

Samuel L. Kimbles



Intergenerational Complexes in Analytical Psychology

The Suffering of Ghosts



Samuel L. Kimbles (doctor brother man), my dear friend and colleague, is one of the kindest, most compassionate intellectuals that I know. In this time of national crisis precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the relentless violence against Black, Brown, and Indigenous bodies, Sam's latest book, *Intergenerational Complexes in Analytical Psychology: The Suffering of Ghosts*, provides a psychoanalytic lens to illustrate our complicity in past traumatic cultural histories and contemporary injustices. In his brilliant, insightful analysis, Sam focuses on how we use our own personal suffering as a defense against recognizing the ways in which we are implicated in the suffering of others. As such, we miss opportunities for the mutual recognition essential for reparative communication and instead, both consciously and unconsciously, perpetuate social enactments that replicate intergenerational traumatic cultural experiences in our current everyday lives. I strongly recommend this book for anyone who is interested in understanding the psychosocial underpinnings of our ongoing cultural strife and who believes that insight can lead to behavioral change. *Intergenerational Complexes in Analytical Psychology* lights a pathway for a brighter collective future.

– **Medria L. Connolly**, *PhD, co-author with Bryan K. Nichols of Transforming Ghosts into Ancestors: Un-silencing the Psychological Case for Reparations to Descendants of American Slavery*

Sam Kimbles has once again substantially deepened our understanding of how unconscious dynamics operate in political, social, and cultural and group processes. In this book, he pulls together histories of violence, oppression, and social injustices to present to the reader an emotional field in which psyche generates its own responses and creates conditions for subjectivity grounded in the cultural unconscious. On such a reading of the psyche, we see in a remarkably rich and attuned way what possibilities exist for change and healing. Sam's work represents a significant contribution to our field.

– **Andrew Samuels**, *former Professor of Analytical Psychology, University of Essex, and author of The Political Psyche*

If your ghosts were stolen from Africa, sold into slavery, or were indigenous peoples deprived of their lands, or immigrants fleeing poverty, famine, and war, or Jewish refugees from the Nazis, Central American refugees from gangs, all of you have terrible stories to tell. How do those of us who work with human suffering treat your pain? How do we heal the severed feeling of kinship in our culture, our recognition of each other as fellow citizens, all of us carriers of ancestral trauma? These are among the questions Samuel Kimbles addresses in his wise and compassionate book. . . . *Intergenerational Complexes in Analytical Psychology* is a major contribution to Jungian thought, a profound and hopeful call to bring what Jungians know about working with the unconscious into the social and cultural realm. If your ghosts are agitated, moaning and muttering, rolling over in their graves, read them this book. They will thank you for it.

– **Naomi Ruth Lowinsky**, *author of* *The Rabbi, the Goddess and Jung: Getting the Word from Within*

Intergenerational Complexes in Analytical Psychology

Intergenerational Complexes in Analytical Psychology: The Suffering of Ghosts draws attention to human suffering and how it relates to unacknowledged and unrecognized traumatic cultural histories that continue to haunt us in the present. The book shows the many ways that our internal lives are organized and patterned by both racial, ethnic, and national identities, and personal experiences.

This book shows how the cultural unconscious with its multiple group dynamics, identities, nationalities, seething differences of conflicts, polarizations, and individual personalities are organized by cultural complexes and narrated by archetypal story formations, which the author calls phantom narratives. The emotional dynamics generated constitute potential transitional spaces or holding containers that allow us to work with these issues psychologically at both the individual and group levels, offering opportunities for healing. The chapters of the book provide numerous examples of the applications of these terms to natural and cultural catastrophes as well as expressions as uncanny phenomena.

Intergenerational Complexes in Analytical Psychology is essential reading for analytical psychologists, Jungian psychotherapists, and other professionals seeking to understand the impact of intergenerational trauma on individuals and groups. It is also relevant to the work of academics and scholars of Jungian studies, sociology, trauma studies, politics, and social justice.

