WHITE SHADOW-PERSONA:
WITH A COMMENTARY ON MARY MAGDALENE AND THE DA VINCI CODE

RUNNING HEAD: White Shadow-Persona

David Johnston
ABSTRACT
In this paper, I move into the realm of *praxis*, which is so essential to understanding Jung’s contribution to psychology and spirituality. White-shadow persona primarily concerns an experiential phenomenon, a product of the persona that is identified with high ideals, driven by the power-complex. The persona is the mask that feigns individuality, but which is a collective phenomenon with which, psychologically, one should not identify. The power-complex is a split-off power-drive, which, when assimilated to consciousness, becomes a formative factor that can be used creatively, and to enhance the spirit of life. As a subsidiary theme and as an example, I comment on the book and movie, *THE DA VINCI CODE*, focusing on the albino monk, who is a striking image of the white-shadow persona, as a puffed-up murderous monk who believes he is an instrument of God. In fact, he is trying to prevent the resurrection of Mary Magdalene from obscurity and projected sinfulness, and her location in her rightful place as the bride of Jesus and spouse of Christ, which is important evidence for the tradition of the Holy Grail. As an archetypal image, Mary Magdalene unites both the superior and inferior aspects of the psyche and would, therefore, promote wholeness and the ability of aligning the human will with the Divine will.
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Introduction
Rather than the image of Christ alone, Jung preferred that of Christ on the cross hung between two thieves, one ascending to heaven the other descending to hell, which is a more substantial icon with greater redemptive power. The reason for his preference is that the latter image includes shadow as well as light, while the image of Christ alone is all light, or all white and without shadow, without defining substance. In fact, the shadow side of Christianity became split from the light side and was therefore repressed and relegated to the unconscious. In the mainstream Christian worldview, this refers to a collective split-off complex and, metaphysically, a separation of the Shadow side from Consciousness, and the Self.

To complicate matters somewhat, Jung also noted that Lucifer's revolt against God led to the attainment of consciousness and humankind's mastery of the physical and vital worlds, which is a viewpoint like that held by the Mother; that the Asuras [including the Asura of Falsehood] are Beings of Light with great formative power.\(^1\)\(^2\) Thanks to the split-off Shadow, in other words, there has been a gain in consciousness and world mastery, but also a separation of Lucifer and other Asuras from the Divine Source.

Integration of the Shadow vs. Identification with the “White” Shadow
Despite Nietzsche's iconoclasm, his emphasis on the light was perpetuated in his book Zarathustra where the "ugliest man" was not accepted by the "wise man of light," Zarathustra, with whom he likely identified, eventually prophesying disastrous consequences to both his own life and Nazi Germany. In a more individual and personal

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\(^1\) C. G. Jung, 1970.
\(^2\) C. G. Jung 1975a.
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vein, Jung once observed that Mephistopheles can be understood as a power-driven split-off complex that sets itself up in place of the Self "enjoy[ing] independence and absolute power." Yet, he also wrote that Mephistopheles is "the true spirit of life", again in harmony with the Mother's view that "the greatest Asuras are the greatest beings of Light and, once converted, [they] will become the supreme beings of creation." A major psychological task, therefore, is one of integrating the personal shadow and its relationship to the collective Shadow to consciousness and the Self. This results in the relativizing of both good and evil, a viewpoint shared by both Jung and the Mother.

If individuals don't integrate the shadow they can easily identify with the white "shadow," project the black shadow onto neighbors or other people and, all the time, be possessed and driven with a power-complex. Here, I am not referring to the compensatory virtuous and white or light shadow of a criminal, who consciously identifies with antisocial and black values and attitudes about which Jung writes. I use the expression, rather, to give an imaginative picture of inflated consciousness driven by an unconscious power-complex. The white "shadow" of this essay can refer either to the ideals or ideal self-image of any given society or high ideals and various forms of Romanticism, which are not fully integrated into consciousness in an instinctually-related way. In terms of individual psychology, my experience tells me that people with certain personality disorders are very susceptible to these dynamics. More specifically, people with an elitist form of a narcissistic personality disorder or those with another personality disorder with elitist narcissistic features are wide open to this identification. As a first

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3 C. G. Jung, 1975, p. 69.
5 La Mère, 1978b, p. 133.
principle, then, I would observe that the white “shadow” is driven by a split-off power-complex that, when truly assimilated to consciousness, can be an instrument of creative power for realizing the Divine work. But this leads to another question, which is: where should one locate this white “shadow” in practical terms and is there, in fact, a more appropriate name for this psychological phenomenon?

