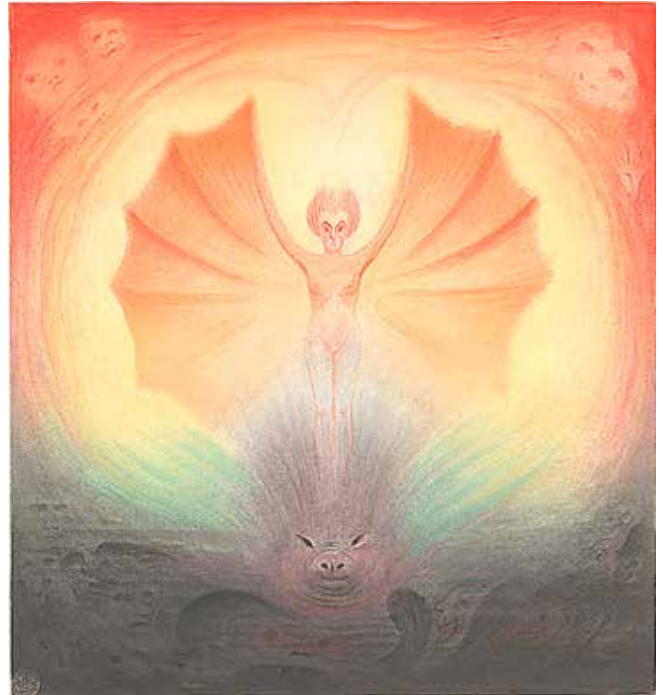


The Human Double and the Human Shadow

Modern companions of individual development

The origin of the concept of the *Double* can be traced through the history of esotericism, in classic literature for example. The *Shadow* as a concept has become familiar since Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) designated its involvement in the unconscious of the human psyche. In both cases it is immediately clear that we are dealing with something which has to do with ourselves. Also we realise that we are concerned with elemental experiences which are, or have been, uncomfortable, and which can sometimes apparently even be malicious. In relationships particularly we often observe phenomenological activity of the *Double* and the *Shadow*, e.g. in suffering, hurt and pain, as also in manipulation, ridicule and violence. No one comes through conflict without such damage, even when this is not always realised during the process. Only later do we appreciate how difficult processes have contributed to the possibility of further development. In the moment, or afterwards, we can form the opinion that adversary forces are involved which are alien to human kind. A paradox is that evil often appears to bring about not only bad but also good things. It is also possible that I know I am doing something bad through which good is realised; just as good can also attract evil.

For decades the concepts *Double* and *Shadow* were applied in different streams of research which were independent of one another. Twentyfive or so years ago the word *Shadow* was hardly used in circles of spiritual scientific research, although to do so was quite normal in exoteric psychology of the 20th Century. Nowadays it is quite usual to speak about the *Shadow* and *Double*, whereby no differentiation of meaning between the words is intended. In this way, however, observation of the phenomenology is impaired. Actually the elemental activity of the *Shadow* and *Double* should be differentiated. If we did this consequentially then we would be able to work with conflict more successfully. Instead there is a huge resistance to doing so; indeed in multiple ways, through the manners of our civil



"Lower Guardian of the Threshold" by Gerhard Reisch
1961 mineral pigment on paper (73 x 68 cm) EW 13

('bourgeois') society. That which is known as evil does not want to be recognised. Once exposed, it must reveal itself truthfully. This is a spiritual law. The moment when it reveals itself, which is seldom experienced as being comfortable, evil can be transformed into good.

In such moments the human soul acquires sources of consciousness which further spiritual development; the evolving "I" is strengthened. The human being becomes emancipated individually from the compulsions of existing life circumstances in the cultural environment. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) offered indications for this path of development through the presentation of a perspective of evil which differentiates the influences of the Devil (Lucifer) and Satan (Ahriman) in connection with the cosmic evolution of humanity. Together with Edith Maryon (1872-1924) he dedicated himself to creating a 9.5 metre high wooden sculpture known as the "Representative of Man". This figure, accompanied by Lucifer and Ahriman, was being prepared as the "keystone" of a modern mystery temple in Dornach,

(Switzerland) at the beginning of the 20th Century. The intention was to reveal a central task of humanity in the confrontation with the addictive symbiosis of the devilish and satanic which are intimately involved with the evolution of individual aspects of our beings.

This task is shared by every human being, as we gradually learn, on the one hand, to differentiate the activities of *Doubles* from *Shadows*, and on the other hand, to separate them inwardly in our own individual souls. If we do not do this they poison each other and us as well, through their unavoidable obligation to balance out our weaknesses and mistakes. Each small success, however, furthers not only personal development but also the development of these elemental forces which are still parasitically nesting in (each one of) us. When I learn to separate them, even if only partially, then I integrate their really useful capacities into myself. At the same time they are being emancipated from my soul, and thereby become helpful companions in alignment with my own self-direction.

The moment we come closer to a conscious resolution of a conflict, we may encounter a threshold to the abyss of our humanity. Near this abyss each one of us senses the loneliness and threat of losing our individual viewpoint, attitude, belief, ethic, understanding, etc.. Whether, in such moments, we experience this outwardly (in the behaviour of our fellow human beings) or inside our own soul, we meet an elemental energy-constellation of ideas, emotions and impulses. These characteristics are brought to expression symbolically, for example, in the picture by Gerhard Reisch (1899-1975) "Lower Guardian of the Threshold". By seeking to avoid the horrifying accumulation of the devilish and satanic I am more likely to get caught up in my own egoism or a behavioural offence, or fall into a pathological paralysis of will.

When I consciously succeed in separating these elemental forces, I will certainly experience a moment of hopeless surrender to abysmal nothingness; but the human spirit is strong and the awakening consciousness develops the "I" in the void. Surprisingly in such moments we can realise new perspectives, readiness to make sacrifices and fresh possibilities, which can lead to a resolution of the conflict. Peace and healing is born in a gentle stream of emerging unconditional love, which, in retrospect, we often know intuitively had always been around us, even if we could not feel it at the time. Now it can stream through our souls. In such moments we often experience shame, yet at the same time new strength and confidence.

What are the new capacities which develop in human beings, when they succeed in separating the *Shadow* and *Double*?

We may experience how the middle way must be held between the impression of the *Double* as self-indulgence in the spiritual realm and the influence of the *Shadow* as hardening of the self in form and pain. When, however, we apply the forces of these elemental companions and bring them into balance, on the one hand we develop clear conceptual thought forming forces and on the other hand the urge for knowledge which strives towards the spirit, that our *Shadow* and *Double* respectively can mediate to us through our participation in their further evolution.

Above all else one's own "I" becomes strengthened in the stable, conscious perception of the spiritual concerns of our fellow human beings.

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