

The Politics of Complexes*

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ABSTRACT *The complex, a central concept of analytical psychology, contributes to an understanding of political consciousness in at least three ways: in tracing the influence of complexes on political attitudes; in treating oppressed consciousness as an expression of a cultural complex; and in viewing psychopolitical healing as the integration of split-off complexes in the oppressed. Case studies of Native people demonstrate the application of these ideas to the context of oppression. Copyright © 2009 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.*

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INTRODUCTION

This article follows up some hints in my recent book, *The Psychopolitics of Liberation: Political Consciousness from a Jungian Perspective* (Alschuler, 2007). The book replies to two big questions left unanswered during my career as a political scientist, specializing in the political economy of the Third World. First, ‘Why do the oppressed *not* revolt more often?’ The book answers in terms of ‘oppressed consciousness’. To the second question, ‘Why do *some* oppressed people succeed in liberating themselves?’ I answer with ‘liberated consciousness’ (Alschuler, 2007, 1). The first part of the book presents a series of discoveries consisting of connections between ‘political consciousness’ and key concepts of analytical psychology: individuation, complexes, narcissism and the tension of opposites. The second part faces another challenge: to apply these ideas to four case studies of Native people in Guatemala and Canada, in an attempt to explain how they attained ‘liberated consciousness’. In all four cases that attempt was successful.

The ideas that have germinated since completing the book focus on the complex, a central concept of analytical psychology, as it pertains to the political consciousness of the oppressed. I examine three themes: *first*, political attitudes as expressions of complexes; *second*, oppressed consciousness as an expression of a cultural complex; and *third*, psychopolitical healing as the integration of complexes.

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POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND COMPLEXES

Both 'complexes' and 'attitudes' belong to the vocabulary of Jungian psychology. A complex is a cluster of ideas and images with a common emotional tone (Samuels et al., 1986, 34). When activated, it behaves as a partial personality, independently of the conscious mind (Jung, 1969, 96–7). Though we are familiar with the concepts of 'complex' and 'attitude,' how well do we understand the connection between a complex and an attitude, especially a political attitude? Here is the connection in brief: a conscious attitude resembles the tip of an iceberg while the complex lies in the submerged part of the iceberg, ten times the volume above water. A conscious attitude consists of the judgements, feelings and beliefs we have about the image of some person, situation or thing. The underlying complex attaches its emotional tone to the image.

More precisely, an attitude may be defined as a feeling-toned image that evokes expectations and predispositions to behave in a particular way toward the object of the attitude. In contrast to Jung's definition of 'attitude' (Jung, 1976, 414–18), Rokeach, a social psychologist, offers this definition:

An attitude... is an organization of several beliefs focused on a specific object (physical or social, concrete or abstract) or situation, predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner. Some of these beliefs about an object or situation concern matters of fact and others concern matters of evaluation. An attitude is thus a package of beliefs consisting of interconnected assertions to the effect that certain things about a specific object or situation are true or false, and other things about it are desirable or undesirable. (Rokeach, 1969, 159)

A *complex* is a group of images that share a common affect or feeling tone. Rooted in an emotion, the feeling tone differs from a 'feeling' (a rational judgement or preference) by having a bodily manifestation, that is, originating in the unconscious. Attitude and complex already seem like members of the same family of concepts (Jung, 1969, 96). An attitude is conscious and can be detected by asking people about their feelings toward and beliefs about a person, thing, situation, or themselves. The answers take the form: 'I believe ...' and 'I feel ...' The predicates complete the conscious attitude. Being able to state: 'I' believe or 'I' feel means that the attitude is conscious. A *political attitude* is an attitude toward a political object (for example, a policy, politician, governmental agency, nation, political party, election, court decision, legislature, or oneself as a political actor).

An example from everyday life will demonstrate the relationship of a person's political attitude to a complex.

On Paul's shadow: an extended example

A former colleague in political science recently asked me to explain what was meant by the Jungian concept of the 'shadow'. Instead of giving him a lecture, I decided to generate a relevant experience that he could grasp easily. In contriving this experience, I reminded myself that the shadow, being unconscious, would be found in a projection. Also, being a complex, the shadow would be coloured by an emotion (Whitmont, 1978, 60, 161). This experience for my colleague, whom I will call 'Paul', has four steps.

In the first step I would ask Paul to think of a *person* who causes Paul to have a strong *negative* emotional reaction. This excludes the positive shadow, of course. In the second step I would ask Paul to describe the *traits* of this person.

