

IV 4.2.34). The cycle of positive and negative inflation—association with Dives and Lazarus, respectively—gives way when the trickster's humanization leads to individuation; and a more integrated psyche in turn makes Falstaff receptive to divine grace.

It is insufficient to say that Falstaff is only a Lazarus-figure or even a parody of Henry IV's troubled realm, for Falstaff's criminal life is an object lesson to Henry V of the gross mismanagement that he must avoid and of the corruption that he must quell in order to be a successful ruler. The knight's life is thus a "negative witness"<sup>57</sup> to the moral life that the young king must affirm and achieve. Shakespeare's biblical allusions in *The Henriad* convey a strong ethical imperative and social consciousness, and Falstaff emerges as an even more complicated and fascinating character against the full spectrum of parabolic language. As an extended analogy and an example of the trickster's inflation, Shakespeare's allusions to Luke's parable provide the means to understand the true depth of the knight's depravity and to chart his spiritual progress; therefore, his portrait is both more somber than Battenhouse and Bloom propose and more hopeful. Falstaff is the key figure in a lifelong psychomachia modeled on the parable: he is not only a round character in both senses of the term but also a dynamic one who plays the negative role of Dives, his brothers, and the Pharisaic audience. But his marginalization by Henry V and his eventual contrition imply that, like Lazarus, he enjoys felicity in the afterlife.

If this truly is the shape of Falstaff's psychomachia, then he more than fulfills Radin's sense that the trickster becomes "at least conscious of what he does and . . . attempts to become socialized."<sup>58</sup> And the movement toward greater consciousness critiques Falstaff's statement in the tavern: "There is nothing but roguery to be found in villainous man" (*I Henry IV* 2.4.122–23). That he is a villain and a trickster should now be obvious, but the fact that roguery is not the extent of his psyche should be equally obvious. While his allusions to Dives and Lazarus are the trickster's inflation (both positive and negative), Falstaff's final identification with Lazarus ultimately suggests the trickster's humanization and a way out of the cycle of inflation.

Matthew A. Fire

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Villainous Man

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## CHAPTER 4



### THE PRIMITIVE IN OTHELLO A POST-JUNGIAN READING

*Outwardly people are more or less civilized, but inwardly they are still primitives.*

Jung, "On the Psychology of the Trickster-Figure"  
(*CW* 91, 482/269)

If the collective unconscious connects human beings to instinct (chapter 1), and if the trickster is part animal (chapter 3), it follows that the collective unconscious also bears some relation to the primitive, a concept to which we now turn. Previous psychological critics—both Jungian and non-Jungian—have glanced at the primitive in connection with Shakespeare's *Othello*, but most consider it an obvious premise not worthy of deeper consideration. Only Jungian critic Barbara Rogers-Gardner, whose comments on the primitive deal mainly with Othello's concept of time, begins to unfold the notion of the primitive, though she does not apply Jung's theory.<sup>1</sup> There is no sustained reading of the primitive in *Othello* from a Jungian perspective despite various references that suggest its relevance: Othello's travels in strange lands, his attitude toward the handkerchief, and his final speech about the "base Indian" and "turbaned Turk" (5.2.357, 363). On the one hand, the omission of such a reading is strange because the primitive lies at the heart of Jung's theory of the collective unconscious. He notes that "it was the discovery of the collective unconscious, that is to say, of impersonal psychic processes, that aroused my interest in primitive and Oriental psychology" (*CW* 18, 1286/553). The collective

unconscious, which transcends time and place, connects human beings with archaic elements in humans' psychic history; and these elements, for Jung, were more evident in tribal cultures than in Western civilizations, though his articulation of these ideas sometimes includes troubling statements about race. To use the idea of the archaic to advance an understanding of the play requires that Jung's statements about race be sheared away—a critical process that I undertake here in the spirit of postcolonialism.<sup>2</sup> Once Jung's theory of the primitive has received a post-Jungian corrective, however, the remaining concepts enable a deepened understanding of Othello's so-called primitive mentality—his *participation mystique* (mystical participation), a state of being that is psychologically archaic but not tied to race or culture—that ultimately thwarts his individuation, though the resulting portrait is subject to cultural critique as well.

Previous Jungian criticism has analyzed Othello's problems using an archetypal approach, which focuses on projection. Rogers-Gardner quotes the relevant passage: "A man who is unconscious of himself acts in a blind, instinctive way and is in addition fooled by all the illusions that arise when he sees everything that he is not conscious of in himself coming to meet him from outside as projections upon his neighbour" (*CW* 13, 391/297). Maud Bodkin, the first Jungian critic to examine *Othello*, holds that Othello projects his anima onto Desdemona and his shadow onto Iago, while Desdemona projects her animus, her inner warrior, onto Othello. Non-Jungian critic Robert Rogers calls the conflict within the main character "endopsychic" or "intrapsychic": the key conflict is within Othello, whose psychic forces are projected onto others. For Alex Aronson, Othello is a "victim of the archetype" when he relies on the handkerchief as "ocular proof" (3.3.376), allowing anima and shadow (the "devil-figure" Iago) to overcome his ego. Perhaps this is why non-Jungian critic Catherine Bates sees "a profound archetypal significance" in Othello as "a Mars disarmed." In any case, it is no surprise when Rogers-Gardner states that "Othello is caught between his anima and shadow"; and her analysis—the most sustained Jungian reading of the play to date—adds the helpful idea that whereas Desdemona and Othello's mother "represent witchcraft, anti-reason, and romantic love," Iago "represents wit or tough, reductionist realism." Kenneth Tucker develops the idea that Othello is to feeling as Iago is to thinking, and he too argues that Othello projects his anima onto Desdemona. Terrell L. Tebbets takes a more comprehensive approach to archetypes and projection: Othello-as-general

represents male ego, while his blackness reflects the shadow; Othello and Desdemona are animus/anima projections; Iago's sexual suspicions manifest shadow and negative anima; and the trial scene at the Senate enacts a "balanced or individuated psyche" inasmuch as all parties are heard from. Later in the play, of course, Othello, Desdemona, and Iago deviate from the ideal of the individuated Self that the Senate represents. Gregg Andrew Hurwitz memorably adds, "Rather than integrating his shadow and wedding his anima, Othello weds his shadow and neglects his anima." Hurwitz also suggests that the handkerchief represents Othello's attempt "to transfer his anima libido from mother to mate."<sup>3</sup> To one degree or another the preceding Jungian approaches to *Othello* all relate to this homology: Desdemona is to anima as Othello is to ego as Iago is to shadow (or what Othello himself calls "some monster in thy thought" [3.3.119]). The characters' interaction, then, is a stage psychomachia, with Othello attempting, but ultimately failing, to integrate competing alternatives. Nonintegration of the shadow dooms his attempt to embrace the anima, but previous criticism does not examine how this failure to achieve individuation relates to the primitive.

Although a number of studies do touch on the primitive in *Othello*, they neither use the concept precisely nor avoid perpetuating the negative connotations that trouble Jung's rhetoric. Arguing against the idea that Othello is a primitive, G. K. Hunter asserts that *Othello* does not use "any simple primitivist terms" or depict "the exploitation of a noble savage by a corrupt European." Whereas Montaigne critiques European society in "Of Cannibals," the play is "anti-primitivist" because Othello is not a "credulous and passionate savage." Other critics have focused on the way in which the play enacts the disintegration of a primitive psyche in a civilized setting. Abraham Bronson Feldman does not use the term "primitive," but he does imply that primitivism is a factor in Othello's geographical origin: "Othello's Moorish fatherland is linked in the unconscious not only with sex-terror but also with vision of an id-paradise. . . . a wonderland of libido," which stands in opposition to Venice where reason rules. Although Jung would not be comfortable with Feldman's claim about the id, he would support a link between the unconscious and primitive geography, particularly the lands through which the young Othello has traveled. Moreover, if K. W. Evans is right to consider Cyprus "midway" between the two settings, it follows, in the Freudian vein, that Africa is to the id as Venice is to the superego and that on Cyprus Othello's

ego attempts to mediate between these competing psychological imperatives. As Jyotsna Singh argues regarding this traditional geographical reading of *Othello*, "a 'symbolic geography' . . . continues to perpetuate racial divisions within today's postcolonial world."<sup>4</sup> Readings of *Othello* based on geography thus perpetuate the troubling sense in Jung that the primitive is the Other, whereas in this chapter I am more interested in examining his idea that the primitive, as the archaic substrata of the collective unconscious, is common to us all.

