

CUNNINGHAM, RENEE MOREAU. *Archetypal nonviolence. King, Jung, and Culture through the Eyes of Selma*. (2021, 142 pp.). New York: Routledge

One of Carl Jung's seminal achievements was his recognition that the individual human psyche stands at the nexus of both individual psychic factors and broad collective and even cosmological forces. While such an idea would not have been news to a prescientific age, it was both a new and a controversial claim in the early phase of psychoanalysis, during which Sigmund Freud had set the tone by insisting that analysis was a more or less entirely personal and individual process. Though the significance of collective factors for understanding individual psychic life and process has since become a defining feature of Jungian psychoanalysis, it appears to this reader still to be something of an open question just how wide and deep this relationship between clinical psychoanalysis and collective factors is and to what extent understanding this relationship can also be useful for articulating the nature of psychoanalytic process.

Renee Moreau Cunningham's book *Archetypal Nonviolence. King, Jung, and Culture through the Eyes of Selma* is an original contribution to the psychoanalytic understanding of nonviolent resistance to injustice, both as a collective and a clinical phenomenon. Cunningham deftly integrates the formative thought of Martin Luther King on nonviolent resistance, factual matters of social and political history, psychoanalytic theory, and analyses of relevant phenomena in the American collective into a coherent and readable text, interpreting the cultural forces embodied in the March from Selma to Montgomery in terms of Jungian psychoanalytic theory while simultaneously distilling from the theory and the practice of nonviolent resistance essential principles of psychoanalytic clinical practice. It is also an excellent illustration of how gaining a substantive psychological understanding of an important social action, one which in many ways defined the collective unconscious of a nation at the time, can in turn illuminate some of the particularities of clinical practice.

The first chapter of *Archetypal Nonviolence* draws the reader in with a brief but gripping account of the months surrounding the March from Selma to Montgomery, underlining some of the thought and actions of Martin Luther King, as well important elements of the American collective psyche of the time and ways in which these elements set the stage for the March and for further events leading to the passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This is followed in Chapter Two by a relatively comprehensive and well differentiated discussion of racism as a cultural complex. Cunningham outlines both structural features and something of the range of affective experiences associated with this complex, while also effectively and illustratively linking some of these phenomena to her own experiences of growing up in the South. Cunningham's claim that the archetypal core of the American complex of racism is the master-slave relationship and that this constitutes a substantial piece of American shadow is persuasive, as is the discussion of the nature of the resulting psychological split in the collective. Perhaps somewhat more discussion of the master-slave relationship in dialogue with some of the substantial philosophical literature on the topic could have been fruitfully added.

The third chapter discusses the nature of nonviolent resistance, relating the conceptions of both Mahatma Gandhi and King to the thought of Jung. Cunningham does a good job of keeping this

potentially complicated discussion to the relevant essentials, offering a clear account of King's use of Gandhi, and interpreting each figure as well their thought as examples of "carrying consciousness" for a collective that could not do so by itself. Cunningham notes in passing King's background in personalistic philosophy, something which might be more important for King's philosophy and for the philosophy of nonviolence generally than this reference suggests (Wierzbicki, 1992).

The core chapter of the book is Cunningham's development of what she calls "archetypal nonviolence," including an analysis of King's six nonviolent tenets. Cunningham discusses not only the theoretical propositions here but illustrates them with references to the actions of King and some of his followers, bringing these tenets very much to life. By understanding nonviolence not only as a theory or practice but as something archetypal, Cunningham's analysis adds something important to typical treatments of this material, namely, that nonviolence is not only an idea but a kind of *energy* in which one can participate, if one wills it. Perhaps the most important of the theoretical clarifications in this chapter is that nonviolence is not pacifism nor is it in fact passive in any sense: nonviolence is a form of aggression but consists in being aggressive in a nonviolent way. Cunningham gives us a vivid portrayal of what Jung calls the "transformation of energy," (Jung, 1960) as she highlights the way aggression can be transmuted into a deeply personal, conscious, and ethical stance.

After interesting chapters entitled "Why we march," on the initiatory character of marches, and "The trickster," this latter being an important archetypal character associated with nonviolence and its practitioners, Cunningham offers a number of chapters which draw out consequences and insights about clinical psychoanalysis from the philosophy and practice of nonviolence. These chapters should be of interest for any Jungian or psychoanalytic practitioner. In a chapter entitled "Analytic interpretation of the march," Cunningham looks at the *dramatis personae* involved in the March as representative of different psychic forces, a kind of macro-narrative illustrating, by means of collective projection, how the ego defends itself against movements of the unconscious which are intended in fact to enliven the relationship to the Self. This chapter is both interesting as an analysis of a collective movement and for illustrating a method for discerning parallel processes in individual and collective psyches. The following chapter, "The analytic stance and the eightfold path of nonviolence," focuses on clinical work with patients who suffer from "oppressive inner others," whom they tend to assume are exclusively outer forces. Cunningham shows how the philosophy of nonviolence can substantially impact our work with such patients, both illuminating their internal master-slave relationships and aiding us clinicians to recognize where we need to confront our own oppressive inner others, if we are to guide such patients to individuation. To this reader, this part of Cunningham's book is truly a seminal contribution, in that it focuses on how we work with aggression, an area less developed in the Jungian tradition than, say, in the Freudian. Further, as mentioned above, while it is not always clear how best to relate collective psychic reality to clinical psychoanalysis, Cunningham's transformation of nonviolent principles at the collective level into clinical precepts appears to have been successful and can potentially be a model for a similar approach to other collective phenomena. An extended case example illustrating the clinical use of these principles follows this chapter.

Though this review emphasizes the value of its psychological ideas, no review of the book can be complete without also pointing out that nonviolent resistance is nothing if not an ethical stance, something which Cunningham sees quite clearly and brings very much to bear on how she uses the ideas of nonviolence in and for clinical work. This reader found it refreshing to read a text which treated ethics as internal to the clinical practice being articulated. The ethics of applying nonviolent principles to clinical work may extend further than Cunningham has taken them, but it is to be hoped in any case that the points made here will be part of an ongoing discussion of clinical ethics into the future.

Jung, C. G. (1960). On psychic energy. In *The structure and dynamics of the psyche Collected Works of C.G. Jung, Vol. 8*. Ed. and trans. Gerhart Adler and R. F. C. Hull. Princeton: Bollingen

Wierzbicki, A. M. (1992). *The ethics of struggle for liberation: Towards a personalistic interpretation of the principle of non-violence* Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.