

Article

The Case for African Religious Cosmology and Psychoanalysis as Spiritual Care in the Age of Authoritarianism

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Abstract

This paper argues for the necessity of psychoanalysis in the North American field of spiritual care. More specifically, the essay argues that at a time of social unrest, despair, and authoritarian rule, the work of interiority that psychoanalysis and African religious cosmologies emphasize is especially suited to the current moment in U.S. history. An integrative sampling of black psychoanalytic thinkers and black religious scholars will be highlighted as possible examples of interdisciplinary praxis for the work of spiritual care in a world where freedom and democracy are in peril. As the voices of many black and brown scholars in this area have been overlooked, disregarded, or ghettoized as only being relevant to ethnic minority populations, this essay reflects on how the symmetry between psychoanalytic thought and African spirituality and cosmology can function as a formidable psychospiritual framework for spiritual care in the 21st-century authoritarian state.

Keywords: psychoanalysis; race; racism; authoritarianism; African religious cosmology; hegemonic; oppression; social violence

Ghosts of the unconscious, imprisoned by defenses but haunting the patient in the dark of his defenses and symptoms, are allowed to taste blood, are let loose. In the daylight of analysis the ghosts of the unconscious are laid and led to rest as ancestors whose power is taken over and transformed into the newer intensity of present life, of the secondary process and contemporary objects. (Loewald 1960, p. 29)

1. Introduction

Loewald's description of the therapeutic space aligns closely—in nomenclature, symbolism, and imagery—with many elements of African-diasporic spirituality and cosmology. In the spiritual care market place in the United States (both in theological education and in the field), the radical turn towards evidence-based modes of intervention in the field of spiritual care, while understandable and beneficial in many respects (i.e., insurance reimbursement, quantitative evidence, etc.), risks emulating a turn back to modernity's project to essentialize anthropology and flatten the complexities of human experience—if carried out at the expense of the psychoanalytic project and black religious experience. But perhaps more importantly, valorizing the quantification of spiritual care outcomes, as it de-emphasizes the exploration of the interior world of individuals and groups, risks playing into the hands of the current psychopolitical rise in authoritarianism and its goal to roll back hard-won freedoms and undermine the democratic experiment. Escalation of the authoritarian logic in no small part reflects an enfeebled individual and collective self-structure within the body-politic that projects and then capitulates to authoritarian and totalitarian rule (Temple



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2006). In this era of authoritarian ideology, the field of spiritual care is in desperate need of creative psychoanalytic exploration of the inner world of the Western populace, as opposed to being constrained by the delimitation of observed behavior proffered by evidence-based modalities. This essay argues that the field of spiritual care would greatly benefit from an interdisciplinary relationship between African religious cosmology and psychoanalytic discourse. An interdisciplinary psychospiritual theory that incorporates psychodynamic and African religious sensibilities is proposed for the reader to consider in their own context.

2. Authoritarianism and the Decline of Freedom

The work of unfreedom is a global hegemonic undertaking that has left no part of the world untouched in the first decades of the 21st century. Social media and the 24-h news cycle profile a world that is overrun with war, relentless oppression and social violence, and interpersonal incivility in the public domain. The global dataset for the V-Dem Institute's *Democracy Report 2026* (Nord et al. 2026) concludes that global democracy has receded back to 1978 levels for the average person around the world. A sample of the key findings in the report, which include over 32 million points of data from the years 1789 to 2025 for 202 countries, is indeed sobering. They include the following salient highlights taken from the report:

- Democracy is back to 1978 levels for the average global citizen. . .[with] the gains of the “third wave of democratization,” starting in 1974 Portugal, are almost eradicated.
- The level of democracy for the average citizen in Western Europe and North America is at its lowest level in over 50 years.
- The world has 92 autocracies and 87 democracies at the end of 2025.
- In total, 74% of the world population (6 billion) now live in autocracies.
- Only 7% of the world population (0.6 billion) live in liberal democracies.
- Almost all aspects of democracy register far-reaching declines during the last decade—a dramatic reversal compared to 25 years ago.
- Freedom of expression is the hardest hit: 44 countries are declining in 2025.
- Torture is now increasingly used to suppress political opposition. . .[with] 33 countries are substantially degenerating in 2025.
- Media censorship remains the most common tactic among autocratizing governments, with 32 countries (73%) resorting to it.
- Repression of civil society has surged to affect 30 autocratizing countries (68%) (Nord et al. 2026, p. 4)

The *Freedom in the World 2026* report issued by Freedom House, Inc. (2026), which evaluates data on political rights and civil liberties from 195 countries and 13 territories, concluded that “global freedom declined for the 20th consecutive year in 2025. . .[with] the United States, Bulgaria, and Italy. . .[having] experienced the year’s largest declines” (Freedom House, Inc. 2026, p. 1). The report attributes the declines in democratic governance to a combination of factors that include efforts to undermine free speech in the media and other segments of the public domain, dysfunction in the legislative branch of government, and executive overreach and domination. Moreover, while rights and civil liberties have suffered across the board, the report finds that the greatest declines have been in the areas of freedom of expression and speech. Notwithstanding the setbacks, the report does offer up a glimmer of hope when it observes the resilience of democracies:

Despite internal pressures and threats from foreign powers, democracies continue to demonstrate that their domestic political systems are responsive and capable of course correction. Of the 87 countries rated Free in 2005, a total of 76—more than 85 percent—have remained Free throughout the two-decade period of global decline. Moreover, new democracies have repeatedly taken root under difficult

circumstances, and aspirations for democracy routinely find popular support in even the most repressive environments. (Freedom House, Inc. 2026, p. 1)

