

EVIL PERSONA, SHADOW AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF COMMUNITY

RUNNING HEAD: Persona, Shadow, Transformation of Community.

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ABSTRACT

In this essay I examine what Sri Aurobindo referred to as the humankind's double nature consisting of its animal nature of instincts impulses desires and automatisms and its higher, self-reflective, mental, aesthetic, ethical and spiritual nature. I particularly study humankind in terms of modern western individuals, with their damned-up repressed instincts. I then study the Evil Persona as defined by Sri Aurobindo, suggesting that it be understood in light of the persona as presented by C. G. Jung. Sri Aurobindo defined it as a being that is attached to the sadhaks who creates wrong conditions. The persona is the ideal image and mask that one wears to present oneself to the world, either professionally or otherwise. Although the persona serves the purpose of greasing the wheels of life, one is enjoined not to identify with its false wrappings. The Evil Persona, in fact, seems to be a product of both the workings of the persona, and also the shadow. The brighter and more virtuous the persona, then the darker is the shadow, the repressed other side of the coin. If the falseness of the Evil Persona can be relegated to the field of the Asura of Falsehood, then the darkness of the shadow is the realm of the Asura of Ignorance. I then examine the nature of first the personal shadow and then the archetypal shadow, or the shadow side of the God-image. The personal shadow is not evil *per se*, but awkward and ill-adapted aspects of the psyche that need to be integrated into consciousness, often to the advantage of gaining a greater range of life and instinctual connectedness. At the archetypal level, the goal is for to suffer the opposites of good and evil, to allow them to come together in the Self as a vessel filled with divine conflict. I end the essay by studying the shadow as positive value and source of vitality, and then indicate how the spiritualization and assimilation of the animal shadow at an individual level enhances the transformation of community.

“This bodily appearance is not all; / The form deceives, the person is a mask; / Hid deep in man celestial powers can dwell (Sri Aurobindo, 1970c, p. 23).”

“It is amazing, amazing---this power of self-deception, the mind’s skill in finding an admirable justification for any ignorance, any stupidity whatsoever (The Mother, 2004, p. 225).”

“The spirit of evil is fear, negation, the adversary who opposes life...he is the spirit of regression, who threatens us with bondage...dissolution and extinction in the unconscious (C. G. Jung, 1974a, p. 354).”

“O Mother, give to our life and mind the Asura’s strength, the Asura’s energy and to our hearts and intelligence a God’s character and a God’s knowledge (Sri Aurobindo, as reported in Nolini Kanta Gupta, 1977, p. 21n.).”

“Together the patient and I address ourselves to the 2,000,000 year old man that is in all of us. In the last analysis, most of our difficulties come from losing contact with our instincts, with the age-old unforgotten wisdom stored up in us. (C. G. Jung, as reported in William McGuire and R. F. C. Hull, 1980, p. 100).”

An important goal of the opus is realization of the fourfold quaternity of the mental, vital and physical planes of being organized around the psychic being. This requires coming to terms with the persona and the shadow.

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Preamble on the Condition of the Collective Psyche

This essay is on the nature of the persona and the shadow, two complementary aspects of human nature, especially with respect to building a new world and the transformation of community. Understanding and coming to terms with these two psychological factors and how they play themselves out in both individuals and the community are, in my opinion, highly significant for this realization. The Mother (2004, p. 207) said on this subject that it is of “capital importance,” while lamenting that it is very little discussed. Not only is the subject matter itself intrinsically interesting, studying it broadens one’s understanding of life in general and, at least for some people, it opens up potential for a fuller, more vital life.

It is a subject that is particularly relevant for the Westerner and European, with their monumental saurian tail that is forgotten or denied to everybody's peril. It not only includes a long history of colonialism and suppression of indigenous people and their culture, but a trail of ongoing devastation and world conflicts, all in the name of cultural superiority and outright arrogance. From the point of view of world culture, the curious fact that the Western world, thanks to its interpretation of Christianity, split good and evil into two irreconcilable opposites is incomprehensible in the light of depth-psychological understanding of human nature. Christian dogma that attributes all good to God and all evil to man – omne bonum a Deo, omne malum ab homine, has had repercussions on Westerners that have the effect of exaggerating moralistic tendencies and the projection of cultural and spiritual inferiority onto other people. This contrasts with the Hindu tradition, where humans are sanctified as God or the Divine Mother, a much saner understanding. Moreover evil, in the Hindu tradition, has been typically understood as ignorance and the dark face of God, whereas, in its privatio boni doctrine, Christianity concluded that evil is only a deprivation of good and insubstantial in its own right, thereby underestimating the destructive role of evil and the unassimilated shadow and their impact on life. C. G. Jung, as reported in Gerhard Adler (1975), found both these doctrinal propositions of Christianity psychologically untenable and the reason for much of the psycho-spiritual imbalance in the Western mind. Especially for people with a European background, but others as well, there is a compelling need to understand the nature of good and evil and their place in the psychological economy of life both

collectively and, most importantly, individually.

For much of the twentieth century Europe was split by an iron curtain dividing Eastern Europe from the West along ideological lines. Whereas Eastern Europe was nominally atheist and individual freedom was repressed, the West encouraged materialistic individualism and the fulfillment of every imaginable desire, which means, it encouraged and continues to encourage a desire-laden ego. Today there is a major global psychological split between an economically well-off North, by which I particularly mean much of Europe and North America, and an impoverished South. This dissociation is also religious and psychological. Northern countries are still predominantly Christian, at least nominally, although the churches have either lost all moral authority or else a moralistic fundamentalism prevails. Moreover the numbers of those who officially consider themselves Christian have radically decreased. Meanwhile a self-satisfied humanistic liberal theology and individual rights guide mainline churches. In southern countries, religion, including Christianity, is vibrant and an essential aspect of life. In this case, the Divine is considered to be everywhere and the earth a temple. At the same time there is also superstition, with demons and devils aplenty, demand for demonic exorcisms, witch-killings and occult practices. This includes India, where much of traditional Hinduism and the Brahmin culture have been lost at the village level. In the former case the natural person living close to the sacredness of the earth is severely repressed while, in the latter, a balancing humanistic reason or authentic intuitive spirituality has a

weak presence.