Othello's journeys through primitive landscapes prior to the opening of the play also suggest that he bears some resemblance to the hero archetype. David Kaula notes that Othello has achieved, "like the standard mythical hero, an upward progress from slavery, dangerous exploits, and exposure to monsters and wild landscapes, to an honored place in Brabantio's drawing room and finally to the love of Desdemona." The point is a valuable one, for (in my view) the stages of the hero's journey not only characterize Othello's past and present but also correspond to elements of the dramatic situation. Cassio's drunken misbehavior may parallel Othello's "boyish days" (1.3.34). Young manhood corresponds to the realms that he describes to Desdemona ("antres [caverns] vast and deserts idle" where cannibals "each other eat," and men have heads that "grow beneath their shoulders" [1.3.142-47]). The young hero becomes a more integrated psyche as a result of battling his shadow projection in a primitive setting, which may be why Robert B. Helman associates primitivism with "unresting destructiveness." Mature manhood finds Othello commanding the Venetian army, and victory over the Turks ought to herald a time of contentment-in-marriage that would usher him into old age. The ideal progression is understood to be toward the civilized, but Othello fails to perform one of the hero's duties. A hero must "protect beautiful women from terrible danger" (Henderson), not subject them to it as Othello does when he murders his wife. Because he has not integrated his shadow in his earlier travels, he cannot properly embrace his anima and is instead at its mercy. James Hillman states, "The more a man identifies with his biological and social role as man (persona), the more will the anima dominate inwardly," and he quotes the following passage from Jung: "Take, for example, the 'sportless' man of honour and public benefactor, whose tantrums and explosive moodiness terrify his wife and children. What is the anima doing here?" (CW 7, 319/199). As Feldman puts it, Othello is "spiritually chained to his mother." Anima addiction (as opposed to

anima integration) derails a hero's journey from the primitive landscape—where psychic content is projected and dealt with—to the civilized world where the integration of shadow and anima should enable him to become man-in-relationship-to-woman.<sup>5</sup>

By reflecting the hero's journey in *Othello*, geography implies the role of the primitive and develops the "intrapsychic" approach; but one must turn to Rogers-Gardner for a more direct reading of the primitive. She first goes the archetypal critics one better by cleverly invoking Shakespeare's angel and devil in Sonnet 144—his two loves "of comfort and despair." Contrary to Feldman, she holds that Othello is a "primitive, innocent man [who falls] into civilized deceit" by allowing Iago, the "angel of despair," to win him over. Like the geographical critics, she then describes the realm of Othello's travels as "the warrior's world of the primitive past." Because Othello's worldview is "traditional-tribal," he has a "primitive sense of time" and lives "in the wide open spaces of myth" rather than by the clock—a deficiency that renders him vulnerable to Iago's machinations. Rogers-Gardner's strongest contribution to the discourse on the primitive is this statement: "[Jung reminds us continually that only primitives like Othello have access to those deep areas of the unconscious which must be integrated for full maturation, for individuation, and for art."<sup>6</sup> Presumably analysis enables everyone to access the deep unconscious, and one may also quibble that a successful general cannot really be innocent or lack a linear sense of time. But it is certainly true that Jung considers primitive peoples in general to have greater access to the collective unconscious than those who are civilized.

#### JUNG'S THEORY OF THE PRIMITIVE

In this review of Jungian criticism, those who invoke "the primitive" assume that it means the opposite of civilization, the presence of warfare, or what Shakespeare calls in *The Tempest* "the dark backward and abysm of time" (1.2.50). No one actually defines it explicitly, and not even Rogers-Gardner considers Jung's extensive statements on the concept. I believe that Jung's primary intention in using the term "primitive" is to convey the *psychologically archaic*, that is, areas of the psyche that are less conscious and less differentiated. Unfortunately, he occasionally makes statements that conflate such an archaic/primitive psychological state with the skin color of tribal peoples, in whom

he thinks such a state predominates. My goal here is to acknowledge and criticize this conflation and then to focus on *the primitive as psychologically archaic* to analyze *Othello*.

Jung's essay "On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry" (1922) provides an appropriate starting point for an inquiry into his theory of the primitive:

The fact that artistic, scientific, and religious propensities still slumber peacefully together in the small child, or that with primitives the beginnings of art, science, and religion coalesce in the undifferentiated chaos of the magical mentality, or that no trace of "mind" can be found in the natural instincts of animals—all this does nothing to prove the existence of a unifying principle which alone would justify reduction of the one to the other. For if we go so far back into the history of the mind that the distinctions between its various fields of activity become altogether invisible, we do not reach an underlying principle of their unity, but merely an earlier, undifferentiated state in which no separate activities yet exist. (CW 15, 99/66)

Art, science, and religion are evidently of a magical mentality all compact in the mind's distant history. An "undifferentiated state" is not a "principle of their unity," meaning a unity of art, science, and religion, because such distinct fields simply did not exist in human prehistory. Although this conclusion is reasonable, Jung reaches it through the association of primitives with children and animals: even as he provides the helpful concept of the undifferentiated magical mentality, the implied disparagement of native peoples echoes colonial discourse. As Andrew Samuels puts it in *The Cambridge Companion to Jung*, Jung's "attitudes to women, blacks, so-called 'primitive' cultures, and so forth are now outmoded and unacceptable. He converted prejudice into theory, and translated his perception of what was current into something supposed to be eternally valid." Samuels is describing the principle of "fixity," which Homi K. Bhabha defines "as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism." As Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin point out, "'the African mind' was slotted into a permanent and fixed difference from the European [mind]." <sup>77</sup>

Since such fixity is, in a word, racist, it will be helpful to examine two contrasting perspectives that relate Jung's racism to Darwinian thought. In the first view, Petteri Pietikainen makes a strong case that

Jungian psychology has little in common with evolutionary theory: Jung's racism is not so much biological as cultural, and it would be inappropriate to put a neo-Darwinian spin on it. On the one hand, Pietikainen concedes that both Jungians and neo-Darwinians assert "a universal structure of the mind that has its own evolutionary history" and that evolution may provide an analogy for an individual person's development from childhood to adulthood. But on the other, the application of biological science to Jungian thought is fraught with difficulties: metaphysics and philosophy are more relevant to Jungian psychology than is hard science; Jung's own assumptions about biology are largely erroneous; he did not read Darwin or understand Darwinian principles; and the biological theories that he did embrace were later proven false. A second perspective, one more firmly grounded in Jung's own writings, is offered by Farhad Dalal who holds that Jung's lack of scientific method is precisely the point: his position purports to be evolutionary science but is not. Jung is particularly guilty of projecting his own racist fears on the Other (especially African blacks) and of then defusing that fear by considering them to be the evolutionary equivalent of European children. As with children, so with animals: Dalal writes that for Jung "the races are seen to be on a spectrum of evolution. But there is a sharp discontinuity at two places on the continuum: between the animal world and the human, and between the European and the non-European." Jung thus "creates a hierarchy of races and uses Darwinism as a justification for it. The bushman is less evolved than the European and therefore closer to the animal world." Difference, then, is both psychological *and* biological: "The European brain being 'more evolved' has access to the history of the 'primitive' by plumbing its own depths, but the brain of the 'primitive' being less developed has no such access. . . . The collective unconscious is the realm of concretism, participation mystique, non differentiation, collectivity. The European has evolved and grown out of this stage, and has repressed it. The other races have not moved too far from this stage. Thus the unconscious of the European is equivalent to the conscious of the non-European."<sup>8</sup> I find value in each author's perspective, and my own inquiry into Jung's concept of the primitive is consistent with elements of both. Pietikainen correctly holds that Jung's take on the primitive is not Darwinian in execution (it is instead bad science or non-science); and evolution is indeed an analogy for individuation. And Dalal rightly identifies the racism in Jung's Darwinist intentions—Jung's perception of difference obscures a

sense of cultural and biological hegemony. I will argue, however, that Jung's theory of the primitive is less Darwinian than Eurocentric. As a white European, Jung looked down on primitive peoples as *lesser* even as he admired what he presumed to be their close connection to the archetypes.

Perhaps the best definition of the "primitive" appears in "Archaic Man" (1931), where "archaic" and "primitive" are synonyms. Jung specifically states that "man" does not imply skin color but refers instead to "his psychic world, his state of consciousness, and his mode of life." He further maintains that "primitive mentality" is not the exclusive province of one race in particular or even of uncivilized man in general (CW 10, 105/50-51). If the primitive relates not to skin color but to the collective unconscious, to which all persons are linked, then everyone has a primitive element inside. He states that "these primitive vestiges still exist in us" and that "certain contents of the collective unconscious are very closely connected with primitive psychology. . . . deep down in our psyche there is a thick layer of primitive processes. . . . closely related to processes that can still be found on the surface of the primitive's daily life" (CW 18, 1288-89/554-56). He is expressing what Edward Said calls the "contrapuntal," a "simultaneous awareness" of "metropolitan history" and "other histories" or what Emily C. Bartels calls "cross-cultural dialogism, recovered traces of the Other in the self, the self in the Other."<sup>9</sup> Although Jung sometimes talks about race in binary terms that seem to have universal application, his theory of the psyche and therefore of the primitive does include its own subaltern voice, which conveys the sense that the boundaries embedded in colonialist discourse, though they may still obtain, are beginning to blur.

