

31. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, pp. 418–419.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 420.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Lou Andreas-Salomé, *The Freud Journal of Lou Andreas-Salomé*, trans. Stanley A. Leavy (New York: Basic Books, 1964), p. 43.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 168–169.
36. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, pp. 170–171.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
38. C. G. Jung, *Psychological Types*, trans. H. G. Baynes, ed. R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series XX, vol. 6 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 330.
39. Barbara Hannah, *Jung: His Life and Work—A Biographical Memoir* (New York: Putnam's, 1976), p. 116.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 115–116.
41. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 183.
42. Jung, *Two Essays*, p. 154.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

## Chapter 6

### *The Shadow*

I stood upon a high place  
And saw, below, many devils  
Running, leaping,  
And carousing in sin.  
One looked up, grinning,  
And said: "Comrade! Brother!"

—Stephen Crane

Jung understood the sickness in Western culture that denies the opposites in human nature. As a child in a minister's family, he was thrust into the heart of a Christianity that denied the dark side, denied the value of doubt. At his first communion, he expectantly waited for the subjective experience of profound change, but felt nothing.

When he was eleven years old, he was tortured by a vision in which he saw God on his throne above the cathedral in Basel. As he saw this remarkable vision, a terrible thought threatened to break through, but he was terrified to let himself think further, lest his thoughts damn him. Finally, after days of anguish, he decided to let his mind express itself, and he saw a huge turd from God's throne fall and destroy the roof and walls of the cathedral. Rather than damnation, he experienced release and a sense of grace.

These feelings enforced Jung's sense of being an outsider. There appeared to be no room in the Christian cultural fabric to include

the shadow. His mother suggested that he read Goethe's *Faust*, and that became a guiding myth for his life, a story that did full justice to the integration of the "dark side."

Later, particularly in *The Answer to Job*, Jung expressed the dilemma that Christianity faces by splitting the opposites of light and darkness, masculinity and femininity. Christ is all good, and Christians are expected to see no value in "sin." The devil serves no serious function in life. God is male. The Church is the Bride of Christ, but that hardly brings the feminine into the Godhead. For that reason, Jung was gratified at the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Assumption of the Virgin, which squares the trinity precisely by bringing the feminine into the Godhead. In contrast to the dismissive polarizing of good and evil in the developing Christian Church, the Gnostics proclaimed that God includes the opposites, both darkness and light—that God is accountable for *all* of creation. Therefore, darkness is as essential as light in man's evolution, providing the testing ground to develop his inner nature.

The psyche of man as a microcosm of the world likewise contains the opposites of light and dark. What is denied is thrust into unconsciousness and lives its secret within the shadows of one's life. When a culture splits the opposites in man, denies the shadow, and exalts the masculine over the feminine virtues, it dooms itself to wars and unexpected reigns of terror, as the dark side, so long denied a voice, erupts after long suppression. Reich saw evil as a secondary layer originating from the perversion of free and full expression of the sexual instinct, but Jung saw evil in a more global way.

In the individuation process, it is necessary to accept the opposites, to expect the good man to have moments of rage, to include the dark lessons of life that lead us to the holy grail. The way toward God could be toward an uplifted consciousness, a deepened awareness rather than an adherence to "good" behavior. Man's fall from Eden was his first step in awakening, and the awakening of man was his salvation. Submission and obedience do not bring enlightenment. To begin instead to see life as most powerfully alive in its opposites is to live vitally, intelligently, and cooperatively with one's spiritual path.

Each of us has a shadow side and a masculine or feminine counterpart within us, animus or anima, created in the natural

thrust of the law of opposites. The integration of the shadow and the bisexual nature of the psyche is essential in the path of individuation.

Jung drew from language rich with connotations. The shadow as concept and experience is pervasive in life and art. Abundant and common as salt, yet it remains as changeable, elusive, and lethal as the power of imagination itself. Everything on the planet that feels the light must cast a fragile dark shape, which in fact confirms to the eye that an object has bulk, has three dimensions.

Jung differentiated between the personal shadow, the collective shadow, and the archetypal shadow. As Marie-Louise von Franz has said:

In Jungian psychology, we generally define the shadow as the personification of certain aspects of the unconscious personality, which could be added to the ego complex but which, for various reasons, are not. We might therefore say that the shadow is the dark, un-lived, and repressed side of the ego complex, but this is only partly true.<sup>1</sup>

Jung tended to pull away from definitions of his terminology when they were too rigidly applied. Again, to quote von Franz:

Dr. Jung, who hates it when his pupils are too literal minded and cling to his concepts and make a system out of them and quote him without knowing exactly what they are saying, once in a discussion threw all this over and said, "This is all nonsense! The shadow is simply the whole unconscious."<sup>2</sup>