Then, in the third step, I would tell Paul that his *emotional reaction*, expressed by the traits, indicates his *shadow projection* onto this person. Finally, in the fourth step, I would suggest that the traits of his shadow, the projected images, probably belong to Paul! I would explain to Paul that these negative traits, being incompatible with his positive *self-image*, are repressed. That is, the traits would be removed from consciousness or prevented from becoming conscious, then relocated in Paul's shadow complex and found in projection. Whitmont (1978, 162) describes virtually the same experience.

Here is what actually happened. When I asked Paul to name a person who caused him a strong, negative emotional reaction, he thought and came up with President George W. Bush! At this moment Paul's wife remarked that Paul could ramble on and on about Bush's faults, confirming the emotion as anger. Paul's long and nasty description of Bush can be summed up politely: Bush is 'a supremely incompetent leader'. I told Paul that he had met *his own shadow* as a projection onto President Bush.

I helped Paul to distinguish between an *objective* image of Bush as he really is and an image coloured by a shadow projection. To do this I suggested that a team of non-partisan political experts examining the political performance of President Bush might arrive at conclusions similar to Paul's, but the experts would be *unemotional* that is, more objective in their judgement. The experts would not be projecting their shadows.

I then suggested that some of the traits of incompetence in the shadow figure projected onto Bush might belong to Paul, but that only he should decide this and that I did not need to know more. In five minutes I had demonstrated to Paul what it meant to have a shadow and to find it in projection onto another person in an emotionally charged experience.

Later on that day, I decided to explore Paul's personality without his participation. I reflected on the Jungian principle of *compensation* as an unconscious psychic process that attempts to reduce one-sidedness, to restore a balance between consciousness and the unconscious (Jung, 1976, 418–20). I asked myself this question, 'The shadow projection of incompetence onto Bush compensates for what conscious attitude in Paul's personality?' In the interpretation of dreams, Jung asked this question about dream images (Jung, 1933, 17–18). To find the answer, I reasoned in five steps.

Step one. Paul has a conscious political attitude toward Bush: that Bush is a supremely incompetent leader.

Step two. Paul experiences the emotion of anger toward Bush. This suggests that he is reacting to something other than Bush as he really is. Rather, Paul's attitude expresses his reaction to the projection of Paul's shadow complex onto Bush.

Step three. Incompetence must be a trait that belongs to Paul's shadow complex.

Step four. The incompetence in Paul's shadow compensates for its opposite in Paul's conscious attitude toward himself. Logically, he must have an exaggerated, one-sided self-image of competence. This would belong to his persona. Jung (1964, 68) regards '... personal complexes as compensations for one-sided or faulty attitudes of consciousness...' In a case of an inferiority complex, Jung (1964, 51–2) says that dreams of conversing with Napoleon compensate for an inferiority complex by expressing the dreamer's secret

megalomania. Dreams of grandeur compensate for the dreamer's conscious feeling of inferiority.

Step five. If we consider 'competence' to be an aspect of 'superiority' and 'incompetence' an aspect of 'inferiority,' we can say that Paul has an attitude of superiority toward himself. This one-sided conscious attitude finds compensation in an unconscious inferiority complex that forms part of his shadow. The psyche attempts to reduce his one-sidedness by making Paul at least partially conscious of his inferiority. It does so by projecting onto Bush the image of inferiority in Paul's shadow. The projection is an image, not an attitude. Rather, the emotion or the affect in the attitude arises in reaction to the image projected onto the object, President Bush.

Now comes a tricky question: how do we know whether or not Paul's attitude of superiority is realistic? Is Paul superior or is his attitude a self-delusion? Over the years that I was Paul's colleague, sometimes other colleagues shared with me their impressions of Paul, providing me with some more or less objective information about him. He showed incompetence as a researcher; his performance as a department chairman was largely incompetent. I even recall that the departmental secretary, a perfectionist, had a nervous breakdown during Paul's chairmanship! Despite all this evidence, plain enough to his colleagues, Paul seemed unaware of his incompetence. So it must have been split off and repressed, later to reappear in projection onto Bush, the 'incompetent' President. Paul is proud of being a graduate of Harvard University. When I last saw Paul he was wearing a Harvard sweatshirt that revealed his superiority attitude and concealed his inferiority complex.

