

Chartres Course Day 3 the Shadow and the Labyrinth

Day 3 – the Shadow - picture green dragon

Today, the problem that I wish to explore with you is the Shadow of the solar era which continues to perpetuate war, oppression and suffering because we are still in the grip of that polarising mythology. How can we dismantle the Promethean myth of Progress and the Power of Science and Technology and offer a different myth to humanity that would reconnect us with the deeper intention of the Cosmos? How can we define a new humanity and a new kind of civilisation it might bring into being? The emphasis of the solar era has been the control and subjugation of nature to serve man as well as on the theme of power and conquest. It seems that despite all we have been taught by the great teachers who have incarnated on this planet from higher dimensions in the Cosmos, we have completely forgotten that we are called to a higher destiny and a different goal.

Jung

Jung's words are a warning to us: "As at the beginning of the Christian Era, so again today we are faced with the problem of the general moral backwardness of our species which has failed to keep pace with our scientific, technical and social progress..."

"We need more understanding of human nature because the only real danger that exists is man himself. He is the great danger and we are pitifully unaware of it. We know nothing of man, far too little. His psyche should be studied because we are the origin of all coming evil." He also said that Man cannot stand a meaningless life.

Warning to Humanity by scientists 1992

In 1992 a "Warning to Humanity" was given by more than 1,600 of the world's senior scientists, including a majority of Nobel laureates in the sciences.

"A great change in our stewardship of the earth and the life on it is required, if vast human misery is to be avoided and our global home on this planet is not to be irretrievably mutilated."

We are the greatest threat to the planet because we are still so unconscious

We are collectively driven by the biological imperatives of the limbic system – the fight or flight response – and are still geared to egocentric perception of threat. We are not able to see the threat we ourselves constitute to the planet and our species.

We are in the midst of the Sixth Great Extinction which is caused by us in what

has been called the Anthropocene Age. It is possible that as many as half of the plants and animals with whom we share the planet may be extinct by 2050.

Odilon Redon

Here is an image of the one-eyed consciousness that controls our world. It is an image of the dominance by the solar rational mind and ignorance of the shadow aspect of that rational mind. The effects on the world of the loss of the Feminine, the loss of Soul, are incalculable. Instinctive knowledge of the holy unity of things, reverence for the interconnection of all aspects of life, trust in the power of the imagination and the faculty of the intuition — all this as a way of relating to life through participation rather than through dominance and control, has almost been lost. We can see the effects of this loss of soul everywhere today, not only in the devastation and pollution of vast swathes of the earth, but in the unhappy, impoverished and hopeless existence that people endure in the hideous and ever-expanding suburbs of our cities, in the increase of diseases like cancer, diabetes and mental illness — particularly depression. The young are offered nothing to aspire to beyond the material goals promoted by the media and unemployment is widespread. In Muslim countries the deep chasm between the Shia and Sunni tribal groups threatens ever more slaughter. Millions of women in these countries are oppressed and are even murdered for apostasy or reasons of family honour. In India and parts of Africa, rape is endemic, not only the rape of women and young girls but the rape of babies and small children. The human heart cries out for justice, for a place of sanctuary, for community and relationship, where the inner life is seen to be as important as the outer and where a unifying sacred order to life on this planet is recognised and honoured.

In the wider context of the planet, we are dramatically and rapidly changing the chemistry of the ocean through increasing acidification and the depletion of fish and resources. We allow forests to be cut down to supply paper and packaging or to establish cattle farms or crops to provide biofuels for energy; mountains to be hollowed out to extract the elements needed to construct nuclear reactors, computers and mobile phones; areas of land to be shattered by explosions, eviscerated and scarred to extract shale oil or gas. Military bases are constructed as launch pads for guided missiles on land that was once the sacred territory of people whose ancestors had lived there for centuries. The Arctic is pillaged to extract vital supplies of oil and gas. Vast tracts of Africa are bought up to provide land for biofuel crops or food for states whose own land cannot supply it in sufficient quantity for their growing populations. Animals are viewed in terms of the amount of food we need to feed our ever-increasing numbers, not in terms of their well being: the indiscriminate daily slaughter of African elephants and rhinoceros and of whales and dolphins in the earth's oceans continues.

What does this pattern of exploitation amount to if not the crime of ecocide, with our species destroying the habitat on which all species, including ours

depend? Ecocide leads not only to the destruction of the environment but to wars over diminishing resources and crimes against humanity as conflicts proliferate.