Consciousness is just a focus of light moving in the darkness, and in the shadows stand not just what we dare not see but our potentiality, what we are becoming. In Jung's words:

That future personality which we are to be in a year's time is already here, only it is still in the shadow. The ego is like a moving frame on a film. The future personality is not yet visible, but we are moving along, and presently we come to view the future being. These potentialities naturally belong to the dark side of the ego.<sup>3</sup>

While our tendency is to turn from the darkness in fear and to see there only what we assume is inferior and unworthy, psychol-

ogy teaches us to enter more easily into the shadows so that we can cooperate with nature and ourselves. As Jung wrote:

Consciousness, no matter how extensive it may be, must always remain the smaller circle within the greater circle of the unconscious, an island surrounded by the sea; and, like the sea itself, the unconscious yields an endless and self-replenishing abundance of living creatures, a wealth beyond our fathoming. We may long have known the meaning, effects, and characteristics of unconscious contents without ever having fathomed their depths and potentialities, for they are capable of infinite variation and can never be depotentiated. The only way to get at them in practice is to try to attain a conscious attitude which allows the unconscious to cooperate instead of being driven into opposition.<sup>4</sup>

The hero's journey leads into the unconscious, the shadow of present social being. John Bunyan, in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, begins with a step into unconsciousness, experiencing as he does so a sense of alienation: "As I walked through the wilderness of this world," he says, "I lighted on a certain place, where was a den; and as I slept I dreamed a dream."<sup>5</sup> And Dante also goes astray in a midlife crisis:

Midway in our life's journey, I went astray  
from the straight road and woke to find myself  
alone in a dark wood, How shall I say

what wood that was! I never saw so drear,  
so rank, so arduous a wilderness!  
Its very memory gives a shape to fear.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, we can see something of the range of the concept, extending from the personal shadow into the entire shadow that surrounds the small candlelight of our consciousness. The shadow on a personal level may contain not only the discarded and rejected aspects of ourselves but the potentiality of being. As Goethe said, "Coming events cast their shadow before."<sup>7</sup>

The shadow is what gives us three dimensions, grounds us in the present reality, demonstrates our presence on the physical plane, and demonstrates our membership among those who are subject to the pain and constriction of time. The shadow holds the

essence of what it is to be alive.

The spirit world does not cast a shadow, is not grounded here; it is neither responsible to the laws of this world nor able to grasp its strange privileges. The shadow gives us weight and credibility, grounds us in space and time. The physical world, with its trying limitations, holds a fascination for the ungrounded spirit world. "Eternity," said William Blake, "is in love with the productions of time."<sup>8</sup> The gods are not content to stay on Olympus. They consort with humankind.

Life is played out through a tension of opposites. The light is often seen as reason, order, that which conforms, stands forward, looks good, relates easily to other parts, is scientific, empirical, predictable, understood, generally agreed on, immediately available, civilized, in balance, the right hand, structure, sanity, the face of things, the Apollonian, the leaves, branches, and trunk of the tree.

The shadow, in contrast, is imagined, unseen, primitive, archaic, instinctual, primordial, unpredictable, confused, rebellious, unstructured, unaccepted, unrelated, uncivilized, unstable, unavailable, mad, the left hand, the antithetical mask, the Dionysian, the underside of things, the chthonic side, the background, the peripheral, the perverse, the yearned for, that which holds back and stands back, that which is glimpsed at out of the corner of the eye, that which looks bad, is magical, denied, unusual, mercurial, elusive, deadly, underground, the roots of the tree.

On the one hand, said Jung, "sinful, empirical man" stands opposed to "Primordial Man," the primitive man, a "shadow of our present-day consciousness," who "has his roots in the animal man (the tailed Adam), who has long since vanished from our consciousness. Even the primitive man has become a stranger to us, so that we have to rediscover his psychology. It was therefore something of a surprise when analytical psychology discovered in the products of the unconscious of modern man so much archaic material—and not only that, but the sinister darkness of the animal world of instinct."<sup>9</sup> The instinctual and primitive, all that falls on the dark side, is for the most part avoided by society.

Jung also said that "the man without a shadow is statistically the commonest human type, one who imagines he actually is

only what he cares to know about himself."<sup>10</sup> In families, for instance, the children or other family members may act out the shadow that has been denied by another family member. Frequently the children in families act out the unconscious yearnings of the parents, which play vibrantly, albeit unconsciously, throughout their childhood. A. I. Allensby, a Jungian analyst in England, recalls a story told to him by Jung:

He told me that he once met a distinguished man, a Quaker, who could not imagine that he had ever done anything wrong in his life. "And do you know what happened to his children?" Jung asked. "The son became a thief, and the daughter a prostitute. Because the father would not take on his shadow, his share in the imperfection of human nature, his children were compelled to live out the dark side which he had ignored."<sup>11</sup>