Both the *Freedom in the World* 2026 report and the *Democracy Report* 2026 observe that the United States had some of the highest declines in democratic metrics. Perhaps the pinnacle of this concerted and intentional decline in democratic sensibilities (and what the reports did not capture) was the Supreme Court's recent 6–3 decision to overturn Section 2 of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that protected the political power of ethnic minorities from being weakened because of gerrymandering. The Voting Rights Act was perhaps the most consequential piece of legislation to be passed in the 20th century, as it opened the door to ethnic minority representation in Congress. Reflecting on the previous success of the Voting Rights Act (while by no means perfect), Elie Mystal observes that “in 1964, there were only four black people in Congress, and zero in the Senate. . .[but] by 1968 [after the enactment of the Voting Rights Act] that number had more than doubled to nine. . .[and] today, there are 67 Black people and 56 Latinos in Congress, the highest number for both groups in this country's history” (Mystal 2026). Prior to this most recent Supreme Court ruling, states could be sued if redistricting resulted in black and brown communities having less than proportionate or no representation in Congress because they had no majority districts where they could select their own representatives. If the political outcomes from the redistricting had material implications on racial communities, then the preceding action (i.e., gerrymandering) was deemed racist. However, this is no longer the case after the most recent Supreme Court Ruling, which all but eviscerates the potency of the Voting Rights Act. Here the concern is less about the specifics of the legislation, and more about the assumptions that led to the ruling, namely: (1) *racism either no longer exists, or is not nearly as bad as it was in America's past*, (2) *social progress is linear, forward looking, and permanent and*, (3) *actions can only be understood as racist if they are perpetuated in a conscious, deliberate, and intentional act with racist intent*.

Of course, these assumptions are not limited to the Supreme Court alone. The denial of racism, coupled with the idea of American virtue and exceptionalism, is as old as the republic, and represents longstanding ideologies that collude to form what is termed the racial imagination (Gibson 2024). Because of the plausible deniability of being a racist when the phenomenon is understood as conscious and intentional harm imposed on another because of their race, the terminology in and of itself has little to no probative value in formulating a more just society and healing from the past atrocities that continue to haunt this experiment in democracy. Alternatively, it is suggested that the concept of race, and by extension racism, is best understood as an infirmity of the imagination:

The illusion and toxicity of race infect[s] the unconscious more than the conscious, effectively incapacitating the interior world and imagination of the individual. . .the racial imagination corrupts the individual and collective soul. . .The racial imagination represents an intergenerational socialization of the individual and collective psyche—sometimes consciously, but more often unconsciously. . .The psychospiritual result is to affectively experience and perceive [black and brown] persons—along with their history, heritage, culture, spirituality, and life experiences—as inherently flawed and consequently, subordinated to. . .[white] persons. (Gibson 2024, pp. 23–24)

The proposed definition attempts to serve as a corrective to the long-standing capacity of the body politic to split off and deny its commitment to the ideology of race and racial animosity, and the ongoing effort to absolve itself of the task of repentance and justice.

The racial imagination cannot be separated from the rise in authoritarianism in the U.S. over the past several decades. The hatred of people groups based on race, ethnicity, or any other marker is a key component in the authoritarian logic. The theologian Howard

Thurman understood this point well, and feared that America, in the wake of WWII, was primed for the proliferation of the same fascism that decimated Europe during the war, all because of its infatuation with race and inequality. In his essay entitled “The Fascist Masquerade,” Thurman (2015) details the codependent relationship between racism, fascism (and by extension authoritarianism), and how it manifests within the citizenry:

To those who “belong,” who satisfy the demands of the etiquette [of fascism], there is given a priority in terms of privilege, security and status. This fact becomes the basis of a generalization as to equality and inequality. Therefore, it seems clear to the writer that *fascism in the very nature of the case has to be committed to a fundamental inequality among men*. This theory of inequality, a derivative from the basic fascist doctrine of the State, *becomes a doctrine of inequality from which there flows a bloody stream of racism and terror. . . This concomitant of fascism, namely, racism is significant because it gives to any current doctrine of racial inequality or superiority a new dimension of dignity and respectability*. Obviously, this particular concomitant of fascism is not new; it merely provides a fresh banner under which the same old warriors may parade. *American soil is particularly fertile for this new facade. Already in solution in American mores and folkways there is the compound that recognizes, for all practical purposes, the basic “inequality” among men*. This is evident in many of our statutes, our customs and in our social structure.¹ (Thurman 2015, p. 146)

Thurman demonstrates that the commitment to racial terror and inequality among human beings fundamentally plays into the authoritarian logic. The two are virtually inseparable. The common refrain of “this is not about racism,” or the psychological defense of compartmentalizing race in the collective psyche as a way to soothe racialized anxiety, guilt, or shame, are indeed dangerous practices that blind us to the death-dealing realities of racial terror propped up by authoritarianism. The ideology of race, and by extension the practice of racism, is always a component of a more pervasive praxis of evil.

Dr. Martin Luther King (King 1967) makes a similar connection between race and other evils in his speech at Stanford University entitled “The Other America.” His reference is quoted at length here because of its probative value for the current moment in history:

In the final analysis, *racism is evil because its ultimate logic is genocide*. Hitler was a sick and tragic man who carried racism to its logical conclusion. He ended up leading a nation to the point of killing about 6 million Jews. *This is the tragedy of racism because its ultimate logic is genocide*. If one says that I am not good enough to live next door to him; if one says that I am not good enough to eat at a lunch counter, or to have a good, decent job, or to go to school with him merely because of my race, *he is saying consciously or unconsciously that I do not deserve to exist*. To use a philosophical analogy here, *racism is not based on some empirical generalization; it is based rather on an ontological affirmation*. It is not the assertion that certain people are behind culturally or otherwise because of environmental conditions. It is the affirmation that the very being of a people is inferior. And this is the great tragedy of it.²

Ultimately, this is the context where the scholarship and work of spiritual care finds itself in this present age of authoritarianism. Practices of denial and escapism for the sake of soothing internal anxiety are not an option for scholars and practitioners of spiritual care. The urgency of the current moment demands we recognize that the spiritual care enterprise cannot merely disentangle itself from the present authoritarian context and behave *as if we have a choice* on whether or not spiritual care scholarship and practice—in and of itself—is affected by the authoritarian logic. Not only must we be prepared to provide spiritual care in this precarious environment, but we must also be prepared to engage in the practices of

self-work and reflexivity that may uncover split-off biases, prejudices, shame, or anxieties within ourselves that could negatively inform our work and scholarship. Moreover, we must do this while we still have a “good enough” democratic framework to function within. Sheppard (2022) is right to observe that:

The interior then is comprised of aspects of our relationship to the broader culture that are apparent and conscious as well as unconscious elements. This requires us to become deeply familiar with our own interiority, face its complexity, and to do the work of interior transformation while resisting the external forces of the hegemonic imagination. . . we must seek out the interior because neither religion nor interiority is spared the intrusion and formation that the wider social forces enact on the psyche. (Sheppard 2022, p. xiv)

