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What evil lurks in the hearts of men? The Shadow!

Inna Semetsky, Ph.D.

Introduction

This paper examines the symbolism of "The Devil", trump number XV in the Tarot deck, from the perspective of the Jungian archetype of the Shadow. Jung saw how powerfully this archetype worked behind the scene, implicitly affecting one's mind and explicitly causing one to behave in a neurotic or compulsive manner.

The Jungian analytical psychology attempts to create, by means of a symbolic approach, a dialectical relationship between the contents of the unconscious and the conscious mind. To achieve a mental health means to continuously work on expanding the boundaries of individual consciousness, and Tarot readings serve as a means towards achieving this purpose (Semetsky 1994, 1998, 2000).

The focus of this paper is one actual reading (Semetsky 1994) intended as an illustration for a clinical case study that I used to analyze the action of Tarot signs and, specifically, the archanum number XV, the Shadow archetype. The important role played by this sign in a subject's psyche can be addressed at both emotional and cognitive levels. A logic of affect, compatible with Peirce's triadic semiotics, enables signs to function at the level of Firstness, that is *outside* one's individual cognition, yet *inside* the collective unconscious posited by Jung.

The Thirdness of mediation during an analytic, interpretive, session contributes to signs becoming present to one's conscious awareness as objects of action and reaction, that is, Secondness. The explication of the implicit meanings, in accord with Peirce's pragmatic maxim, has profound therapeutic implications for the subject of the reading by not only contributing to healing one's psyche but also by virtue of enabling one to look reflectively at oneself as situated within conflicting experiences.

Peirce's semiotics and Jung's depth psychology

This section attempts to, by employing Charles Sanders Peirce's three semiotic categories, unpack the complexities of Jungian conceptualizations. Jung rejected

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dualistic logic and, similar to Peirce, asserted that "psyche and matter are two different aspects of one and the same thing" (Jung CW 8, 418). As if anticipating the post-Cartesian philosophies, Jung did not draw a line of great divide between the products of imagination and those of intellect: all thinking aims to the creation of meanings

Briefly, in its practical sense, Jungian analysis incorporates "the paradigm of an *active, interventionist therapist*" (Samuels 1985: 197) who facilitates an analytic session by means of interpreting images that may appear as unconscious material in an analysand's dreams, or in art forms like pictures and drawings, including such artifacts as *I Ching* and Tarot, or in a course of an active imagination during sessions. Unconscious, for Jung, is not reduced to Freudian repression, but is specified as lacking meaning, that is, as yet – prior to the Thirdness of mediation (that is, reading and interpretation) – being out of the conscious awareness.

The unconscious is collective, that is it involves past heritage and future possibilities, and its content is determined by the activity of archetypal dynamic patterns, indeed "habits-taking" (Peirce CP 1.409), manifesting as universal motifs in human behaviors. Habits, for Peirce, are dispositions to act in a certain way under specific circumstances "and when actuated by a given motive" (Peirce CP 5. 480). As for the archetypes, they were conceptualized by Jung as being "a real force charged with specific energy" (1963: 352) or "system[s] of readiness for action" (Jung CW 9, 199).

A sign, "in order to fulfil its office, to actualize its potency, must be compelled by its object" (Peirce CP 5. 554), therefore it strives to appear in a mode of Thirdness and become available to integration into consciousness. Any sign, for Peirce, is in fact a sign if and only if it is interpreted. An act of imagination is potentially transformative, according to Peirce, in its function as deliberation for the purpose to generate a meaning for a habit. For Jung, all archetypal images are "endowed with a generative power; ... [the image] is psychically compelling" (Samuels, Shorter & Plaut 1986: 73).

A habit which manifests itself in a particular way of human conduct, including one's emotions and perceptions, may become identified in a course of analytical relationship as embedded in some actual problematic situation, that is as otherness, or Secondness of "reaction against my will" (Peirce CP 8. 144) manifested in the intervention of brute facts of human experiences. The purpose of Jungian analysis consists in *individuation*, the latter seen as a process of integration of conscious and unconscious aspects of one's self for the "achievement of a greater personality" (Jung CW 7, 136).