Samuel L. Kimbles is a psychologist, Jungian analyst, member and former president of the C. G. Jung Institute of San Francisco, and a clinical professor (VCF) in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco. He has a private practice in San Francisco and Santa Rosa, California, and works as a clinical consultant to organizations. In addition to lecturing and presenting widely, he has published several works on the cultural complex. *Phantom Narratives: The Unseen Contributions of Culture to Psyche* explores the themes of psyche in groups and society. This book, *Intergenerational Complexes in Analytical Psychology: The Suffering of Ghosts*, continues the processes of exploring the unconscious at the level of culture and groups.



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Intergenerational Complexes in Analytical Psychology

The Suffering of Ghosts

Samuel L. Kimbles

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To my father and mother, Nelson and Margaret (Maggie) Kimbles, from whom I learned about the lineage that then opened the doors to the ancestors.

Those who know ghosts tell us that they long to be released from their ghost life and led to rest as ancestors. As ancestors, they live forth in the present generation, while as ghosts they are compelled to haunt the present generation with their shadow life.

H.W. Loewald, "On the Therapeutic Action of Psycho-Analysis"

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Foreword

If your ghosts were stolen from Africa, sold into slavery, or were indigenous peoples deprived of their lands, or immigrants fleeing poverty, famine, and war, or Jewish refugees from the Nazis, or Central American refugees from gangs, all of you have terrible stories to tell. How do those of us who work with human suffering treat your pain? How do we heal the severed feeling of kinship in our culture, our recognition of each other as fellow citizens, all of us carriers of ancestral trauma? These are among the questions Samuel L. Kimbles addresses in his wise and compassionate book. He seeks the healing of our cultural agony, reminding us that we are bound to each other.

Kimbles confronts the Tower of Babel that dominates our cultural landscape, full of competing assumptions and ideologies, where ghosts from different lineages argue with one another about who is suffering more and no one can understand the other. This Tower of Babel is a cultural complex, signifying the “cold civil war that never ends.” Kimbles argues, as he has for many years and in many books, that Jungian psychology needs to address the social reality of people’s lives and the cultural level of the psyche. What’s missing in all the chaos and fury of our times is a psychological attitude. He invites us and our suffering ghosts into a safe space, where our ghosts can hear each other’s stories, remember our shared history. “Each subgroup is carrying a shard of the cultural vessel,” he writes, referring to the Jewish mystical idea of “Tikkun Olam,” healing the world.

Intergenerational Complexes in Analytical Psychology: The Suffering of Ghosts is a major contribution to Jungian thought, a profound and hopeful call to bring what Jungians know about working with the unconscious into the social and cultural realm. If your ghosts are agitated, moaning and muttering, rolling over in their graves, read them this book. They will thank you for it.

Naomi Ruth Lowinsky
Author of *The Rabbi, the Goddess and Jung:*
Getting the Word from Within

Preface

As expressions of normative unconsciousness, psychodynamic treatments, in general, and traditional psychoanalysis, in particular, are the products of European and American cultural socialization, which emphasizes autonomy, individuality, freedom, purity, and the denial of whiteness as privilege and power. Thus, there tends to be unconsciousness about how this acculturation contributes to our theories, clinical work, and the understanding of emotional suffering. Our theories are not as racially or culturally free of the bias of cultural complexes as they may seem to imply. What Jung stated in 1946 applies equally to our current times:

We are living in times of great disruption: political passions are aflame, internal upheavals have brought nations to the brink of chaos, and the very foundations of our *Weltanschauung* are shattered. This critical state of things has such a tremendous influence on the psychic life of the individual that the doctor must follow its effects with more than usual attention. The storm of events does not sweep down upon him only from the great world outside; he feels the violence of its impact even in the quiet of his consulting room. . . . As he has a responsibility towards his patients, he cannot afford to withdraw to the peaceful island of undisturbed scientific work, but must descend into the arena of world events, in order to join in the battle of conflicting passions and opinions. Were he to remain aloof from the tumult, the calamity of his time would reach him only from afar, and the patients suffering would find neither ear nor understanding. He would be at a loss to know how to talk to him, and to help him out of his isolation . . . the psychologist cannot avoid coming to grips with contemporary history, even if his very soul shrinks from the political uproar, the lying propaganda, and the jarring speeches of the demagogues. We need not mention his duties as a citizen, which confronts him with a similar task.