Psychoanalytic discourse and African religious cosmology are conducive to the task of exploring the personal and collective inner worlds of the body politic in the age of authoritarianism.³ In this Special Issue on “The Fate and Future of Psychoanalysis in Spiritual Care,” this article makes the case that psychoanalytic discourse, coupled with African religious cosmology, is an absolute necessity in the future of spiritual care, as both discourses seek to explore the inner world of the individual and society, as well as the metaphysical, in the pursuit of healing, human wholeness, justice, and to challenge all that would be antithetical to human flourishing. The psychic structure of the authoritarian logic and the commitment to race, racism, and inequality must be challenged from the inside out, along with all its fears, drives, anxieties, persecutory objects, or psychic defenses. This is not to suggest that psychodynamic discourse is superior to other discourses and approaches to spiritual care, whether it be evidence-based modalities, cognitive and/or behavioral modalities, chaplaincy, cross-cultural paradigms, post-colonial care, or trauma-informed care. But the guild would be ill-advised to become faddish in how it imagines the future of spiritual care, where one discourse or approach is emphasized—disproportionately—at the expense of all others. In this current age of authoritarianism where we are witnessing political violence and retaliation, social backlash in response to the progress of ethnic minority groups (backlash that black and brown scholars have long warned about),⁴ and the recurring pattern of age-old oppressions that were naively thought to be a thing of the past, the praxis of spiritual care needs to be informed by a multiplicity of discourses, approaches, and modalities. This article attempts to make the case for psychoanalytic discourse and African religious cosmology as a potent interdisciplinary intervention in the age of authoritarianism.

3. Authoritarianism, the Matrix of Oppression, and Social Violence

Because terminology, like oppression or violence, has been trivialized through the ideology of “being woke,” or in some cases even commandeered and self-servingly used by the powerful when their methods are challenged by the proletariat and marginalized, for the purposes of this article, it is important to elucidate the socioeconomic and cultural phenomena that are being depicted when invoking these terms. Courtney Goto offers up a compelling definition of oppression when she defines it as “institutionalized, culturally normed, social phenomena in which a dominant group benefits from directly or indirectly (consciously or unconsciously) legislating reality for a minoritized group of people, and in that process diminishing their agency” (Goto 2017, p. 179). Her definition is concise in its description of the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed, yet broad enough to be used across many disciplines.

In his work on justice and politics, Young (1990) describes the operationalization of oppression through the lens of five social archetypes that include exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. According to Young, exploitation

is economic in nature, whereby the benefits of the goods and services produced by the labor of one group are disproportionately transferred to another group. The laborers can never outproduce this imbalance. Young is clear that:

Exploitation enacts a structural relation between social groups. Social rules about what work is, who does what for whom, how work is compensated, and the social process by which the results of work are appropriated operate to enact relations of power and inequality. These relations are produced and reproduced through a systematic process in which the energies of the have-nots are continuously expended to maintain and augment the power, status, and wealth of the haves. (Young 1990, pp. 49–50)

Marginalization, according to Young, is the most insidious manifestation of oppression, as it refers to entire groups of people deemed as being unnecessary for the continuity of a civilization. Taken to its logical conclusion, Young warns that “a whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in social life and thus potentially subjected to severe material deprivation and even extermination” (Young 1990, p. 53). In describing powerlessness, Young differentiates between those with professional status and those with nonprofessional status. Professional status citizens usually possess college degrees, have (and feel entitled to) more work autonomy, and are in a position to exploit the labor of nonprofessionals. While Young acknowledges that most individuals (professional and nonprofessional) possess some capacity to affect the decisions of some other person (even if it is a family member or child), the essence of powerlessness reflects “those over whom power is exercised without their exercising it; the powerless are situated so that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them. . . [have] little or no work autonomy, exercise little creativity or judgment in their work, have no technical expertise or authority. . . [and] lack the authority, status, and sense of self that professionals tend to have” (Young 1990, pp. 56–57).

Cultural imperialism refers to power possessed by the dominant group to create and impose the worldviews and master narratives through which others will be understood and judged. Post-colonial writers like Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak have written extensively on the production of knowledge, story, and narrative, and how it can be manipulated and construed to underwrite colonial domination.⁵ Young articulates the instantiation of cultural imperialism in the everyday life of a society in compelling detail:

Often without noticing they do so, the dominant groups project their own experience as representative of humanity. . . The dominant group reinforces its position by bringing the other groups under the measure of its dominant norms. Consequently, the difference of women from men, American Indians or Africans from Europeans, Jews from Christians, homosexuals from heterosexuals, workers from professionals, becomes reconstructed largely as deviance and inferiority. Since only the dominant group’s cultural expressions receive wide dissemination, their cultural expressions become the normal, or the universal, and thereby the unremarkable. Given the normality of its own cultural expressions and identity, the dominant group constructs the differences which some groups exhibit as lack and negation. *These groups become marked as Other.*⁶ (Young 1990, p. 59)

Lastly, as it relates to violence, Young focuses less on the violent act in and of itself, and more on the systemic nature of it and the surrounding culture that normalizes violence against certain groups of people. But for the purposes of this essay, Kernberg’s (2003) concept of sanctioned social violence is better suited to elucidate the nature of violence in authoritarian systems in a manner that Young fails to do. For Kernberg, violence under repressive authoritarian and/or totalitarian regimes differs from violence in other sociopo-

litical settings. He sets out to profile the nature of violence in a society that is in the process of regressing to archaic drives that defy even the most basic understanding of human empathy and compassion. In his concept of sanctioned social violence, Kernberg focuses on “the emergence of socially sanctioned violent behavior against unarmed, defenseless, noncombatant civilians, sustained sadistic, intentional destructive behavior against other human beings that would ordinarily run against the most basic and essential assumptions of humane concern for self and others” (Kernberg 2003, pp. 683–84). In Kernberg’s conception of social violence, it appears that a key focus of his work is on the *process of social regression* to such violence, or the descent into individual apathy and social indifference—and by extension—the unconscious sanctioning of the violence. Informed by Freud’s (1922) concept of mass psychology in *Group Psychology And The Analysis of the Ego*, Kernberg suggests that “the massive killing of civilians, the open and socially sanctioned torture and persecution of minorities. . .[and] the mass abandonment of the usual standards of human decency. . .reflect the operation of massive, primitive, self-directed aggressive drive in groups, institutions, and social and national conflicts” (Kernberg 2003, p. 684). Ultimately, for Young, the presence of any one of the aforementioned despotic practices (exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence) constitutes oppression, and more often than not, they converge and collude in a manner that gives way to a praxis of hegemony.