Contemporary Complications

The situation described above is complicated by two principal facts. The first is that in India and other post-colonial countries, there is an attraction to modernization and contemporary Western economic and cultural values, by which I mean positivistic reason and Western-style (*Peter Berger et al, 1974*). This includes the development of a burgeoning consumer culture with all its inherent promises and ills. There is, at the same time, a significant difference between post-colonial countries and the West, which is that, along with socialist tendencies, governmental bureaucracy and ‘intellectual’ bureaucrats are accorded a higher status in the former than is typically the case in the Western world. In some post-colonial countries or regions, there is also a class of people with a privileged sense of cultural and spiritual superiority, which casts an opaque shadow that impedes genuine communication and relationships with other people. Moreover, for various cultural reasons, including the importance of the bureaucracy, there is also considerable corruption at all levels of society. These phenomena, taken individually and as a package, seriously bias social dynamics and discourage the formation of a truly free society.

The other principal complicating factor is that, despite the contemporary dominance and apparent successes of the right wing global economic enterprise, a growing faction of people in the West are deeply dissatisfied with the Western

experience and are seeking alternative life-styles (ibid). Although some of it involves an ardent quest for living in harmony with the ecology, there is also a search for religious and spiritual integrity as well as a sense of genuine community. Indeed, for this very reason, many Westerners are attracted to primal cultures, especially to India, with its rich spiritual and cultural heritage. This endeavor, which offers so much of human value, also comes with the risk that one's own spiritual and cultural roots, in both their positive and negative values, are denied and repressed or, at the least, are not fully acknowledged and integrated into a wider synthesis. Indeed, the end result of the Western experience is a significant shift away from the rationality of modernism to a centerless postmodern culture and moral relativity, where traditional values have been virtually discarded. Although this may be understood as a necessary interregnum and transitional, it is a sickness of the soul that, for the individual, comes with a high psychological and spiritual price, while having a very disturbing effect on the formation of any ideal community.

In the case of new world style communities where human unity is a conscious ideal, there is another important, this time, psychological factor to consider. Not only can people from different cultures have a generative and creative influence on each other but they can, just as likely, also infect each other unconsciously, stimulating shadow values. Inasmuch as one does not become conscious of how one is being influenced, the effect can only be negative, overtly or subtly affecting normal ego functioning. For people from cultures with strong ego

development and a feeling of cultural and/or spiritual superiority this is a decided risk. For those with relatively weak ego development, for instance, local villagers, it is more likely that an aspiration for the development of ego consciousness and modernization opens them to being more consciously influenced - as long as resistance to modernization has been overcome. In this case the risk is the development of a perverse persona and the shadow values that accompany it. Meanwhile post-colonial countries are often perplexed and very resistant to the moral relativity they experience in Westerners and Europeans under postmodern influences, although some, perhaps unconsciously, also succumb to its seductive appeal. The spirit of place is, of course, always making its influence felt, although consciousness of shadow and persona are indispensable for collaboration with it to be realized in harmony with a higher will.

Humankind's Double Nature

I wrote the above preamble on the condition of the collective psyche along with its contemporary complications in order to help put this discussion in perspective. For the development of a new world style community, especially one with an ideal of human unity, it is very evident that coming to terms with human imperfection is the first order of business. Otherwise, there is the distinct danger of creating some form of postmodern neo-colonialism, whether the neo-colonialists are from the West, from elsewhere or whether they consist of some combination of power-ambitious individuals, along with silent or explicit collusion

from all members of the community. Whatever the case may be, coming to terms with the persona and shadow, the subject of this essay, is vital. Moreover, it is exceptionally important to realize that the problem is never only personal but also collective and that individuals carry both the genius and shadow of their own cultural background, from which there is no escape.

Indeed, as Jung (as reported in Jolande Jacobi and R. F. C. Hull, editors, 1974, p. 232) perceptively wrote, “the dammed up instinct forces in civilized man are immensely more destructive than the instincts of the primitive, who, in a modest degree is constantly living his negative instincts.” The radical cleaving asunder of good and evil in the Christian psyche, especially in the northern part of the globe, has resulted in an opaque shadow that lies behind its consistent belief in moral and cultural superiority. This is based on a tremendous power drive and the projection on to other people of evil and cultural inferiority. Although the darkness is not as black as with Westerners, certain parts of the post-colonial world also exhibit a disquieting sense of cultural and spiritual superiority, along with projections of inferiority onto other people, including their own fellow citizens.

With the depiction of the violent Orcs, Balrogs and monstrous animals working for the forces of evil, Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings poignantly captures the repressed dynamic referred to in the above paragraph. It takes the down-home humility of the Hobbit, Frodo, to ultimately sacrifice the ring of power [along with his ring-finger, symbolizing ego-consciousness], at which time the war between

good and evil is over, with a victory for the Good. This portends an elevated human rule with life organized around the Self and Eros, meaning individual relationships and community life based on love. This, of course, was Christ's victory over the temptations of the power-driven animus of ancient Rome, some two thousand years ago. However, it requires human participation in the divine task for its full realization in life and, in this regard, the contemporary so-called civilized world falls very short of the mark. As a matter of fact, for some two thousand years now, the Christian world has generally held the view that since Christ has taken on the burden of humankind's sins there is no need to personally take on the burden of one's own life. Nothing can be farther from the truth. Although grace is of primary importance in the life of any seeker, the need for active collaboration in the work is crucial.