(Jung, 1968, pp. 177–178)

We are living in an historical moment similar to that described by Jung during World War II. We have not created a space for social and political processes to be theorized as significant psychodynamic factors that affect our subjectivity, especially for those marginalized by racial, cultural, gender, and sexual traumas. And “what is less focused on is an acknowledgment and articulation of the layer within the psyche that contains and secrets crimes against humanity and their history” (Holmes, 2016, p. 642).

In addition to the dominant themes in European and American socialization just mentioned, the emotional and cultural fallout from conditions created for nonwhites revolve around feelings of being silenced, unseen, unheard, invisible, nameless, and marginalized. These feelings reflect responses to social and political contexts that function within an aspirational framework, such as “equal justice under the law” or “all men are created equal” on the one hand and the evidence of structural racism (disparities in healthcare, education, income) on the other. Though the dominant analytic orientations have remained intrapsychic and, of late, relational, the cultural attitudes implicit in psychological work have been similarly marginalized, thus haunting not only our cultural behavior but also our psychological work. The relational models, although they create more conceptual space for the sociocultural dimensions of this larger context, have been slow to evolve.

Intergenerational Complexes in Analytical Psychology: The Suffering of Ghosts is also, of course, my way of calling attention to the unacknowledged, unprocessed consequences of group traumas (violence) that I have personally seen reappear over and over again because of social and political violence around differences of race, class, gender, and sexual orientations. These histories and their various sociopolitical contexts are phantomatic for me in the sense that they constitute previously unacknowledged stories – and sometimes unimagined histories that generated stories I needed to listen to – that, as I retell them, will, I believe, affect others through their telling presence in our socioemotional environment that we all share.

My approach to these themes and issues uses both the practice and the lens of Jung’s analytical psychology. As an analyst, I have long marveled at the role of cultural consciousness in contextualizing some of our deepest personal experiences, and I have learned that attention to social reality deeply influences the psychological well-being of the individual self. As someone often consulted by people who want to restore their effective participation in life, I have found that such essential human senses as agency, choice, and the ability to locate ourselves and hold our own

within societal structures only emerge when the psychic consequences of feeling separate from others are adequately explored.

This book contains a number of my papers, some previously published, others presented at professional meetings. Together, they show my continued dreaming forward the concept of the cultural complex, of phantoms, phantomatic complexes, and phantom narratives to locate the collective dreams, fantasies, and imaginative reconstruction of historical complexes that, however intergenerational, are pressing for present-day integration and resolution. The past four-hundred-plus years in relationship to slavery and the genocidal destruction of millions of indigenous people here in the United States have been the open secret of our unacknowledged violence.

An old Bushman saying – “there is a dream, dreaming us” – has been the primal ground leading me into and through the historical nightmares that fill our newspapers today. Even natural catastrophes (hurricanes, tsunamis) seem to flush out of the swamp of cultural complexes many culturally imposed traumas (see Chapter 2). These issues are so ubiquitous partially due to their structural forms, for instance, structural racism. We don’t see that we swim together in these turbulent cultural waters and are affected by and contribute to their disturbances, consciously and unconsciously. Othering and demonizing differences are expressions of part of the structure of cultural complexes and are used to justify and deny our positions in what we are creating.

The line between what is clinical and what is not needs to be crossed to include issues of injustice, structural racism, and our own contributions to these cultural traumas, not only countertransferentially, but also as citizens of and in the very institutions that foster unhealthy context for us all. For the suffering ghosts that haunt us are “not simply a dead or missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life” (Gordon, 2008, p. 8).

The reader can follow my thinking and attitude of making space for us to stand as we enter these complex and chaotic times in this our cultural and global moment. This attitude requires us to sit with uncertainty, to bear conscious witness, to be engaged citizens, to live in the spaces of our differences and rework the links that connect us. This evolving attitude will, I believe, help us to develop our capacities to work toward a wholeness of psyche and culture. The chapters in this book give many ways that ghostly processes are manifested in our social and political lives, offering opportunities for potential healing of our cultural complexes.

