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## The Darkest Pit:<sup>1</sup> The Shadow in Wordsworth's Poetry

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### Abstract

This paper reads Wordsworth's poetry from a Jungian point of view, and asserts that Wordsworth's poetry focuses on the unconscious and its contents. Turning one's back on the unconscious leads to the development of the shadow. We also contend that Wordsworth seems to urge his reader to turn to the unconscious in order to integrate the shadow into the conscious—something which helps us have a more productive, empathic, and healthy life on individual level and more tolerant, understanding, and peaceful life on collective level.

**Keywords:** Wordsworth, Jung, the unconscious, the darkest pit

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### Introduction

The image of “the darkest pit” in the title of this paper, perhaps describes the unconscious in the best possible way—the depth and the darkness symbolize the unconscious.<sup>2</sup> Its recurrence in various forms in Wordsworth's poetry gives the reader a feeling that he/she is voyaging through the dark world of the unconscious and is exploring its depth in order to bring the unknown contents to the known world of the conscious.

The most immediate content of the unconscious is the shadow which is born as a result of the individual's overdeveloped persona.<sup>3</sup> For it is nature's law that where the sun is, there shall shade be; and by the same token, where the persona is, there shall shadow be. All that we hate and despise or what we do not want to be is what constitutes our shadow.<sup>4</sup> Since the shadow archetype exists in the upper layer of the unconscious quite immediate to the conscious, the process of individuation starts from our encounter with it.<sup>5</sup> The shadow, being the undesirable dark side of our personality, is not publicly presentable. We push back any behaviour, action, notion, belief, or practice which our society considers "bad," "wrong," or "evil." This is why we keep such dark side of our personality hidden and suppressed; exposing it to the society tarnishes our public image, and disturbs our adjustment to our social norms. We don't allow this side of our personality to develop. Our constant suppression of the shadow eventually makes it negative which turns totally against us and erodes our persona by flooding all the external barriers. Instead of looking within ourselves and accepting our own weaknesses or the evil within, we go on projecting the evil onto others. In order to make our attitude positive, efficient, and productive, what we need the most is to pay serious attention to the neglected part of our own selves. This is more or less the attitude of the romantics for whom the dark or the invisible, the infinite or the unknown, which are the characteristics of the unconscious, is more important than the brighter and the visible in life. Their whole focus is to look within their own being or the unconscious and illuminate the dark side of themselves.<sup>6</sup>

Paying attention to the unconscious helps us focus on its contents, which invariably leads to coming to terms with oneself—something that a Jungian would call individuation. One explores and learns about the neglected aspects of one's being—some of the basic instincts that all humans overlook or even suppress to suit themselves to the immediate social environment around them. Thus while they shine from without, they cast a shadow of the bright face from within. The more one pursues the socially acceptable and desirable face, the darker the shadow becomes, and in the process one turns back on the unconscious. This overdevelopment of the persona makes one lopsided. Instead of accepting our shadow as part of our being, we turn against it, and want to eliminate it.

To be able to strike a balance between the outer and the inner worlds or the conscious and the unconscious, one has to look inside and integrate the suppressed aspects into the conscious. One has to learn to live with what is the undesirable, the unacceptable, the disgusting, the evil—something which is as

much part of one's being or of a society as the desirable, the acceptable, the presentable, the good. I argue that like most Romantics, Wordsworth also focuses on the neglected and the suppressed aspects of life, the shadow, in order to integrate them into the conscious. His focus on the characters which are otherwise marginalized in a society, like leech gatherers, beggars, gypsies, are a good example of his attempt to integrate these undesirable events and neglected denizens—something that a Jungian would call the contents of the society or the unconscious. This chapter reads Wordsworth's poetry from a Jungian point of view, and asserts that Wordsworth's poetry focuses on the unconscious and its contents; that turning one's back on the unconscious leads to the development of the shadow. I also contend that Wordsworth seems to urge his reader to turn to the unconscious to integrate the shadow into the conscious—something which helps us have a more productive, empathic, and healthy life on individual level and more tolerant, understanding, and peaceful life on collective level. This, however, is possible only when the conscious and the unconscious interact with each other.