Perry's model of complexes applied to oppressed consciousness

The example of Paul can now be reformulated according to John Perry's model of the complexes. Perry, a Jungian analyst, considers all complexes to be found in bipolar pairs, one of which is aligned with the ego and the other is projected (Perry, 1970). The complexes in any pair are complementary to each other such that, together, their integration into ego consciousness would enhance the fullness of the personality. I could also say that Paul's *shadow* complex, containing traits that are incompatible with his persona, such as his incompetence and inferiority, *compensate his persona* complex (his self-images of superiority and competence as an academic). Whitmont (1978, 159) comments on the compensatory relationship of persona and shadow. In my example, Paul's shadow contains an *ego-projected* inferiority *complex* that generates his political *attitude* toward President Bush. Paul's *ego-aligned* superiority *complex* generates an *attitude* of superiority toward himself.

Whitmont (1978, 166) says, 'The [shadow] projections eventually so shape our attitudes toward others that at last we literally bring about that which we project.' Using Perry's terms (in capitals) this means that a shadow (EGO-PROJECTED COMPLEX) is projected onto a person. Then the projected image (AFFECT-OBJECT) activates the EGO-ALIGNED COMPLEX in the bipolar pair. The EGO-ALIGNED COMPLEX reacts emotionally to the projected image (AFFECT-OBJECT). A conscious attitude toward the person is formed (derived from the AFFECT-OBJECT). Here is Jung's view:

The presence of a strongly feeling-toned content in the conscious field of vision forms (maybe with other contents) a particular constellation that is equivalent to a definite attitude, because such a content promotes the perception and apperception of everything similar to itself and blacks out the dissimilar.

It creates an attitude that corresponds to it. This automatic phenomenon is an essential cause of the one-sidedness of conscious *orientation*. It would lead to a complete loss of equilibrium if there were no self-regulating compensatory function in the psyche to correct the conscious attitude. (Jung, 1976, 415–16)

I paraphrase Jung's quote above: the feeling-tone of a constellated *complex* forms a particular *attitude* by selecting automatically what is similar and rejecting what is dissimilar to the complex ('subjective content'). Jung (1969, 96) defines a complex: 'It is the *image* of a certain psychic situation which is strongly accentuated emotionally and is, moreover, incompatible with the habitual attitude of consciousness.' I interpret Jung's definition in the light of Perry's model as follows: the habitual attitude is derived from the ego-aligned unconscious complex. The habitual attitude is incompatible with the ego-projected complex. PAUL has a conscious (habitual) *attitude* of superiority toward himself. He has a split-off, ego-projected inferiority *complex*.

How can these ideas help us understand the complexes of the oppressed? In the oppressed we often find the reverse of Paul's situation: the oppressed have in their 'persona' an inferiority complex that I call 'dependence'; and in their 'shadow' they have a superiority complex called 'paternalism' that they project onto the oppressors. In the unconscious of the oppressed the dependence complex is ego-aligned while the paternalism complex is ego-projected. The bipolar pair of complexes here is 'paternalism-dependence.'

An explanation of how this pair of complexes generates a pair of political attitudes in oppressed consciousness relies on the seminal work of Paulo Freire. This Brazilian social scientist and author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* refers to the oppressed as 'inauthentic beings' because of their false self-images and false images of the oppressors. These false images, 'myths' as termed by Freire, 'nourish' oppressed consciousness. The myths about the oppressed and about the oppressors form complementary pairs of opposites. That is, a particular myth about the oppressed implies the opposite about the oppressors, and vice versa.

The first group of myths describes the inferiority of the oppressed in contrast to the superiority of the oppressors. The oppressed, according to the various myths, are the negation of this model. The following are examples: 'The oppressor is generous... The oppressed lacks gratitude... The oppressor is hard working and the oppressed is lazy... The oppressor is knowledgeable and the oppressed is ignorant' (Freire, 1974, 38, 51, 132–3). It is natural for the oppressed to want to imitate the oppressors, who represent their 'model of humanity' (Freire, 1974, 23–4).

A second group of myths has to do with the oppressed's 'fear of freedom' in contrast to the oppressors' courageous civilizing mission. The oppressed fear taking responsibility for their lives. If they were free from the guidance of the oppressors, they would be obligated to make their own decisions. Although they lack self-confidence, they have confidence in the oppressors. They yield their power of decision to the oppressors and follow their dictates (Freire, 1974, 25, 42, 154). Since the oppressed fear freedom, they seek the oppressors' protection.

