

EVIL – THE SHADOW SIDE OF REALITY: A Summary

John A. Sanford, Crossroads Publishing, New York, 1981, pp.155

1. Ego-Centred and Divine Perspectives on Evil

The notion of evil can depend on your perspective – what is ‘evil’ for you may be ‘good’ for someone else. This is ‘moral’ evil (that which emerges from the heart); ‘natural’ evil is what appears to emerge from the world (e.g. earthquakes and their consequences). Yet all this is still relative and begs the question whether good and evil have any existence in themselves. “Nature itself is beyond good and evil and ignores our egoistic terminology.” (*Chu His: 12th c. Chinese philosopher*) In war opposing sides often claim moral superiority – ‘God on our side’ – because religion claims there is an ultimate source of goodness (God) against which evil can be measured.

In psychology the ‘ego’ is the centre of consciousness (“I”) which can be self-actualising (“I did this”) whilst the ‘self’ is the centre of our total personality that is greater than the ego it contains. When the ego views life it is from its own perspective; when the self does it is from a broader perspective. Yet evil is not just relative to the ego-centric self (“what’s bad for me”).

Jung considered people are orientated by four major psychological functions: thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition. People with little ‘feeling’ will not react to a situation with appropriate human value judgment and are prone to becoming instruments of evil. But, paradoxically, the presence of evil enables the feeling function. ‘If a complete human being is a feeling being, then evil must be allowed to exist for this feeling nature of ours to live and grow.’ (p.10) The self also needs to see things from a broader perspective (God) and the development of norms and rules (e.g. Ten Commandments) is linked to this.

2. The Problem of Evil in Mythology

Through myth man has personified threatening, evil forces of nature and enabled a relationship with them. Often these personifications concerned light and darkness, psychic factors beyond our control and magic developed to control them. There are outer and inner realities though modern man tries to deny any reality beyond the material and ignores spiritual realities. Evil is to be overcome by political or economic systems. Only that which is rational or material can exist.

For example, in Egypt evil was personified by the god Set who was connected with the desert and drought whilst goodness was represented by his brother, Osiris, whom he seeks to destroy. Persian mythology takes this further and posits an eternal dual between these two forces (Good: Ahura-Mazda / Evil: Ahriman, whose other names included Beelzebub). It was believed that Good would, ultimately, triumph (p.17). Zoroastrianism, which influenced Gnosticism and the early Christian heresies of Manicheism, equated goodness with the spiritual and evil with the material.

Mythology is like a map of the human psyche. There is a ‘dark side’ to our nature that refuses to be assimilated and if we strive to live entirely in the light without regard for darkness that can have dangerous consequences. Psychology encourages us not to live from forced ‘goodness’ but to be grounded in a ‘centre’ which alone keeps the balance. ‘To try to be good and disregard one’s darkness is to fall victim to the evil in ourselves whose existence we have denied.’ (p.23) Hence, Jesus refuses to accept the definition of being ‘good’ (Mk.10. 17/18)

3. The Problem of Evil in the Old Testament

In those religions which believe in an ultimate source of good also a source posit a source of evil. In the OT there are only four references to ‘Satan’ or a supernatural being and all are in the post-Exilic books (post 597BC): Zechariah 3.11f (angels of accusation/destruction and of defence); I Chron. 21.1 (cf. II Sam. 24 – where Satan opposes Israel); Ps.109.6 (refers to Satan as ‘the Accuser’), and the Book of Job (interim stage of separation of good and evil/dark side of God’s nature). Satan is part of God’s ‘court’, his inner

family, but not an adversary. He is able to talk with God as a separate Being and is allowed to accuse Job of faithlessness.