A Charter for the Earth, which offers an agenda for a different relationship with the planet, exists, but governments and powerful corporations pay little heed to it. All this might be described as the desecration of the *Anima-Mundi* or Soul of the World who lies in thrall to the one-eyed consciousness that controls the planet, held in the image of the woman in this painting.

Aspects of the Shadow Today that threaten the world

The Myth of Progress through the Power of Science and Technology

The Sacrificial Rituals of War; the desecration of the body wherever there is rape, torture and murder

The Denial of the Effects of Climate Change on land, sea and air

The Hunger and Deprived Existence of Billions

The Oppression and Rape of Women

The unchecked Growth of Population estimated to reach 10 billion by 2050

The Neglect and Abuse of Children: the Murder of their Souls

Woman Clothed with the Sun Doré

Listening to Karen in her May 14th transmission, I heard her speak about the Woman Clothed with the Sun, with the moon beneath her feet and her head encircled with 12 stars which comes from chapter 12 of the Book of Revelation. I looked up the paintings related to this image and found this wonderful engraving by Gustave Doré. These are the words that go with this picture: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in haven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.”

The Great Dragon

Here is another painting by Blake of the same subject with a fearsome dragon and the woman in deep trouble. As I looked at these two pictures, I thought that the cosmic woman trying to give birth and threatened by the dragon could apply to the time of Christ when a new consciousness was struggling to be born. But it also applies to our time when the Cosmos is once again trying to bring a new consciousness into being but that consciousness is held back by the power of the great dragon and the one-eyed vision that I have just described. Claudia may be able to give us an astrological reference for both these events. Yesterday we saw how the image of the Great Mother was replaced by that of the Great Father and how society came to be dominated by the masculine archetype and how this led

to the widespread oppression of women. Today, I want to go deeper into the psyche to explain where the evil we deplore comes from.

The Dragon as the Power of Instinct

The Dragon is an image of the immense creative and destructive power of the instinct: what Jung called our primordial soul.

This primordial soul is unconscious until it is called forth by fear, rage or the drive for power of a psychopathic demagogue, or anyone who is possessed by an ideology, whether religious or secular. It can then burst through the fragile defences of the ego and take possession of it. We then regress, whether as individuals or as a collective mass, into the archaic fight/flight responses. In my book I describe a dream I had of an enormous dinosaur laying waste to the land and devouring people. There was nowhere to hide and I felt the utter terror of being at the mercy of this fearsome reptile.

Lion and lion killing prey

There is a saying of Jesus: “Blessed is the lion which the man eats, and the lion may become a man; and cursed is the man whom the lion eats, and the lion will become a man.” Logion 8, Gospel of Thomas. I have put in these pictures of lions because the lion is not only an image of the predator aspect of the psyche that can take us over but also an image of the courage and strength and instinctive intelligence we carry in our depths – an image of the lion within us being able to function in a creative rather than a destructive way.

Lion swallowing the sun

But when the lion eats the man there is a problem. Here is an alchemical image of the lion swallowing the sun, or the unconscious swallowing the conscious ego.

Diagram of the Psyche

With this diagram I want to try and explain what happens when the ego is possessed by the shadow or when there is a very weak ego with no capacity to distinguish between right and wrong:

In the middle box in red you will see the words Personal Shadow and in the larger box below it

The Collective Shadow

Primordial Soul

Predator/prey pattern

Collective Unconscious

Nature

The collective unconscious is precisely that, unconscious is most people

Ego experience, self-awareness, conscious mind

Personal experience is largely unconscious = The Personal Shadow
memories/traumas

Memories & instinctive
habits/traumas of evolutionary experience = The Collective Shadow
largely unconscious

The Matrix of Nature, Primordial Soul and the Collective Unconscious is the source of our creative and destructive instincts. We are part of Nature and carry her ability both to create and destroy. When the ego is possessed by the predator/prey aspect of the primordial shadow, it loses the ability to be aware of what is happening. It is like a psychosis. In Syria and now Iraq, we see the terrifying face of a collective psychosis taking hold of thousands of young men and turning them into killers, believing that they are serving Allah in a holy war. We see millions regressing into the darker aspect of lunar consciousness where the instinct takes over and there is no insight or moral awareness to stand against it. This happens more easily when someone has been indoctrinated from early childhood with religious beliefs and is an unconscious member of a tribal group, serving a very primitive image of God.