4. Intersubjective Theory: A Theoretical Interdisciplinary Framework for Psychoanalytic Theory and African Religious Cosmology—A Case Study

The argument put forth here, that there is an ideological symmetry between psychoanalytic thought and African spirituality and cosmology—primarily as it relates to its focus on interiority—that can function as a formidable psychospiritual framework for spiritual care in the 21st-century authoritarian state, builds on previous research and work where a psychodynamic psychobiography of Frederick Douglass (Gibson 2018) was constructed. That project focused on one central question: how do we account for the robust subjectivity of Frederick Douglass given that he was born and raised in the violence and terror of the American slavocracy? The work entailed the psychoanalytic examination (of every page) of all four of his first-person autobiographies, which consisted of two written antebellum and two written postbellum (the third written during Reconstruction and the final written after the Supreme Court of the United States struck down Reconstruction). Perhaps more importantly, the project assumed that Frederick Douglass was among the most significant and prolific thinkers and personalities of the 19th century, such that without his leadership, ingenuity, scholarly body of work, and influence on the body politic, it is conceivable the Abraham Lincoln would not have been persuaded to pen the Emancipation Proclamation.⁷ Taken together, this begs the question of how such a robust subjectivity that we find in Frederick Douglass could have emerged in the context of extremity (i.e., the hegemony of the slavocracy). Contemporary trauma theories suggest that the vitality and stout structures of the self that we see in Frederick Douglass (as well as unrecognized others) would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for human beings subjugated to the horror of the slavocracy.

Moreover, it was suggested in that project that traditional psychoanalytic theories (classical, drive, ego, object relations, etc.) were extremely limited, if not inadequate to the explanatory task as well. The psychoanalytic tradition, when contemplating the human project, did not have in its purview generations of enslaved black and brown human beings subjected to the slavocracy. Moreover, from a developmental perspective, the majority of traditional psychoanalytic theories posited the caregiver/parental matrix as the foundation of psychological life. This foundational assumption about human psychic space is turned

on its head in the slavocracy, as black families were separated, with toddlers being removed from their parents in order to advance the hegemonic apparatus of slave labor. Ultimately, the analysis revealed that intersubjective systems theory, while not perfect, was best suited to explicate the robust subjectivity we find in Frederick Douglass. Consequently, the point here is not to reargue the extensive theoretical position previously established in that project (Gibson 2018), but to set the stage to appreciate the transformative power—for the oppressed and the oppressor—of the intersubjective psychospiritual space that is formed and cocreated by two or more people, and establish the theoretical foundation informing the proposal that psychoanalytic thought and African spirituality and cosmology colludes as a formidable psychospiritual framework for spiritual care in the 21st-century authoritarian state (more on this point shortly).

Intersubjective-systems theory as postulated by theorists like George E. Atwood and Robert D. Stolorow represents a significant departure from traditional psychoanalytic theories in terms of how it seeks to delineate psychological phenomena as well as how the therapeutic space is operationalized.⁸ Intersubjective psychoanalytic theory argues that psychological life, for both the analyst and the patient, is mutually and reciprocally formative and informative. The relational patterns, emotional patterns, psychological scar tissue, biases, presuppositions, worldviews, and organizing principles of both the analyst and the patient are brought to center stage in the therapeutic dyad where they create an affective nexus that forms and informs the subjectivities of both patient and analyst. The “myth of the isolated mind” is done away with in the intersubjective paradigm, as the mind is always influenced and informed by the concrete and affective content of the context in which it is ensconced. The asymmetry of the traditional analytic space is now challenged in the intersubjective matrix, as even the vicarious introspection⁹ of the most attentive analyst is not unaffected by the nexus of interacting subjectivities. Once asymmetry becomes symmetry, the analyst realizes that the therapeutic space is always co-created, for better or for worse. Lastly, according to theorists like Stolorow and Atwood, intersubjective theory resists reifying and universalizing any explicit psychological concept as being representative of all human beings (although the risk of reifying our ideological commitments is a constant occupational hazard for all scholars and theorists). The telos then of the intersubjective paradigm is for the analyst to attune to the patient to an extent (and in a manner) where the patient cultivates a more complex and robust subjectivity that can better navigate their prevailing affective challenges or enhance the principles that organize the patient’s experiential world. According to Stolorow and Atwood (1996), the nomenclature of the intersubjective paradigm “is one of interacting subjectivities, reciprocal mutual influence, colliding organizing principles, conjunctions and disjunctions, attunements and malattunements—a lexicon attempting to capture the endlessly shifting, constitutive intersubjective context of intrapsychic experience, both in the psychoanalytic situation and in the course of psychological development” (Stolorow and Atwood 1996, p. 181). It is the authors’ reference to how intersubjective vocabulary applies beyond the therapeutic situation to “psychological development” that is extremely useful in the proposition that the intersection of black spirituality and psychodynamic inquiry can be useful to spiritual care, especially in the context of authoritative oppression. Stolorow and Atwood go on to conclude:

The investigation and illumination of these invariant meanings as they take form within the intersubjective dialogue between patient and analyst can produce powerful therapeutic reactions in liberating the patient’s affectivity and in strengthening the patient’s capacities for affect tolerance, integration, and articulation. We regard such expansion and enrichment of the patient’s affective life as central aims of an analytic process. (Stolorow and Atwood 1996, p. 183)