Sri Aurobindo (1971, p.220) wrote that the imperfection in the human being springs from the fact that it is of "a double nature," an animal nature consisting of instincts, impulses, desires and unconscious automatisms along with a self-reflective and conscious higher mental, aesthetic, ethical, emotional and dynamic nature. Not even Asia, he observed, with its profound spiritual culture, has yet learned how "entirely to make" the spirit "master of life (ibid. p. 225)." This is the task of the contemporary seeker for self-perfection, as long as perfection is understood as completeness of being, which includes as much shadow as light. The Mother (1967, p. 125) differentiated between Divine perfection and human understanding of perfection, which is often considered to be "the sum total of all

they consider to be “virtuous, divine, beautiful, admirable.” Divine perfection, in contrast, she argued, “is the whole,” outside of which there can be nothing at all, including the shadow and what humankind considers as evil (ibid.). “All believers,” she lamented, “all the faithful [those from the West in particular] think in terms of “something else.” When they speak of God — He cannot be weak, ugly, imperfect --- but this is wrong thinking. They are dividing, separating. – The divine perfection is the whole of the Divine with nothing subtracted from it (The Mother, 1978a, pp. 280, 281).”

Likewise, Jung (as reported in Edward F. Edinger, 1996, p. 81) considered the imperfection of the creation the result of an unconscious and “not yet transformed Deity,” a fact that is very evident in the study of the Bible and Judeo-Christian history. The psychological implications are, as Jung (as reported in Jolande Jacobi and R. F. C. Hull, editors, 1974, p. 315) insisted that “there is no light without shadow and no psychic wholeness without imperfection” and that “life calls not for perfection but completeness.” Contemporary psychology is indeed witness to the fact that the ego’s striving for perfection and light, at the expense of the shadow side of life, is the source of severe pathology and loss of containment and balance.

The Evil Persona

The moral issue raised here concerns the psychological nature of the shadow side of life and the way of coming to terms with it. To understand what is

involved, it is necessary to discuss both the natures of what Jung called the persona and what he referred to as the shadow, two complementary sides of the same coin. As a matter of fact, an ashramite by the name of Kishor Gandhi had presented Sri Aurobindo with some of Jung's writings, presumably on the nature of the persona and possibly the shadow, which captured his attention (Paulette Hadnagy). In his own words Sri Aurobindo (1970b, p. 1660) wrote that the subject "interests me greatly." Gandhi, who was the editor of the ashram magazine, *Sri Aurobindo's Circle*, published a letter of Sri Aurobindo's on the subject, along with an article on the Evil Persona by Raymond de Becker in August 1953. In the letter, Sri Aurobindo referred to the "Evil Persona" as a "being" attached to someone intensely involved in the yoga "which is just the contradiction of the thing he centrally represents in the work to be done (ibid.)." He went on to say that "its business seems to oppose, to create stumblings and wrong conditions, to set before him the whole problem of the work he has started to do (ibid.)." At the same time Sri Aurobindo saw it as necessary for the disciple to personalize the problem and make "the difficulty his own (ibid.)."

In the light of these comments it is intriguing to note that the original Hebrew meaning of the word *satan*, the name of Judeo-Christian Devil, is 'adversary,' 'obstacle' and 'opposition (Jeffrey Burton-Russell, 1989, p. 5).' The English word devil, meanwhile, derives from Greek *diabolos*, meaning "'slanderer,' 'perjurer' or 'adversary' in court (ibid.)." Although the Christian moralistic solution is hopelessly one-sided, the problem is not new, particularly in the Judeo-Christian tradition,

where emphasis has been put on coming to terms with a morally ambivalent God in historical time (Bede Griffiths, 1983). Despite the reality of Devils, Asuras and other “hostile forces” it is not a question of blaming them for either the conflicted conditions of one’s own life or the life of the community. “Their role,” observed The Mother, (2004, p. 228), is to make “you see and feel all the progress that has yet to be made.” Thus the recognition of the need for personalization of the difficulty involved and taking on the full burden of one’s life brings the issue forcefully home for people in search of greater consciousness and self-knowledge today.

Sri Aurobindo was a consummate master of the English language and chose his words with considerable feeling discernment and care. For this reason I am convinced that his choice of the word persona was not fortuitous but judicious. In ancient Rome, the word referred to a mask worn by an actor signifying his role. Jung used the word to represent the conscious external personality and social face, which, he believed, is a concession to the collective psyche of which it is a segment. It is, accordingly, ultimately unreal and illusory or, at best, “a secondary reality” and “compromise” (C. G. Jung, 1975b, p. 156). Typically considered to be an individual’s preferred self-presentation and “ideal image” it is, as Jung (ibid. pp. 155, 156) remarked, “a mask that feigns individuality and tries to make others and oneself believe that one is individual.” It can be either adapted to social norms or more unconventional, for example the social mask of the iconoclast, the beatnik artist, the coffee house philosopher, or the no-

nonsense feminist. Although there may be something individual about one's way of portraying the persona, the ultimate goal is to shed its false wrappings, taking refuge in the psychic being or heart-Self and its feeling values as the regulating principle of everyday life. Christ's wise counsel in this regard is detachment from the persona and being like a little child, to whom belongs "the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 18: 3-5, 19:14, Mark 10:14, Luke 18:16)." Such an attitude promotes devotion and surrender to the Divine.