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Working with cultural phantoms through cultural complexes

Recently, I saw the movie *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (Zeitlin, 2012) on a recommendation from friends who knew I was going to New Orleans for a conference. I thought the movie was fantastic, full of magical, imaginative, and gritty suffering, and the shadow associated with earthiness. I felt a type of immediacy as well as a separateness. It reminded me of Du Bois's image of the Veil, the kind of double consciousness that creates a barrier and a separation from otherness, making for an inner space. I also thought of the image of *Duende* in Spanish lore in its recognition of a presence, where the experience of immanence brings in the irrational, the absurd, the instinctive, and fate as other. The intimation of madness, the absent but present mother, the body, death, the world on the other side of the broken levee that became flashpoints for discussions of race – all constituted for me the feeling of an absent presence that was as big as Hurricane Katrina, the storm that devastated New Orleans on August 23–25, 2005. On the other hand, perhaps Hurricane Katrina as the phantom in the movie was the representation of the cataclysm.

This is the theme of *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, whose central protagonist is a six-year-old girl named Hushpuppy who lives with her father, Wink. She has lost her mother and lives in a shack with her father situated in the remote Delta. Wink is preparing his young daughter for the end of the world. When the father falls mysteriously ill, nature falls ill with him. Temperatures rise, the ice caps melt, and fearsome prehistoric beasts called *aurochs* run loose (an extinct species of large wild cattle that inhabited Europe, Asia, and North Africa). The aurochs appear in the film during and shortly after the storm's rising waters threaten to engulf their community, sending Hushpuppy in search of her long-lost mother. The movie depicts (although Romanized) the harsh reality of poverty and places the innocent little Black girl as the actual and symbolic victim of the storm, which is, psychically, indistinguishable from

the racism that is as present in the background as the poverty, the storm that broke through the levee that allows the nightmare to come rushing into our imagination. There is no containment for making sense of what's happening. We, as audience, like Hushpuppy and Wink, cannot offer any holding for either their or our feelings.

What a shocked world saw exposed in New Orleans in 2005 wasn't simply a broken levee. It was a cleavage of race and class, at once familiar and startlingly new, laid bare in a setting where they suddenly amounted to matters of life and death.

In this chapter I introduce the concept of the *phantom* as an image related to collective dynamics that operate as largely background in our cultural life. These are preliminary thoughts as I introduce yet another concept into the discussion of cultural complexes. But I hope it is one that will deepen our understanding, reflections, and discussion on the activity and dynamics of the group at the level of cultural processes.

Contemporary culture is a Tower of Babel of competing assumptions and ideologies about human rights, individual and group tensions around differences, resources, and intergroup conflicts both within and between nations, genders, and religions. These tensions produce complex moral and ethical dilemmas and push us toward political conflicts and social splits that we use to include and exclude each other. But what are we to do with all this? How do we process these times? Think about this? What actions can we take?

The one thing that seems to be missing in our Tower of Babel is a psychological attitude that allows us to see and to relate to what the unconscious is doing with these cultural ferments. In other words, what is missing is a psychological attitude toward the psyche expressed at the cultural level.

We tend to acknowledge the psychology of scapegoat dynamics but then feel powerless to do much with this awareness. Hate, envy, paranoia, and our difficulty with understanding and working with differences bind us over and over again to old patterns of relating based in fear. Previously, I introduced the concept of the cultural complex with the hope of opening up larger areas for viewing and getting language for describing what the psyche is doing with the interplay of these cultural phenomena. Building on the work of Joseph Henderson on the cultural unconscious (1990) and C. G. Jung's work on complexes (1934/1969) and the archetypal unconscious, the cultural complex allow us first to understand better how the psyche operates at the group level to organized group phenomena. Second, it allows us to understand both the individual's relationship to the group as well as how the group functions

within the individual. Third, through attention to group complexes, we may come into a better relationship with the autonomy of the psyche as it plays itself out at individual and cultural levels, expressed as collective myths, images, and themes.

Background of my interest in cultural phantoms

Before moving on to say what I mean by *phantoms*, I want to present some of the background that helped me to get into these ideas. My first recognition that the group psyche had a stake in individual and group survival occurred through a dream on the night before my admission's interview to the C. G. Jung Institute of San Francisco.