The fear of freedom is linked in the extreme to *fatalism* or, at least, to mere passivity (Freire, 1974, 43–4). The fatalism of the oppressed belongs to a myth about God: the oppressed 'find in their suffering – a consequence of exploitation – the expression of God's

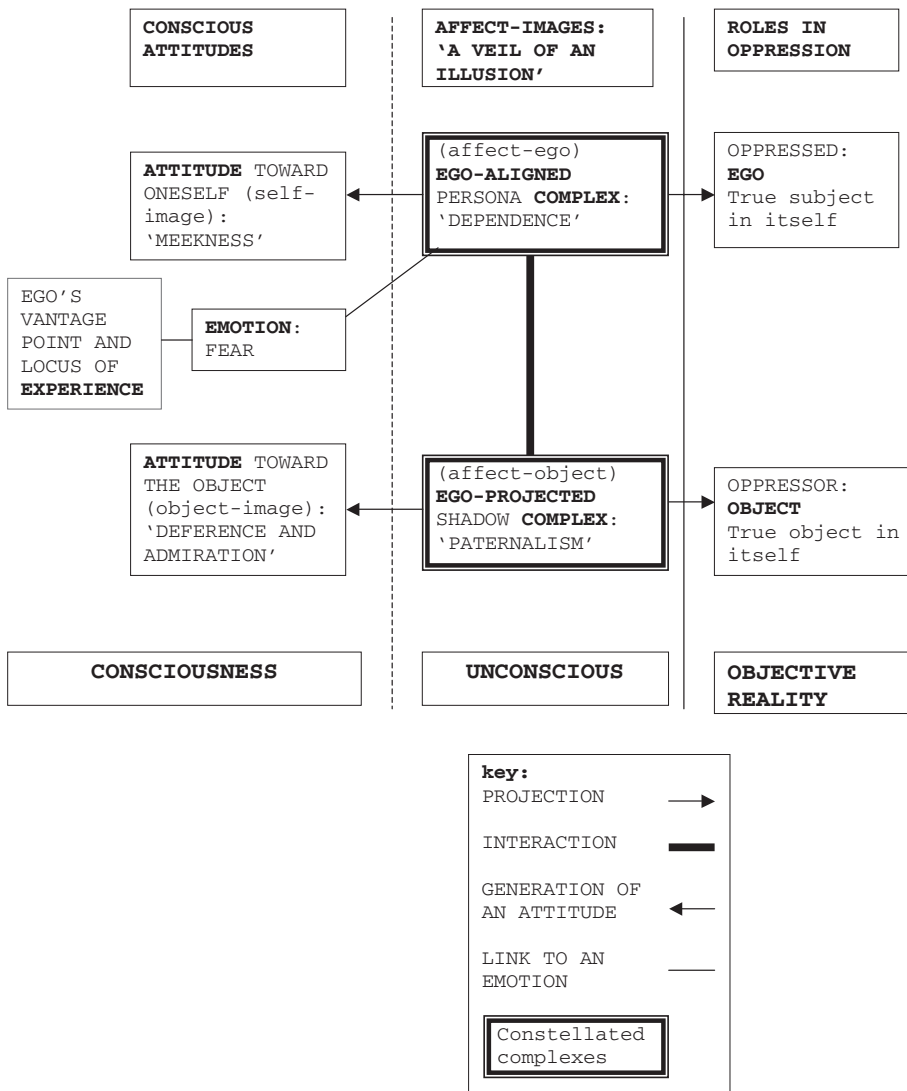


Figure 1. Perry’s model of a bipolar pair of complexes and emotion (applied to the political consciousness of the oppressed).

will, as if he were the artisan of this “organized disorder” (Freire, 1974, 43–4, 132). The oppressors are able to foster the related myth that any revolt against society would be to disobey the will of God. This myth naturally ties in with the one that sees the oppressor’s class as the heroic ‘guardians of the order that incarnates “Christian Western civilization”’ (Freire, 1974, 132, 157). Hence, the sacred and political orders are closely associated in these myths, with the oppressor class as ‘guardians’ of the sacred order on a mission to ‘save’ the oppressed.

The two groups of myths, about inferiority and superiority, and about fear and courage, combine to form a single complementary pair of political attitudes: dependence and

paternalism. According to the first attitude, the oppressed view themselves (self-image) as dependent. According to the second attitude, they view the oppressors (object-image) as paternalistic.

Perry's model of complexes portrays this pair of political attitudes as the expression of a pair of complexes in an oppressed person's psyche. The 'dependence' complex is ego-aligned, while the 'paternalism' complex is ego-projected. So, the inauthentic part of the oppressed's psyche is the pair of complexes, dependence-paternalism. The authentic part is the ego, free of this pair of complexes. When Perry says that, due to complexes, reality is experienced through a 'veil of illusion', he echoes Jung. 'We are in all truth so enclosed by psychic images that we cannot penetrate to the essence of things external to ourselves' (Jung, 1933, 190).