Integration, as the production of meanings, leads to potential change in one's habitual ways of thinking, feeling and behaving as eventual effects of an analytic process the latter based on archetypal imagery embedded in the collective unconscious. Thus Jungian analytical psychology, both theoretically and practically, may be considered to be a pragmatic method quite in accord with Peirce's maxim: "Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then our conception of these effects is the whole of our

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conception of the object" (CP 5. 402).

New information, as the effect of interpretation, not only determines the concept but also "gives it body" (Peirce CP 1. 537) in the world of action. The archetypal images are thus semiotic by virtue of their being carriers of information (see Semetsky 1998) embedded in the collective unconscious: the unconscious is capable of spontaneously producing images "irrespective of wishes and fears of the conscious mind" (Jung CW 11, 745). Archetypes are postulated by Jung to serve as a psychological, or better psychic – hence, *depth* psychology – ground for habits. Never mind their status as ideas, or rather because they are indeed regulative and generative ideas, archetypes as *symbols* of transformation are effective in the *physical* world. For Peirce too, "the ideas do play a part in the real world" (MS 967. 1).

Mental images are not pure icons, they become enriched with indexicality; they perform a definite sign-function and point to some antecedent event contributing to their appearing in the unconscious. Thus they *indicate* Seconds of actions and reactions, rather than just being Firsts of the as yet disembodied mind. Jung used the word *symptom* (cf. Sebeok 1991) within clinical discourse. An image, if "purposively interpreted, ... seems like a *symbol*, seeking to characterize a definite goal with the help of the material at hand, or trace out a line of future psychological development" (Jung CW 6, 720).

In this respect, Peircean might-be-ness and would-be-ness, that is his altogether virtual Real, seem to be isomorphic with the realm of the collective unconscious the latter defined not only as the repository of human past, inherited, dispositions, but also future developments. Jung's position seems to be almost deterministic in his saying that "the archetype determines the nature of the configurational process and the course it will follow, with seeming foreknowledge, or as if it were already in a possession of the goal" (Jung CW 8, 411). The archetype's function is that of a Peircean "general idea ... [which] is already determinative of acts in the future to an extent to which it is not now conscious" (Peirce CP 6. 156).

The synthesis of time inscribed in the collective unconscious as the universal memory pool accords with Peirce's semiosis acting within a shared layer of human experiences that includes dimensions of past, present and future: "A man denotes whatever is the object of his attention at the moment; he connotes whatever he knows or feels of this object, and is the incarnation of this form ...; his interpretant is the future memory of this cognition, his future self, or another person he addresses, or a sentence he writes, or a child he gets" (Peirce CP 7. 591).

The Thirdness of interpretation in its mediation performs the amplifying function constituting the basis of Jungian *synthetic* method which implies the *emergence* – that is a leap to a new meaning (cf. Peirce) – as carrying the utmost significance. Synthetic method thus reflects the future-oriented path to knowledge, the memory of the future – or what Jung called a prospective function of the unconscious – and indeed amplifies traditional psychoanalysis which was considered by Jung as reductive because of its

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sole orientation to the past marked by a single signified.

For Jung, as for Peirce, "psychological fact ... as a living phenomenon, ... is always indissolubly bound up with the continuity of the vital process, so that it is not only something evolved but also continually evolving and creative" (Jung CW 6, 717). Moreover, Jung's defining the collective unconscious as the *objective* psyche outside the actual personal experience and his notion of the archetypes that may appear as mental representations of an object – even if the latter appears to be "a pure fiction" (Peirce CP 4. 351) – describe in a way "the Reality which by some means contrives to determine the Sign to its Representation" (Peirce CP 4. 536).