In the dream, I was sitting in a mosque with a dozen or so African American men, all dressed in black suits. I recognized them as Black Muslims. My name was called, and I got up and approached the door to leave for my interview. Suddenly, these men jumped between me and the door and said they would not let me pass until I demonstrated to them the secret handshake, and they would know that I knew them and would not forget them.

When a dream stirs up and reverberates through many levels of the psyche, as this one did for me, one can be relatively sure that something of the numinous and the archetypal has been activated. This kind of dream puts us in the shoes of that archetypal situation where we may resonate with the deeper currents of the living reality of the psyche. This living reality for me included recognition that the group, the African American community, was making a claim on me. That claim is something that I have been responding to and living out for many years. I have come to feel that it was a call for a reconnection to my Black ancestors that would open me up to my greater identity that comes through experiencing the reality of the psyche at the level of the group where symbols are embodied in our ways of living our values, identity, and integrity.

This dream brought to my attention the historical setting in which my current choice was situated. It forced me to remember the cultural assaults on our Black American humanity – hence, the title of one of my first papers on cultural complexes: “The Myth of Invisibility.” I thought of the earlier Black authors who had touched me and the titles of their works: W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folks*, Ralph Ellison's classic novel *Invisible Man*, James Baldwin's *Nobody Knows My Name*,

Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, all sharing the horrific dilemmas that are created in coping with collective hate, and the list goes on and on. Surely the theme that constitutes these authors' responses to American cultural life is that of invisibility, rootlessness, and homelessness. So I move through cultural complexes to the *phantom* or, as Borges (1999) says, from nightmare to dream, that is, to the presence of something from the facts of collective traumas to a way of working psychologically with their reality. My dream brought to my consciousness the importance of holding a connection to these ancestors/brothers as I go forward. My dream reflected an inner identity and a continuity that must be attended to and its shadow of collective responsibility and guilt as I moved from one frame of identity toward integrating another.

I am reminded of President Obama's report of his first trip to Kenya, before he went to Harvard Law School. He sensed his father's ghostly presence in the streets of Nairobi: "The Old Man's here, I think, although he doesn't say anything to me. He's here asking me to understand" (Obama, 1995, p. 323). Later he said, "The pain I felt was my father's. My questions were my brothers' questions. Their struggle, my birth-right" (p. 430). These kinds of internal responses to transitions around identity and culture must be very common, even if they are minimized. For what Cornel West says of Black culture is true of any people whose cry is for being seen:

The original cry of the black culture is neither a word nor a book, not an architectural monument or legal brief. Instead, it is a guttural cry and a wrenching moan – a cry not so much for help as for home, a moan less out of complaint than for recognition.

(West, 1999, p. 81)

This chapter is part of an ongoing response to this request to remember and to share with others as I have integrated these kinds of reflections into my development as an analyst over the past number of years.

History-keeping by the unconscious in individuals and groups seems independent of the conscious intention and goals of the group, and there seems to be a teleological aspect also (Stein, 1987). There is an independence from space/time coordinates reflecting a nonsequential, transpsychic arrangement of historical patterns as these are related to individual complexes. Like phantoms, history is a strange attractor (*strange attractors* are hidden islands of structure, subtle patterns of order at the heart of chaos).

Jung's idea of history includes not only childhood and the immediate family, but also the larger matrix of culture, generational patterns, and

archaic history as embedded in the collective unconscious. Inclusion of archetypes within the historical nexus led me to the realization that the influence of history on individuals is ubiquitous, rooted in culture and the unconscious, and pervasive through all segments of emotional and mental functioning, and is therefore fundamental to identity.

My first approach to history began with considering intergenerational traumas that I ultimately felt to be organized around cultural complexes. Thinking in intergenerational terms raises the issue of how all this occurs: by what mechanisms does the transmission happen? Since we are talking generally about the movement from past to present, across time dimensions, how do we talk about the fact that without direct communication we may be affected by processes and dynamics from another time and place? In addition, what about the intersubjective? And how do our ways of relating to each other stimulate and generate associations and complex responses that put us into different emotional spaces and awaken memories of the Other as well as our relationship to others past and present? These kinds of questions come up routinely in the transference-countertransference clinical situation. At a deeper level this seems to be related to generational continuity and, of course, to the survival of a people, group, or religion. Henderson, who introduced the concept of the cultural unconscious, defined it as

an area of historical memory that lies between the collective unconscious and the manifest pattern of the culture. It may include both these modalities, conscious and unconscious, but it has some kind of identity arising from the archetypes of the collective unconscious, which assists in the formation of myth and ritual and also promotes the process of development in individuals.