In the OT it is God who is mainly responsible for evil and the figure of the devil is unnecessary (e.g. Amos 3.6; Is.45.5-7; I Sam.18. 10 'an evil spirit from God seized on Saul'.) Yahweh is the totality of opposites (including good and evil) and everything comes from Him. *There is only one God; therefore all things originate from Yahweh.* There's an integrity to this image found in pre-Exilic literature ... 'a bold and unflinching monotheism. ... To put away the responsibility for all that seems to us evil or terrible on the shoulders of a semi-omnipotent Devil ..., are clumsily comfortable devices. We have to look courageously in the face of the reality and see that it is God and none else who has made the world in His being. ... The discords of the world are God's discords.' (p.28)

However, Satan is used elsewhere in the OT to mean an adversary and not just a divine being (e.g. I Sam. 29. 4; I Kgs.11. 14 and 2) and Yahweh could be an adversary to man (e.g. Num. 22 and the Story of Balaam and his ass, a story which shows how Yahweh originally had a 'dark' side that could be destructive (cf. Job 28. 28). The story of Balaam shows that the Self has a dark, adversarial, destructive side: '*... it is a fact that if a human being persists in going against the Self, that is going against his or her own deepest truth, that person does run into a destructive force.* So the story illustrates both the dark, demonic side of Yahweh in the Old Testament, and also the dark side of the Self.' (p.30f) Balaam saves himself by getting into dialogue with the adversarial angel and heightens his consciousness. Balaam had not listened to his donkey (all that, instinctively, would urge us to avoid the adversary).

The dark side of the self may seem evil and much of Christianity today tends to encourage us to see only the light, loving side of God. But there's always a danger in rejecting the 'dark side' of reality. We need to look at the older, Hebraic image of God as totality of light *and* dark, as an expression of one aspect of the truth about paradoxical relationships of good and evil which is part of the plan of salvation.

4. The Role of the Devil and Evil in the New Testament

It's uncomfortable to consider that God is the source of evil and whether He intends evil or is amoral? When evil takes our attention, Satan becomes more prominent.

The development of demonology and angelology occurred in the post-Exilic period as shown by books of Jewish Apocalypse, possibly influenced by the encounter with Babylonian myths. By the time of Jesus there was widespread belief in good and evil 'spirits' with Satan presiding over the latter. 'Satan' comes from a Hebrew word meaning a being which hinders free movement. In Greek 'Devil' (*diabolos* – to throw across) is its equivalent.

In the gospels Satan, aided by demons, is responsible for human ills, physical and mental, and he also incites man to sin and rebellion. But no explanation of his origins or ultimate end is given. Jesus clearly knows of the devil and regards evil as a necessary part of creation (Matt.13. 24ff) only to be separated at the final Judgment. He believed man could be good or evil (Lk.6. 10) and what he does makes a difference. But if someone practices evil (Matt.8. 5ff) that will have terrible consequences.

However, Jesus is not crucified because of the devil nor does he seem pre-occupied with eliminating Satan or evil. What we find is a 'kind of dualism overridden by the umbrella of a far-reaching monotheism' (p39). It seems as if God allows evil to operate as it is part of the Divine Economy.

Origen (an early Christian philosopher) thought this and taught that creation was struggling for perfection and that, ultimately, the devil would be saved. Analytic psychology sees this urge towards fulfilment doesn't come from the mind but from the Unconscious Centre of our being. Jung called this 'individuation' – the conscious expression of the *totality* of personality. That's part of the fusion of the ego, but the ego is like a sleepy bear who hibernates and only wakes up when he has to – when pain, loss etc.. forces him to, when people are tested in the fires of life.

Can there be a just life without injustice? Or freedom without the temptation of evil? Can there be true growth without the need for souls to work against evil?

It might be otherwise, but that's how it is.

However, evil isn't just a means towards the good, it really *is* evil. This culminates in belief in an Antichrist (cf. II Thess. and Revelation) and seems based on Jewish pseudepigrapha and apocrypha which drew on the stark dualism of the Persians.

So there are two points of view in the NT concerning evil, that of Jesus in the Gospels, where Satan is seen doing his job, and the documents of the early Church (e.g. Revelation), a view which influenced the Church throughout history. So, can Antichrist be saved? Extreme dualism says not and even after the final battle Revelation says only 144,000 will be saved. Revelation demands a far higher standard of living for those who will be saved, any hint of imperfection 'lands man in the devils camp' (p44). Psychology suggests this witnesses a split in the personality between the ego and the Shadow.

In Hindu philosophy good and evil are illusions and there is no need for a devil, but there are plenty of demonic forces. As they are an illusion there's no need to seek the good or to overcome evil, rather the purpose of life is to renounce the ego, to fulfil Karma by purifying the soul. God does not notice man who is to be submerged in Him.