I believe the answer to that is that the white-shadow belongs with the persona and that, consequently, a better descriptor for what I have thus far referred to as white “shadow” would, I propose, be white shadow-persona. It is more in keeping with Jung’s idea that the shadow is relegated to the unconscious, often carrying considerable repressed vital energy and, as a social construction, the persona is related to ego-consciousness, although grounded on an archetypal principle and what Sri Aurobindo calls the inconscient, a region of chaos, confusion and obscurity, and which Jung refers to as the original alchemical chaos. It is also suggestive of the shadowy quality of this kind of persona, which is driven by an unconscious power-complex. Nor does it disguise the white shadow-persona’s repressive, even potentially destructive effect on life.

According to Jung the persona is a "segment of the collective psyche" and can often be mistaken for something individual. Although there may be something individual in it, it is, rather, he insists, "a mask that feigns individuality," while one is acting a collective role through which the voice of the collective speaks its seductive "truths." Individuation, however, involves, in part, "divesting oneself from the false wrappings of

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the persona" and the realization of a privatized Self liberated from social obligations.8 Here then Jung alludes to the persona as being ultimately connected to falsehood, even if it does have practical value at one level of being. In identifying with the persona, then, one is forging an unconscious relationship to the Judeo-Christian, Lucifer, and the Hindu Asura of Falsehood.

When people engage the collective unconscious and there is an expansion of consciousness, the inevitable outcome, at least initially, is inflation. Jung is particularly biting in his remarks about people who identify with any aspect of the collective psyche, which, he argues amounts to full "acceptance of inflation but now exalted into a system.9"
In mythological imagery, this means being devoured by the dragon, with a loss of individual autonomy. Genuine self-criticism, he observes, is thrown to the wind and there is the appearance of a reward in that one seems to participate in a superior world, one “pregnant with meaning.10”

Nations in search of their identity, in the extreme like Nazi Germany or other totalitarian states, who project the Messiah or Savior onto their national leaders, are fertile ground for inducing collective inflation. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism, some of which fosters international terrorism, promotes this kind of fanatic inflation. Perhaps to a lesser degree, democratic states governed by leaders representing or influenced by Christian or fundamentalist religious position are also vulnerable to this unhealthy phenomenon. The on-going Christian battle for good against evil, and the tendency of Christian fundamentalists to see the work of the Devil in other people and not

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8 C. G. Jung, 1975c, 174.
9 C. G. Jung, 1975b, 169.
10 C. G. Jung, 1975b, 170.
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themselves, is a classic example of "whited" inflation behind which lies an unconscious identification with Lucifer himself. Here the reader is reminded of Christ referring to scribes and Pharisees as “hypocrites! ...like unto whited-sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness,” clearly alluding to the falsehood of identifying with the persona and fundamentalist dogma.

Mary Magdalene in *The Da Vinci Code* and Beyond

If taken as a representative symbol of the white shadow-persona that is unconsciously driven by a dark force, the depiction of the murderous albino monk in Dan Brown’s immensely popular *The Da Vinci Code* cannot be surpassed. He is a member of the fundamentalist Catholic sect, the *Opus Dei*, an organization portrayed in the book and movie as intent on destroying any evidence of the Holy Grail. It turns out to involve the “bloodline” of Jesus Christ that was reputed to have descended directly from him as well as, according to some Gnostic traditions, Mary Magdalene, the Grail bearer. In their belief, she was Jesus’ foremost disciple, apostle to the apostles, and beloved, loving wife and companion and not a penitent prostitute, as mainline Christianity has maintained for some fourteen hundred plus years. In 1969, the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church put an end to the belief she was a penitent prostitute, and publicly acknowledged that this portrayal was not based on any scriptural evidence. At the same time, the council of Trent was affirmed, where she was declared a disciple but not an apostle to the apostles, downgrading her knowledge, wisdom and leadership role amongst the other apostles.