A Definition of Evil

Evil has its origins in the unconscious predator-prey pattern of behaviour. It may be defined as the intention to inflict or the act of inflicting terror, suffering, humiliation, torture or death on an individual or group of individuals.

The Danger of Utopian Ideologies: Mao, Hitler, Stalin

We have had terrifying examples of this takeover by the unconscious in the ideologies and mass hypnosis exercised by psychopathic individuals during the last century. Between them they organised the murder of over 90 million people. They found plenty of bureaucrats – like Eichmann – willing to obey orders. Millions of helpless citizens caught up in this horror have had their hearts turned to stone with terror by what their fellow men can do to them. Women, children and the helpless old become victims of the archaic predator-prey pattern in the human psyche. With the recent very moving last commemoration of D-Day, we can see what a colossal sacrifice of the lives of young men was needed to defeat the evil of Nazism and what incredible courage they showed in the face of utter terror.

Max Ernst and Gorgon

Here are three images of what the psyche can become when it is taken over by the predator aspect of the primordial soul. The first is a painting by Max Ernst from the Second World War. The second is an image of the Gorgon taken from

the Greek myth of Perseus. Perseus could only kill the Gorgon by looking in a polished shield given to him by the goddess Athena. The third is an example of the current takeover over of the Muslim mind by the shadow aspect of Islam. The Middle East is now in the grip of another devastating ideology which could spread to the whole world.

Jung quote

“Consciousness torn from its roots...possesses a Promethean freedom but it also partakes of the nature of a godless *hubris* with the assertion that ‘Nothing is greater than man and his deeds.’” (MDR p. 303)

“God’s powers have passed into our hands. The powers themselves are not evil, but in the hands of man they are an appalling danger — in evil hands.” CW 10, par 879

The Predator-Prey pattern in the primordial soul – Godzilla and T Rex

The Instinct to Kill

The will to dominate others

Bestial cruelty

Territorial expansion

Terror/fear/need to defend

Rage

Hatred

Jealousy

Greed

Tribal memories as triggers in unconscious shadow

(the murder of the Prophet’s grandson Ali at Karbala 1400 years ago).

Godzilla

Godzilla is a perfect portrayal of our predatory shadow that is causing such havoc in the world.

Nuclear Explosion

With nuclear fission, tremendous power was given into our hands, power that we were in no sense morally equipped to handle. Mistakenly believing that matter is something ‘dead’ rather than something alive with spirit, allowed us to split the atom and develop a dangerous technology which is leaving lethal residues of radioactivity on the earth from nuclear explosions and the plutonium waste from nuclear reactors. It is also driving us to create ever more demonic weapons with which to perpetuate our addiction to war. It has created a very dangerous situation and a negative karma.

There are currently 435 operable nuclear reactors worldwide and 72 under construction. Since 1945 there have been over 2000 nuclear explosions releasing

radioactivity into the air. Nuclear power is the most dangerous way of making electricity. 200 completely new radioactive elements are created in the process of nuclear fission in the reactors. All are toxic. Some “live” for only a few seconds; others like plutonium 239 remain radioactive for up to 500 million years. Eventually these elements will enter the re-productive organs of plants, animals, and humans, where they will mutate the genes in reproductive cells, causing disease and death in the immediate generation and transmitting a hidden genetic disease to future generations. The incidence of cancer is already on the rise worldwide in both adults and children. Few people trace this to the legacy of radioactivity.

Syrian city after bombing

Syrian city waiting for food

Picture of hanged girls

It is not only psychopathic dictators who can cause this carnage. It is also people who rape or kill if they have an impulse to do so or feel that tribal custom demands or justifies this. I have put this picture in because I feel such a sense of outrage that this kind of crime can happen and go unpunished and that the governor of the province could comment about rape: “Boys will be boys.” It is good that these fearful crimes which have been hidden for millennia should now be coming into the public eye. Rape is endemic throughout the world, not only in the theatre of war. But as William Hague recently said, bringing this atrocity into public awareness and opening it up for discussion is perhaps the only way of eradicating it. Shame is a powerful factor in creating moral awareness.

Execution of Shia young men

Here is an example of where hatred between two different religious sects can lead. Something that happened 1400 years ago still has the power to trigger the impulse for revenge and to justify executions like this one.