5. The Shadow

In psychological terms 'Shadow' is the dark, feared, unwanted and rejected side of our personality, 'repressed for the sake of the ego ideal' (p. 49). Such ideals may come from society, parents, peer groups or religion, consciously or unconsciously accepted. We are taught not to murder so repress our murderous instincts. The Judeo-Christian moral code, rooted in the Ten Commandments, goes further and teaches us to be loving, forgiving, chaste, etc... Parents reinforce these ego ideals as do character-building organisations. But the rejected qualities continue to live in the Shadow. Dreams allow the Shadow to express itself through same-sex figures. The Shadow also contains rejected aspects of the opposite gender (cf. 'All About Eve'). The Shadow can be a passive figure or represent the un-lived – life. It also contains positive elements, energies which may begin to emerge in mid-life. What's important is to integrate, rather than give licence to, the Shadow. Anger needs to be expressed appropriately (e.g. Jesus in the Temple). Our sexual instincts also need appropriate expression. Laughter can be a means of releasing the Shadow – something Pharisees find difficult. If the ego over-identifies with the Shadow then there's a probability that the person will develop the darker aspects of their personality. However, a child needs to be helped to recognise the presence of the Shadow and not to be encouraged to deny it in order that they can learn how to retrain their darker side.

The Shadow is referred to as an 'archetype', an essential building block of our personality and often appears in myth (e.g. Jekyll and Hyde). For healthy growth, parents need to be in touch with their Shadow so they can help their children to control their behaviour in healthy ways: 'A confrontation with it is essential for the development of self-awareness' (p.57).

Some seem fated to primarily live out of their Shadow (e.g. criminals) and this can help society realise the presence of it and may soften our judgment of others.

When we confess our sins we acknowledge the presence of the Shadow and we acknowledge that we do the very things we know we ought not to do (cf. Roms. 7. 15-19). Paul calls this 'sin dwelling in me' but this is the Shadow.

We tend to see people of other races in terms of the Shadow (gangs are also driven by it) - Jews and Gentiles can live out the Shadow and the Nazi's projected their inferior Shadow on the Jews. Organised religion has often done the same. These are illustrations of the 'collective Shadow' and nations can develop an 'ego ideal'. War requires us to project our Shadow as does collective nationalism.

Sexual fantasies can express the Shadow as are fantasies that one's partner is dead. But, generally, Shadow fantasies concern sex, money and power and our money/power culture has commonly exaggerated the problem of the Shadow. Human relationships help us to work it out as others point out its presence: 'This thing of darkness I acknowledge mine.' (*The Tempest, Act 5, Sc.1*). But we will resist facing it as we fear our negative feelings. We may avoid facing the guilt that lives here and

so avoid carrying its load but often it is crippling false guilt we carry as we avoid accepting the imperfect person we are. So there are times when we must allow our Shadow to live. If we only strive to be good we might become hateful instead as we accumulate darkness in our unconscious.

What is necessary is to recognise the Shadow side which will enable a powerful and beneficial change in us – it develops our humility, our sense of humour and our capacity to be less judgemental and is the basis of individuation. ‘As long as people observe morally scrupulous lives only because of outer sanctions, but with no knowledge of themselves, their morality is on a collective level. A higher morality can come about only through self-knowledge’ (p. 65). Where ignorance reigns the Shadow is an autonomous figure. Each of us needs to work out how to live with it more consciously.

6. Jesus, Paul and the Shadow

The ‘persona’ is like the mask worn by Greek and Roman actors. It’s the outer clothing of our ego, a necessary tool for daily living when one feels vulnerable as well as being the means whereby we communicate. Problems come when we identify with it too much. Professionals, esp. priests, are almost ‘given’ a persona (kind, patient, forgiving etc.) But to accept and adapt a persona means we lose part of ourselves and somewhere within its opposite will be lurking. In the story of Jesus being met by a rich young man (Lk.18.18f) Jesus refuses to respond from his persona to the statement “Good master” and responds by pointing out that God alone is good. He points to the way the Scribes and the Pharisees live through their persona and call them hypocrites lacking compassion.