In light of Jung's basic position—the primitive is the psychologically archaic—we can properly contextualize passages in the *Collected Works* that sound offensively Eurocentric. Such rhetoric is unfortunate because he is making an important point about the primitive as a trans-racial phenomenon. He mentions "lower races, more particularly the Negroes" and asserts that "the Negro" and "the Red Indian" are present in the American white person (CW 18, 1284/551, 94/47). Here, then, is the problem: although a sympathetic reading might assert that Jung is speaking metaphorically and that he *means* to suggest the presence of the psychologically archaic even in the most "civilized" citizens of the West, he has conflated the psychologically primitive with darker skin color, leaving him open to valid concern regarding

his position on race. The same conflation is present when Jung writes, "Just as the coloured man lives in your cities and even within your houses, so also he lives under your skin, subconsciously. Naturally it works both ways. Just as every Jew has a Christ complex, so every Negro has a white complex and every [white] American a Negro complex. As a rule the coloured man would give anything to change his skin, and the white man hates to admit that he has been touched by the black" (CW 10, 963/508).

Again, a sympathetic reader might consider Jung's final statement that the "white man hates to admit that he has been touched by the black" to mean that human beings have great difficulty facing their inner shadow. Similarly, by "the coloured man would give anything to change his skin," Jung may mean that the impulse of individuation arising from the Self impels all persons to desire transformation from their archaic psychological states to those of increased consciousness and differentiation. But such readings belie what Jung says, and what he says poisons the well with rhetoric that is sometimes akin to the Duke's statement to Brabantio: "If virtue no delighted beauty lack, / Your son-in-law is far more fair than black" (1.3.292-93). The Duke's praise of Othello, as Philippa Kelly notes, invokes categories that reflect the racist sense of difference and otherness that leads to the indictment of Othello in the first place.<sup>10</sup> The same criticism may be leveled at Jung. Even if his rhetoric and examples are more at issue than the theories themselves, a rereading of his stance on race and the primitive is definitely in order.

If Jung's point is that all persons, whether civilized or not, share a layer of primitive psychology, then what is that primitive layer, and how does it manifest, particularly in a civilized setting? Here as well, Jung's discourse perpetuates the sense of racial difference because he considers tribal peoples, all of whom possess darker skin color, to be psychologically "inferior." For instance, they lack intellectual capacity, are like "herd animals" in terms of instinct and "well-developed social sense," and like children are both strongly imitative and strongly influenced by the unconscious (CW 4, 403/179, 641/278; 6, 422/249; 8, 516/270; and 9i, 276/163). "Primitive people, especially," he writes, "are very much bound to their infantility" (CW 4, 564/246). Their emotions rule their egos,<sup>11</sup> and they are suspicious of neighboring tribes (CW 10, 45/27). Although naturally expressing their sexuality, primitives have strict moral codes, especially as regards sexual matters (CW 10, 214/103; 6, 356/212; and 8, 465/244). In

Jung's way of thinking, people characterized predominantly by primitive or archaic psychological elements are also unintelligent, animal-like, infantile, suspicious, openly sexual, and rigidly moral. Of course, some of these characteristics relate to Othello; and behind Shakespeare's Moor, as Ruth Cowhig points out, lie the stereotypes of Africans popularized by Leo Africanus's *The Geographical History of Africa* (1550; published in England in 1600): "courage, pride, guilelessness, credulity and easily aroused passions."<sup>12</sup>

Jung's own expeditions to "primitive" cultures reinforce the sense of cultural difference and contrast markedly with Othello's presence in Venice. Othello, a black man who has traveled through primitive lands, finds himself in Venice where his psychic limitations prove to be stronger than Europe's civilizing influence. Jung himself journeyed in the opposite direction, visiting Africa twice in 1920 and 1925 and New Mexico in 1924–25 to study the Pueblo tribe of Native Americans.<sup>13</sup> Whereas Shakespeare wants to dramatize Othello's reactions to civilization, Jung wanted to see how he, as a civilized man, would react to Africa—to study his own psyche as much as the "primitive psychology" of the natives whom he visited. He writes, "In traveling to Africa to find a psychic observation post outside the sphere of the European, I unconsciously wanted to find that part of my personality which had become invisible under the influence and pressure of being European."<sup>14</sup> For both Othello and Jung, then, the fundamental issue is how a man's reaction to a foreign culture whose mentality differs from his own relates to his individuation. If Jung had not expected to find a different mentality among "primitive" peoples than among Europeans, he would not have traveled to far-flung parts of the world.

If we understand the primitive to mean the psychologically archaic and separate it (as Jung often failed to do) from a context based on race, Jung has a point when he considers all persons to have a degree of the primitive inside. In the same spirit, William Heinrich Roscher and James Hillman assert that people can be "Western, modern, secular, civilized and sane—but also primitive, archaic, mythical and mad."<sup>15</sup> A "civilized" person's primitive side manifests, for example, in Jung's own positive return to nature when he built his rural retreat at Küsnacht or in Lago's negative Turk-like machinations. It is vastly more difficult for Othello, the supposedly primitive man, to operate within a highly sophisticated civilization. Yet, according to Jung, the "primitive" man longs for "civilization" because the psyche's basic goal is growth, and civilization fosters a social and individual state of

further consciousness and differentiation. Jung's work also frequently acknowledges that civilization is itself problematic in a multiplicity of ways, including civilized man's vestigial primitivism, whose most obvious manifestation is war. In "The Fight with the Shadow" (1946) he attributes world war to unconscious influence because "we simply accuse our enemy of our own unadmitted faults" (*CW* 10, 444/218; 8, 516/270).<sup>16</sup> If we project our shadow on the enemy, then fighting that enemy equals denying our own shadow and blocking the individuation process. Jung predicts grave consequences: "The damned-up instinctual forces in civilized man are immensely destructive and far more dangerous than the instincts of the primitive, who in a modest degree is constantly living out his negative instinct"; and he considers world war a manifestation of the primitive within and among civilized nations (*CW* 6, 230/140). So although, on the surface, the Venetians are fighting the Turks, Jung's concept of projection suggests a different reading. Whereas, from the Venetian point of view (and presumably from Shakespeare's), the Turks represent a primitive, bellicose challenge to civilization, the Turks (in a Jungian reading) merely objectify the Venetians' own inferior function, which "is practically identical with the dark side of the human personality" (*CW* 9i, 222/123).

Civilized persons' vestigial primitivism also illuminates Desdemona's attraction to Othello. Jung writes that "the sight of a child or a primitive will arouse certain longings in adult, civilized persons—longings which relate to the unfulfilled desires and needs of those parts of the personality which have been blotted out of the total picture in favor of the adapted persona."<sup>17</sup> It is not merely, as the archetypal critics argue, that Desdemona projects her animus onto Othello but also that their interaction makes her aware of her own "dammed-up instinctual forces." Jung notes a similar phenomenon in a comment about American girls: "We often discover with Americans that they are tremendously unconscious of themselves. Sometimes they suddenly grow aware of themselves, and then you get these interesting stories of decent young girls eloping with Chinamen or with Negroes, because in the American that primitive layer, which with us is a bit difficult, with them is decidedly disagreeable, as it is much lower down. It is the same phenomenon as 'going black' or 'going native' in Africa" (*CW* 18, 341/148). The statement's racism and Eurocentrism are so pronounced that it is necessary to state at once what I am not saying. I am not saying that there is anything wrong with interracial marriage or that Jung is right about Americans or women. That said,

does Jung's quotation contain anything beyond obvious flaws; and, if so, what valid insights illuminate *Othello*? The passage suggests that while all persons have a primitive element by virtue of the collective unconscious, the primitive in Americans is layered over with greater repression than in Europeans who, though they struggle with unconscious forces too, have somehow managed to become more individuated (that is, they have achieved greater conscious awareness of their own unconscious forces). When a white American girl becomes somewhat aware of her unconscious, primitive nature, however, she affirms it by projecting it onto a black man whom she then marries: the stronger the repression of the unconscious, the more force it will have when it is released. The passage repeats the unacceptable linkage of dark skin and primitivism, but the point for Desdemona is that Othello's stories activate her animus and make her aware of her own primitive nature, which she embraces through projection and marriage to the Moor. There is not only animus/anima projection in the union of the Venetian belle and the African general but also a connection in terms of the primitive: Desdemona may subtly desire it, while Othello appreciates the pity she feels for his endurance of it (1.3.163). Jung's analysis of American girls and my application of it to Desdemona thus reinforce what was once a popular stereotype: "Given the enormous popularity of travel books among white women (the Earl of Shaftesbury in 1710 was to lament the fact that 'a thousand Desdemonas' were so obsessed with stories of African men that they would readily abandon husbands, families and country itself, to 'follow the fortunes of the black tribe'), can we not say that Desdemona was an early travel book 'fanatic'?"<sup>18</sup> Although Shakespeare, Shaftesbury, and Jung may, to an extent, reflect white European males' insecurity about female sexuality and fidelity, the dependability of their evidence seems dubious. So far, Jung's valid principle of universal primitivism, defined as the archaic, undifferentiated, and less conscious elements of the psyche, is sometimes obscured by racist rhetoric that centers on binary opposition and creates a sense of alterity; however, his insights—perhaps because of their flaws—are not without some application to *Othello*.