The reality *contriving* the determine the sign to its representation is, for Jung, the psychic reality: as a sign, the very depth of the psyche creates a *relation* between the worlds of mind and matter. Mental images *per se* in their Firstness are *immediate* objects – Peirce was saying that "this is present to me" (CP 5. 289) – but the archetypes to which they refer, seem to accord with Peircean definition of the *mediate* or *dynamical* object "which ... the Sign ... can only *indicate* and leave to the interpreter to find out by *collateral experience*" (CP 8. 314).

For Jung, archetypes are general tendencies and subsist, rather than exist, *in potentia* only. The skeletal concepts, their significance is not exhausted by Platonic Ideas: as Firsts, they are only "forms without content, representing merely the possibility of a certain type of perception and action" (Jung in Spinks 1991: 448). But the vague and unconscious forms are to be filled with contents. Situated in the midst of Seconds, within real flesh-and-blood human experiences, they need thought and interpretation as Thirds so that to acquire meaning by virtue of being "altered by becoming conscious and by being perceived" (Jung in Pauli 1994: 159).

The plurality of evolving meanings find their expressions in the symbols of transformation embedded in the series of thought-signs and sign-events. A symbol, for Jung, "points beyond itself to a meaning that is ... still beyond our grasp, and cannot be adequately expressed in the familiar words of our language" (Jung in Noth 1995: 119) but needs a medium – Thirdness – for its expression.

The relationship between the collective unconscious and the individual consciousness was of the utmost importance for Jung. Signs are "always grounded in the unconscious archetype, but their manifest forms are molded by the ideas acquired by the conscious mind. The archetypes [as] ... structural elements of the psyche ... possess a certain autonomy and specific energy which enables them to attract, out of the conscious mind, those contents which are better suited to themselves" (Jung CW 5, 232) – that is, as Peirce would have said, potentially "connected with in representation" (CP 5. 285). The attraction is a quality of affect, the latter – in its relation of Firstness – is indeed independent, that is, autonomous.

In order to explain the contingency of events as meaningful coincidences, Jung postulated the so called synchronicity principle, that is the absence of a direct (or local,

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in the language of contemporary physics) cause-effect connection. Recall Peirce's asserting that the absence of cause had to be admitted as playing a part in the universe: although Jung never overestimated the role of pure chance, his was indeed an acausal connecting principle attempting to overcome the chance/cause dualism and to explain the occurrence of coincidences as having value and meaning.

The principle of synchronicity was developed by Jung in collaboration with Wolfgang Pauli, the latter taking the idea seriously and elaborating on it in detail. Synchronicity addresses the problematic of meaningful patterns generated both in nature and in human experience, linking the concept of the unconscious to the notion of "'field' in physics ... [and extending] the old narrow idea of 'causality' ... to a more general form of 'connections' in nature" (Pauli 1994: 164). Pauli envisaged the development of the theories of the unconscious as overgrowing their solely therapeutic applications by being eventually assimilated into natural sciences "as applied to vital phenomena" (1994: 164).

Referring to various phenomena that may appear random and senseless if not for their meaningful synchronistic significance, Jung has mentioned that "it also seems as if the set of pictures in the Tarot cards were distantly descended from the archetypes of transformation" (CW 9, 81). This brief note has subsequently inspired a substantial body of work produced by contemporary post-Jungians. Andrew Samuels, for example mentions "systems such as that of the *I Ching*, Tarot and astrology" (1985: 123) as possible, even if questionable, resources in analysis and quotes Jung's writing in 1945: "I found the *I Ching* very interesting. ... I have not used it for more than two years now, feeling that one must learn ... or try to discover (as when one is learning to swim) whether the water will carry one. (quoted in Jaffe 1979)" (Samuels 1985: 123).