Complexes also influence the relationship between oppressed persons. *Horizontal violence* refers to aggression between two oppressed persons, often between a man and his spouse or his children. Once again I refer to the bipolar pair of complexes, dependence-paternalism. The paternalism complex behaves like an authoritative voice that accuses the oppressed man of being lazy, weak, irresponsible, cowardly, childish and so on. To be aligned with the dependence complex is to identify with these negative evaluations and to experience what Freire describes as 'self-depreciation'. The paternalism complex constitutes a *threat* to the ego of the oppressed because it conveys so many negative judgements. Even an oppressed's wife or child seems to echo the accusatory voice of the oppressor in the paternalism complex simply by asking 'why can't you afford to buy us new clothes?' In such a situation, the man readily projects the paternalism complex onto his wife or child. The wife is not immune from the effects of this projection since her paternalism complex will be activated. The wife will act out her paternalism complex in the interaction with her husband who then becomes the recipient of the projection of her dependence complex. In this interpersonal interaction, threat, attack and reprisal dramatize horizontal violence.

To recall my initial metaphor, the political attitudes of the oppressed, toward themselves and toward the oppressors, are the tip of the iceberg, the more conscious part. The unconscious pair of complexes, dependence-paternalism, is the submerged part of that iceberg. Now imagine that such an iceberg represents a whole society with its 'cultural complexes'. This is my next topic.

OPPRESSED CONSCIOUSNESS AND CULTURAL COMPLEXES

In 2004 a group of Jungian analysts introduced a new concept, the 'cultural complex'. In attempting to shed light on conflicts between groups, they extend Jung's concept of the personal complex to the level of culture (Singer and Kimbles, 2004b, 1–2). They define a cultural complex as information and misinformation about society, groups and social classes, 'filtered through the psyches of generations of ancestors' (Singer and Kimbles, 2004b, 5) and apply the concept to conflicts between cultures and between groups defined by gender, race, social class, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and nationality. In contrast, I apply it specifically to the conflict between oppressors and oppressed within a single society. The cultural complex of each of these two groups contributes toward sustaining the domination by the oppressors. I will describe a cultural complex in terms of its origin, transmission, structure, contents and effects, with reference to oppressed consciousness.

- *Its origin.* A traumatic historical event, such as colonial conquest, creates deep wounds in the collective psyche. Around these wounds a cultural complex develops that becomes a vehicle for collective memory and emotions, carrying over many generations, even into the post-colonial era (Singer, 2004, 19, 32). Descendants of the colonized develop a cultural complex distinct from that of the descendants of the colonizers.
- *Its transmission across generations.* Among the colonized, traumatized parents pass on the post-traumatic stress syndrome to their children by their style of child rearing (Duran and Duran, 1995, 30–5). Socialization by colonial institutions such as schools, the media, and churches, deepens the impact on new generations. The intergenerational transmission of complexes can be inferred from the similar profiles of a parent and child on Jung's association tests (Jung, 1970, 83–6).
- *Its structure.* Cultural complexes are found in bipolar pairs, according to Perry's formulation, already mentioned. The ego-aligned and ego-projected complexes in a pair are complementary to each other. By integrating the pair of complexes into ego consciousness, the personality of the oppressed will experience greater wholeness – what I term 'liberated consciousness' in the final section of this article.
- *Its contents.* As I noted already, one of the complexes in the bipolar pair contains images of dependence, aligned with the ego of the oppressed; the other complex contains images of paternalism projected onto the oppressors. This pair of complexes lies at the core of the cultural complex of the oppressed. Conversely, the ego of the oppressors aligns with the paternalism complex while their dependence complex is split off and projected onto the oppressed. In this manner the cultural complexes of oppressors and oppressed reinforce each other, stabilizing the culture of oppression.
- *Its effects.* When a renewed trauma activates a cultural complex, members of the group experience 'intense collective emotions'. In the case of the oppressed, the constellated dependence complex dominates their political consciousness. They experience their paternalism complex in projection onto members of the oppressor group. Emotions arise from the ego-aligned complex as it reacts to the image projected onto the other group. The oppressed may experience the intense emotions of humiliation and fear in response to the images projected onto the oppressors.

Something I did not think to mention in my book about the bipolar pairs of complexes and their projections is the matter of their constellation. Only when constellated does the bipolar pair cast a 'veil of illusion' over the object in itself and the person in her/himself (Perry, 1970, 4, 11). When a pair of complexes has much psychic energy (affects and emotions), due to many experiences gathered to them, it takes little provocation for them to become constellated. The oppressed, while out of contact with oppressors or oppressive situations, are not likely to find their bipolar paternalism-dependence complexes constellated.