A more positive aspect of Jungian primitivism—and what motivated Jung to visit African and Native American villages—is the aforementioned "magical mentality" and the primitive's connection to the collective unconscious. The primitive, as Steven F. Walker writes, "is wise in the ways of psychology, capable of establishing a relationship with the archetypal world."<sup>19</sup> He does this primarily through projection,

as Jung points out: "We find this phenomenon beautifully developed in primitive man," who "is somewhat more given to projection than we [are]" (CW 10, 44/26, 132/65). In "Archaic Man," Jung takes the point a step further: "Projection is one of the commonest psychic phenomena. It is the same as *participation mystique*, which Lévy-Bruhl, to his great credit, emphasized as being an essentially characteristic feature of primitive man" (CW 10, 131/65). It is this projection, or nondifferentiation between subject and object or between the perceiving mind and the perceived object, that characterizes a primitive mind as opposed to a civilized mind, for the latter type distinguishes between "qualities which, formerly, were naively attributed to the object [but] are in reality subjective contents" (CW 7, 329/206; 8, 516/270–71). "To him [the primitive] the world is a more or less fluid phenomenon within the stream of his own fantasy, where subject and object are undifferentiated and in a state of mutual interpenetration" (CW 9, 187/101).

According to Jung's line of reasoning, because primitives do not realize that projection is taking place, they assume that there is no difference between psychic content and external objects. Dire consequences result when civilized persons make the same mistake. The most obvious is war, which is not merely a manifestation of primitive instincts but also an example of projection. A second consequence is fetishism, the belief that objects have power and significance in themselves. In a passage that could nicely illuminate the 1980 film *The Gods Must Be Crazy*,<sup>20</sup> Jung writes: "For primitive man any object, for instance an old tin [or Coke bottle] that has been thrown away, can suddenly assume the importance of a fetish. This effect is obviously not inherent in the tin, but is a psychic product" (CW 10, 625/329). Elsewhere he speaks of "the primordial relation of the primitive to the object. His objects have a dynamic animation, they are charged with soul-stuff or soul-force (and not always possessed of souls, as the animist theory supposes), so that they have a direct psychic effect upon him, producing what is practically a dynamic identification with the object. . . . Its [the object's] strong libidinal investment comes from its *participation mystique* with the subject's own unconscious" (CW 6, 495/294–95). A third consequence of projection is superstition; the primitive assumes the existence of magical "supra-personal 'powers'": "Primitive man has a minimum of self-awareness combined with a maximum of attachment to the object; hence the object can exercise a direct magical compulsion upon him" (CW 8, 95/50, 516/270). As

Jung points out in "Archaic Man," for example, primitives assume that occurrences may be ascribed to supernatural causes and that what "we call pure chance is for [them] wilful [*sic*] intention" (*CW* 10, 107/52, 117/56). There is no doubt that *participation mystique* underscores cultural difference (all humans are prone to projection, but primitives' "magical mentality" makes them most prone of all). Let us now see where Jung's line of thinking leads in our understanding of *Othello*.

#### THE PRIMITIVE AND DESDEMONA'S HANDKERCHIEF

War, fetishism, and the supernatural—unlike the minor characteristics of the primitive—have a major bearing upon an interpretation of *Othello*. Projection in each case springs from and defines a primitive mentality and illustrates an inability to distinguish between subject and object. The war against the Turks shadows forth the Venetians' own inner negativity, while the primitive in fetishism and the supernatural relates to the matter of interpretation that has most engaged the play's critics—Desdemona's ill-fated handkerchief.

That handkerchief  
 Did an Egyptian to my mother give.  
 She was a charmer, and could almost read  
 The thoughts of people. She told her, while she kept it  
 ¶I would make her amiable and subdue my father  
 Entirely to her love, but if she lost it  
 Or made a gift of it, my father's eye  
 Should hold her loathed and his spirits should hunt  
 After new fancies. She, dying, gave it me,  
 And bid me, when my fate would have me wived,  
 To give it her. I did so; and take heed on 't;  
 Make it a darling like your precious eye.  
 To lose 't or give 't away were such perdition  
 As nothing else could match. . . .  
 ¶'Tis true. There's magic in the web of it.  
 A sibyl, that had numbered in the world  
 The sun to course two hundred compasses,  
 In her prophetic fury sewed the work;  
 The worms were hallowed that did breed the silk  
 And it was dyed in mummy which the skillful  
 Conserved of maidens' hearts. (3.4.57-77)

The handkerchief definitely qualifies as a symbol because there is no "pat definition of its significance" (Adams). To begin with, its origin is ambiguous—Othello's mother got it from an Egyptian charmer in one passage (3.4.57-58) and from Othello's father in another (5.2.223-24). Othello may truly impute magical power to the handkerchief and mention his father only when it suits the dramatic situation (Andrews); but if the father story represents his "real feelings" (Reid), then the mythological story may be a fabrication (Evans, Jones). The handkerchief is an emblem of death (Kaula), responsibility for marital happiness (Reid), "purity or honesty" (Stockholder), Desdemona's reputation (Hodgson), "women's civilizing power" (Neely), the "primal scene"—parents' lovemaking—and "the mysteries of female sexuality" (Rudnytsky), the capacity for love and pity (Rogers-Gardner), sexual power and chastity (Berger), and both purity and baseness (Fisher). The handkerchief's strawberry pattern symbolizes nipples (Wangh), breasts (Faber), the penis (Jofen), breast and penis interchangeably (Smith), the clitoris (Newman), or virgin blood on the wedding sheets (Jofen, Boose). In the context of emblem books and Shakespeare's other plays, strawberries represent both Desdemona's true goodness and Othello's warped perception of that goodness (Ross). The worms that produced the silk for the handkerchief suggest the sensuous and primal nature of Othello's love (Elliott); they are a phallic image (Boose) as well as an "emblem of self-entanglement" (Bates) and "of death, sexuality, and procreation" (Neely). Others consider the handkerchief an echo of St. Veronica's handkerchief (Doloff), a "bridge" between states of mind and a "surrogate" for ocular proof (Mudford), a "floating signifier" (Rudnytsky, Rogers-Gardner), a "snowballing signifier" (Newman), and a fetish (Stockholder, Rudnytsky).<sup>21</sup>

A question untouched in this profusion of critical opinion, however, is how Jung's notion of the primitive illuminates specific elements of the handkerchief's main description. There is no doubt, as Katherine S. Stockholder points out, that Othello "confuse[s] the handkerchief . . . with the human love it represents,"<sup>22</sup> but a Jungian interpretation of the handkerchief locates this problem of projection in a specifically primitive mentality. Writing about "primitive and archaic psychology," Jung states, "The unconscious identity, in turn, is caused by the projection of unconscious contents into an object, so that these contents then become accessible to consciousness as qualities apparently belonging to the object" (*CW* 13, 122/91). The seriousness of the blurring of subject and object becomes clearer when Jung discusses



the notion of "bush-soul": "Many primitives assume that, as well as his own, a man has a 'bush-soul,' incarnate in a wild animal or a tree, with which he is connected by a kind of psychic identity. This is what Lévy-Bruhl called *participation mystique*. . . . Injury to the bush-soul means an equal injury to the man" (CW 18, 440/194). In Shakespearean terms, as it is done to the handkerchief (object), so it is also done to Othello (subject) and to his marriage. The subject-object connection is what Lynda E. Boose means when she rightly notes "the triviality of this object which the primitive invests with disproportionate significance."<sup>23</sup> Jung's theory of primitives' projection, then, undergirds Othello's caveat that losing or giving away the handkerchief would signify that Desdemona is no longer "amiable" and that the marriage has come to "perdition" (3.4.61, 69).

Even the inherited nature of the handkerchief relates to the primitive. As Jung notes, "The lively imitativeness which we find in primitives as well as in children can give rise, in particularly sensitive children, to a peculiar inner identification with the parents, to a mental attitude so similar to theirs that effects in real life are sometimes produced which, even in detail, resemble the personal experiences of the parents" (CW 4, 308/135). When Jung also notes the importance of ceremony, one thinks of the ritual transfer of the handkerchief from mother to son to wife. With primitives, Jung writes, "you find that all important events of life are connected with elaborate ceremonies whose purpose is to detach man from the preceding stage of existence and to help him to transfer his psychic energy into the next phase" (CW 18, 365/159). Thus the handkerchief has such a grip on Othello's psyche for three reasons: he has the primitive's tendency to project psychic content onto objects, he has learned the story from his mother (a particularly primitive thinker), and the object's ceremonial transfer from mother to son to wife signifies a corresponding transition within Othello himself.