The frequent use of nocturnal imagery in Wordsworth poetry requires a careful analysis. He employs images which evoke immensity and vastness or infinity, which are the common characteristics of the unconscious. That means focus on the unconscious is one of the common motifs in Wordsworth's poetry. Images like "the dark winter night" (*Excursion* VII, 448) <sup>7</sup>; and "dark-green wood" ("Descriptive Sketches," 269); "secreted islands" (*Prelude* X, 63); the "rocky cave" ("Composed While..." 5); the "dark cave, the goblin's hall" ("The Idiot Boy," 228); the "sunless cleft" ("The Faery Chasm," 2); "Nature's dark abyss" ("Lines Composed at Grasmere," 18); "subterranean fields" (*Prelude* X, 62); "the sunless land" ("Extempore Effusion," 24); "A dungeon dark" ("Is there a power..." 4) are only some of the images that symbolize the unconscious. All these images suggest something which is not clearly visible or accessible, more like the unconscious which in itself has a world of its own but which has not been explored to the maximum. They also bring to mind the idea of an immense storehouse where, in addition to its own contents or potential, we store condemned articles or discarded objects.

The contents of the unconscious are the archetypes; the most well-known are the persona and the shadow. The former we acquire as we interact with the world around us. And as we adjust ourselves to our surroundings, we push back into the unconscious instincts, actions, and ideas which our society considers undesirable; Jungians call these personal shadow. The more we consciously adjust ourselves to our mores and social norms, the darker the shadow grows. Wordsworth, in a way,

prefigures what Jung and Jungians call psychological truths. Reading his poetry from a Jungian point of view reveals that Wordsworth also talks about issues which a Jungian would describe as the personal and the collective shadows; the latter is what a society, ethnicity or people of a country consider undesirable, unacceptable, evil etc.<sup>8</sup> The shadow is the first and foremost archetype of the unconscious which has the most powerful and troubling influence on individual's personality.<sup>9</sup> Like the unconscious, the shadow, being a content of the unconscious, is also associated with darkness. The two are, however, different in that the unconscious is the whole, while the shadow, an archetype, is one of the infinite parts of the whole. The shadow is associated with darkness because it is not conscious, and being undesirable is negative in nature. It is something that we want to keep in the dark so no one sees it as it is the unacceptable part of our being. The shadow is something that we hate. Images like "a dark abominable pit" ("At Bologna...", 4), "abhorred den" (*Borderers*, 546) and "shadowy cave" ("To the Moon," 63) clearly point to the dark side of an individual or of society. The personal shadow, Jung says, is "acquired during the individual's lifetime" while the collective shadow<sup>10</sup> is "present from the beginning" and are common to all human kind.<sup>11</sup> For example, the idea of evil is common to all societies and ethnicities irrespective of time and place. However, the things, actions, and/or ideas that we consider evil change from place to place and time to time.

Wordsworth's poetry contains examples of both the shadows but here in this paper I will confine myself to the collective one which, being an archetype of the "collective unconscious" (Jung, *Portable*, 60), is antique, primitive, and inherited.<sup>12</sup> As an archetypal content, the collective shadow represents the collective psyche of a whole group, community, society or a nation on the basis of religion, ethnicity, profession, politics, caste and colour. It will not be inappropriate to say that our hatred and prejudice against some societies, communities, religions, or professions is only because of our inherent collective shadow lurking within ourselves. It takes on different colours and contours according to beliefs and norms of society and culture. Satan, Devil, or their symbolic variants are some of the seminal collective shadow figures in Judo-Christian-Islamic belief system. These variants are found in every culture, from gods and goddesses through witches and furies to ghosts and fairy tales.<sup>13</sup> The archetypal evil is responsible for motivating our acts and actions through which we demonize others to divinize our egos and personas as the only representatives of what is "good" in the world. Instead of blaming ourselves for our own weaknesses and failings we hold "others" responsible. All societies have the practice of "demonizing" certain things or people. We can confidently say that