What more can be said about the origin of a cultural complex among the oppressed? In Chapter 3 of my book I apply the theory of narcissism to colonial oppression, as described by Albert Memmi, the Tunisian sociologist and author of *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. I found a remarkable correspondence between narcissistic depression and the political consciousness of the colonized. When writing that chapter I was troubled because I was

unable to find the origin of this narcissistic disturbance. Now, however, I am ready to speculate.

Narcissistic depression is not a cultural complex as such. However, this disturbance among the colonized may contribute to the pair of cultural complexes, dependence-paternalism. Memmi's (1967) 'mythical portrait of the colonized' corresponds rather well with an ego-aligned complex of dependence. The 'mythical portrait of the colonizer,' in turn, resembles the ego-projected complex of paternalism.

A person's narcissistic disturbance, as presented in the appendix to my Chapter 3, originates as a psychic wounding, brought about by an unempathic caretaker, usually one's mother or father. What if the colonial conquest as an historical trauma created a *narcissistic* wound that became the core of a cultural complex? This could be the origin of the narcissistic tendencies of the colonized and their descendents. At the time of the conquest, perhaps the traumatic wounding was experienced collectively as abandonment to the conquerors by an unempathic caretaker figure such as a monarch or a deity. Luigi Zoja, a Jungian analyst, expresses a similar thought: the Aztecs may have experienced the conquest of Mexico traumatically as abuse by their gods. '...This wound stays open throughout the following centuries, to the point of being considered the basis of national identity' (Zoja, 2001, 40).

Various authors in the book, *The Cultural Complex*, refer repeatedly to traumatized populations as suffering from low self-esteem (Singer and Kimbles, 2004a, 108, 110, 112), inferiority feelings (Singer and Kimbles, 2004a, 37, 104, 108, 111, 112), living the false self (Singer and Kimbles, 2004a, 18–19, 156) and depression (Singer and Kimbles, 2004a, 78). All of these are traits of *narcissistic depression*. There are also numerous references to the collective experience of betrayal in the historical event that traumatized the society (Singer and Kimbles, 2004, 39, 84). Betrayal resembles abandonment, a condition associated with a narcissistic wound (Asper, 1993).

Before having this insight, I was unable to account for the origin of the narcissistic depression among the colonized, a tendency consistent with the descriptions given by Memmi. This insight may prove to be fruitful for future research on historical trauma and the creation of cultural complexes. I will turn next to the healing of psychic injuries associated with the cultural complex of the oppressed.

PSYCHOPOLITICAL HEALING, LIBERATED CONSCIOUSNESS, AND THE INTEGRATION OF COMPLEXES

The cultural complex associated with 'oppressed consciousness' forms around a psychic wound originating in a societal trauma such as colonial conquest. As already mentioned, this wound is a split in the dependence-paternalism pair of complexes in the psyche of the oppressed. The resulting one-sidedness may stabilize or progress through two stages. After presenting these stages I will introduce a third stage, called 'liberated consciousness,' in which the psychic wounds of oppression are healed. All three stages can be understood as modifications of the pair of complexes, dependence-paternalism.

- *The stage of naïve consciousness.* The ego of the oppressed is aligned with the dependence complex; the paternalism complex is split off and projected onto the oppressors. The oppressed one-sidedly suffer from self-contempt and from being treated as inferior. Their solution is to become 'better,' to be like the oppressors through *assimilation*.

- *The stage of fanaticized consciousness.* Here the alignments reverse, sometimes suddenly. The ego of the oppressed aligns with the paternalism complex; their dependence complex splits off and is projected onto the oppressors. The oppressed identify one-sidedly with a superior self-image or with some great 'truth'. As 'true believers' they become fanatic. They denigrate the oppressors and may oppose them through *rebellion*. Memmi (1973, 160, 164, 166, 167, 168) describes this as 'the stage of revolt'. Elsewhere I have provided a fuller treatment of fanaticized consciousness (Alschuler, 2009).
- *The stage of liberated consciousness.* The oppressed overcome the one-sidedness of the two previous stages. The ego of the oppressed endures the tension of opposites in the pair of complexes, dependence-paternalism, without splitting, by integrating the ego-projected complex. When oppressors and oppressed belong to different ethnic groups, liberated consciousness means holding the tension of psychic opposites, where the opposites are images of ethnic groups in conflict (Alschuler, 2007, 79–80).