For the same reasons, the loss of the handkerchief—the "ocular proof" (3.3.376) of Desdemona's supposed infidelity—is particularly potent for Othello. Jung writes: "Here you see the chief difference between primitive and civilized psychology: with us a word is enough to release an accumulation of forces, but with primitives an elaborate pantomime is needed, with all manner of embellishments which are calculated to put the man into the right mood for acting" (CW 18, 1289/556). What is Iago's manipulation of the handkerchief if not "an elaborate pantomime"? Finally, since *participation mystique* surely characterizes Othello's attitude toward the handkerchief, then, as

Michael C. Andrews maintains, Othello "does indeed impute magical properties to the handkerchief."<sup>24</sup> The handkerchief story is consistent with Jung's portrait of the primitive mind-set: Othello really believes what he tells his wife about its supernatural qualities, despite his later statement that his father gave it to his mother.

Besides amplifying the role of projection in the confusion between subject and object, a Jungian approach provides terms for the handkerchief's function within the symbolic process. Jung mentions the "detachment of libido from the real object, its concentration on the symbol and canalization into a symbolic function" (CW 6, 402/238). Libido for Jung is psychic energy in general (CW 4, 566–67/247), but in Othello's case the Freudian sexual libido is the right concept. Othello (as subject) detaches his sexual desire ("libido") from Desdemona ("the real object") and attaches it (channels or "canalizes" it) to the handkerchief ("symbol") so that, in his own mind at least, it restrains male lust ("symbolic function"). In the same paragraph, Jung adds something a bit different: "The detachment of libido from the [real] object transfers it into the subject, when it activates the images lying dormant in the unconscious. These images are archaic forms of expression which become symbols, and these appear in their turn as equivalents of the devalued objects" (CW 6, 402/238). As Sherry Salman states, "Symbolic images are genuine transformers of psychic energy because a *symbolic image evokes the totality of the archetype it reflects*" (Salman's emphasis).<sup>25</sup> By detaching his sexual desire from Desdemona, Othello internalizes it, activating male sexual restraint (the archetype), which he then projects onto the handkerchief (archetypal image). If "the archetype cannot be named until it is represented by a symbol,"<sup>26</sup> then a symbol *represents* the archetype. Othello's problem, however, is that he considers them one and the same thing: rather than merely seeing the handkerchief as a symbol of male sexual restraint, he believes that the handkerchief actually regulates sexuality—that the symbol *is* the archetype that it represents. That is, Othello mistakes a symbol, which "depicts a reality that cannot be fully explained," for a sign, which "is immediately understood."<sup>27</sup> Jung ascribes such an error in judgment to a specifically primitive propensity: "For primitive man . . . the psychic and the objective coalesce in the external world" (CW 10, 128/63).

Because one of the defining qualities of the Jungian primitive, along with *participation mystique*, is its relation to man's ancient origins, the symbol is relevant to this discussion.<sup>28</sup> Though not addressing the primitive, Boose forges the relevant link: "Because the ritual origins of

marital blood pledge stretch back into man's ancient consciousness, 'A sibyl, that had number'd in the world / The sun to make two hundred compasses, / In her prophetic fury sew'd the work' (III.iv. 68-70).<sup>29</sup> There is more afoot here than Stockholder's simple association of the sibyl and wisdom.<sup>30</sup> Although the sibyl in *Othello* is only two hundred years old, the sibyl, as an ancient figure, participates in the primitive; and a look at what Jung says about her illuminates an understanding of Othello's primitive consciousness.

The sibyl, of course, is best known for her role as guide to Aeneas during his journey through the underworld in the *Aeneid*, book 6, a journey signifying the hero's exploration of his own unconscious mind.<sup>31</sup> Although Jung does not mention the sibyl and Aeneas together, what he does say about her is Virgilian in spirit. She is "a feminine psychopomp" (one who delivers the souls of the dead), "the sibylline anima," "the guide of souls," and "the anima-sibyl" or a guide to the essential feminine quality within a man (CW 9I, 60/29; 14, 300/226, 282/214, 287/217, and 313/233). As what James Hillman calls a "girl guide,"<sup>32</sup> the sibyl is part of an anima pattern in the handkerchief's description that calls to mind Jung's "four stages of eroticism," which coincidentally happen to be anima-figures: Eve, Helen of Troy, the Virgin Mary, and Sophia (CW 16, 361/174). The handkerchief is handed down from the sibyl to the Egyptian sorceress, Othello's mother, and finally Desdemona. Merging the two patterns yields an exact correspondence:

- Sibyl/Sophia: anima that provides wisdom and guidance
- Sorceress/Helen: anima that bewitches and misguides
- Othello's mother/Mary: maternal anima that nurtures but can also smother
- Desdemona/Eve: wifely anima and proper partnership<sup>33</sup>

This series suggests a number of things: first, a maturation process whose goal is to affirm the wisdom that marks its origin; second, types of anima (mother, whore, witch) that must be confronted and integrated into consciousness; and third, if the hero makes it this far, psychic integration in union with a wife, who may yet betray him. The handkerchief's transmission from one female figure to the next over a period of generations (with Othello as an intermediary in one transmission) is thus an outline for Othello's, or any man's, individuation within his own lifetime. As the correspondence between the female

characters in Othello's speech and Jung's stages of eroticism suggests, the handkerchief represents stages of psychological development that Othello must work through, but has not, in order to be successfully married.

The sibyl is significant not only for promoting a man's individuation but also for guiding him from the primitive to the civilized. Jung writes, "The sibyl, the guide of souls, shows the hero the way to Mercurius, who in this case is Hermes Trismegistus" (CW 14, 300/226)—an opaque statement that deserves unpacking. Hermes, like the Sibyl, is a psychopomp. Mercurius is Mercury/Hermes, and Hermes Trismegistus (literally "thrice great Hermes") is a god who conflates Hermes and Thoth, both of whom are gods of writing. So a reference to Hermes Trismegistus carries the same weight as the following explanation of Thoth: "he came to be regarded as the lord of knowledge, language and all science—even as Understanding or Reason personified."<sup>34</sup> Thus the sibyl, for Jung, guides the psyche away from the primitive's inability to distinguish between subject and object, toward civilized man's ability to differentiate between signifier and signified. With Hermes Trismegistus in the background, the handkerchief's history is ironic, for its genealogy implies an antidote to the projection that it invites as a fetish object. The sibyl is actually not responsible for the projection-inviting myth of the handkerchief. Although she wove it in ways that seem magical to Othello, it was the Egyptian charmer (a Helen-figure) who touched off the *participation mystique* by promulgating the myth that the handkerchief will make a woman "amiable" and "subdue" her husband's libido "to her love." Far from being to blame for Othello's projection problem, the sibyl actually guides men toward a civilized use of signification in which external objects do not govern psychological processes.<sup>35</sup>

The sibyl's civilizing influence relates to yet another passage in Jung's writings: the "Erythraean Sibyl . . . was alleged to have foretold the coming of Christ" (CW 14, 277/211).<sup>36</sup> The sibyl is primitive only in the sense that she is ancient. For Jung, she is a civilizing force in the course of human events, for she helps men with the individuation process, relates to a properly functioning symbol system, and prophesies the coming of Christ.<sup>37</sup> As the sibyl wisely foretells the coming of Christ, so the sibylline handkerchief prefigures Othello's baptism. There is no causal relationship on either side of the homology—the existence of the handkerchief does not directly bring about the baptism. In each case, however, psychological well-being precedes and prepares

the way for spiritual wisdom, and baptism signals the birth of "spiritual man," as Jung mentions: "I mean that the idea of baptism lifts man out of his archaic identification with the world and transforms him into a being who stands above it. The fact that mankind has risen to the level of this idea is baptism in the deepest sense, for it means the birth of spiritual man who transcends nature" (*CW* 10, 136/67). But Othello is no more able to affirm the Christian message of loving-kindness and its Pauline extrapolation—that husbands and wives should be subject to each other—than to achieve psychic integration by embracing his shadow and his anima. On the contrary, as Kaula states, by regarding the handkerchief as magic, "Othello is in a sense renouncing his baptism."<sup>38</sup> Far from becoming spiritual man or even psychological man, Othello remains primitive man, unable to distinguish between his own psychic forces and the object onto which he projects them. This inability to perceive and overcome binary opposition is part of his tragedy.