Beslan

Girl with landmines

Boy collecting rubbish

Why do we inflict such evil on others?

Because we believe we are justified in killing/torturing/starving people if we feel threatened.

Because they belong to a different tribal group.

Because they belong to a different religious sect.

Because we believe God, Yahweh or Allah approves of what we are doing

Because we are unconscious: unaware that we are possessed by the dark aspect of our primordial soul.

Because we do not know that what we are doing injures the Whole and therefore ourselves.

Picasso – the Minotaur

All these patterns of behaviour might be described as the work of the Minotaur within us – that part of ourselves that is not conscious, that is still tied into archaic patterns of behaviour that are seen as necessary to our survival or the defence of territory. This engraving was made during the Second World War some time after Picasso painted Guernica depicting the horrors of the Spanish Civil War.

Theseus killing the Minotaur

The ancient Greek myth of the hero killing the Minotaur is still alive in our time. This is a powerful modern sculpture depicting it. It is about confronting the shadow with the sword of insight. Not killing it, but transforming it by resisting its power to take us over.

Drawing the Dark Man out of the Mud

Here is a powerful alchemical image of the stage in alchemy when a transformation is taking place, when the shadow is being drawn out of the unconscious state. The figure on the right, with angels' wings and a star on her head holding the red robe, is Sophia, the guiding image of Alchemy. I will return to her in our fourth day together.

Redon Child – The Effects of Childhood Suffering

What are the effects of childhood suffering?

Cruelty/abuse/neglect/abandonment, terror or horror experienced in childhood can remain imprinted as a memory in the personal unconscious, giving rise to rage, violence, breakdown or depression decades later or to alcohol and drug abuse and even a psychotic breakdown.

The Collective Shadow Comes into Being

Through childhood suffering/cruelty/abandonment/neglect

Indoctrination in collective beliefs whether religious, political or scientific

Repression of natural feelings/instincts

Experience of cruelty from parents/teachers/peers; sexual abuse

Being forced to witness the torture or murder of a close family member and being unable to prevent it. (Afghanistan, Africa, Syria, domestic violence)

The child may react against any of these or may be imprinted with the pattern and re-enact it unconsciously in his/her own life later on.

Building a strong ego in the child – diagram of the psyche

Ego experience
self-awareness
conscious mind

loving parenting
happy memories
strong boundaries
and relationships

The Memories & instinctive habits/traumas of evolutionary experience are present but do not overwhelm the conscious ego.

The connection with the creative depths of the personal and the collective unconscious is strong as indicated by the yellow line connecting the ego to the lunar soul. Head and heart are in harmony. Rachel Carson has given us some wise words about the care of the child:

“I sincerely believe that for the child, and for the parent seeking to guide him, it is not half so important to know as to feel. If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow. The years of early childhood are the time to prepare the soil. Once the emotions have been aroused — a sense of the beautiful, the excitement of the new and the unknown, a feeling of empathy, pity, admiration or love — then we wish for knowledge about the subject of our emotional response. Once found, it has lasting meaning. It is more important to pave the way for the child to want to know than to put him on a diet of facts he is not ready to assimilate.”

From Rachel Carson's remarks at her acceptance of the National Book Award for Nonfiction

Hero and Dragon

To reconnect with the part of our soul that has been split off and dissociated from the conscious ego, we need to become aware of instincts that are deeply unconscious. We need to learn how to recognise them, relate to them and free ourselves from their power. This requires insight, awareness of psychic wounds and constant vigilance. It is a truly heroic task. The warrior ethos can be taken to a new level in the fight against injustice, suffering, cruelty of every kind – the release of humanity from the bondage of unconsciousness.

As we accomplish this task in our individual lives and in our culture, we may become the servants of the immense power that lives through us and direct it to help others. This is the treasure the dragon guards, the treasure given to the one who has the courage to face the dragon of fear and hatred and not be overcome by its fiery breath. He or she then has access to energy which is directed towards the compassionate service of humanity.

Labyrinth of Chartres large picture

Now, I would like to turn to the labyrinth on the floor of the Cathedral. There was originally a copper plate at the centre of the labyrinth. In 1792 during the Napoleonic wars, it was removed and melted down. It held the image of Theseus and the Minotaur and, standing next to them, Ariadne with the ball of twine given to her by Daedalus, the master builder, when she asked for help for Theseus, with whom she had fallen in love. It may be that the builders of Chartres wanted to identify themselves with this earlier Master Builder and the story of deliverance from the power of the Minotaur that he facilitated. They fashioned the labyrinth as a message to those who walked its path. Their message was perhaps this: remember the thread of Ariadne that will guide you to its centre and out again to the world. Remember that the confrontation with the Minotaur is no easy task. And, as you walk, hold the awareness of the divine world in the form of the great rose window we designed, which exactly matches the dimensions of the labyrinth itself.