At the stage of naïve consciousness, the images of the oppressors and oppressed correspond to their 'mythical portraits'. In fanaticized consciousness these images are reversed. Yet, in both stages these images remain extreme and unrealistic. Liberated consciousness allows moderate and realistic images to emerge. For example, the oppressed recognize that some oppressors and some oppressed are generous, hardworking, and knowledgeable, while other oppressors and oppressed are not. As a consequence, those at the stage of liberated consciousness gain self-respect as well as respect for the humanity in the oppressors, even while they struggle to overcome oppression.

Case studies of native people

The most revealing phase of my research consists of four case studies of oppressed Native people, living in Canada and Guatemala. I was searching for the conditions that favoured their psychopolitical healing and attainment of liberated consciousness. An analysis of their published personal testimonies enabled me to identify two conditions in particular: ego strength and rootedness in the ancestral soul.

Ego strength results from the successful resolution of a maturation crisis. Whitmont (Whitmont, 1978, 247–8) describes ego strength as the sense of freedom to choose and decide for oneself. And further, it is the ability to assert one's own will power in the face of opposition and resistance.

Rootedness in the ancestral soul means that a Native person's ego-self axis is connected. This conveys a positive identity as an Indian, a sense of community as an Indian, and pride in the Indian heritage. More specifically, the Indian heritage includes language, music, spirituality, history, legends, tradition, and the relationship to nature. In contrast, a 'loss of ancestral soul' (Gambini, 1997, 145–7) may result from a traumatic historical event in society, at the core of a cultural complex.

In my book I concluded that the presence of these two conditions promoted liberated consciousness while their absence resulted in oppressed consciousness. Now I am able to expand this conclusion. The presence of neither condition, one condition, or both conditions is linked to three different stages of political consciousness. The case of Atanasio, a Quiché

Maya man and factory worker in Guatemala, illustrates how these two conditions contribute to psychopolitical healing and the development of political consciousness.

Atanasio's stage of fanaticized consciousness

His rootedness in the ancestral soul begins in childhood with a positive Indian identity, thanks to the teachings of his grandfather, a Mayan priest. In adulthood he remains proud of his Indian heritage (Alschuler, 2007, 95). The non-Indians of Guatemalan society, called *Ladinos*, attack this positive Indian identity by treating the Indians as inferior. The distinction between a *Ladino* and an Indian is cultural rather than biological. '*Indigenas* can redefine themselves or their children as *Ladinos* by some combination of moving away from home, getting a good education, disclaiming their natal language, marrying into the *Ladino raza*, or acquiring wealth' (Stoll, 1999, 17).

Atanasio's fanaticized consciousness first appears at the age of eight when he experiences humiliation as an Indian in Guatemala City, far away from his native village. His rootedness in the ancestral soul protects him from this humiliation. 'At this early age, Atanasio's reaction is not to feel inferior, but rather to reject all *Ladinos* whom he begins to view negatively' (Alschuler, 2007, 94).

Years of oppression reinforce Atanasio's fanaticized consciousness. Much later, as a perceptive adult, he is able to describe major aspects of oppression in general: economic exploitation, social discrimination, military domination, and foreign cultural invasion (Alschuler, 2007, 96–7). In his own words, Atanasio expresses his fanatical one-sidedness:

We, Indians, have been reduced to being a country within another country. We are like spirits, we have names, but we do not exist. Since we are nothing to *Ladinos*, they are completely indifferent to the way we live: alone, isolated, sick, illiterate, without the opportunity to progress. They want to immobilize us, to annihilate us. (Alschuler, 2007, 98)

Atanasio's self-healing and liberated consciousness

His self-healing begins at age eighteen as he successfully resolves a maturation crisis. The burden of his family's poverty, worsened by his father's drinking, falls upon Atanasio when his father dies unexpectedly. This event plunges him into despair because he must abandon his own ambitions for higher education in order to provide for the family. Insisting that his father is not entirely to blame for his family's poverty, Atanasio searches fervently for another explanation.

He resolves part of his crisis through an ideological innovation: he understands his family's poverty and his father's alcoholism both as consequences of the oppression of Indians on a societal scale (Alschuler, 2007, 99). He resolves the conflict between his educational ambitions and his family obligations as well. While working in a garment factory to provide for his family, he reads, on his own, the classics in Spanish translation.