Jung's biographer Laurens van der Post, in his introduction to "Jung and Tarot: an Archetypal Journey" by S. Nichols (1980), notices the contribution made to analytical psychology by "Nichols, in her profound investigation of Tarot, and her illuminated exegesis of its pattern as an authentic attempt at enlargement of possibilities of human perceptions" (1980: xv). Irene Gad (1994) has connected Tarot cards with the process of individuation and considered their archetypal images "to be ... trigger symbols, appearing and disappearing throughout history in times of transition and need" (1994: xxxiv).

Each Tarot image may be considered what Peirce called "an Icon of a peculiar kind" (CP 2. 248). Because of the cards' a-priori indexicality as related to the archetypes of the collective unconscious, a layout functions in a mode of Peircean existential graphs therefore asserting its possible "epistemological thrust" (Spinks 1991: 446). Peirce asserted the possibility of habit-change not only at the mental level, but also at the level of action: transformation of old habits means "a modification of a person's tendencies toward action" (CP 5. 476) – such a modification being the ultimate purpose of the reading process. Habits, however, are resilient – they wouldn't be called habits otherwise – and their action is similar to the action of archetypes that, according to Jung, can sometimes possess the psyche in a guise of an individual or collective

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Shadow – the latter corresponding, as it seems, to card number XV, "The Devil".

Imagery

The semiotics of the card number XV presents an image of the Devil (Fig. 1) –the fallen angel, the dark archetypal shadow of oneself. The two naked figures on the picture lost all the power of thinking clearly and consciously. They are being held by chains representing one's self-destructive tendencies and weaknesses. Several questions immediately arise: What is holding the subject of the reading in bondage? How to overcome fears of one's own free self? How to get rid of those chains?



Figure 1: The Devil

"Illustration is from Rider-Waite Tarot Deck, known also as the Rider Tarot and the Waite Tarot. Reproduced by permission of US Games Systems Inc., Stamford, CT 06902, USA. Copyright 1971 by US Games Systems, Inc. Further reproduction prohibited"

For Jung, the concept of Shadow describes a cluster of impulses, complexes, shameful and unacknowledged desires, self-indulgences and being a slave to one's own primitive instincts. Sexual compulsion, poor impulse control and low frustration tolerance are some behavioral signs that may manifest in real life under the unconscious influence of this archetype. Plain old greed may drive one crazy or destroy the ability of fair

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decision-making. It may be a fear, or a superficial complex of superiority when in fact one feels inferior. In interpersonal relationship, the Devil can reflect upon co-dependency issues. It may be a deeply engraved fear of breaking free – similar to battered women staying in the relationship with abusive spouses. As a sign, which indeed plays its part in a semiotic drama, the Shadow calls for a deep exploration so its psychodynamic presence can be acknowledged, recognized, analyzed and, ultimately, transformed.

My son gave me permission to reproduce here his poem, "The Night", that, as it seems to me, strikingly describes sensations and emotions experienced by a person whose psyche is affected by the Shadow archetype.

It's this intoxicating night
Whose foreign smell and melting light
And steaming sounds at every pore
Entice me to the devils door.
The beating heart sweet poison craves
As groaning muscles in their graves
Are roused, and ancient flesh is thawed
By tongues of fire that long ignored
The taste of wine, the candle's flame
A glimpse of sin, the naked shame
Of heaving beasts! A sleeping snake
In darkness strikes! Alive! Awake!
The hiss of death, the kiss of birth,
Both writhe entwined beneath the earth
That promised cooling midnight rain
But brings forth deadly weeds, again.
Again, the first bleak rays of dawn
Will open weary wounds to scorn
And mock the bloody, sweat-drenching fight
In this intoxicating night.

A Case Study

Sam was a man in his 40s, who wanted to have a reading for some, as he said, current professional problems. His layout is shown here in Fig. 2.

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because somebody did not keep his promise regarding a career offer.