Because *participation mystique* governs Othello's psyche, he puts all his stock in the strawberry handkerchief and none in the signifying thing that it *truly* represents—bloody wedding sheets. For critics, whether the marriage is consummated remains mysterious,<sup>39</sup> but Jung's insights into the sexual libido illuminate the issue. "Non-employment of the libido makes it ungovernable." "When, therefore, unconscious contents accumulate as a result of being consistently ignored, they are bound to exert an influence that is pathological. There are just as many neurotics among primitives as among civilized Europeans" (*CW* 4, 474/209; 10, 26/19). Jung's comments on repression sound distinctly Freudian: the monster is the thing that is repressed. Othello has been directing all of his libido, sexual and otherwise, into prosecuting a war against the Turks; and now that the victory has been achieved, the "young affects" in him are "defunct" (1.3.266–67), which may mean that he is unable to consummate his marriage. He is repressed, first, because his marital duties do not allow otherwise; and later his impotence makes him unable to perform his marital duties at his leisure. On the one hand, Othello's "impotence" is transformed into a defensive accusation—his guilt becomes the blame that he projects onto Desdemona. On the other, it could be that his sex-libido becomes ungovernable. When Desdemona declines from what Jung calls a *femme inspiratrix* (an inspirational woman or muse) by interrupting Othello to go to housework and by arguing for Cassio's reinstatement, Othello's sex drive, which should have been

relieved in consummation, is "canalized" into spousal abuse. Jung writes that the *femme inspiratrix*, "if falsely cultivated, can turn into the worst kind of dogmatist and high-handed pedagogue—a regular 'animus hound,' as one of my women patients aptly expressed it" (*CW* 7, 336/209). This is essentially the perception of Desdemona that Iago instigates in Othello's psyche.<sup>40</sup>

#### THE PRIMITIVE AND OTHELLO'S FINAL SPEECH

As the great victor over the Turks ironically adopts their brutality in his domestic life, we come to the final evidence of Othello's primitive mentality. His last speech has been negatively viewed as schizophrenia (Burton); an undermining of his identity (Singh); and an expression of "universal human weakness," an escape from reality, and a self-dramatizing aesthetic attitude (Eliot). In a more positive reading, the speech is a subaltern's self-reclamation, self-appropriation, and reversal of "colonial encryption" (Habit).<sup>41</sup> My Jungian position is that Othello's comments in his final speech express a frank confrontation among his intrapsychic forces. He affirms reality and asserts such strength-identity as he still possesses (not weakness or schizophrenia); however, far from constituting a postcolonial voice, the speech shows the extent of Othello's submission to the dominant discourse. His final utterance is what ethnographers call "transculturation," that is, "processes whereby members of subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted by a dominant or metropolitan culture."<sup>42</sup>

By using third person in his last speech, Othello puts psychic distance between his civilized self and the part of him that killed his wife.

Soft you; a word or two before you go.  
I have done the state some service, and they know't.  
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,  
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,  
Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,  
Nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak  
Of one that loved not wisely but too well;  
Of one not easily jealous but, being wrought,  
Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand,  
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away  
Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,

Albert unused to the melting mood,  
 Drops tears as fast as the Arabian trees  
 Their medicinable gum. Set you down this;  
 And say besides that in Aleppo once,  
 Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk  
 Bear a Venetian and traduced [slandered] the state,  
 I took by th' throat the circumcised dog  
 And smote him, thus. (5.2.348–66)

The two analogies correspond to his former lack of self-awareness (Indian) and his present self-realization (Turk). His primitive mentality is on greater display in his first analogy: killing his wife makes him like “the base Indian, [who] threw a pearl away / Richer than all his tribe” (5.2.357–58).<sup>43</sup> An “Indian” in Shakespeare’s time is not only a denizen of India but also a Native American.<sup>44</sup> As Leslie A. Fiedler states, “By the time *Othello* was written, the first English explorations of the New World had already occurred, and the audiences had learned to associate the word ‘tribe’ not only with Jews but with those red men whose contempt for gold and precious stones had already become proverbial.”<sup>45</sup> Reflecting on his trip to New Mexico, Jung considers Native Americans to be at “a still lower cultural level” than he had found in the Sahara and notes that they think with the heart rather than the head.<sup>46</sup> Although he admires their closeness to the archetypes, he believes that Native Americans may participate in the lack of self-awareness that he attributes to African tribesmen. After asking what state would characterize children who grew up without formal schooling, he writes: “It would be a primitive state, and when such children came of age they would, despite their native intelligence, still remain primitive—savages, in fact, rather like a tribe of intelligent Negroes or Bushmen. They would not necessarily be stupid, but merely intelligent by instinct. They would be ignorant, and therefore unconscious of themselves and the world” (CW 17, 104/52–53). Far from being one of Jung’s ignorant bushmen, Othello inhabits the liminal space between savagery and civilization—his murderous nature has been put to the service of the Venetian state. But he shares with the bushman—and presumably with Jung’s version of the Native American—a lack of self-awareness, the predominance of heart over head, and, again, the inability to distinguish outer objects and events from his own psychological processes.

Whereas act 5 shocks Othello into the painful awareness that leads to his self-comparison to “the base Indian,” his ultimate reference to the “turbaned Turk” not only amplifies his self-realization but also explains his suicide. In Othello’s view, the Turks, in their treachery and bellicosity, are to the primitive as the Venetians, with their elaborate judicial system, are to civilization. Styling himself as the opponent of the one and the avenger of the other, Othello projects his psychic situation onto a remembered conflict. On the surface, Othello is saying that, in Aleppo (in present-day Syria), he killed a Turk who had beaten a Venetian citizen and spoken maliciously of the state (presumably but not necessarily Venice). As Othello dispensed justice to the Turk on that earlier occasion, so he now, as Harold C. Goddard points out, punishes the Turk-like part of himself by committing suicide.<sup>47</sup> As a Moor, he too is a “circumcised dog” who beats, traduces, and murders a Venetian (his wife); but like his former self he now exacts strict justice with a blade. In Freudian terms, the superego (Othello) snuffs out the id (Turk) that had been assailing the ego (Venetian). In Jungian terms, Othello’s final analogy declares victory over the shadow, probably by the persona rather than the Self, for he speaks his last words not as Whole Othello but as General Othello, dispenser of swift justice and broken man. He has achieved a Pyrrhic victory: the shadow, once wedded, is now divorced and beaten but not integrated—all at the cost of his own life. His suicide indeed marks the disintegration of his psyche rather than individuation, the psyche’s government by the Self, the latter being Jung’s term for “the wholeness of our psyche.”<sup>48</sup>

Achieving individuation enables one to overcome the crux of the primitive mentality: “If the transposition [from ego to self] is successful, it does away with the *participation mystique*” (CW 13, 67/45). The goal of individuation is “to detach consciousness from the object so that the individual no longer places the guarantee of his happiness, or of his life even, in factors outside himself, whether they be persons, ideas or circumstances [or handkerchiefs], but comes to realize that everything depends on whether he holds the treasure or not. If the possession of that gold is realized, then the centre of gravity is in the individual and no longer in an object on which he depends” (CW 18, 377/166). In short, Othello’s fetishism—his inappropriate attitude toward an object, which arises from his primitive mentality—is the main barrier to his individuation, the shift from ego to the greater wholeness of the Self. Shakespeare provides a fitting image for this

lack of transition. After killing Desdemona, Othello says, "Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse / Of sun and moon, and that th' affrighted globe / Should yawn at alternation" (5.2.102-4). This is pretty clearly the "chaos" that he prophesies at 3.3.99-100. The murder causes the whole earth to shudder (and no doubt proved especially shocking for those who had just witnessed it at the Globe Theater), but the image takes on a further meaning in a Jungian context. As Marie-Louise von Franz points out, "In art it [the Self] is often depicted as the globe of the world, which clearly shows its meaning, for the child and the sphere are widespread symbols of wholeness."<sup>49</sup> The shadow-driven murder of Desdemona affrights the Self, which seeks to draw Othello from the primitive tendency for *participation mystique* toward a greater psychic integration through a more sophisticated understanding of signification. Ultimately, however, his death is tragic not because he never realizes the error of his primitive thinking but because the realization comes too late for him to conceive of any outcome other than self-murder.