Emerging from a successful resolution of his maturation crisis, Atanasio's ego is strengthened, enabling him to overcome his one-sidedness. In place of his fanatical convictions about the superiority of Indians over *Ladinos*, Atanasio opens himself to nuances and ambiguities. He learns that not all *Ladinos* are bad and that not all Indians are good. He

realizes that Indian bosses can be as oppressive as *Ladino* bosses. In this sense, Atanasio endures the tension of opposites between ethnic groups in conflict and attains liberated consciousness (Alschuler, 2007, 103).

Atanasio understands better the ethnic conflict in his country, whether in his factory or in the Army's repression of Indians, as a clash between modernism and traditionalism (Alschuler, 2007, 102). He remains rooted in Indian culture and takes pride in his Indian identity, although no longer one-sidedly. He recognizes the harm as well as the potential benefits of modernism. He mourns the damage done to traditional Indian culture, and yet reaffirms its potential benefit for all Guatemalans.

The transition to liberated consciousness

Ego strength and rootedness in the ancestral soul combine to promote psychopolitical healing and the transition from oppressed consciousness (naïve and fanatical stages) to liberated consciousness. I found a pattern of causes and consequences to be valid for all four cases of Native people.

- *Stage one: naïve consciousness* (only one of my four cases passed through this stage). *Both conditions are absent.* The absence of these two conditions leaves the oppressed extremely vulnerable to humiliation by the oppressors. This will constellate their dependence complex. In the oppressor subculture, teachers, political authorities, bosses, church pastors and priests, and the media, for example, are agents of political socialization. At the stage of 'naïve' consciousness, these agents encourage the oppressed to reject their own 'inferior' identity in order to become something 'better', that is, to imitate the oppressors. In both Memmi's and Freire's work, this is the path of *assimilation*.
- *Stage two: fanaticized consciousness* (three of my cases experienced this). *Rootedness in the ancestral soul alone.* Because of their rootedness, the oppressed, one-sidedly, believe in their superiority as a group. They adhere to an over-arching 'truth' and identify with their own charismatic leaders. The ego of the oppressed is too weak to challenge these aspects of the collective unconscious that overwhelm the personality and produce psychic inflation. The result is fanaticized consciousness, leading them to defend their 'superior' self-image and to impose their 'truth' on the oppressors, often through *rebellion*. The key condition of inflation is a form of possession by some aspect of the Self or a complex. Ego strength wards off possession according to Hart (1997, 92) and Sandner and Beebe (1982, 311). Von Franz (1993, 187) considers possession to be synonymous with fanaticism.
- *Stage three: liberated consciousness* (all four of my cases experienced this stage). *Ego strength and rootedness in the ancestral soul are both present.* The ego of the oppressed is strong enough to challenge the collective unconscious, to which it is connected, without being overwhelmed by it, as in fanaticized consciousness. The presence of both conditions allows a tension of opposites to replace the one-sidedness of oppressed consciousness. In other words, the oppressed attain *psychopolitical self-healing* by integrating into consciousness the split-off and projected complex of paternalism or dependence.

CAUSES		EFFECTS
<p>ROOTEDNESS IN THE ANCESTRAL SOUL</p> <hr/> <p>NO</p> <p>YES</p> <p>YES</p>	<p>EGO STRENGTH</p> <hr/> <p>NO</p> <p>NO</p> <p>YES</p>	<p>NAÏVE CONSCIOUSNESS 'candidate for assimilation'</p> <p>(e.g. migrants from the countryside to the city, Native people who adopt the culture of the White majority)</p> <p>FANATICIZED CONSCIOUSNESS 'true believer', religious or political</p> <p>(e.g. Bin Laden, Muslims in response to the Danish cartoons of Mohammed)</p> <p>LIBERATED CONSCIOUSNESS 'humanized warrior'</p> <p>(e.g. Gandhi, final stage in my four cases of Native people)</p>

Figure 2. Psychopolitical healing and stages of political consciousness.

CONCLUSION

This article presents my recent reflections on the 'politics of complexes', drawing from my book, *The Psychopolitics of Liberation*, which explores new connections between analytical psychology and the political consciousness of the oppressed. The Jungian concept of the complex, as modified by Perry, sheds light on the dilemma of the oppressed: why some adapt to oppression and why others struggle to overcome it. By considering oppressed consciousness as an expression of a cultural complex, we gain insights into its origin in a societal trauma and into its transmission across generations. By viewing the psychic wounds

of oppression in two stages of oppressed consciousness, we can better understand the psychopolitical healing that takes place at the stage of liberated consciousness. I welcome others to explore both the development of political consciousness and its application to new cases.

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