The problematic reality of daily life, however, generally still needs attending. In this light a middle-aged woman dreamt that she stripped naked in front of a sympathetic and understanding male friend and then, in the following, dream, he suggested she put on a beautiful silken black and white gown with rhinestones and diamonds, which she did. Consciously she was concerned about the problem of the persona and how to express herself with her sisters, with whom she felt considerable anger and resentment. Nakedness in the dream refers to a condition without a persona, whereas the beautiful dress symbolizes a refined expression of value and attitude. The dream, in other words, indicates compensatory integration of the opposites by way of the heart-Self or psychic being, represented by the diamonds and rhinestones. It is as if to say the persona needs to be refined or replaced by a direct expression of feeling that integrates and transcends both her anger and normal desire to present something of an ideal face to her sisters.

The persona is, at best, a necessary evil, but necessary nonetheless, at least until a deeper reality comes forward. Ideally it is flexible and infused with circumstantially appropriate feeling values and evaluative discernment, and one does not identify with it. First and foremost, it represents the role one plays in life, either professionally or otherwise, and is filled out in choice of dress, comportment, office space, diploma, business card, residence, vehicle and so on. It is Herr Professor, with an armload of weighty books and a pensive look, the smartly dressed police officer, with baton and commanding style, the mental health worker with overweening concern, the all-knowing doctor dressed in a white robe and stethoscope, and the dutiful housewife with her “feminine” allure.

In the marketing-oriented world of today, the persona has taken on an added dimension of falsity having become “personalized” and manufactured in the desire to project an image or different images of choice according to the situation and public appeal. In the contemporary postmodern world, one can now be a serious business executive now a dashing playboy, now a decisive war-President, now a warm and fuzzy family man, sportsman and down-home Texan. Although, outside of a variety of “feminine” personas, for instance, ones limited to the roles of wife and mother or a man’s companion, its principal carrier has typically been men. Now, of course, women play many different roles, including that of the business executive and government bureaucrat and, dressed in their power suits, like men, they too are subject to its dissembling seductions.

The persona has the function of greasing the wheels of life, while giving one the confidence that the role being played is up to collective standards and expectations. Its other function is self-protection in the harsh reality of life. Although in the West today, far too much of one's essential nature is sacrificed on the altar of the collective psyche, it is still a requirement of the collective life of the community. Ego identification with the persona and relying on it for one's self-esteem, respectability and self-definition, still often the case is, however, problematic. Too much concern over one's worldly image and unduly concealing or repressing one's inadequacies is a sin against nature. If nothing else, the repression involved can negatively affect people in one's environment, for instance, through displaced anger expressed towards one's children and spouse. Moreover, children often feel compelled to live out the parents' repressed dark side. In the final analysis, community life organized with only minimal concern for the persona would have a felicitous and resounding effect, and potentially improve both individual psychological well-being as well as the functioning of society.

There are other considerations regarding the persona, however, which may be more relevant, especially amongst spiritual seekers and idealists aspiring to bring in a new world. In such circles, people may constantly re-invent themselves in the search of some form of utopian fulfillment of being. In this case there are, at least, two possibilities. Although there are individuals who excel in some new enterprise as if to say they have found their place, ambition often propels one to

take on a persona and do work without either qualification or the natural predisposition. In other cases there is, what Jung (1975b, pp. 163-168, *passim*) referred to as, a “*regressive restoration of the persona*” where, after some defeat in life and shattered persona, one takes on a lesser role than one’s true capacity. In some cases, it may not necessarily be a defeat in life, but discouragement by the ambivalent values of the contemporary world and motivation by the romantic ideal of a simple life, where the fulfillment of wholeness is seriously devalued. In either case, as Jung observed, one’s life can then amount to nothing other than “a cheap imitation (ibid. p. 168).” I am fully aware that hard necessity often drives work values in idealistic or spiritually-oriented communities and that, in some cases, doing menial or other humble work can be an act of *bhakti* and surrender to the Guru or Divine, ultimately for the sake of realizing a more authentic life. Nonetheless, seeking a simple life can also involve resistance to taking on the full burden of one’s life and Jung’s biting comment is relevant, suggesting the need for honest discernment and integrity.

I am also aware of several cases where life has eventually been re-cast, more according to the truth of one’s being, and this, in my estimation, represents the ideal. For example, a middle-aged Canadian man, who had lived for a number of years with a negatively restored persona, dreamt that the heart of Whitman is still beating. Walt Whitman is the nineteenth century American poet of freedom, of whom Sri Aurobindo (1972, p. 180) wrote that “he arrives at some first profound sense of the greater self of the individual, of the greater sense of the greater self

in the community of the race....” The genius of the United States lies in an intrinsic sense of the spirit of individual freedom, its true gift to the world, of which the poet chants in *One’s Self I Sing*:

*One’s-Self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse....
Of Life immense in passion, pulse and power,
Cheerful, for freest action form’d under the laws divine,
The Modern Man I sing (ibid).*

In the current American adulation of sports heroes, entertainers and the unbridled license to manipulate images through advertising and public relations, this spirit is perverted and mistaken for ego individualism and its persona, “a mask that feigns individuality (C. G. Jung, 1975b, pp. 155, 156).” The man referred to above is, in fact, in the process of reformulating his life in a way that suits his inherent talents and authentic self-expression of being, by which not only he personally but also the community can benefit. This at least is the potential and a sign of vocation, the finding of which requires shifting attention away from collective standards to the inner voice of the Self and one’s uniqueness. This requires, as Jung (1974c, p.173) observed, “trustful loyalty” in the inborn law of one’s life, one’s *swadharma* or self-law. In the words of Sri Aurobindo (1970c, p. 507), this involves ultimately doing work “according to the truth within us,” which “should not be an accommodation with outward and artificial standards,” but “a living and sincere expression of the soul and its inmost powers.” The final answer to the persona, in other words, is withdrawing energy

away from its false standards and living according to the values of the psychic being or heart-Self and related expressions of the archetypal psyche.