Othello's adoption of the dominant culture's discourse ("base Indian" and "turbaned Turk") illustrates the position held by Patricia Parker and Stephen Greenblatt that his psychological deterioration parallels colonization.<sup>50</sup> The dominant culture is to the subordinate culture as Iago is to Othello, Venice is to Cyprus, and England is to Africa. Part of his fall is his *participation mystique* (he is guilty of projection), but as a fictional character and a product of the playwright's own projection, the Moor reflects the Elizabethans' ambivalence about "the alien other" (Habib), otherness that is "at once an object of desire and derision" (Bhabha). Regarding the Elizabethans, Cowhig elaborates a plethora of mixed emotions such as fascination, prejudice, fear, distrust, and hostility. Ania Loomba adds, "Outsiders provoked more debates, anxiety, and representations than the population statistics might warrant."<sup>51</sup>

Jung's theory of the primitive provides an appropriate starting point for examining Shakespeare's depiction of the Moor precisely because both theory and play are rife with the same flaws that come into focus under the lens of postcolonial critique. Both Shakespeare and Jung convey a sense that the European is distinct from the Other, and this relationship implies hierarchy based on value judgment—a privileging of the civilized over the primitive. Thus the ambivalence felt within the Elizabethan psyche is at least partly a projection of psychic content onto a so-called "primitive" Other and a handy method of

sidestepping individuation. The terminology and examples of Jung's formulation of the primitive are often problematic, but there is value in using a post-Jungian conceptualization of the "primitive" (defined as those elements of the psyche that remain archaic, undifferentiated, and less conscious) and in recognizing that there is a strong tendency to project such elements outward to other individuals, groups, and societies. The exploration of this post-Jungian conceptualization of the primitive in *Othello* illustrates the power of literature to portray and convey essential human truths: Othello's *hamartia* (error, mistake) is seen less as jealousy than as his inability to confront and overcome his own archaic psychological states, of which jealousy is one symptom. The play demonstrates that psychologically primitive powers lurking in each person's psyche can cause devastating damage, but Jung reminds us that within each psyche reside the potential and desire for individuation, growth, balance, and increased wholeness. If we wish to avoid literal or symbolic destruction in our lives, these primitive elements must be brought to consciousness through the individuation process, and their power must not be repressed but rather be channeled and integrated into individual and social growth. In this way we can avoid our own unique version of Othello's fate.

## CHAPTER 4

1. Barbara Rogers-Gardner, *Jung and Shakespeare*: Hamlet, Othello, and The Tempest (Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications, 1992), 39–75.
2. Despite the unfortunate nature of Jung's rhetoric, at the end of his life he could see colonialism from both sides, as he makes clear in the following passage from his autobiography: "What we from our point of view call colonization, missions to the heathen, spread of civilization, etc., has another face—the face of a bird of prey seeking with cruel inhumanity for distant quarry—a face worthy of a race of pirates and highwaymen. All the eagles and other predatory creatures that adorn our coats of arms seem to me apt psychological representatives of our true nature" (*MDR*, 248–49).
3. Maud Bodkin, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 219; Robert Rogers, "Endopsychic Drama in *Othello*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 20 (1969): 206, 209; Alex Aronson, *Psyche & Symbol in Shakespeare* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 27, 110; Catherine Bates, "Weaving and Writing in *Othello*," *Shakespeare Survey* 46 (1993): 53; Rogers-Gardner, *Jung and Shakespeare*, 66, 45; Kenneth Tucker, *Shakespeare and Jungian Typology: A Reading of the Plays* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2003), 82–93; Terrell L. Tebbets, "Pageants for False Gaze: Jungian Perverbity in *Othello*," *Publications of the Arkansas Philological Association* 23 (1997): 93, 95; and Gregg Andrew Hurwitz, "The Fountain, from which my current runs: A Jungian Interpretation of *Othello*," *Upsilon Crow* 20 (2000): 80, 82.
4. G. K. Hunter, "Othello and Colour Prejudice," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 53 (1967): 157–60; Abraham Bronson Feldman, "Othello's Obsessions," *American Imago* 9 (1952): 160; K. W. Evans, "The Racial Factor in *Othello*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 5 (1969): 132; and Jyotsna Singh, "Othello's Identity, Postcolonial Theory, and Contemporary African Rewritings of *Othello*," in *Women, "Race," and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (New York: Routledge, 1994), 289.
5. David Kaula, "Othello Possessed: Notes on Shakespeare's Use of Magic and Witchcraft," *Shakespeare Studies* 2 (1966): 116; Robert B. Heilman, *Magic in the Web: Action & Language in Othello* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1956), 127; Joseph L. Henderson, "Ancient Myths and Modern Man," *MHS*, 123; James Hillman, *Animas: An Anatomy of a Personified Notion* (Dallas, TX: Spring Publications, 1985), 11; and Feldman, "Othello's Obsessions," 162.
6. Rogers-Gardner, *Jung and Shakespeare*, 39, 47, 50, 41, 61, and 43. Asim Kumar Mukherjee mentions the primitive in the following remark: "Othello's 'egocentric', his personality, has its seat in a primitive, aboriginal self-love" ("The 'Blissfully Unconscious' and the 'Careful Observer' [A Jungian

- interpretation of *Othello*]," *The Literary Criterion* 13 [1978]: 13). Mukherjee's thesis is that "Othello's tragedy is the tragedy of extreme ego-consciousness" (2).
7. Andrew Samuels, "Introduction: Jung and the Post-Jungians," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jung*, ed. Polly Young-Eisendath and Terence Dawson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2; Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 66; and Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin, "Introduction: Shakespeare and the Post-colonial Question," in *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, ed. Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin (London: Routledge, 1998), 11.
  8. Perteri Pietikainen, "Soul Man Meets the Blind Watchmaker: C. G. Jung and Neo-Darwinism," *Psychoanalysis and History* 5.2 (2003): 195–212; and Farhad Dalal, "Jung: A Racist," *British Journal of Psychotherapy* 4.3 (1988): 265–66, 271, and 277–78.
  9. Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 51; and Emily C. Bartels, "Othello and Africa: Postcolonialism Reconsidered," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54 (1997): 46.
  10. Philippa Kelly, "The Cannibals That Each Other Eat: Othello and Post-colonial Appropriation," *Spun* 36 (1993): 116.
  11. Jung, *MDR*, 242.
  12. Ruth Cowhig, "Blacks in English Renaissance Drama and the Role of Shakespeare's Othello," in *The Black Presence in English Literature*, ed. David Dabydeen (Dover, NH: Manchester University Press, 1985), 1.
  13. Jung, *MDR*, 242–73.
  14. *Ibid.*, 244.
  15. Quoted in Claire Douglas, "The Historical Context of Analytical Psychology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jung*, 21.
  16. For a similar point, see Johannes Fabricius, *Shakespeare's Hidden World: A Study of His Unconscious* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1989). Fabricius associates war in *Richard III* with something akin to the Jungian shadow (18).
  17. Jung, *MDR*, 244.
  18. Cowhig, "Blacks in English Renaissance Drama," 13.
  19. Steven F. Walker, *Jung and the Jungians on Myth: An Introduction* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), 142.
  20. *The Gods Must Be Crazy*, VHS, dir. Jamie Uys (Hollywood, CA: Columbia Tristar, 1980).
  21. Michael Vannoy Adams, "The Archetypal School," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jung*, 315; Michael C. Andrews, "Honest Othello: The Handkerchief Once More," *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 13 (1973): 273; Stephen Reid, "Othello's Jealousy," *American Imago* 25 (1968): 291; Evans, "The Racial Factor," 134; Eldred Jones, *Othello's Countrymen: The African in English Renaissance Drama* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 102–3; Kaula, "Othello Possessed," 126; Katherine S. Stockholder, "Egregiously an Ass: Chance and Accident in *Othello*,"

- Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 13 (1973): 268, 266; John A. Hodgson, "Desdemona's Handkerchief as an Emblem of Her Reputation," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 19 (1977): 313-22; Carol Thomas Neely, "Woman and Men in *Othello*: What should such a fool / Do with so good a woman?" in *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz et al. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 228-29; Peter L. Rudnytsky, "The Purloined Handkerchief in *Othello*," in *The Psychoanalytic Study of Literature*, ed. Joseph Reppen and Maurice Charney (Hillsdale, N.J.: Analytic Press, 1985), 185, 171; Rogers Gardner, *Jung and Shakespeare*, 69, 65; Harry Berger, Jr., "Impermeable Trifling: Desdemona's Handkerchief," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47 (1996): 239; Will Fisher, "Handkerchiefs and Early Modern Ideologies of Gender," *Shakespeare Studies* 28 (2000): 205; Martin Wagh, "*Othello*: The Tragedy of Iago," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 19 (1950): 212; M. D. Faber, "*Othello*: The Justice of Its Pleases," *American Imago* 28 (1971): 242; Jean Jofen, "The Case of the Strawberry Handkerchief," *Shakespeare Newsletter* 21 (1971): 14; Gordon Ross Smith, "Iago the Paranoid," *American Imago* 16 (1959): 160; Karen Newman, "And wash the Ethiop white? Femininity and the Monstrous in *Othello*," in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, ed. Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor (New York: Methuen, 1987), 156; Lynda E. Boose, "Othello's Handkerchief: The Recognition and Pledge of Love," *English Literary Renaissance* 5 (1975): 362, 367; Lawrence J. Ross, "The Meaning of Strawberries in Shakespeare," *Studies in the Renaissance* 7 (1960): 227, 239; G. R. Elliott, *Flaming Minister: A Study of Othello as Tragedy of Love and Hate* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1953), 151-52; Bates, "Weaving and Writing in *Othello*," 58; Steven Doloff, "Shakespeare's *Othello*," *The Explicator* 56 (1977): 13; and Peter G. Mumford, "Othello and the 'Tragedy of Situation,'" *English* 20 (1971): 5. Finally, those who seek a Lacanian psychoanalytic reading will find much of interest in Elizabeth J. Bellamy, "Othello's Lost Handkerchief: Where Psychoanalysis Finds Itself," in *Lacan, Politics, Aesthetics*, ed. Willy Apollon and Richard Feldstein (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 151-79.
22. Stockholder, "Egregiously an Ass," 265.
  23. Boose, "Othello's Handkerchief," 360.
  24. Andrews, "Honest Othello," 273.
  25. Sherry Salman, "The Creative Psyche: Jung's Major Contributions," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jung*, 65.
  26. James Baird, "Jungian Psychology in Criticism: Theoretical Problems," *Literary Criticism and Psychology*, ed. Joseph P. Srelka, *Tearbook of Comparative Criticism*, vol. 17 (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), 9.
  27. David L. Hart, "The Classical Jungian School," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jung*, 95.