Wordsworth deals with the issue of highlighting the dark side or suppressed aspects of life. By doing so, he not only accepts these aspects as an essential part of human life, he also integrates them into the conscious. He fetches them from the background to the foreground, and thus integrates them into the conscious. He confidently handles, through some of the characters, the problem of the shadow at collective level. "The Old Cumberland Beggar" and "Gipsies," (used by the poet as titles) are enough to evoke collective pictures of what society demonizes as evil, satanic, inhuman, and ominous for no fault of theirs, but to glorify our personas as good, divine, human, and auspicious. Thus the characters of the beggar and gypsies coupled with that of the Leech-gatherer in "Resolution and Independence" give us a clear picture of shadow at the collective level. Compared to the integration of the individual shadow, the collective shadow is far more difficult to handle because it requires positive and productive changes at social level to accept the unacceptable and undesirable figures as extensions of our psychic wholeness as humans. The ideas and beliefs associated with certain professions like leech-gathering, shoe-making, drumming or begging are not considered as clean, respectable, and decent in society. Being undesirable is what makes these professions symbolic of the collective shadow.

Wordsworth's "Resolution and Independence" is one of such poems which deals with the problem of integrating the marginalized collective shadow into the conscious. The Leech-gatherer, who roams "from pond to pond" (103) to "gather leeches" (100), appears to be socially disgusting and abhorrent. The job of gathering leeches is deemed untidy, indecent and publicly un-presentable in society. This is why Leech-gatherer is symbolic of the undesirable dark side or the collective shadow of the society. We deem those individuals and families related to such humble professions as an inferior lot of a community or a society. Likewise there are other professions as well which are deemed as disrespectful and despicable on religious, cultural, or moral grounds. Our hatred and bias against such professions are deeply rooted in our unconscious. That means that we are in the complete grip or possession of an archetype of the collective shadow which generally leads to despising such unpretentious professions and professionals at the conscious level in order to be acceptable to society. The result is that we "otherize" a class of individuals from the main stream of society in our unconscious attempt to follow the demands of the persona, and lose our spiritual contact with the bigger whole of humanity. To accept the unacceptable within and without is a moral challenge for the conscience of an individual or society as it tarnishes our social image around. The recognition and integration of the shadow into the

conscious as involve a lot of sacrifices in the form of cherished ideals, the shedding of our unnatural or false selves and above all the self- surrender of the inflated ego.<sup>14</sup> As Jung says:

To be conscious of [the shadow] involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge, and it therefore, as a rule meet with considerable resistance. Indeed, self-knowledge as a psychotherapeutic measure frequently requires much painstaking work extending over a long period (*Portable*, 145).

Wordsworth's saying, "The old Man's shape, and speech—all troubled me; / In my mind's eye" (128-29), may be symbolically interpreted as a troubling experience of meeting the shadow. The resemblance of "the oldest man" with "a *sea-beast crawled forth*, that on a shelf/ Of rock or sand reposes, there *to sun itself*" (62-63. Emphasis mine) is an interesting image to note. The image symbolizes the terrible manifestation of the shadow out of the sea of the unconscious in order to be illuminated or integrated into the conscious. It implies that such marginalized individuals need to be actively functional parts of society, enriching it with diversified skills and talents. They too, like us, desire to be respectable denizens of society. The description of the old Man in the following passage gives us some clear clues about the undesirable associations of the collective shadow figures. Wordsworth says:

Such seemed this Man, *not all alive nor dead*,  
 Nor all asleep—in his old age:  
 His body was bent double, feet and head  
 Coming together in life's pilgrimage;  
 As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage  
 Of sickness felt by him in times long past,  
*A more than human weight upon his frame* had cast  
 ("Independence and Resolution," 64-70. Emphasis mine).

The picture of a man half dead /half alive is good enough to suggest fear and horror, imaging something unhealthy for us to accept as part of our personality or for society to absorb as one of its operatives gone faulty. The crooked figure of the Leech-gatherer read with "more than human weight upon his frame" and "dire constraint of pain, or rage / Of sickness" has a strong symbolic connection with

“dwarfs” interpreted as shadow in Jungian studies. Dwarf figures literally represent what is below “normal” from the viewpoint of our monotheistic ego. Thus we can easily assume that the Leech-gather is a shadow figure tickling our imagination for integration.