The Mother (2004) made some remarkable comments regarding a certain aspect of the persona that are worthy of serious contemplation. Some of her disciples might be astonished to read her observation that “this kind of will for purity, for good...in the ordinary mentality, as the need to be virtuous is the great obstacle to true self-giving (The Mother, 2004, p. 229).” “This,” she contended, “is the origin of Falsehood and even more the very source of hypocrisy-the refusal to accept to take upon oneself one’s own share of the burden of difficulties (ibid.). Likewise, although from a more psychological perspective, Jung (as reported in Jolande Jacobi and R. F. C. Hull, editors, 1974, p. 102) wrote, “We must begin by overcoming our virtuousness, with the justifiable fear of falling into vice on the other side. The danger certainly exists,” he went on to say, “for the greatest virtuousness is always compensated inwardly by a strong tendency to vice, and how many vicious characters treasure within themselves sugary virtues and a moral megalomania.” Not only is there a need to detach from one’s identity with being virtuous, but there is a corresponding need to become conscious of and reject one’s related, yet repressed shadow tendencies.

Similarly, according to Jung (1975b, pp. 169-171, *passim*), would-be-prophets and prophet’s disciples who pepper their arguments with “truth,” to which they alone are privy and which they proselytize to others, actually systematize a

segment of the collective psyche, by which they are absorbed. In these examples, despite what is often presented as a modest persona, the astute individual can recognize its dissolution into the collective psyche and the loss of true psychological independence, along with psychological inflation. This particularly refers to individuals who self-righteously stand on the moral high ground, as well as those who consistently and naively quote holy writing, sacred scripture, or insights from the most recent workshop, in ready response to every problem of life in the community and, for that matter, the world. The words in themselves are always inspiring, but their meaning needs to be assimilated at one's level of psychological and spiritual integration and, first and foremost, applied to oneself, or as presented to others as an integral aspect of a cogent argument.

Throughout the essay I give examples from sayings attributed to Christ, which I use to emphasize that Christianity offers many valuable psychological and spiritual insights, some of which are pertinent to the subject of this essay. Christianity is an important part of the Western heritage for better and for worse. From one point of view it brings spiritual continuity and yet it carries a dark shadow that needs to be assimilated. It continues to affect the whole world one way or another. Christianity was the religion for the Age of Pisces, which is presently giving way to the Age of Aquarius. The symbol for that aeon is two opposing fishes, representing Christ and the Antichrist and the differentiation of the opposites of good and evil. Now, the task is reconciliation of these opposites

as suggested in the Aquarian symbol of the water-bearer, who is depicted as carrying a vessel of living water and pouring it out on humankind. Jung (As reported in Edinger, 1996, p. 119) saw this potential happening in the new age through “the action of the Holy Spirit,” commonly referred to as ‘the spirit of truth.’ With Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, it is through the transformative power of the Supermind, or “Truth Consciousness (Sri Aurobindo, 1978, p. 160,161),” which they defined in the most comprehensive way.

There is considerable evidence today that the sayings attributed to Christ were largely based on Jewish sources, and esoteric wisdom that was widely circulated in antiquity long before the time of Christ (Orlando Patterson, 1991) (Tom Harpur, 2004) (Joseph Campbell, 1975). This in itself should alert one to the fundamental existential truth of the Christian message. Rather than unmindfully rejecting Christianity outright, both the shortcomings, which I alluded to at the beginning of the essay, and the unique truth of its concern for time-bound life and a fellowship of love need to be assimilated to consciousness, especially by people with Christian roots. The image of a suffering Christ fixated to the cross suggests that not only does the realization of his message still lie in the unconscious but that it is the door to the Godhead. It is, in other words, the cross of suffering for the Christian world, to be free from which requires consciously coming to terms with the persona and shadow.

As a matter of fact, Christ made similar observations to Jung and the Mother

when he says: "Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs that look handsome on the outside, but inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of corruption... (Matthew 23:25, Luke 11:39-40). The word "hypocrite" means actor and, in antiquity, actors wore masks (John Sandford, 1970, p. 97). Given the fact that, at that time, persona meant mask, the deliberate choice of the word "hypocrite" by Christ and "hypocrisy" by the Mother implies that they are referring to the persona. Christ is also reported to have said: "You are the very one's who pass yourselves off as virtuous in people's sights, but God knows your hearts. For what is sought highly by men is loathsome in the sight of God (Luke 16:15)." He was warning people here about the falsehood of the persona, which conceals one's true nature, feelings and thoughts. This is especially the case when it involves the ego's ambition for and identification with purity, goodness, virtue and truth. Given the sayings attributed to Christ and the Mother's comments here, one can understand Sri Aurobindo (1970b, p. 1660) referring to the persona as evil, by which I mean his reference to the Evil Persona as a "being" whose "business seems to be "to oppose," and "create....wrong conditions."

The Evil Persona separates one from the heart-Self or psychic being. There is nothing essentially real about it and, despite its glitter and seductive power, it is illusory. In the Judeo-Christian tradition there is a legend that, out of envy, Satan, the dark Son of God, would incarnate in order to mimic Christ, which, as the great deceiver and father of lies, seems to be his destiny (Jung, 2002).

Occultly, the Mother (1978b, pp. 133, 134) spoke of a “big asuric being who has taken on the appearance of Sri Aurobindo” and it is not difficult to imagine that there are also false Mothers. This means that one can easily be misled in one’s spiritual life by false understanding, misunderstood or misapplied ideals and attraction to the Evil Persona, surely a creation of the Asura of Falsehood.