(1990, p. 102)

The part of Dr. Henderson's definition of the cultural unconscious that I am drawn to has to do with "some kind of an identity arising from the archetypes, which assists in the formation of myth and ritual and promotes the process of development in individuals." The term *phantom* is my response to "what kind of identity arising from the archetypes" as expressed through the cultural unconscious. In the remainder of this chapter, I describe what the phantom means and how it relates to cultural complexes.

The background to my thinking about the phantom can be found in Jung's own work described in his doctoral dissertation, entitled "On the Psychology and Pathology of So-Called Occult Phenomena"

(1902/1970), which laid the foundation for some of his most important concepts: subpersonalities, that is, autonomous complexes; the representation of an unconscious perception in the formation of imagery and personification; the autonomous psyche; images and hallucinations as potentially healing; and the mythical. Today we are likely to describe words like *phantom* in terms of the exteriorizations of unconscious complexes. Nearly twenty years later he said, "I doubt whether an exclusively psychological approach can do justice to the phenomena in question" (Jung, 1920/1969, para. 600, fn. 15). Jung's work at that time occurred when Freud's concerns about the uncanny expressed his attempt to understand the origins of certain psychic phenomena. The tilt toward scientific, rational understanding of phenomena that straddled the fence between the rational and the unknown put many of the earlier intuitions into the background for Freud (1919/1959) and was to lead to Jung's professional marginalization in the larger psychoanalytic community. Both Jung and Freud were interested in the psychic background, mostly the transpsychic for Jung and the more personal unconscious for Freud. However, Avery Gordon (1997), nearly a century later in using Freud's paper "The Uncanny," posited: "The uncanny is the return, in psychoanalytic terms of what the concept of the unconscious represses: the reality of being haunted by worldly contacts" (p. 54). "Something has become unfamiliar to describe those singular yet repetitive instances when home becomes unfamiliar, when your bearings on the world lose direction, when the over-and-done-with comes alive, when what's been in your blind spot comes into view" (Gordon, 1997, p. xvi). The phantom is the unbearable, that which is too much for consciousness, the untranslatable, that felt presence of the absence that opens the space for phantom dynamics.

Phantoms

Just as within individual psychology we may think about the imago of a mother or father complex, in cultural complexes we may think in terms of phantoms as constellations of images representing the psyche at the level of the group, expressed through social attitudes and structures that are alive in current events. For instance, the history of cultural traumatic events that have destroyed and disrupted social and cultural patterns causing breakdowns in family and social functioning have created symptoms of cultural traumas that can be seen in the varieties of learned helplessness, passivity, and lack of efficacy in relationship to one's own environment or world. Expectations of failure, anger, and a shift toward

external locus of control, self-blame, poor self-esteem, and the generation of invisibility – these can be witnessed on the individual level.

All of this occurs within a cultural setting of political, economic, and institutional power structure that privileges certain groups over others. I like the term *social suffering* from medical anthropology, introduced by Arthur Kleinman, Venna Das, and Margaret Lock. The term allows me to visualize the structural situations that freeze cultural complexes:

Social suffering results from what political, economic and institutional power does to people and, reciprocally, from how these forms of power themselves influence responses to social problems. Included under the category of social suffering are conditions that are usually divided among separate fields, conditions that simultaneously involve health, welfare, legal, moral and religious issues.

(1997, p. ix)

Another way to translate this is that trauma is perpetuated not only by victims but also by those who are heirs to the benefits and privileges of the spoils as they perpetuate attitudes, rituals, and the social machinery that makes these conditions manifest and recurrent. I call these *phantomatic effects*.

My first hypothesis is intergenerational processes are expressed as phantoms that provide representation and continuity for unresolved or unworked-through grief and violence that occurred in a prior historical cultural context, providing for potential continuity of these dynamics. There are several sources of influence for my interest in phantoms. I will mention only four.