28. There are only four other references to the sibyl in Shakespeare's works: *I Henry VI* 1.2.56, *The Taming of the Shrew* 1.2.69, *Titus Andronicus* 4.1.107, and *The Merchant of Venice* 1.2.104.
29. Boose, "Othello's Handkerchief," 367.
30. Stockholder, "Egregiously an Ass," 266.
31. Edwyn Bevan, *Sibyls and Seers: A Survey of Some Ancient Theories of Revelation and Inspiration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 140.
32. Hillman, *Anima*, 133.
33. This interpretation of the "stages of eroticism" differs from Daryl Sharp, *C. G. Jung Lexicon: A Primer of Terms & Concepts* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1991), 20-21. For Sharp, Eve is "the personal mother" and Mary "religious feelings and a capacity for lasting relationships." One thinks first, however, of Eve as Adam's wife and Mary as Jesus's mother.
34. Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 22. See also Françoise Dunand and Christiane Zivie-Coche, *Gods and Men in Egypt: 3000 BCE to 395 CE*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 275; and Brian P. Copenhaver, introduction to *Hermataia: The Greek Corpus Hermataian and the Latin Asclepius in a New English Translation, with Notes and Introduction*, ed. Brian P. Copenhaver (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), xiii-lxi.
35. It is possible, however, to be sibyl-like in a negative way as well. Writing about international criticism of the Germans, Jung states, "It is blasphemy to them, for Hitler is the Sybil [*sic*], the Delphic Oracle" (quoted in Ronald Hayman, *A Life of Jung* [New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999], 343). Hayman's source is William McGuire and R. F. C. Hull, eds., *C. G. Jung Speaking* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 92-92. Jung's statement about Hitler suggests the following homology: Hitler is to the swastika (negative) as the Sibyl is to the handkerchief (positive).
36. See also CW 9ii, 127/72, n. 2.
37. An irony immediately surfaces: although the sibyl teaches ancient peoples how to use symbols in a way that properly disconnects subject and object, she foretells the coming of the person who says that bread and wine are his body and blood. Transubstantiation bears considerable similarity to the *participation mystique* that bedevils Othello as he contemplates the handkerchief.
38. Kaula, "Othello Possessed," 125.
39. For an affirmative view, see Boose, "Othello's Handkerchief," 363; André A. Glaz, "Iago or Moral Sadism," *American Imago* 19 (1962): 336; Martin Orkin, "Othello and the 'plain face' of Racism," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38 (1987): 186, n. 44; and Rogers-Gardner, *Jung and Shakespeare*, 61. For an opposing view, see T. G. A. Nelson and Charles Haines, "Othello's Unconsummated Marriage," *Essays in Criticism* 33 (1983): 1-18. Rudnytsky claims

- that the matter is uncertain, but he inclines toward lack of consummation ("The Punloined Handkerchief," 181-82).
40. See also *CW* 11, 240/161: 17, 340/199.
41. Jonathan Burton, "A most wily bird: Leo Africanus, *Othello* and the Trafficking in Difference," in *Post-Colonial Shakespeares*, 58; Singh, "Othello's Identity," 287; T. S. Eliot, "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca," in *Selected Essays*, new ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1950), 110-11; and Imtiaz Habib, *Shakespeare and Race: Postcolonial Praxis in the Early Modern Period* (New York: University Press of America, 2000), 145.
42. Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," in *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers*, ed. David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky, 6th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002), 612.
43. Eldred Jones, *Othello's Countrymen*, 108; and Hunter, "Othello and Colour Prejudice," 160.
44. *OED*, s.v. "Indian," B.2.a. Shakespeare's other references to Indians appear in *All's Well That Ends Well* 1.3.201; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 2.1.22, 124, and 3.2.375; *The Merchant of Venice* 3.2.99; 3 *Henry VI* 3.1.63; *Henry VIII* 5.4.33; and *The Tempest* 2.2.33.
45. Leslie A. Fiedler, *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (New York: Stein and Day Publishing, 1972), 196.
46. Jung, *MDR*, 247.
47. Harold C. Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 467.
48. Marie-Louise von Franz, *Archetypal Dimensions of the Psyche* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1997), 293.
49. *Ibid.*, 346.
50. Patricia Parker, "Fantasies of 'Race' and 'Gender': Africa, *Othello* and Bringing to Light," in *Women, 'Race,' and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, 99; and Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 233.
51. Habib, *Shakespeare and Race*, 139; Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 67; Cowhig, "Blacks in English Renaissance Drama," 1; and Loomba, "Outsiders in Shakespeare's England," in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. Margreta de Grazia and Stanley Wells (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 148.

## CHAPTER 5

1. Jung, *MDR*, 302.
2. In Bevington's edition 5.2.64 reads, "He that hath killed my king and *whored* my mother" (my emphasis).

3. H. R. Coursen, *The Compensatory Psyche: A Jungian Approach to Shakespeare* (New York: University Press of America, 1986), 80-81, 88, 83, 96, 93, 97, 72-73, and 76.
4. James Kirsch deals with the ghost through the lens of analytical psychology in *Shakespeare's Royal Self* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1966), 10-57.
5. Hamlet says of Claudius, "My mother. Father and mother is man and wife, man and wife is one flesh, and so, my mother" (4.3.55-57).
6. Barbara Rogers-Gardner, *Jung and Shakespeare: Hamlet, Othello, and The Tempest* (Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications, 1992), 19, 18, 35, 27-28, 33, 26, and 14.
7. Sally F. Porterfield, *Jung's Advice to the Players: A Jungian Reading of Shakespeare's Problem Plays* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 93-95.
8. Elizabeth Oakes, "Polonius, the Man behind the Arras: A Jungian Study," in *New Essays on Hamlet*, ed. Mark Thornton Burnett and John Manning (New York: AMS Press, 1994), 103-12. Oakes uses the phrase "racial father." Jung's phrase is "tribal father." She quotes *CW* 5, 396/261 (107-8).
9. Regarding this detail, there is some difference of opinion among the play's Jungian critics. Rogers-Gardner also claims that Hamlet jumps into Ophelia's grave (*Jung and Shakespeare*, 14), and Porterfield has Hamlet leap into it with Laertes (*Jung's Advice to the Players*, 94).
10. Charlton Hinman, *The Norton Facsimile: The First Folio of Shakespeare* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1968), 786.
11. Maud Bodkin, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934).
12. Kenneth Tucker, *Shakespeare and Jungian Typology: A Reading of the Plays* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2003), 132, 111, 129, and 116.
13. Porterfield, *Jung's Advice to the Players*, 76.
14. James Hillman, *Anima: An Anatomy of a Personified Notion* (Dallas, TX: Spring Publications, 1985), 139.
15. Coursen, *The Compensatory Psyche*, 91. For Jung, whereas the soul of a male is feminine, the soul of a female is masculine (*CW* 16, 522/304).
16. *Ibid.*, 97.
17. *OED*, s.v., "Light," 14b.
18. Daryl Sharp, C. G. Jung *Lexicon: A Primer of Terms & Concepts* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1991), 124.
19. *Ibid.*, 27.
20. Kay Stanton, "Hamlet's Whores," in *New Essays on Hamlet*, 179.
21. Hillman, *Anima*, 57, 63. Hillman is quoting *CW* 9, 311/184: "As a matter of practical observation, the Kore often appears in woman as an *unknown young girl*, not infrequently as Gretchen or the unmarried mother" (Jung's emphasis). The reference to "the unmarried mother" connects nicely to Ophelia's probable pregnancy, which I discuss below.
22. Tucker, *Shakespeare and Jungian Typology*, 113.