Returning to Frederick Douglass then, it was determined that intersubjective theory was best suited for the task of formulating a psychobiography of his life (Gibson 2018). In responding to the psychodynamic question of where Frederick Douglass came from, or how we account for the robust subjectivity we see in him, it was determined that his subjectivity reflected the accumulation of instances where he endeavored to experience himself as human, or experience his humanity, as he existed within the intersubjective field that propped up and underwrote the American slavocracy. In the construction of the psychobiography, the intersubjective space between individuals in the American slavocracy is referred to as the intersubjective milieu and defined as:

the interpsychic space that a group of individuals or community in a specific context (be it geographic, sociopolitical, class, religion, ethnicity, race, etc.) co-create and inhabit based on individual and collective subjectivity, agency, narratives, histories, cultures, or heritages. When this collectively constructed interpersonal psychic space pushes the limits of human survival. . . such as slavery. . . the most basic psychosocial task is to experience selfhood [or one's humanity] within that intersubjective space. (Gibson 2018, pp. 21–22)

The intersubjective milieu represented the conglomerate of organizing principles (socially, culturally, politically, and religiously) that underwrote and normalized the slavocracy in the psychic space of the American body politic. In such a context of extremity where the enslaved person's options were few, and where there were little to no external resources to effectuate freedom, the only remaining alternative was to fall back on their interior world and attempt to *experience themselves as someone other than a slave*—that is to say, to experience freedom. The perpetual psychological effort to experience oneself as other than enslaved is termed the *internal force of being* (an intrapsychic talent for life and survival):

The force of being is described as the interior motivation, desire, and agency to imagine and experience selfhood interdependently within the intersubjective milieu in which one is embedded and the autonomy to influence or transgress such space. A healthy force of being enables one to experience herself in a life-giving, counter-hegemonic way that defies how one otherwise may have experienced oneself in a violent and oppressive intersubjective milieu. (Gibson 2018, p. 127)

Perhaps the most compelling example of the transformative power of the intersubjective matrix/milieu and the *force of being* is observed in Frederick Douglass's well-known fight with Covey, a notoriously violent plantation overseer (Douglass 1845). On one occasion, Douglass was beaten so savagely by Covey that his entire body was covered with blood. Douglass escaped from the field (which he knew was a punishable offense) to report the ghastly beating to the plantation master, a person with whom Douglass erroneously believed he had a rapport, even if modest. The plantation master responded with cold indifference to Douglass's bloodied body. In his autobiography, Douglass recalls that at that moment, the plantation master's apathy had instantly broken the curse of priestcraft (a play on the word witchcraft) on him. Priestcraft referred to the use of the bible and Christian doctrine to justify slavery and compel the enslaved to accept their lot as Divine providence. *In intersubjective terms, it is suggested that the plantation owner's malattunement to Douglass precipitated a radical shift in Douglass's subjectivity; a shift that eviscerated the hold of priestcraft on Douglass's mind.* As Douglass returned to the plantation, he came across a fellow enslaved person by the name of Sandy, who not only attends to Douglass's wounds, but affectively joins with Douglass's terror of having to return to the plantation (knowing what his fate would be). Before Douglass returns, Sandy gives him a root (a kind of plant in African religious cosmology that symbolizes some form of spiritual power or intervention

on behalf of the root-holder) and tells Douglass that as long as he carries the root in this pocket, no man will ever be able to physically beat him or whip him. While Douglass says that he never believed in roots, he took it anyway. *From an intersubjective perspective, it is suggested that Sandy's empathic words and intervention represented radical attunement to Douglass's plight in a way that further reinforced his subjectivity.* By the time Douglass returned to the plantation and Covey attempted to beat him for leaving, Douglass reports that a fighting madness had overtaken him such that everyone on the plantation was frozen in shock as Douglass fought back and eventually rebuffed Covey. While Douglass's physical plight did not change, there was a radical psychospiritual shift in his subjectivity:

I was a changed being after that fight. I was nothing before; I WAS A MAN NOW. It recalled to life my crushed self-respect and my self-confidence, and inspired me with a renewed determination to be A FREEMAN. A man, without force, is without the essential dignity of humanity. Human nature is so constituted, that it cannot honor a helpless man, although it can pity him; and even this it cannot do long, if the signs of power do not arise. He only can understand the effect of this combat on my spirit, who has himself incurred something, hazarded something, in repelling the unjust and cruel aggressions of a tyrant. Covey was a tyrant, and a cowardly one, withal. After resisting him, I felt as I had never felt before. It was a resurrection from the dark and pestiferous tomb of slavery, to the heaven of comparative freedom. I was no longer a servile coward, trembling under the frown of a brother worm of the dust, but, my long-cowed spirit was roused to an attitude of manly independence. I had reached the point, at which I was not afraid to die. This spirit made me a freeman in fact, while I remained a slave in form. (Douglass 1855, pp. 246–47)

In this examination of Frederick Douglass, it remains unclear if he really understood the psychospiritual impact that Sandy's root had on his subjectivity. Douglass's reflections in the aftermath of his fight with Covey, in many respects, foreshadow the intersubjective framework that Stolorow, Atwood, and many others articulate in the late 20th century. While he was still enslaved, his comments demonstrate the intrapsychic "establishment of new, alternative principles for organizing experience, so that. . . [his] experiential repertoire . . . [became] enlarged, enriched, more flexible, and more complex" (Stolorow and Atwood 1996, p. 183). This enhanced subjectivity ultimately prepared Douglass to escape from bondage and to evolve into the scholar, leader, and abolitionist he is known for.

There is much to be gained, for all people, at the intersection of psychodynamic theory and African religious cosmology, especially when contending with the forces of authoritarian rule and structures of oppression and unfreedom. Douglass demonstrates that with an interior world buttressed by a strong force of being, even when external hegemonic forces are against the oppressed and marginalized and seem to be prevailing, resistance and resilience are still possible and required—both in the interior world of the individual and in the intersubjective space.