Manifestation of the collective shadow may also be traced in the character of the aged Beggar in “The Old Cumberland Beggar.” Begging is also an undesirable profession which makes it a collective shadow of the society. Beggars are marginalized humans in every society. They are deemed as despicable and most undesirable humans, which is why they are obvious symbols of the collective shadow of every society. In our blind pursuits of personas we fail to see humanness in such neglected humans. Due to lack of self-knowledge or lack of consciousness we are unable to accept the Other as dark side of ourselves. The result is marginalization and “otherization” of humans from the central stream of the society. The result is that we demonize them and make them the butt of our hate, and thus subsequently try to “eliminate” them; hate crimes have this energy in the backdrop. Wordsworth in this poem handles the problem of marginalization of a profession which is the product of injustice and inequitable distribution of wealth, which forces a group into begging. From a symbolic perspective, the ego world pushes some contents into the background as unacceptable and abominable. Wordsworth, through the character of an aged Beggar, conveys a message to integrate the collective shadow in order to stay in touch with the bigger whole. The aged Beggar who “Shouts” from the “woody lane” (39-38) of the society is symbolic of the call of the unconscious to integrate the collective shadow. These calls of the marginalized humans we hear from time to time as reminders of the unconscious collective shadow for integration in the society. But being blinded by maddening worldly hunts we turn our deaf ear to them. The “sauntering Horseman” (26), who “safely lodge[s] the coin / Within the old man’s hat” (28-29) (the former symbolizes the conscious and the latter the collective shadow) shows his symbolic gesture of empathy with the marginalized other or the collective shadow. The boy, who “passes gently by, [the Beggar] without a curse / upon his lips or anger at his heart” (42-43) also shows a potential symptom of his tendency to see humanness in the marginalized humans. These symbolic gestures perhaps reveal one’s tendency which leads to accept the Other as an inseparable part of one’s self. Seeing the dark Other (neglected humans) or the collective shadow as an essential part of ours is the true test of one’s personality development. Whitmont says:

Acceptance of oneself is the essence of the moral problem and the acid test of one's whole outlook on life. That I feed the beggar, that I forgive an insult, that I love my enemy in the name of Christ—all these are undoubtedly are great virtues....but if I should discover that the least among them all, the poorest of all beggars, the most impudent of all offenders, yea the very fiend himself—that these are within me, and I myself stand in need of the alms of my own kindness, that I myself am the enemy who must be loved—what then (169).

The reader is tempted to bring the neglected Other back to the main stream of society with reference to the figures and images read in the light of the above quotes. That does not mean that we should encourage begging; certainly not. We must encourage a sense of earning money in a respectable manner rather than asking for it without working for it. But this too is a fact that failing to see humanness in such neglected and unkempt humans is to distance ourselves from the bigger whole of society. The aged Beggar being symbolic of the collective shadow is a psychic reminder to all of us to integrate the dark Other into the conscious in order to achieve harmony at individual and societal level. "Otherizing" leads to psychic split and disintegration on individual and societal levels both. This is why Wordsworth says:

But deem not this Man useless—Statesmen! Ye  
 Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye  
 Who have a broom still ready in your hands  
 To rid the world of *nuisances*; ye proud,  
 Heart-swoln, while in your pride you contemplate  
 Your talent, power, or wisdom, deem him not  
*A burthen of the earth!* 'tis Nature's law  
 That none, *the meanest of created things*,  
 Of forms created *the most vile and brute*,  
 The *dullest or most noxious*, should exist  
 Divorced from good—a spirit and pulse of good,  
 A life and soul, to every mode of being  
 Inseparably linked ("The Old Cumberland Beggar," 67-79).

Here the "statesmen" with authority and power representing the conscious are symbolic of the lopsided individuals with inflated egos. Due to overdeveloped personas, we fail to see humanness in the marginalized humans. In our chaotic



endeavour for adjustment to social “acceptables”, we are always “ready” “To rid the world of nuisances” or bent upon suppressing and marginalizing whatever is unacceptable to us under persona-possession. But due to lack of self-knowledge we do not know that “the meanest,” “most vile and brute,” “The duller or most noxious,” all being undesirable, are symbolic manifestations of our collective shadow or the dark side of the society of which we are denizens. We deem these ignored humans as “burden” on society, but we are unconscious of the simple fact that they are inexplicable part of ourselves and society. Emile Legouis says:

Contempt for man as he is, contempt for the world of reality, such at bottom is the twofold source of the disease from which men are suffering. This contempt, born of pride and impotence, is the height of impiety, and those who indulge in it may be said to be justly punished by the despair in which it results. *Nothing that this world contains is worthy of contempt; none who inhabits it has the right to despise* (77, Emphasis mine).