Paul, however, has little idea of the persona and encouraged people to repress their Shadow; he was aware of duality in his nature (Roms.7) between his ego and Shadow but blames “sin living in me”. He teaches his converts to only live out of the light side (love, patience, forgiveness etc.) and to deny the dark side (anger, hatred etc.). See Galatians 5.16ff for an example of how he encourages a collective persona, thus reinforcing a split personality, In Romans 7 he again teaches that we should only be interested in the “higher” ideals, thus denying their unwelcome feelings. His antagonism towards emotions (e.g. anger, sexual desire) brings him close to the gnostics who saw the material world and physical self as inherently evil. He mostly regards sex as evil and hands an impossible persona to clergy (I Tim.3) and women. However, everyone has dark fantasies and if we can accept them we can’t accept them we become divided. His teaching about women’s salvation owes nothing to Christ and everything to developing the right persona (I Tim.2. 15) of motherhood. She has no right to the Shadow.

Paul was culturally conditioned and the Church, unfortunately, chose to follow his teaching rather than that of Jesus, who clearly accepted the place of the Shadow. Yet we cannot simply live out of it. Interestingly Jesus told us to “come to terms with your opponent” (Matt.5. 25) in teaching that make more sense if understood psychologically. The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk.15. 11-32) presents us with two brothers, one who “came to himself” (recognised his rebellious Shadow) and an account of the way the father sought to reconcile the two, opposite, brothers.

To accept the Shadow involves accepting paradox, which the Church has found difficult. Lk.7, 36-50 recounts how Jesus accepted the paradox of a sinful woman (one who lived with her Shadow) washing his feet with her tears.

Jesus’ teaching about being perfect as God is perfect seems to suggest that we must avoid the Shadow and be spotless, but the Greek word means ‘brought to completion’ and so he is telling us to accept the Shadow as God does.

The Book of the Revelation concerns metaphysical cleavage between God and Satan and is far removed from the teachings of Jesus. Facing our own duality isn’t easy. Dostoevsky’s figure of the Grand Inquisitor shows the consequence of ‘correcting’ Christ’s work, man’s freedom is replaced by a collective persona. In Jesus’ ethic man is left with the alternatives life poses, the problem of his own duality and the necessity of psychological honesty.

7. The Problem of the Shadow and Evil in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Jekyll and Hyde (app. 1886) is a story full of psychological insights into the problem of the Shadow. Its lasting popularity is due to its archetypal quality – all of us contain a Jekyll and Hyde that fascinate us as the story fascinated Robert Louis Stevenson who first dreamt the story. Awareness of archetypal evil emerged from his unconscious. Jung wrote that we become what we do and once Jekyll decides to be Hyde he eventually becomes Hyde. The deliberate desire to do evil leads to us becoming evil; it is one of the qualities of archetypes that they can possess the ego, which is like being devoured by or made identical with the archetype. 'Jekyll's careless disregard for the power of evil together with his desire to escape the tension of his dual nature proves the way to his ultimate destruction (p.104).

At the point of self-awareness Jekyll determines to have nothing to do with Hyde; he renews his 'good' life, becomes dedicated to good works and 'religion'. Hyde as the Shadow personality continues to exist in the unconscious and, therefore, struggles to live – to express himself. But the strength of the dark side cannot be locked away in the basement of the psyche – he is too strong and a split occurs., So Jekyll keeps some of Hyde's clothes and his flat, nor does he try to fill the emptiness with anything good. He is aware of his dual nature but fails to carry the tension of the opposites – to have individuated. Instead he tried to escape the tension and denies responsibility blaming Hyde for his actions.

The story shows the need to carry this tension of opposites rather than repressing the Shadow, which is the desire to escape the pain of the problem. Carrying the tensions like a Crucifixion – to be as one suspended between opposites in which God's grace can operate for the Self, the *Imago die* within us can bring about an irrational synthesis. This is a secret, irrational healing process where the feminine is capable of achieving of a synthesis – and yet the feminine is almost absent in the story and where it appears it is weak and ineffective. The feminine is refused, it is weakened and falls into despair.

The character of Utterson is necessary as the one who identifies the dark secret of Jekyll and Hyde and whose dawning consciousness becomes the container for the knowledge of evil thus representing the ego at its best. Dr. Lanyon, on the other hand, was not prepared to look into evil and, doing so too quickly, is overwhelmed by its effect.

Ultimately when Hyde takes over he commits suicide reminding us that evil will eventually destroy itself; it cannot exist on its own but there must be good upon which it can feed.