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11 Mathew 23:27.
12 Margaret Starbird, 2005, pp. 2, 6, 23, 38, 39, 44-46, 52-63, 95, 96, plate 10, passim.
13 Michael Haag, 2016, p. 299.
The Christian Gnostic tradition developed independently and thrived in Egypt, with a set of beliefs and practices that differed widely from Roman Christianity, with its extraverted bias and church hierarchy. The Roman church eventually condemned Gnosticism as heretical and the tradition died out. The Gnostic goal was spiritual liberation from the world and attainment to non-dual reality, something like Hindu Advaita, and not following dogma, doctrine and church authority as in the Roman tradition. Two codices, *Pistis Sophia*, in 1773, and one including the *Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, acquired in 1896, have come to light as have discoveries in 1945 near *Nag Hammadi* by two Egyptian peasants, with three gnostic gospels, where Mary Magdalene is preeminent: *Dialogue of the Savior*, the *Gospel of Philip*, and the *Gospel of Thomas*. These discoveries have stimulated unprecedented research into Mary Magdalene and the Gnostic tradition, which, over time, will unquestionably, have a major impact on Christianity and Christians. In fact, Dan Brown, who authored the *Da Vinci Code*, was influenced by the *Gospel of Philip* in asserting the marriage of Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

What is most significant, from the point of view of the essay, is that, in the book and movie, evidence for the Holy Grail involves resurrecting Mary Magdalene from obscurity and projected sinfulness and, from an archetypal point of view, her finding her rightful place as the dignified bride of Jesus and spouse of Christ. It is no coincidence that the name of the attractive young French woman in the movie based on Dan Brown’s work and, as it turns out in his historical account, the rightful last descendent of the “bloodline,” is Sophie, while, in Gnostic speculation, Mary Magdalene was identified with

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14 Ibid, pp. 190 -216, passim.
15 Ibid, p. 213.
the sacred feminine and the ancient goddess of wisdom, Sophia herself.\textsuperscript{16} In fact, it seems likely that her name, Magdalene, does not refer to her home town, as has long been the official view, but is an honorific title meaning exalted, great or magnificent and derives from the Aramaic, \textit{magdal}, meaning tower.\textsuperscript{17,18} Archetypally, as Jesus’ wife, she represents the “land and her people,” values of Eros or relatedness in common everyday life, the humanization of the Divine, and her sacred union, \textit{hieros gamos}, as Sophia with Christ symbolizes the divinization of life.\textsuperscript{19}

According to a French legend, Mary Magdalene arrived in France pregnant with a child that initiated the royal “bloodline” alluded to in \textit{The Da Vinci Code}.\textsuperscript{20} When understood symbolically, this phenomenon parallels the alchemical goal of giving birth to the \textit{lapis} or philosopher’s stone, also referred to as the \textit{filius philosophorum}, the son of the philosopher, the product of the womb of matter and the alchemical \textit{opus} (Exhibit). In fact, in addition to matter, there are several other symbolic synonyms for the mother of the \textit{lapis} that could also be applied to Mary Magdalene such as her lunar nature, her association with an alabaster jar or vessel containing the royal nard ointment [that she used to anoint Jesus], her widowhood, and the persistent allusion to her having been a [divine] prostitute.\textsuperscript{21,22} The alchemists believed that the \textit{filius philosophorum} compensated for the dogmatic image of Christ as a more complete figure, uniting both the light, superior aspect of the psyche and the shadow, inferior side, thus harmonizing human will with the

\textsuperscript{16} Margaret Starbird, 2005, pp. 2, 6, 23, 38, 39, 44-46, 52-63, 95, 96, plate 10, passim.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{18} Michael Haag, 2016, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{19} Margaret Starbird, 2005, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{20} Margaret Starbird, 2005, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{21} Margaret Starbird 2005, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{22} C. G. Jung, 1974, pp. 17-22, passim.
Divine will. Accepting the archetypal reality of Mary Magdalene and her offspring is a significant response to a one-sided approach to life, where the shadow is not integrated but split-off and projected. Collective acknowledgement of this symbolic reality, at least in the Christian worldview, potentially brings this realization closer to individual consciousness.

Near the end of her life, Marie-Louise von Franz recorded two dreams that took place in the Benedictine monastery in Einsiedeln, involving Jung and concerning the marriage of the Black Madonna on earth. She believes that this portends the marriage of heaven on earth, the union of spirit and matter. The Black virgin goddess and the narrative of Mary Magdalene are historically interlaced, implying fully integrating the archetypal story of Mary Magdalene into the Christian worldview is now a potential reality, with considerable implications to Christianity and life. Indeed, it is not unusual for Westerner’s today to have dreams of compassionate and wise dark feminine figures, suggesting the unconscious is preparing the way for conscious integration of the black virgin goddess. Von Franz was overjoyed with the prospect portrayed by the two dreams, as, before the dreams, which took place in a Christian context, she did not think it was possible for Christianity to be transformed. But, after the dreams, she did.