For a number of years I had been working to utilize the concept of complexes to better understand psychologically a variety of historical, political, and cultural situations as these manifested in therapy and analysis. These included transference and countertransference issues, and representations of nonwhite groups as well as the relative unconsciousness of whiteness. From this, I eventually formulated the concept of cultural complexes. Cultural complexes as opposed to individual complexes are group based. Like individual complexes, they function autonomously within each individual and group to organize the attitudes, emotions, and behavior that make up group life. Their archetypal telos seems to be to provide both individuals and groups with a sense of belonging and identity within a historical continuity of shared emotional assumptions. The first influence came from my study of the unconscious dimensions of group life. Over the years I have both consulted to groups and trained others to read the unconscious dynamics of groups. One can see fairly

easily what Bion called the interaction between the more conscious way in which group members function to work with the group tasks and the unconscious processes that get going when members generate phantasies that are designed to create manageable anxiety for themselves. Essentially one sees the vastness and boundlessness of group life.

The second influence on my thinking came from my early work in a child guidance clinic as a child and family therapist wherein I adopted a family systems approach to the issues presented by my child patients. I often worked with families and many times extended family members as well as previous generations, such as grandparents. There I saw how family myths and beliefs led to emotional entanglements that bound family members to the needs and losses of previous generations. It became second nature to adopt at least a three-generational point of view within any family meeting. There was the child, and there was the family history of the parents that became a part of the contextual understanding of the presenting problem.

Not only did symbols and images of family members tend to encode intergenerational processes, but in the family unconscious suffering was shared or carried for each other; roles and rules were enacted that protected familial homeostasis and safety, often through extruding and scapegoating other members. I could always find the hero and the villain, the princess and the dirty old man, within the family group. I came to think of this unconscious functioning in the family as one expression of the cultural unconscious. The cultural unconscious at the family level embodies the interactional energies and strategies occurring within the family constellation, expressed through shared images, experiences, and roles. Like the cultural unconscious, the family unconscious expresses a shared emotional field at the group level, expressed through collective assumptions. The family's emotional life is intermingled with the cultural unconscious and with cultural processes.

The third contribution to my understanding of phantoms grew out of developing a way to look at intergenerational processes through a Jungian frame. As a transpersonal psychology, Jung's psychology serves as a corrective to the reductionist approaches of traditional psychoanalysis, which would reduce all human misery and mystery to developmental processes occurring after birth. To quote Jung, "the human psyche is not a self-contained and a wholly individual phenomena, but also a collective one" (1966/1972, para. 235). We would get closer to the truth if we think of the conscious personal psyche as resting upon a broad psychic base of inherited and universal psychic dispositions, which are unconscious. A child is related not only to parents but to grandparents and great grandparents; this explains the individuality of children more than

the relationship to their own parents. In spite of Jung's explicit statements that our individual psyches emerge out of the deeper levels of the unconscious and are derived from the collective, communal, and social experiences of humankind (meaning our individual identity is grounded in the symbols, rituals, language, and shared historical memories of our families, countries, and nations), we still tend to think in terms of oppositions: 1) inner and outer, 2) psyche and social, 3) and a tendency to understand the outer in terms of individual psychodynamics.

The fourth influence came when I later discovered the work of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok (two French analysts) who described a topographical structure called the "phantom":

It is a structure that grows out of secrets concealed and held. These secrets are silently transmitted directly into the unconscious of the child. The phantom is thus a formation totally outside any strictly phased or developmental view of human behavior. The child haunted by a phantom becomes a living tomb, in which an unspeakable drama, experienced as traumatic by someone else, lies buried yet alive, exerting its disruptive influence. It is described as a preservative repression. Along with the transgenerational transmission of a secret, the child inherits the unspoken imperative to preserve intact the integrity of that secret. The carrier of a phantom in analysis is thus always, metapsychologically speaking, "a child in analysis." To put it another way, the analysis of a phantom is always a child analysis. At the same time however the psychoanalysis of a phantom is also always an adult analysis – not an analysis of the adult on the couch but of the adult who concealed the secret.