Dealing with Evil

There's a temptation to directly oppose evil when it appears but evil will afflict those it touches – for evil is contagious. Yet the worst thing is to try to appease evil – to do so feeds it.

In fairy stories there is no one way of dealing with evil yet we must always know what we are doing.

Because it appears from the Shadow Evil fascinate us and, therefore, has a considerable power over the human soul. Recognising this Jung said that there are only two things that can keep the soul from falling under its power: if a person is filled with a greater power, or if a person is contained in a warm, related human community. Isolation is a great danger.

The story of Jekyll and Hyde is that possession is the worst form of evil and it is likely to occur when the powers of evil are not taken seriously. For example, those who carelessly take drugs do so without due regard for their powers..

"Form comes from heaven, but energy from hell" (William Blake) which is why we must seek to unite these two opposites. The Shadow contains lots of energy: it is not to be denied but dealt with by a higher authority.

8. The Devil in Post-Biblical Mythology and Folklore

The Devil is also named Lucifer – 'Light Bringer' – derived from Is.14: 12-15 which describes the fall from on high of the 'Daystar' into the Abyss. That may refer to the fall of Babylon and is also referred

to in Lk.10: 18. Lucifer fell prey to the sins of pride, conceit and ambition – the Usurper. Archelaus (early bishop) refers to other angels also rebelling and joining him.

Parallels between Christian mythology and Zoroastrian thinking (Ahura-Mazda – St Michael and Ahrim – Lucifer); the Talmud says that Lucifer's downfall was due to his envy of man before whom, at his creation, the angels had to fall. This demonic host is responsible for evil thoughts, e.g. the dark powers which also caused disease and mental affliction.

But the question remains – why did God allow this to happen? (p.114: penultimate para) The legend is certainly a useful psychological archetype in describing the spilt in the human psyche which, originally whole, becomes divided and the Devil gained a place in our psyche. If it is archetypal then, no matter how careful we control our environment, evil will still appear, as history shows. So we can't assume that, given the right kind of upbringing evil will disappear from a child – such is the power of the archetype – the drive for power which Satan exhibits as does our ego which wants to dominate the whole psyche, rather than allowing the God-given centre to rule. Egocentricity is at the core of the problem, something which Christianity, like other religions, seeks to overcome (cf. Jesus encounter with Satan in the Wilderness).

Though many today would discount the story it exists for a purpose and plays itself out in every power game. 'It would be better to have our divine myths back than to fall into the paranoid states of mind that a mythology projected onto other people produces.' (p.116)

In the NT we find that the devil can transform himself into other forms – as an angel of light, for example (2 Cor.11. 14). He can assume the form of a man (Mephistopheles I Faust) – an object of ugliness or beauty (St Augustine), or an animal (a roaring lion). His consort animals include bats, vermin etc...

The mercurial aspect of the devil betrays his close identification with the mercurial unconscious, refusing to be absorbed into consciousness. It is full of tricks, devilish for those afraid of paradox. (p. 17 bottom).

Post-biblical mythology combines in the devil attributes of pagan deities – the hooves of Pan and the horns of Dionysius. Pagan religions were tolerated in Europe until a Bull of 1484 (Innocent VIII) and from that time n witches began to appear. The old nature goddesses when pushed into the dark reappear in sinister form, indicating that the figure of the devil is a representation or personification of those aspects of the human psyche which became repressed, especially when they conflicted with the Christian narrative (e.g. Aphrodite, goddess of eros). The devil is feared as we fear what we repress and what exists in the shadows. Thus Origen spoke of the need for the devil to be redeemed and Jung believed it needed to be included as a fourth person of the Trinity to complete God and for wholeness to emerge. (*Isn't this what is taught occurs when a man stands before the icon of the Trinity – we, shadow-filled creations of God, are included in that dynamic whole? – J-FF*) The 'fourth part' has also been seen as the repressed feminine, the Great Mother, especially in Protestantism which then rejected her – in the figure of Mary – from the Godhead.

Baptism rites have also confused the 'world ' and the 'flesh', both creations of God, with the devil and demanded they be rejected. But this owes more to Gnosticism which divided creation in two – spiritual = 'good', matter = 'evil'.