To remain a man without a shadow is to live as a mass man, projecting onto others the wrongs of the world, supported by a shallow righteousness, easily subject to the collective forces of life. Without his shadow, modern man has no ground, no individual sense of meaning. "Modern man," Jung argued, "must rediscover a deeper source of his own spiritual life. To do this, he is obliged to struggle with evil, to confront his shadow, to integrate the devil. There is no other choice."<sup>12</sup> The aim is a synthesis of opposites, the assimilation of the darkness, an acceptance and rejuvenation through the acknowledgment of the more primitive instinctual side, the inferior side. But the personal shadow, Jung concluded, is linked with a darkness that will never be completely assimilated:

In psychological terms, the soul finds itself in the throes of melancholy, locked in a struggle with the "shadow." The mystery of the *coniunction*, the central mystery of alchemy, aims precisely at the synthesis of opposites, the assimilation of the blackness, the integration of the devil. For the "awakened" Christian this is a very serious psychic experience, for it is a confrontation with his own "shadow," with the blackness, the *nigredo*, which remains separate and can never be completely integrated into the human personality.<sup>13</sup>

Perhaps most powerfully on a personal level, the shadow becomes a sparring partner, the opponent who sharpens our skill.

The shadow comes to us in the form of a thorn in the side, a person or event that appears to block our expansion, interrupt our joy, and negate our plans. The shadow comes to us in the area of our greatest blindness, an area of inferior development where we are least able to defend ourselves, an area where we are least subtle and least differentiated. Jung wrote about this:

I should only like to point out that the inferior function is practically identical with the dark side of the human personality. The darkness which clings to every personality is the door into the unconscious and the gateway of dreams, from which those two twilight figures, the shadow and the anima, step into our nightly visions or, remaining invisible, take possession of our ego-consciousness. A man who is possessed by his shadow is always standing in his own light and falling into his own traps.<sup>14</sup>

Coming as it does to that part of us where we feel least defended, our shadow makes us act explosively and catastrophically, and, inevitably, we wish to be rid of it. Thomas à Becket was such a shadow figure for Henry the Second. Whatever person or situation we project the shadow upon becomes our devil, the enemy, and at best the beloved enemy. Since a shadow figure often stands on our blind side, it can see us as we would prefer not to see ourselves, and we become uneasy. The beloved enemy stands at the door of our unconscious. It comments loudly to us and points out our repeated failing, our lack of skill in an area we are ill-equipped to develop. Such events or persons need to be embraced without our trying to win them over.

Often the crudest shadow figures are there as our teachers. In our resistance and denial, we are unable to hear the kinder, more indirect language of our friends, or we force them into silence with our sensitivity or ruthless denial. But one comes to us who is unswayed by our fragility or manipulation. He (or she) is the beloved enemy, a shadow aspect standing before us, apparently blocking our way. Frequently his rough-hewn attitude and manner perfectly describe an inner aspect of our own willful stubbornness. In this way, the shadow may in fact be our best teacher, reflecting back to us our blind side.

The great danger of ridding ourselves of a shadow figure is described in the New Testament (Matthew 12:43-45), where a man

drives out one devil that possesses him, but that devil goes and tells seven others of the vacancy, and they return to occupy him once more.

The least developed part of our personality, the side opposite our major gifts and strengths, is the area known in Jungian terms as the fourth function. It is in this area that the shadow stands to educate us and provoke our outrage, shock, and resistance. As this fourth function is developed and faced, the entire structure of the personality gains breadth and stability and loses its one-sided self-righteousness, shifting from rigidity to flexibility.

To some degree, a therapist must stand on our shadow side in such a way that we grow familiar with and used to an alien presence who stands on our blind side without judgment. The transformer, the agent of change, must be able to pass through the borders from light into the land of darkness and be equally at home. He must be one who is well acquainted with the wilderness and the desert, with the dark, left-handed ways. Mythically he has been represented by Hermes (Mercury), the messenger of the gods, the protector of thieves and god of the borders, appearing often in the bodily form of early adolescence, in which the masculine and feminine aspects are gently blended. But, of course, if the shadow terrifies us, he will take on more the form of the devil, the one who tests and opposes us, and even seeks our destruction. "Opposition," said William Blake, "is true friendship."<sup>15</sup>

Not only do individuals create shadows, but so do groups, organizations, and nations. As we develop and project an ego ideal on the one hand, gradually a shadow form develops on the other. The United States, with its ideals of liberty and justice, has also in the shadows the death of the Indian and the enslavement of the black man. The most obvious example of the collective shadow is provided by Nazi Germany. Hitler, Jung saw in 1938, was the "medicine man," the "loudspeaker which magnifies the inaudible whispers of the German soul."<sup>16</sup> "As soon as people get together in masses and submerge the individual, the shadow is mobilized, and, as history shows, may even be personified and incarnated."<sup>17</sup>

Like the rest of the world, they [the German people] did not understand wherein Hitler's significance lay, that he symbolized something in every individual. He was the most prodigious

personification of all human inferiorities. He was an utterly incapable, unadapted, irresponsible, psychopathic personality, full of empty, infantile fantasies, but cursed with the keen intuition of a rat or a guttersnipe. He represented the shadow, the inferior part of everybody's personality, in an overwhelming degree, and this was another reason why they fell for him.