The Shadow

The Mother (2004, p. 217) expanded on Sri Aurobindo’s comments on the Evil Persona with her discussion on the shadow, which she described as a symbol of the unconscious. The shadow is the other dark side of the coin and compensates for the seductive light of the persona. Indeed, the more one identifies with the persona and the more it shines in ideal splendor, the blacker and more demonic the shadow. From one point of view, the shadow can be understood as the whole unconscious. In this connection, later in his life, Jung (as reported in von Franz, 1997, p 386) expressed the belief that it was “stifling stupidity and unconsciousness of people more than evil in them that seemed to be steering us towards a worldwide catastrophe.” With consideration of the shadow, in other words, one moves from the province of the Asura of Falsehood to the unconscious and the Asura of Ignorance.

For pragmatic reasons Jung conceptually differentiated between the personal shadow and the archetypal Shadow, which he once referred to as “absolute evil (1975a, p. 10)”. As there is a direct relationship between the personal and

archetypal Shadow the nature of the latter can be inferred from experience of the former and understood as its amplification. The personal shadow is contained in the personal unconscious, the contents of which are acquired during one's lifetime through repression, denial, faulty perceptions and forgetting. From the point of view of the conscious persona-identified ego, the shadow is inferior, threatening, shameful, primitive and awkward. It comes laden with emotions, and works autonomously with an impulsive, obsessive or possessive quality. It is consequently tied up with projections, which means it is disowned and displaced on to somebody else, object or circumstance.

In the Mother's (2004, p. 218) language "others are a mirror reflecting the image of what you are, and that one needs to concentrate on one's own self-perfection instead of blaming or seeking perfection in others." "Only a fool," observed Jung (1977, p. 117), is interested in other people's guilt, since he cannot alter it," but "the wise man learns only from his own guilt." These are reminders of Christ's admonishment to "take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take the splinter out of your brother's eye (Matthew 7:3-5)." Moral judgments about others are typically subjective and ignorant and, noted the Mother (2004, p. 219), one "has not only no right but no capacity to judge the state others are in." Christ, likewise, warned his disciples not to judge, "because the judgments you give will be the judgments you get (Matthew 7:1-2)." Psychologically, this refers to the fact that if one judges others, one is also condemning an aspect of oneself. According to Sanford (1970, p. 123), an

Episcopalian priest and Jungian therapist, there is consequently “ a condemnation of consciousness on the part of the unconscious,” which means that one unnecessarily represses a part of one’s own psyche, while perverting it. The real task is to withdraw the projections one makes on other people and discover the shadow in one’s own psyche.

The shadow is morally inferior and therefore susceptible to what Medieval Christianity referred to as the seven deadly sins: pride, wrath, envy, lust, greed, avarice and sloth, as well as any other expressions of moral inferiority such as hatred, cruelty, lying, cowardice, indolence and insincerity. Having noted that, it is important to realize that the shadow is relative to the individual’s one-sidedness and personality style, if not pathology. Some people, for instance, need to learn to relax [be lazy] and others to become conscious of their desire-nature and selfishness. Some need to accept dependence, while others need to become more independent and, generally, there is a need for ruthlessness in the service of wholeness. Moreover, as the Mother (2004, p. 272) pointed out, the shadow can often involve qualities that are the opposite of one’s normal conscious attitude and quality of being. Thus, rigorous intellectuals can be sloppy in some areas of thought, courageous people act cowardly in certain circumstances and generous individuals can be miserly at times, and so on.

With insight and good will the personal shadow can be recognized as an aspect of oneself and either extirpated or assimilated into consciousness, while undergoing a process of personality transformation. Without such a moral effort,

however, projections are not withdrawn and, in some cases, one suffers from a meaningless life, one of the well-documented psychopathologies and possibly bodily somatization. The extirpation or transformation of these shadow attributes requires the light of consciousness, moral values and high ideals and, in the darker corners, the penetration of a spiritual light (ibid. pp. 210, 211) (Jung, as reported in Jolande Jacobi and R. F. C. Hull, editors, 1974, p. 217) (Jung, 2002, pp 101, 108) (Jung, 1975a, p. 8). In this context Jung's (as reported in Jolande Jacobi and R. F. C. Hull, editors, 1974, p. 220) warning that "one does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious" supports this view while illuminating a common error of spiritual seekers, especially amongst Westerners. What attitude is appropriate and what needs to be done in any given situation requires sincerity and feeling discernment as it is not necessarily always so obvious.

Disciples of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, who recognize the beneficial value of the Mother's spiritual guidance, may yet underestimate or fear the wisdom contained in her following words of advice: "Do not try to appear virtuous," she said. "See how much you are united with everything that is anti-divine. Take your share of the burden, accept yourselves to be impure and false and in that way you will be able to take up the shadow and offer it (The Mother, 2004, p. 229)." As a matter of fact, life presents ample opportunities for this possibility and following the Mother's counsel is advisable on both psychological and spiritual grounds. One can, for example, fully identify with one's anger and resentments,

both in feeling and fantasy, while offering them to the Mother and the Self and aspiring for their transformation along with taking back one's projection.

It is possible to integrate the personal shadow and experience it as an aspect of one's nature, but not the archetypal Shadow. With moral effort and meaningful suffering, however, the ego can play a role in the transformation of the dark side of the Godhead and its integration in the Self (Von Franz, 1997, p. 48). In this case, it is essential to pay heed to what both Jung and Sri Aurobindo both contended. The former observed that "God is a '*complexio oppositorum*' a paradoxical union of opposites, where truth and delusion good and evil are equally possible (C. G. Jung, 1965, p. 341)." Likewise, Sri Aurobindo (as reported in John A. Sandford 1998, p 28) wrote that "the discords of the world are God's discords and it is only by accepting and proceeding through them that we can arrive at the greater concords of his supreme harmony...." Thus, at an archetypal level, the problematic relationship between good and evil does not belong to the ego, but to oneself as "a vessel...filled with divine conflict (Jung, as reported in Edward F. Edinger, 1996, p.111)." One becomes such a vessel by consciously "suffering the problem of opposites to the utmost (von Franz, 1997, p. 48)," an endeavor that enables their coming together in the Self.