The Puffed-up Albino Monk of Opus Dei in *The Da Vinci Code*
The white shadow-persona in the guise of the albino monk is “puffed up” beyond all measure and believes he is as an instrument of God through *Opus Dei* [Work of God], in real life, a contemporary Catholic organization that was granted approval by the Holy See

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24 As recorded in Rafael Monzo, 2006, pp.413-420, passim.
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on June 16, 1950\textsuperscript{25} The founding father was Josemaria Escrivà, who died on June 26, 1975, and who was set on a fast-track to sainthood, being beatified on May 17, 1992 by John Paul II in a relatively short space of time after his death.\textsuperscript{26} The real-life Opus Dei purports to bring God into every-day life and the world, although from a patriarchal Catholic “heroic” perspective regarding a virtuous Christian life. The albino monk in the book and movie is intent on killing the potential for the realization of the sacred feminine in life, involving the way of the heart, Eros, feeling, intuitive wisdom and creative power. The feminine perspective and the way of the heart is altogether different from that of a Logos oriented patriarchy, with its emphasis on doctrine, dogma, tradition, obedience and discipline, although it may be of spiritual merit, as long as one keeps an eye on and reins in the repressive shadow. This consideration notwithstanding, to a greater or lesser extent, the white shadow-persona always has a repressive and destructive effect on values of the sacred feminine.

From my personal observation, opening the doors of perception through drug use, and disciples of all spiritual and psychological movements with charismatic [often grandiose] leaders or fundamentalist religious movements, without exception, are subject to the risk of becoming inflated. This danger is particularly evident in the case of esoteric groups like those affiliated with The Great White Brotherhood, whose members are taught to specifically adulate “beings of light” as well as occult practices meant to rid the world of the dark forces of evil. In the theosophical movement initiated by Alice Bailey there is conscious acknowledgement of Lucifer as a principle guiding figure of light, but, to my

\textsuperscript{25} Josemaria Esrcrivà, 2006.
\textsuperscript{26} Josemaria Esrcrivà, 2006.
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understanding, no evidence of his need for conversion back to the Divine.\(^{27}\)

Parenthetically, it is interesting to note that Lucifer, which means “bearer of light”, may, in fact, be one of the two Asura’s that have been converted according to the Mother. Indeed, regarding the Asura of Light, the Mother observed that, since his conversion, “he is becoming “Consciousness and Light – he is becoming”, she says, “what he was.\(^{28}\)” Previously, he had become unconsciousness and obscurity, at which time he made innumerable formations of himself, many of whom refuse to convert - which could possibly relate to the form of Lucifer contacted by Alice Bailey.\(^{29}\) When unconverted, he and his formations are specifically associated with ignorance and unconsciousness and, when converted, with light and consciousness. The fact of his conversion could explain the instinctive drive and reality of increasing consciousness operating throughout the world today. Still, there is need to come to terms with the split-off White Shadow-Persona, which requires a different sensibility than active involvement in expurgating evil from the community and world scene, which is an act of unconsciousness and projection, despite its high pretensions.

Jung refers disparagingly to so-called “prophets and prophet's disciples,” each of whom identify with one of these respective archetypal images from the collective psyche.\(^{30}\) Here we have the whitest of white so-called individuals identified with a powerful persona, while inflated with unearned and unassimilated truths and high [Christ or Buddha-like] ideals, yet without any authentic individual autonomy. There is then full projection of the dark Mephistophelean shadow, which, in turn possesses and drives the

\(^{27}\) Sarah McKechnie, 2001.
\(^{28}\) La Mère, 1978a, p. 427.
\(^{29}\) La Mère, 1978a, p.427.
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white knight or his lady with a power-complex. There is, in this case, Luciferian inflation of consciousness and an unconscious identification with falsehood.

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I believe the reader can make a relationship here, if not an equation, between these observations on the white shadow-persona driven by an unconscious power-complex and what Sri Aurobindo refers to as the Evil Persona, at least an important aspect of it, which was, in fact, stimulated by an article authored by Jung. Sri Aurobindo observes that it takes hold of his disciples once they enter his path and begin the march toward realization. Even devoted disciples of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, identify with archetypal images of any kind at their peril. Rather, the reader is better advised to put energy into conscious individuation in relatedness to the psychic being and heart-Self in service to the Mother, while integrating to consciousness the split-off shadow and formative factor that can be used creatively along with the “spirit of life.” Individuals can then potentially become more fully themselves, simple people of integrity without pretension, yet open to a higher will.

REFERENCES


Mathew 23:27. The Holy Bible, King James version.