5. Black Psychoanalysts Engaging the Authoritarian and Racial Logic

The central argument of this paper to use African religious cosmology and psychoanalytic inquiry as a form of spiritual care is but one psychospiritual and/or psychodynamic example to the challenge of white supremacy and the authoritarian logic. Black psychoanalysts, for decades, have made scholarly contributions to challenge systemic oppression and racial terror in the United States. But within the psychoanalytic community, they have often found themselves to be alone in this endeavor and often ignored. The psychoanalytic researchers who participated in *The Holmes Commission on Racial Equality in American Psychoanalysis* (American Psychoanalytic Association 2023) concluded that "In

general, American psychoanalysis lacks local or national leaders who acknowledge the presence and deleterious effects of systemic racism in psychoanalytic institutions or who allay the massive resistance to grasping and resolving systemic racism within psychoanalysis” (American Psychoanalytic Association 2023, p. 17). Moreover, while the psychoanalytic project in America has always gravitated towards a focus on the individual, according to Moskowitz (1999), psychoanalysis has an established history of social and communal concern. He laments that “psychoanalysis in the United States has come to be viewed as politically conservative and socially impotent. To make matters worse, the clinical field has been subject to internal and external forces that further diminish its social relevance and even threaten its survival as a therapeutic modality accessible to more than the elite few” (Moskowitz 1999, p. 334). Consequently, the following represents only a sampling of the work and scholarship of black psychoanalysts engaging systemic racism and oppression through their scholarship. Because so many in the guild of spiritual care remain unaware of the work and scholarship of black psychoanalysts, highlights of their work are briefly presented here as examples, and perhaps a source of hope and motivation for scholars and practitioners committed to the future of psychoanalytic thought in spiritual care.

Dorothy Holmes has published extensively on the intersection of psychoanalysis, systemic racism, and racism within the therapeutic space—both within the person of the analyst and within the client (See D. E. Holmes 2006, 2016a, 2016b). Arguing that racism is generally split off and disavowed in and outside of the therapy room, similar to Loewald, D. E. Holmes (2021) uses the metaphor of a ghost to describe how racism lies in wait to haunt its victims. Holmes claims that at “the deepest level—race as unacknowledged ghosts that haunt us—has not been duly recognized, especially as these ghosts do their mischief in whites” (D. E. Holmes 2021, p. 238). According to Holmes, racial motivations are rarely consciously and intentionally revealed (as assumed by the recent Supreme Court decision to overturn Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act). The well-honed practices of splitting-off and disavowal protect the psyche of the well-intentioned racist. Again, using metaphysical language that can sometimes be found in African religious cosmology, Holmes argues that even psychoanalytic practitioners and scholars must use the psychoanalytic practice itself to “own that *disembodied*... fragments of hate, so easily disavowed” (D. E. Holmes 2021, p. 239). For Holmes, the path forward includes compelling those beholden to the ideology of white supremacy to mourn what is lost in surrendering the philosophy of a person being superior to another human being. Using metaphysical imagery, she concludes “to face the hatred embedded in whiteness is to face the ghosts of hatred, to face the scars and scarring venom inherent in that hatred, and to face the challenge of separating from those ghosts, to suffer the pain of mourning their loss in the interest of creating an owned, more voluntary use of greed-up energy” (D. E. Holmes 2021, p. 242).

Leary (2007) compares the lived experience of racial insult to the lived experience of romantic love. She notes that the former represents a closed psychic system of failures to recognize the raced other, racial stereotypes, and a rejection of the uniqueness of the raced other, whereas the latter reflects an open psychic system where psychological borders can be crossed, and individual distinctiveness celebrated, for the purpose of enlarging our sense of selfhood and humanity. According to Leary, the closed psychic system has the potential to open through recognition of the particularity of the other. Leary offers up a compelling vision of “beloved community” for a society that has worked towards becoming an open system:

Love can be fundamentally liberating and self-enlarging. At its best... love, and the desire that drives it, embodies the willingness to “alter course” on the basis of the lover’s investment in the beloved other. The lover is moved to cross internal psychological barriers and, in many instances, also impelled outward into new

material experience in the world. Love, in this sense, functions as an “open system,” as lovers orient themselves to the beloved’s perceived distinctiveness, to his or her priorities and interests, and change themselves in the process. Love thrives in this particularity. (Leary 2007, p. 540)

Vaughans and Harris (2016) explore the concept of mentalization and the psychological toll that it takes on black and Latino boys when society fails to mentalize them. Mentalization, in part, helps us to imagine and explore the experience of others. The authors suggest this is especially important in high-stakes relationships, like that between law enforcement and ethnic minority boys. Because mentalization fails, the authors observe that black and Latino males “do not have the experience of police as protectors” whereas “Whites for the most part feel that police actions are justified, which suggests a belief in high Black criminality.” Ultimately, this will “fuel the dehumanization of young Black males.” (Vaughans and Harris 2016, p. 176).

Gump (2010) explores the role of subjectivity and human development in African American experience. According to Gump, “few psychoanalytic theories afford culture a role in the development of the self” and that “this silence distorts and constricts our understanding of all subjects, but is particularly pernicious for the nondominant, as it renders significant aspects of their subjectivities invisible” (Gump 2010, p. 42). While she centers her analysis on black life, her work begs the question of how the failure to account for social, cultural, and political life for the dominant group renders subjectivities propped up by the ideology of superiority invisible and inaccessible to reflection. Fanon (1964) provides a clue into the answer to this question when he observes, “The racist in a culture with racism is therefore normal. He has achieved a perfect harmony of economic relations and ideology.” Consequently, for Fanon, “race prejudice” supplies those beholden to the ideology of white supremacy with “a flawless logic” (Fanon 1964, p. 40).

Sheppard’s (2022) project perhaps supplies us with the most extensive treatment of the idea being put forth here, namely that psychoanalytic discourse and African religious cosmology represent a formidable spiritual care modality in the age of authoritarianism. Being a psychoanalyst and womanist practical theologian herself, Sheppard sets out to center the religious life and lived experiences of black women as a way of engaging religious symbols and “ritual space as a means to mediate experiences of self, religion, sociality, and interiority” (Sheppard 2022, p. xxix). Especially in a time where the ideology of white Christian nationalism is being imposed on the collective psychic space of the democratic experiment, and where religion is being used to moralize social violence and justify war on those who have been disinherited from what it means to be human and image bearers of the Divine, Sheppard’s project foreshadows the current age of social unrest and despair for those who are lovers of freedom. Her work compellingly argues that religious and psychic interiority materializes itself in the public space, for better or for worse; for the cause of justice and freedom, or if ignored, for the cause of evil and hegemony.