This phenomenon may ultimately be related to the fact that, according to the Mother (1978c, pp. 426, 427), the Asura of Ignorance has been converted and is now collaborating in the divine work as a being of Consciousness and Light, his

original nature. In Judeo-Christian tradition this being is known as Lucifer, a name that means Light Bearer, who, according to tradition, out of hubris, was separated from God and became 'prince of this world'. As the Mother (2004, p. 207) said, "It is the greatest Asuras who are the greatest beings of light," and with their conversion they become "the supreme beings of the creation." Presumably, the conversion of the Asura of Ignorance back to his original nature of Consciousness and Light is the reason why a quantum change in human consciousness is taking place today, both individually and collectively. Not only are some individuals on paths involving a growth in consciousness but, collectively, shadowy elements are also surfacing in an unprecedented manner.

The Shadow as Positive Value

It is exceptionally important to realize that the shadow contains virtues that can intensify life and round out one's existence. Although, at the outset of one's confrontation with the unconscious, the shadow is unadapted, awkward, primitive and embarrassing, with time and increasingly differentiated ethical decisions, it becomes a vital aspect of life that only a fool would suppress. Related to this is the fact that the very difficulties in life that frustrate one's best efforts are, in the Mother's words, "the nature of the difficulty you will exemplify in yoga." It is, she says, "the door by which he will attain God in his own individual manner (2004, p. 208)." Assimilating shadow values to consciousness, in other words, opens the door to the archetypal psyche and the Self.

Indeed, the psychological quest for wholeness involves integrating what Jung (1974b, *passim*) referred to as the inferior attitude and function of conscious, which is variable and depends on one's individual inclinations. The inferior function [and attitude] are primitive, unadapted and highly sensitive to criticism and typically covered up by the persona. It is the place of suffering and one's cross and yet "holds the secret key to the unconscious totality of the person (Marie-Louise von Franz, 1975b, p. 7)."

The four functions of consciousness are thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition, whereas the two attitudes are extraversion and introversion. Briefly put, sensation is perception of what is, thinking informs one what is, feeling puts value to it and intuition sees possibilities. Extraversion is an exteriorization of energy towards life and the world, whereas introversion withdraws energy and directs it inwardly. Depending on one's natural adaptive predisposition, one's attitude and some functions of consciousness are conscious and others lie in the unconscious and are consequently related to the shadow. The goal is psychic balance with all the elements of being in their right place, harmonized around the heart-Self. "If you organize everything," says the Mother (2004 p. 213), "-your feelings, your thoughts, your impulses, etc, -around the psychic centre which is the inner light, you will see that all inner disorder will change into an inner order." Integrating the inferior side of one's nature brings wholeness, relatedness to the psychic being and the possibility of one's life being directed by the Self as a relatively conscious instrument of the Mother. This truth is illustrated in fairy tales by the fact that it is

the foolish one and brother or rejected sister that finds the treasure and Holy Grail, and not those who are one-sidedly adapted and think they know the way.

Although humans consist of both divine and asuric tendencies, inasmuch as one identifies with the ego [and persona] one is acting out of an asuric nature (Nolini Kanta Gupta, 1977). Associated with the Asura are the Rakshasha and Pishacha of Hindu tradition, the violent and passionate ego of the Rakshasha and the ignorant and obscure hostile forces of the Pishacha (Sri Aurobindo (1970a). However anthropomorphic the depictions in Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings, the book and movie are a treasure chest of descriptive archetypal images. With all his deceit and treachery Sauron and his acolyte, Sauruman, would represent the Asura of Falsehood, the Orcs and Balrogs embody violent Rakshashic-like energy and Golem, hostile attributes and obscurity of the Pishacha. The general darkness or shadow that covers Mordor, Gandor and Rohan prior to the siege of Gondor and elsewhere until the last battle would be the work of the Asura of Ignorance. Indeed, in light of the Mother's observations on the conversion of this Asura, the complete elimination of darkness with Frodo's victory over the terrible temptation of power is interesting and instructive. The darkness of unconsciousness, in this case, lifts with the letting go of all ambition and the drive for power.

According to Sri Aurobindo (1972) the Rakshasha, in particular, has replaced the animal soul. This observation and the above reflections clearly indicate that the

contemporary mind is, by and large, out of touch with the animal soul that he regarded as necessary to reconcile with the higher person for an authentic subjectively spiritual life. This condition is succinctly described by Jung (1974b, p. 213) when he observed that “we are still such barbarians with a thin veneer of culture” without any “trust in the laws of human nature,” which “seems to us a dangerous and unethical naturalism.” There is, in other words, no trust in the natural person who lives close to the animal soul and its dynamism, as life has become perverted with ambition and the power principle. As a consequence, there is little Eros or relatedness and love, the necessary healing balm for those invested in the future.

