native. A victim consciousness arises as the century departs. In keeping with the old modernism we interpret identification with the victim personalistically, try to cure it, to regain supremacy. But there is another reading: white consciousness forced into the post-modern psyche, into an animistic recognition of shades everywhere even in the brightest day and closest love. Melanoma under the white skin. In white itself there lurks invisible disease, uncontrollable terror, impersonal rape and spies who have infiltrated our closed subjectivity. We cannot erect the impenetrable defensive shield, the white immune system no longer reliable. Modern consciousness now suffers its own uncertainty principle, pressed to recognize that all its reflections do not extend beyond the prism, the prison, of its own unconsciousness, no matter how expanding the universe, how luring the moon.

No other place now for the unconscious except inside the act of reflection so that psychic consciousness in this time of the fall can be defined only ironically as self-reflexive, where reflection refers to the many-eyed ways each act of consciousness is supremely multiple and thereby supremely self-limiting, inevitably, humiliatingly projective and indestructibly destructive, or (let us say) supremely unconscious.

1. Brent Berlin and Paul Kay, *Basic Color Terms: Their Universality and their Evolution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969).

2. Counter examples are listed by D. L. Snow, "Samoan Color Terminology," *Anthropological Linguistics* 13/8 (1971): 389. Cf. the following articles in the same periodical: R. W. Wescott, "Bini Color Terms," 12/9 (1970): 349-60; J. A. Frisch, "Mohawk Color Terms," 14/8 (1972): 306-10; H. B. Broch, "A Note on the Hare Indian Color Terms," 16/5 (1974): 192-96.

3. Eleanor Irwin, *Colour Terms in Greek Poetry* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1974); Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

4. C. T. Lewis and Ch. Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1894).

5. Irwin, *Colour Terms*, pp. 163-65.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 166 (cf. Plutarch, *Pericles* 27).

7. Dominique Zahan, *Religion, Spirituality and Thought of Traditional Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); "White, Red and Black: Colour Symbolism in Black Africa," in *Color Symbolism: Six Excerpts from the Eranos Yearbook 1972* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1977), pp. 55-80.

8. Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967; paperback 1970), pp. 69-70.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

10. Geoffrey Parrinder, *West African Religion* (London: Epworth Press, 1949), p. 119.

11. Jean Buxton, *Religion and Healing in Mandari* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 385.

12. V. Turner, *Forest of Symbols*, p. 84 (Cherokee).

13. Gladys A. Reichard, *Navaho Religion*, Bollingen Series (New York: Pantheon, 1950), 1: 189.
14. V. Turner, *Forest of Symbols*, p. 82 (Madagascar).
15. *Ibid.*, p. 83 (Malay Peninsula).
16. Heinrich Zimmer, *Philosophies of India*, Bollingen Series (New York: Pantheon, 1951), pp. 229-31&n.
17. Cf. Frederick Turner, *Beyond Geography* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983), p. 160.
18. Fernand Braudel, *The Perspective of the World*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), 3: 434.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Against this archetypal account, structural anthropology argues that no single color like white has intrinsic meaning: a meaning is often reversible depending on context and other factors. The true bi-polarity of color into an opposite meaning is not black *vs.* white or white *vs.* red, etc., but the presence of absence of colour or between two chromatisms of different degrees [stressed/unstressed]. These observations seem to make it possible to dispose of theories making use of the concepts of 'archetypes' or a 'collective unconscious'. It is only forms and not contents which can be common" (C. Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966], p. 65). The opposition between content and form in Levi-Strauss's theory of mind as well as his monothemsis—i.e., the one basic idea of binary opposition in which the significance of the poles may be reversed without altering the significance of the structure—raises the question whether "binary opposition" is purely formal or whether it too isn't a content, with denotative meaning intrinsic to mind everywhere, and thus itself 'archetypal.'
21. Cf. James Hersh, "From *Ethnos* to *Polis*," *Spring* 1985: 60.
22. Cf. J. Hillman, "Silver and the White Earth (Parts I and II)" in *Spring* 1980 and 1981.
23. Cf. Irwin, *Colour Terms*, pp. 112-35, on "white women" as a Greek literary convention.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 185.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 186.
27. Theophrastus, *On the Senses*, ed. G.M. Stratton (Amsterdam: Bonset, 1964), §73.
28. Cf. J. Hillman, "Alchemical Blue and the *Unio Mentalis*," *Sulfur* 1 (1981): 33-50.
29. M.-L. von Franz, *Aurora Consurgens* (London: Routledge, 1966), p. 243.
30. "For there are never in nature two beings which are exactly alike and in which it is not possible to find an internal difference..." (Leibniz, *Monadology*, 9). Cf. "Identity" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1967), 4: 122 a&b.
31. F. Nietzsche, *The Dawn of Day*, §460.
32. K. W. Schaie, "The Color Pyramid Test," *Psychol. Bull.* 60/6 (1963): 540-41.
33. J. Buxton, *Religion and Healing in Mandari*, p. 389.
34. F. Braudel, *Perspective of the World*, 3: 440, 435, raises questions about African slavery that existed in monstrous proportions ("900,000 in the sixteenth century, 3,750,000 in the seventeenth, between 7 and 8 million in the eighteenth" sent off to the New World alone). Yet "Africa had already developed this bad habit long before the Europeans arrived, sending slaves to Islam, the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. Slavery was endemic to Africa, part of the structure of everyday life..." Could we substitute the sociological word "endemic" for the psychological word "archetypal"? Was the terrible possibility of slavery given, not only with the social and economic structures in the tribal villages, but in the archetypally "inferior" meanings of black employed by the Africans themselves?
35. Calvin Harlan, *Vision and Invention* (Englewood, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1986), p. 84:

"... shades (mixtures of greater or lesser quantities of colors with black)."

36. Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (New York: Norton, 1977), p. 4.

37. Braudel, see n. 34 above.

38. Jordan, *White over Black*, p. 7.

39. For a detailed survey in parody of white folk attitudes, see Martin Mull and Allen Rucker, *The History of White People in America* (New York: Putnam/Perigree, 1985).

40. F. Turner, *Beyond Geography*, in the chapter "Possession" presents examples of whites who chose the other side and the fury released by this "betrayal" of ethnic identity.

41. Cf. Gilbert Durand, "Psyche's View," *Spring 1981*: 2-5 on seventeenth-century "Apollonianism."

42. *The Freud/Jung Letters*, ed. Wm. McGuire (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 255F, 12 May 1911.

43. See, for instance, Henri F. Ellenberger's massive classic, *The Discovery of the Unconscious* (New York: Basic Books, 1970).

44. Cf. Theodore Roethke, "In a Dark Time," *Collected Poems* (1966).

45. Josef Albers, *Interaction of Color* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963; 1975 edition), p. 5.

46. Jordan, *White over Black*, p. 95.

47. On Jung's Italian dreams and "Italian complex" see my *Loose Ends* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1975), pp. 160-61 with notes.

48. C. G. Jung/Aniela Jaffé, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (London: Collins and Routledge, 1963), p. 195.

49. Cf. Stanton J. Linden, "Alchemy and Eschatology in Seventeenth Century Poetry," *Ambix* 31/3 (1984): 102-24.

50. Edward F. Edinger, *Anatomy of the Psyche: Alchemical Symbolism in Psychotherapy* (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1986).

51. The notion that history is open and may be redirected is essential to the psychological approach since all 'past facts' are always subject to psychological re-view. Reconstruction, interpretation, biographical integration—those essentials of every psychoanalysis depend upon the notion that *history*, as Henry Corbin insisted, *is in us, not we in history*. Corbin's reversal of the usual Western view of *history* as a collection of implacable outside forces and facts determining human life compares with Jung's reversal of the usual Western view of *psyche* as a private subjectivity inside the human skin. Instead, says Jung, *not the psyche in us; we are in the psyche*. Together Corbin and Jung allow us to turn psycho-history inside out. Psyche embraces history; history is an activity taking place in the psyche. As the individual works on the soul, so he re-immerses himself in history redirecting its course, a process we can witness in the working through of any case history in a prolonged analysis. Corbin and Jung together point the way beyond Nietzsche's eternal return, for only that history returns which has not been put through the alchemical operations and relocated in the psyche. Only then, as Santayana (and Freud) said, are we forced to repeat because history has become literalized. Only then it still stands outside and thus stands still as traumatic fact.

52. "... Chaldeans used to make images which had an 'antipathetic' effect upon the 'streams of Heimarmene' [destiny]; that is the demons subservient to Hecate, who were considered as agents of diseases. The Chaldeans employed for this purpose a three-coloured earth. . . . the statuettes of Hecate made by the magicians were of white, red and black wax. . . . Hecate the mistress of the three elements: the fiery ether, the white radiant air and the dark earth. . . . It seems probable that the three colours of the statues made by the Chaldeans were meant likewise to represent the

elements of the world (and perhaps the three Chaldean world-circles: the empyrean, the ethereal and the hylic)" (Hans Lewy, *Chaldean Oracles and Theurgy* [Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1978], p. 292).

53. Buxton, *Religion and Healing in Mandari*, p. 387.

54. Quoted in full in P. Berry, *Echo's Subtle Body* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1982), p. 5.