6. African Religious Cosmology in the Authoritarian Age

In African American Christian religious traditions, it is not uncommon to hear people use the terminology of principalities and powers, or spiritual warfare, when referring to racial terror, systemic racism, or other structural forms of oppression. The language (and the logic), in part, is taken from Paul the apostle in the sixth chapter of Ephesians in the biblical text (ESV):

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers [or principalities], against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the*

spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.¹⁰

While at first glance this terminology may be off-putting to some, trivialized by others outside of the tradition, or relegated to fundamentalism in the guilds of theological education, it is suggested here that such dismissive approaches be discontinued and reconsidered. The religious experience of black and brown people has long been ignored or overlooked in theological education and considered ill-suited for theological reflection. While attending an annual conference of the American Academy of Religion and sitting in on a meeting about Pentecostalism and fundamentalism, it was unsettling that many in the meeting (both on the panel and in the audience) made no distinction between the two concepts in question. Moreover, they conspicuously failed to include a scholar from within the tradition of Pentecostalism as an interlocutor. The intent here is not to make an ontological or metaphysical case for spiritual warfare. The point is to argue that metaphysical symbols and language from African religious traditions are legitimate sources of theological reflection and spiritual care—just as legitimate and efficacious as the religious life from traditions of European descent.

Metaphysical language like demons, demonic, ghosts, Holy Ghost, spiritual warfare, or principalities are all representative of African religious cosmology. Moreover, the language denotes critical reflection on the inner world of the individual and the collective social order. Ashby (2003) captures the metaphysical in African religious tradition through the idea of conjuring:

The origins of the longstanding tradition of “conjuring” are found in the life and culture of Africans before their transport to America. *Conjuring was a means by which Africans brought to bear the power of transcendent forces to affect change in the this-world context. Conjuring produced healing, altered outcomes, precipitated reversals, and otherwise refashioned the course of events.* In the history of Africans in America biblical images have frequently been conjured in order to translate and transform African American life.¹¹ (Ashby 2003, p. 12)

For Ashby, the biblical story of Exodus and Joshua is among the most compelling conjuring symbols that align with black experience in America. However, being a long-time professor and scholar in theological education, he is also well aware of how African religious cosmologies may be viewed in the academy. He concludes with:

African American ancestors employed conjures as a way of protecting persons from illness, spells, and the consequences of life. The rituals, incantations, and medicines of conjuring may seem foreign and out of date. . .however, such conjurational devices in Africa and in America have helped keep a people alive over the centuries. And in light of the failure of more modern socio-political-economic strategies that have been employed, the use of conjuring. . .may deliver a people from extinction. . .to a place of promise and hope. (Ashby 2003, p. 15)

Ashby is signaling that the telos of worship and religious practice in African religious cosmology is not the perfect reproduction of liturgies formed from a particular tradition. Instead, it is to journey to a “place of promise and hope” in the midst of an evil and broken world hell-bent on war, racial hatred, and social violence. Alternatively, for others in the tradition, a “place of promise and hope” is captured in the language and telos of *deliverance*.

The language and religious symbols in the African religious cosmology invite its users to explore human experience through a more substantive methodology that extends beyond visible phenomena or that which is perceived consciously or performed intentionally, not unlike the objectives of psychoanalytic discourse. In the current age of authoritarianism, the

metaphysical terminology of African religious cosmology seeks to highlight the pervasive nature of oppression; the seemingly endless cycles of gaining civil rights and then losing those same rights in the courts; the experience of social and political progress for those at the margin and then experiencing social backlash from the powerful and privileged. The metaphysical language in African religious cosmology seeks a deeper exploration and understanding of the inner workings of evil. In her project on social evil, Townes (2006) is sound on this point when she asserts that she is not only “interested in getting into the interior worlds of those who endure structural evil” but that she also is intent on examining the “interior worlds of structural evil itself to discover what truths may be found there” (Townes 2006, p. 12). Many of the truths to be found in the interior worlds of structural evil may lead to guilt and shame, both individually and collectively. However, similar to the psychoanalytic project, African religious cosmology can precipitate anxiety-provoking work, with the expected payoff resting on a firm belief in the axiom *that you shall know the truth. . . and the truth shall set you free*. To this end, Townes calls us all to account by compelling us to engage in true, honest, and authentic self-work, knowing that not only are we harmed by corrupt systems, but that we are also susceptible to being seduced into being participants and benefactors in hegemonic systems. Her call to integrity and faithfulness is concise and compelling, yet pastoral. Again, Loewald’s description of the therapeutic space aligns closely with many elements of African-diasporic spirituality and cosmology. Townes’s project is a prime example of how the symmetry between psychoanalytic thought and African spirituality and cosmology can function as a formidable psychospiritual framework for spiritual care in the 21st-century authoritarian state:

Somewhere deep inside each of us we know that perhaps the simplest, yet the most difficult, answer to the challenge of what will we do with the fullness and incompleteness of who we are as we stare down the interior life of the cultural production of evil is live your faith deeply. This is not a quest for perfection, but for what we call in Christian ethics the everydayness of moral acts. It is what we do every day that shapes us and where both the fantastic hegemonic imagination and the challenge and hope to dismantle it are found. It is in these acts that we do that say more about us than those grand moments of righteous indignation and action. (Townes 2006, p. 164)

7. Final Thoughts and Praxis

One of the primary challenges to what is being proposed in this essay is that in the U.S. spiritual care marketplace, psychodynamic approaches are outdated and are not subjected to evidence-based measurements that test for success in recovery, healing, or the management of psychological ailments. But as argued earlier, while the proliferation of evidence-based modalities of spiritual care is on the rise in North America, to view them as mutually exclusive with psychodynamic approaches is a mistake. The two approaches represent different paradigms asking different sets of questions. Especially in the current sociopolitical climate in the United States, a sound argument can be made that a multiplicity of modalities is needed in spiritual care (in research and scholarship, in the classroom, and in the field) to attend to the multiplicity of needs throughout the country. It is only hubris and arrogance that makes any theoretical tradition believe it has the singular know-how to be all things to all people.

Another challenge to what is proposed in this article centers on the historic and ongoing cultural and ideological gap that exists between black and brown communities and the field of mental health—especially the psychoanalytic community. Indeed, while this article advances the intersection of African religious cosmology and psychodynamic inquiry as a viable form of spiritual care, there is much work to be done in

terms of the psychoanalytic community dealing with its repressed biases, bigotry, and racism. However, not all practitioners need to be trained psychoanalysts in order to attend to the work of interiority and religious cosmology in the life of their patients. Postures of humility and a willingness to learn, coupled with being informed of psychodynamic principles and the liberative practices of black religious cosmologies, can go a long way towards assisting clients. Moreover, it is suggested here that for many black and brown patients, the problem is not doing the work of deep analytic introspection. The problem is the risk of psychological and emotional injury that comes from the therapist's or practitioner's inability to empathically connect with the client across culture, race, ethnicity, or religious experience.