Labyrinth picture 1

Here are two beautiful paintings of the labyrinth as it was imagined in the sixteenth century. The story was originally written down by Ovid in his book *Metamorphoses*.

Labyrinth picture 2

Detail of Labyrinth

The way through the labyrinth leads by a circuitous spiral path inwards to the centre and then out again. It consists of 11 concentric circles and is thought to act as a bridge connecting dimensions. Together with the centre, the total number is 12, the number of completion or totality. The path makes 28 folds or loops – the number of the days of the lunar month.

The centre represents the transcendent state. Having reached it we can then make the journey of return to the world, carrying with us the memory of the connection with the centre. Walking the labyrinth, holding the mythical thread of Ariadne in our imagination, can help us to connect with this part of ourselves because it is not only an image of the path through life that can often be so confusing and frightening but also an image of the path through the labyrinth of the twelve starry constellations that influence our lives. It is also an image of the instinctive entrails within us, the primordial habits that bind us in an unconscious state. But the wisdom of the Feminine as the Law of Love can, like the thread of Ariadne, act as guide through the labyrinth of life and release us from the power of the Minotaur.

The Virgin Mary was identified with Ariadne as the source of this spiritual guidance. The rose at the centre is a symbol of Mary, the *rosa mystica*. Her

patronage of the Seven Liberal Arts shows us the way through the labyrinth of life and the labyrinth of the soul.

The labyrinth contains three basic symbols: the circle, the spiral and the cross. It unites the circle of wholeness of the spiritual dimension with the square of matter and the world, together with the cross whose centre is also a symbol of the place where the vertical and horizontal paths of life cross each other. This image of the cross is something we need to hold in our consciousness as often as we can because in this way we stay connected to both worlds: the temporal and the eternal.

Picture of labyrinth lit up

The labyrinth symbolises the pathway through life in this world as a conscious preparation for life in the eternal one, whose presence is indicated by the jewelled colours of the great rose window on the Western façade which has the same dimensions as the labyrinth. If the rose window were folded down over the labyrinth, it matches its dimensions exactly, so emphasising the relationship between them. The rose at the centre of the labyrinth, whose central space represents the number 7, the number of Sophia or Divine Wisdom, exactly matches the dimensions of the rosette in the centre of the West Rose Window which holds the figure of Christ.

As you move through the labyrinth, the electro-magnetic field of your body will blend with the powerful telluric field of the Cathedral that was recognised by the Druids millennia ago.

In the first stage, enter into a state of meditation where you let go of your thoughts, clear your mind, concentrate on your inbreath and outbreath and tune in to the presence and rhythm of your heart, breathing in and out through it if you can. Recall any latent sense of grief, anger, bitterness, regret or fear and offer it up for release so that your soul can be freed of their power. Stay with whatever image comes to you and hold it in the field of your love. You are entering a field where time is transcended and old wounds can be healed. When you reach the centre, pause and open your heart to what is there to be received.

As you move along the path back into the world, make the connection between what you have received and what you can take back from the world of eternity into the world of time in the way of healing and illumination. Ask for guidance in healing the traumas created by our unconscious habits of behaviour.

Interior of Cathedral

Chartres gives us a new vision of Man as well as a path to Awakening. Its purpose is to draw those of us who tread its stone-flagged floor from the visible

to the invisible world, to see through the veil of matter to the divine ground; to see matter permeated by the presence of spirit. After leaving the labyrinth and moving to the middle point where the transepts cross the nave, we receive the full alchemical force of the light emanating from the three rose windows. The place where the cross axis meets the long axis of the nave represents the meeting place of time and eternity and the place of the heart within us as well as the heart chakra of the Cathedral and the Divine Wisdom that Mary and her Son bring to the world. The long axis of the nave represents the path we tread as we grow in insight and understanding. Having entered the Cathedral at the West door, we pass through the sacred attuning ritual of the labyrinth and can then proceed to the sacred place of the high altar in the East, the place of union with God and a new birth.