But what could they have done? In Hitler, every German should have seen his own shadow, his own worst danger. It is everybody's allotted fate to become conscious of and learn to deal with this shadow. But how could the Germans be expected to understand this, when nobody in the world can understand such a simple truth?<sup>18</sup>

One would have to acknowledge that the meeting with the collective shadow is sufficiently terrifying. We prefer to deal with these issues historically or as projections. There is always the sense that evil can be identified by reason and engaged in with meaning, or psychically avoided. Beyond the personal projections lies the archetypal shadow itself, always present, ready to be reunited, sitting intimately among us as one of our most loyal friends. "But, behold," said Jesus, "the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table" (Luke 22:21). To suddenly slip past the humanity we expect and stare into the eyes of something "inhuman" is to catch a glimpse of the archetypal shadow. "In other words," wrote Jung, "it is quite within the bounds of possibility for a man to recognize the relative evil of his nature, but it is a rare and shattering experience for him to gaze into the face of absolute evil."<sup>19</sup>

Trevor Ravenscroft believes that the "innermost circle of Nazidom were self-confessed satanists,"<sup>20</sup> that supporting Hitler were adepts in the black arts, Eckart, Haushofer, and Heilscher, and that the "Luciferic Principality inhabiting the soul of Hitler sought by means of racist doctrines to lead mankind away from an inward recognition of the Individual Human Spirit."<sup>21</sup> Ravenscroft's documented argument brings the sense of the archetypal shadow a little closer to home.

A sinister description of the Doppelgänger (double) appears in Ravenscroft's *The Spear of Destiny*. "There exists in every human being," he writes, "a kind of 'anti-man' . . . which occultism calls the 'Double.'"<sup>22</sup> Goethe spoke of a time when, entering his study in

Weimar, he saw what appeared to be himself, a counterpart sitting in his chair "behind his desk and looking brazenly back at him." For a few seconds he was able to stare into the eyes and leering face of his counterpart. "It was the first of several such experiences through which the poet came to understand the reason for the existence of this merciless and inhuman shadow element in the human soul."<sup>23</sup> The purpose of the shadow is to provide the human soul with the opposition and tension to develop tough inner resolve and determination, to clarify through the challenge of opposites and awaken us so that we are available for profound transformation.

## Notes

1. Marie-Louise von Franz, *Shadow and Evil in Fairytales* (Zurich: Spring Publications, 1974), p. 5.
2. *Ibid.*
3. C. G. Jung, *Analytical Psychology: Its Theory and Practice* (New York: Vintage, 1968), p. 22.
4. C. G. Jung, *The Practice of Psychotherapy: Essays on the Psychology of the Transference and Other Subjects*, 2nd ed., trans. R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series XX, vol. 16 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 14.
5. John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. Roger Shamrock (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1965), p. 39.
6. Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno*, trans. John Ciardi (New York: Mentor, 1954), p. 28.
7. Quoted here from Trevor Ravenscroft, *The Spear of Destiny* (New York: Putnam's, 1973), p. 21.
8. William Blake, "Proverbs of Hell," in *Poems and Letters*, ed. J. Bronowski (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1986), p. 96.
9. C. G. Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis: An Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy*, 2nd ed., trans. R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series XX, vol. 14 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 417.
10. C. G. Jung, *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*, 2nd ed., trans. R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series XX, vol. 8 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 208.

11. William McGuire and R. F. C. Hull, eds., *C. G. Jung Speaking: Interviews and Encounters*, Bollingen Series XVII (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 158.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 228.
14. C. G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, ed. Sir Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, and Gerhard Adler, Bollingen Series XX, vol. 9 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 123.
15. Blake, *Poems and Letters*, p. 105.
16. McGuire and Hull, eds., *Jung Speaking*, p. 118.
17. C. G. Jung, *Four Archetypes: Mother/Rebirth/Spirit/Trickster*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series XX, vol. 9 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 147.
18. C. G. Jung, *Civilization in Transition*, 2nd ed., trans. R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series XX, vol. 10 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 223.
19. C. G. Jung, *AION: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*, 2nd ed., trans. R. F. C. Hull, Bollingen Series XX, vol. 9 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 10.
20. Ravenscroft, *Spear*, p. 261.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 262.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 290.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 129.