Individual Transformation and Transformation of the Community

For life to be changed from being organized mainly on mental principles and the pursuit of pleasure and power, the present condition, to subjective spiritual principles, Sri Aurobindo (1971) emphasized the important role of the individual. He wrote that this change needs to be first accomplished in “individuals and in a great number of individuals before it can lay an effective hold on the community (Sri Aurobindo, 1971, p. 231).” According to the Mother (2004, pp. 268-274, *passim*), the first step is the unification of the different aspects of the psyche including the shadow, around the psychic being, the divine centre of one’s psyche, in a process she called individualization. Similarly, Jung’s (1975c, p. 275) psychology is principally concerned about what he referred to as the individuation process “by which a person becomes a psychological ‘in-dividual’

that is, a separate indivisible unity or whole.” Like the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, he emphasized individual fulfillment and “the coming to be of the self,” the unique innermost core of individual being, which is “as much one’s self and all other selves, as the ego (Jung, 1975d, p. 226).” This is the fundamental requirement for creative renewal at the level of the community for the very reason that the Self is the ground of all social instincts and the interrelated-ness of Eros (von Franz, 1975a).

Conscious individuation necessitates detachment from the collective mind and “resistance to the organized mass (Jung, as reported in Jolande Jacobi and R. F. C. Hull, editors, (1974), p. 158) (The Mother, 2004, p.248-273).” By collective mind I mean the common understanding of the way life should be organized, whether it be in mainline society, a subculture, a spiritual or idealistic community or elsewhere. Over-emphasizing transformation at the level of the collectivity is a hopeless underestimation of the power of the Self and the archetypal psyche, that is to say the Divine Mother, to propagate a spiritual renewal of culture. For effective instrumental realization in an individual life, the animal soul and the higher person all need to be spiritually reconciled and related to consciousness, the further reaches of which include reconciliation with what Sri Aurobindo referred to as the superconscious with the subconscious and inconscient.

Spiritualization of the Animal Shadow and Its Healing Effect on the Community

Marie-Louise von Franz (1997), Jung’s most important disciple, discusses a

vision of the Swiss saint Niklaus von Fluë, also known as Brother Klaus, [born on March 21, 1417], that involved spiritualization of the animal shadow and its reconciliation with the higher person. Von Franz indicated how this fact alone is what allowed Brother Klaus to be instrumental in bringing about a healing reconciliation of a bitter conflict between new and old cantons in Switzerland, without which the country might not exist today. The bare outline of his extraordinary vision follows:

An extremely beautiful pilgrim, staff in hand, and wearing the hat of a wayfarer and a cloak, advanced towards Brother Klaus. Klaus was enraptured and, as he gazed at him, Mount Pilatus disintegrated and the earth opened up so that the saint believed he could see the sins of the whole world. A huge crowd of people, whose backs were turned to this man of truth, then came to him. Klaus knew they suffered from the sickness of egotism, which appeared like a large tumor. Out of confusion, fear and shame, the people ran away. The wayfarer had meanwhile undergone several transformations, now to be clothed in a bearskin, infused with gold. On departing, the pilgrim, whom Klaus seemed to identify as Christ, turned and bowed towards him. Klaus then experienced him as a vessel overflowing with exalted spiritual love and, it seemed to him, that that he had been shown "everything that was between heaven and earth (von Franz, 1997, p. 40)."

Jung (1973, pp. 364) commented that a numinous individual with extraordinary influence like Brother Klaus typically has theriomorphic attributes, and "surpasses the ordinary man not only upwards but downwards." The figure of Christ, he went on to say, appears here in two forms, "1. as a pilgrim... and 2. as a bear (ibid.)." Later, Jung suggested that the vision may indicate that "in his instinctual [bear-like, i.e. hermit-like] subhumaness Brother Klaus recognizes himself as Christ (ibid.)." Jung concluded that he was "healed, holy, whole" due to the fact that he consciously suffered within himself the opposites of the Self, containing

both “the highest united with the lowest (ibid. p. 365).” In the process, the dark side of the Self was transformed and put into the service of a superior will and divine love.

Although Brother Klaus seems to have identified the wayfarer as Christ, von Franz indicated how much his clothes and transformations actually remind one of Wotan, the “Germanic god of war, of truth, of ecstasy, and of shamanic wisdom (1997, p. 41).” In the world of ancient Germany, robed in a bearskin indicated that one is a berserker warrior. Berserkers were known to fall into a swoon, at which time they believed their soul left their body as a bear, for purposes of going into battle. They were consequently filled with superhuman fury, which was taken out on the enemy and, sometimes, anybody else who got in their way. When individuals or groups are unconscious of the berserker shadow, it can overtake them with destructive rage and war, as happened with Nazi Germany. In Brother Klaus’ vision the destructive frenzy and wrath of the bear, as the shadow side of the Self, was transformed, as indicated by the shimmering gold luster of the pilgrim’s bearskin, and reconciled with Christian spirituality. Here, the bear is the animal aspect of the inner Christ/Wotan and participates in the natural emanation of an abundance of love (von Franz, *ibid.*). Von Franz also believed that assimilation of the berserker figure gave Brother Klaus “an invisible inner authority,” which allowed him to influence other individuals and the community either directly or indirectly (*ibid.* p. 55.). This was the case, she believed, because, as a representative symbol of the paradoxical Self, the

berserker/pilgrim, “embodies the greater personality of the Self in Brother Klaus and at the same time the Self of the whole community (ibid. p. 56).”

As early as 1931, the Mother (1979, p. 186) urgently called for “a new world, a true world, the expression of the Truth-Consciousness.... This world,” she observed, “will be realized; and the sooner the better!” Building this new world with healthy relationships, communities, townships and cities depends on individuals, their conscious relationship to the paradoxical Godhead and their becoming a vessel reconciling extreme opposites. It depends first and foremost on the ability to integrate both light and shadow aspects of the psyche, the higher person and the animal soul, around the heart-Self or psychic being. Related to a common humanity, such integrated individuals are open to a vast river of primordial ideas and eternal images, while containing the instinctive dynamism that allows for their full realization in time. Only then can things and people begin to find their right place in the economy of life, either in a more extraverted or introverted mode of being depending on one’s natural propensity.

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