The legend of Lilith (Is. 34.14 – the first woman created before God fashioned another from Adam's rib) arose in pre-Christian Jewish literature. Lileth was created along with Adam (Gen. 1.26) before Eve took her place and then disappears into the shadows after refusing to obey Adam, to be subservient to him. Eventually she met Samael, chief of the fallen Angels (Satan), became his wife and plots revenge. The legend was known to early Christians, which may be why the snake in Eden is sometimes portrayed in feminine terms. She became the enemy of mortal woman (Rev.17.3 and 12.1-6), a night hag who seeks to destroy new-born babies. What is rejected turns against us and becomes omnipresent, striving for re-union with the consciousness, to be welcomed into the light. No wonder the devil is feared. This is also the process of individuation and none of these dark powers can be regarded as

intrinsically evil, rather the devil is a collective shadow figure.

9. The Ontology of Evil

The problem of evil is unresolved in Christian theology because, in early centuries, the problem to be dealt with concerned the nature of Christ and not the nature of evil which Christianity has never defined in Creed or by dogma.

Yet the gospels and early Church were aware of its reality to the extent that it was addressed by the first theories of Atonement. The '*ransom*' theory (Christ's death ransomed us from the devil) and the '*victory*' theory (Christ vanquished Satan on the Cross). St Gregory the Great said that the blood of Christ on the Cross was the 'bait' that, as he 'bit' on it, caused the devil to become snared. The '*victory theory*' is the basis of Christian exorcism. The '*satisfaction* or '*penal substitutionary*' theory emerged in the 11th century (St Anselm). This claimed that it was not the devil who had to be satisfied but God – God's justice needed satisfying after man's rebellion and it is only Christ who can satisfy Him. This theory also answered those who believed previous theories gave too much prominence to the devil who then gained more power than God.

But none of this explained the origin or nature of evil and if God is good, created a good world and loves mankind, why is there so much evil? And did He just allow it or create it? Is there an ultimate place for evil in the Divine economy? One response attributed all good to God whilst all evil is on man – but who put the snake into Eden? Another stated that God deliberately allowed evil for man's purgation (Irenaeus, '*Clementine Homilies*'). Clement believed that evil will, in the end, be transformed when it will no longer be needed.

The doctrine of '*privatio boni*' (deprivation of the good) stated that evil has no existence in itself and only the good has substance; it only exists by means of the domination of the good. But Jung attacked this theory as it led to splitting off good from evil. Christ becomes one-sided by light with darkness being only found in an Anti-Christ who becomes needed to restore the balance. Jung argued that as it was the nature of the Self to unite opposites (wholeness) it must combine all things, including light and dark, male and female, good and evil in paradox, which Christianity found impossible to accept. *This, he argued, allowed evil the freedom to act independently (italics mine)* which victimises mankind. But there can be no light without darkness, right without left, truth without error. If good is real so must evil. So Jung held to a four-fold rather than three-fold (Trinity) reality which included evil located in God.

H. L. Philips argued (*Jung and the Problem of Evil*) that this enthroned evil forever and creates an amoral God. Opposites are not always needed: the sun would always be hot without the moon. Jung taught (*Psychology and Alchemy*) that evil needs assimilating, raising to the level of the conscious. It is the devil who needs to be redeemed (cf. Origen). Another objection that Jung had to '*privatio boni*' is that it contradicts psychological facts: the Self includes light and darkness, good and evil. The '*missing fourth*' is necessary for wholeness to occur (p.149). He felt that here metaphysics was in conflict with empirical fact. But no one can say they know what the Ultimate is.

Intrinsic evil is a force which destroys wholeness yet can be redeemed by being freed from a dissociated, destructive condition (Hyde was, at first, only mischievous but as the dissociation from Jekyll grew, he became increasingly pure evil).

But, maybe, God allows evil. If wholeness is the highest Good everything must serve that end, including the ego. Wholeness would be impossible without it. "It is ... true that a dark source of evil exists ... and that in the final sense of the word there is no evil." (Nicholas Berdyaev)

Perhaps it is necessary that we never solve the question of evil, to reduce God to a final truth, understandable in human terms. Only if the dark side of life and Self is accepted can the process of integration be possible. What has fallen into the hands of evil is necessary for redemption to be achieved.