Were there any psychological reasons – beside circumstantial ones – for Sam not having been able to get the promised contract? The eight of swords indicated that Sam was quite unaware of how his own power is being suppressed. According to this card, his current mode of existence resembled a sleepwalker who was moving around as if blind-folded and stepping on his repressed feelings and unspoken emotions.

The Empress in the second position told me that Sam's psyche was overtaken by the Mother-archetype. The crossing position of the Empress pointed out that this otherwise positive archetype was counterproductive to Sam's own personal and professional development. Sam was focusing too much on the well-being of his family and children (the Page of Cups) at the expense of devoting some of the time and emotional strength to pursuing his own interests.

The cluster of three cards in the fifth position pointed to Sam's current inability of clear and focused decision-making. Sam fluctuated between the vocational calling (the Magician) and the Shadow part of his nature that was progressively making him a dependent personality unable to move forward.

At this point Sam said that I am wrong and he does not depend on anyone: just the opposite, he was working at a job that he'd rather give up because he was supporting his wife through law school. So in Sam's mind it was his wife who were dependent on him and not he himself who was chained by the Devil.

The three of swords indicated that Sam's role in family was not appreciated at all. Before interpreting the meaning of this card, since it was a sensitive issue, I asked Sam if he felt supported; he said that he never felt supported at home but he accepted it and learned to live with it. Such was the Devil in action: this sign took away Sam's self-esteem, it imprisoned Sam and made him repress emotions and exist in a state of denial of the actual state of affairs. Sam was a slave of the emotional and, quite possible, sexual dependency, as depicted by Devil; he was immobile, as if chained by his feelings towards his wife, who however was not giving him anything in return to keep his psyche in balance.

The Devil indicated that although Sam was convinced that he, as he said, "learned to live" with a total lack of emotional support or love, as if having made a conscious choice, he was in fact driven by the unconscious primitive instincts and co-dependent traits. The symbolism of the Devil carried connotations of those traits functioning as chains that were keeping Sam in the underworld of denial and dependency. To win over polarity of opposites in his personality (the Magician and the Devil) Sam would have to use the help of the Chariot that would carry him towards the transformative, albeit painful, change in his whole character represented by the Death card.

When I finished reading, Sam said that it has made him nervous when "it hit emotional nerves". Well, thus spoke the Devil – the stripping of old outgrown feelings and

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thoughts that were about to be discarded as broken chains can be.

Conclusion

The poisonous quality of the shadow—the dark side of the Trickster – must be recognized, otherwise, it will fall into the depth of the unconscious. The unconscious becomes available to consciousness during its exposure through the Tarot signs. Sometimes, people – similar to Sam – almost deliberately create an illusion of being free when in fact they are imprisoned by their own repressions and denials. The Shadow can often become projected onto others, and one may very well attribute to significant others those qualities that one is tempted to deny in oneself. However human development is impossible without a recognition of bondage which creates an obstacle for the journey ahead.

The reading as described above demonstrated how the subject becomes aware of his own old habitual behaviors and deeply engrained beliefs so that the possibility of breaking free from the counterproductive habits is recognized. Sam is given an opportunity to start the process of understanding some aspects of himself that kept him in the emotionally destructive pattern of behavior. The semiotics of Tarot is a practical means for getting out of the restrictive chains comprising the dark side of either an individual character or behavior at the collective level when governed by "the Devil" archetype.

Individuation, as the never-ending process toward the maximally integrated personality, was used by Jung in the same sense as the Peircean term individual: that which is whole and indivisible, or an ideal limit approximated by actualities or exists in the hecceities of human experience that tend to appear in each singular reading as a meaningful sequence of archetypal events. Thus, an active participation in semiosis by entering the process through its own symbolic representation in tarot signs does contribute to overcoming one's own *Shadow*, therefore marking a significant step towards individuation. Signs are dynamic: they have a tendency to grow, develop and become other signs. Human growth is embedded in a continuous semiotic process of potentially becoming other – and hopefully "more fully developed" (Peirce CP 5. 594) – signs among signs.

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