(Abraham & Torok, 1994, p. 140)

Abraham and Torok's work focused on the phantom within the intrafamilial situation. I use and extend it to cultural and collective forces. In Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, the dead child functions as a phantom representing the dynamics of slavery and its historical legacy for the intersubjective family life while simultaneously representing the cultural complex created around the existence of slavery.

The phantom as an imago

The phantom as an imago "has a living independence in the psychic hierarchy, i.e., possesses that autonomy which wide experience has shown to be the essential feature of feeling-toned complexes" (Jung, 1934/1969,

para. 44, fn. 4). Phantoms function like complexes through the power of the imagination, potentially linking individual and group into a cultural narrative as organized by cultural complexes. Archetypal core and personal experiences may be split in the carrier of the phantom. In this regard I relate to Jung's work on spirits and soul. Jung in "The Psychological Foundations of Belief in Spirits" compares the experiences of complexes with the primitive belief in souls and spirits. Souls correspond to the autonomous complexes of the personal unconscious, and spirits to those of the collective unconscious. He makes an important distinction between soul complexes and spirit complexes:

Whilst spirits are felt to be strange and as not belonging to the ego, this is not true of the soul or souls. The primitive feels the proximity or the influence of a spirit as something uncanny or dangerous, and is greatly relieved when the spirit is banished. Conversely, he feels the loss of a soul as if it were a sickness; indeed, he often attributes serious physical diseases to loss of soul.

(1920/1969, para. 586)

In short, soul complexes "belong to the ego and the loss of them appears pathological" (para. 587).

Bringing this distinction into a reflection again on Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), the interaction between soul and spirit at the level of cultural complexes generates phantoms. The ghost Beloved, the infant daughter who was killed by her mother, Sethe, to prevent her from becoming a slave, returns to haunt the house, the mother, and the sister, Denver. Morrison's story is based on Margaret Garner, who did kill her two-year-old daughter rather than see her become a slave. This process is a reflection of a kind of introjective identification by which a people can accept a foreign thing into their identity. It can also be seen as a kind of effect of a collective projective identification, where the disowned and devalued is put into the "Other." Beloved's presence leads to the deterioration of Sethe's resources and ultimately to a community intervention made up of ostracized Black women who come to pray for Sethe. Hence, intergenerational transmission is a partially structured process that not only has been internalized and perpetuated, but also is a reflection of a type of psychic structure. Like fish in water, all of this tends to function in the background as Bollas's "unthought known" (1987). However, it is represented as a present absence, that is, as a phantom. As a phantom, Beloved has an autonomy that is uncanny. The spirit side of the phantom is expressed through its archetypal autonomy; the soul side of the

phantom reflects its interpersonal and familial history. Both aspects work together to generate a connection through the cultural complex to cultural and group issues that may give rise to consciousness related to belongingness, identity, continuity, and community. Obviously, all these areas and dynamics carry the shadow elements. They also tend to carry the two-sidedness of a positive side, that is, belonging and identity, along with the concerns with losing oneself and fears of exclusion. These polarities stimulate projection, aggression, and competition. But in either case, they carry the potential for individuation and transformation of social forces. A phantom expresses a link to the cultural unconscious. To become aware of a phantom is to find the dynamics of the cultural unconscious.

Like the movie *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, Hurricane Katrina came to symbolize more than a natural disaster. When we think back on the horrific images that appeared on our television screens of thousands of people huddled in the New Orleans Superdome for shelter, food, and safety, while others waited on rooftops to be rescued, we are struck that the preponderance of these images are of African Americans. What a shocked world saw exposed in New Orleans in 2005 wasn't just a broken levee. It was a cleavage of race and class, at once familiar and startlingly new, laid bare in a setting where they suddenly amounted to matters of life and death (Deparle, 2005).

Gallup polls following the hurricane showed that most Black people felt that race was a key factor in the perceived failure of the government to respond to their situation. What reality wants is that we discover that when we are looking at it, we are at the same time looking at us: humans mirror outside reality, and reality mirrors our soul. No separation, just correspondence. This idea is so ancient (Gambini, 2003). Katrina in its primal form, like the flood in *Beast of the Southern Wild*, is the expression of a phantomatic complex situation with many layers – both a phantom and a cultural complex. In this way of relating to psyche we are in a position to begin turning nightmares into dreams (Ogden, 2004).

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