Lastly, in terms of what the confluence of African religious cosmology and psychodynamic influences might look like in spiritual care (whether practicing it or teaching it), instead of attempting to suggest specific strategies or techniques that will inevitably be constrained by context, culture, and a myriad of other considerations, the reader is instead invited to consider several question to aid them in imagining how what is proposed here would look in their context. According to Stolorow (2014), Kohut, in his final lecture before he died, suggested that empathy, in and of itself, was insufficient for healing and recovery in the therapeutic space. Using the Holocaust as an example, Kohut suggested that even the Nazis used empathy as a value-neutral tool to better understand and manipulate their enemies. As such, Stolorow suggests moving beyond the idea of empathy to a concept he understands as emotional dwelling. For Stolorow, "in emotional dwelling, one does not merely seek to understand the other's emotional pain from the other's perspective [as with empathy]. One does that, but much more. In dwelling, one leans into the other's emotional pain and participates in it, perhaps with aid of one's own analogous experiences of pain" (Stolorow 2014, p. 81). In another place where he talks about what emotional dwelling looks like in the context of trauma, Stolorow asserts that "just as finitude is fundamental to our existential constitution, so too is it constitutive of our existence that we meet each other as siblings in the same darkness, deeply connected with one another in virtue of our common finitude. . . . If we are to be an understanding relational home for a traumatized person, we must tolerate our own existential vulnerabilities so that we can dwell unflinchingly with his or her unbearable and recurring emotional pain" (Stolorow 2013, p. 388). What Stolorow suggests here aligns perfectly with African religious cosmologies that highlight community, village, fellowship, and joining fellow brothers and sisters in their suffering.¹² Consider the following questions for your own context:

1. When you consider your own finiteness, what are the limits of empathy in spiritual care in your context? How do these empathic limits impact spiritual care?
2. What would it look like to move beyond empathy to emotional dwelling in your context? What would have to change in how you conceptualize spiritual care to effect a move from empathy to emotional dwelling?
3. In the autobiographies of Frederick Douglass, Sandy engaged in emotional dwelling with Douglass. Sandy cleaned Douglass's bloodied body and then offered him a root (a symbol of cosmic strength and protection and a symbol of Sandy's fellowship with Douglass). What might offering your client a root look like in your context of spiritual care?

This article tracks the decline in freedom and democracy in the United States and names the ongoing legacies of oppression, racial terror, and authoritarianism that are fueling this precipitous decline. Readers are invited to consider spiritual care praxis that turns on the intersection of psychoanalytic discourse and African religious cosmology. Psychoanalytic discourse in the future of spiritual care is an absolute necessity, as it is well-equipped to explore the psychological interior world, just as African Religious cosmologies

are adept at exploring the religious inner world. Both of these modalities, in conversation with each other, are imperative in this current age of authoritarianism. Psychoanalytic discourse should not be viewed in competition with other modalities of spiritual care, as all of these modalities are epistemological interpretations of the human project. In times of social unrest and despair, a multiplicity of modalities is needed to maximize the probability of efficacious intervention, for the individual and community.

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Notes

- ¹ Italic is my emphasis.
- ² Italic is my emphasis.
- ³ Several other scholars have addressed the intersection of psychoanalytic discourse and black religious cosmology and subjectivity from multiple vantage points and perspectives. See Lee Butler, *Liberating Our Dignity, Saving Our Souls: A New Theory of African American Identity Formation* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2006) (Butler 2006), Phillis Sheppard, *Self, Culture, and Others in Womanist Practical Theology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) (Sheppard 2011), Archie Smith, *The Relational Self: Ethics and Therapy From A Black Church Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1982) (Smith 1982), and Edward Wimberly, *Liberation & Human Wholeness: The Conversion Experiences of Black People in Slavery & Freedom* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986) (Wimberly 1986).
- ⁴ For more on the idea of white backlash see Eddie Glaude, Jr., *Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul* (New York: Crown, 2016) (Glaude 2016), Maris Abrajano & Hajnal Zoltan, *White Backlash: Immigration, Race, and American Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015) (Abrajano and Zoltan 2015), Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968) (King 1968), and Eddie Glaude, Jr., *Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own* (New York: Crown, 2020) (Glaude 2020).
- ⁵ See works like *The Location of Culture* (Bhabha 1994), or *Nation and Narration* by Homi Bhabha (Bhabha 1990), or works like *Death of a Discipline* (Spivak 2003), or *Other Asias* by Gayatri Spivak (Spivak 2008).
- ⁶ Italic is my emphasis.
- ⁷ See Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (Hartford: Park Publishing Company, 1881) (Douglass 1881), David W. Blight, *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2018) (Blight 2018), and Jon Meacham, *And There Was Light: Abraham Lincoln and the American Struggle* (New York: Random House, 2022) (Meacham 2022).
- ⁸ See George Atwood and Robert Stolorow, *Faces in a Cloud: Intersubjectivity in Personality Theory* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1993) (Atwood and Stolorow 1993), Stolorow and Atwood, *Contexts of Being: The Intersubjective Foundations of Psychological Life* (New York: Routledge, 1992) (Stolorow and Atwood 1992), Stolorow, Atwood, and Brandchaft, *The Intersubjective Perspective* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1994) (Stolorow et al. 1994) and, Stolorow, Atwood, and Brandchaft, *Psychoanalytic Treatment: An Intersubjective Approach* (New York: Routledge, 1995) (Stolorow et al. 1995).
- ⁹ Heinz Kohut's definition of empathy in *How Does Analysis Cure?* (Kohut 1984).
- ¹⁰ Italic is my emphasis.
- ¹¹ Italic is my emphasis.
- ¹² See Barbara Holmes, *Crisis Contemplation: Healing the Wounded Village and Walking With Our Ancestors: Contemplation and Activism* (B. A. Holmes 2017, 2021).

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