As the shadow warns us of our ignorance or lack of self-knowledge, so is the aged Beggar who as “A silent monitor” reminds us of “self-congratulation” (123-25) or self-acceptance or the dark half of our personalities. Extending helping hand to “the abject poor” (142) would be a symbolic gesture of empathy and compassion which can help us accept the undesirable dark side of ourselves and the society. Our conscious expression of friendliness and love for the “otherized” humans can strengthen bonds of humanity. But the lack of such affections will further widen the gulf and will distance us from the bigger whole.

As evil and good are “inseparably linked” so are the persona and the shadow. One of the extreme forms of denial of the collective shadow is to marginalize humans or societies on religious, ethnic, cultural, moral and racial grounds, which leads to sectarianism, racism, fascism, and xenophobia. Holocausts are a good example of it. Societies which are considered as “less” or “inferior” to others are also symbolic of the collective shadow because all our weaknesses are the constituents of our shadow. For example, the Arabian and the Indian societies are generally considered “less” among European societies or vice versa. Similarly, the Jews were a collective German shadow for the Nazis. No matter how much “inferior” these societies or humans are, they are inseparable part of the whole—humanity. We can never snuff them out of the society as they are manifestation of the dark half of ourselves. These marginalized humans are “Like dry remnant of a garden-flower / whose seeds are shed” (85-86). We need to accept them as necessary parts of

our being “for this single cause / That we have all of us one human heart” (152-53) or denizens of the same human society. Our neglect of this “dry remnant” or neglected humans leads us to selfishness, hatred, intolerance, and violence which pose a serious threat to the harmony and peace of the world. Due to our “selfishness and cold oblivious cares” we are not mindful of this serious threat to human bonds; the aged Beggar is a symbolic reminder. Wordsworth says:

While from door to door  
This old Man creeps, the villagers in him  
Behold a record which together binds  
Past deeds and offices of charity,  
Else unremembered, and so keeps alive  
The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of years,  
And that half-wisdom half-experience gives,  
Make slow to feel, and by sure steps resign  
To selfishness and cold oblivious cares. (87-95).

Wordsworth’s example of the kind neighbour who gives alms to this “old Mendicant” is another point for analysis. The act relates to the theme of the positive aspect of the unconscious urging us to connect with our fellow beings, which is not possible without kindness and compassion. This happens only when there is a regular traffic between the conscious and the unconscious. Wordsworth describes it in a variety of ways. For example, he writes:

Such pleasure is to one kind Being known,  
My neighbour, when with punctual care, each week,  
Duly as Friday comes, though pressed herself  
By her own wants, she from her store of meal  
Takes one unsparing handful for the scrip  
Of this *old Mendicant*, and, from her door  
Returning with exhilarated heart (154-60, Emphasis mine).

From the expressions “let him pass.../ Unblamed, uninjured” (162-66) we can infer that Wordsworth feels the problem of how we unconsciously blame and injure the integral parts of ourselves and our society. The following passage clearly points to this urge of how we intensely need to integrate the marginalized collective shadow in the form of marginalized humans for psychic growth and development. Wordsworth writes:

let him breathe  
 The freshness of the valleys; let his blood  
 Struggle with frosty air and winter snows;  
 And let the chartered wind that sweeps the heath  
 Beat his grey locks against his withered face.  
 .....  
 May never house, a misnamed of industry,  
 Make him a captive!—for that pent up din (172-76 &179-80).

Similarly, Wordsworth's "Gipsies" also reflects another encounter with the collective shadow and a more primitive side of the psyche. The gypsies in almost every society are marginalized and undesirable humans; which is why Wordsworth calls them "Wild outcasts of society" (28). Being undesirable is what makes these vagrants symbolic of the collective shadow of the whole society. While talking about Roma/Gypsies in the United States, Jerilyn Smith says, "Many Roma have been forced to hide their identity within the mainstream to avoid continued marginalization and ongoing attempts towards their extinction" (Abstract). Wordsworth's highlighting of these dark contents of the society points to this problem of marginalization of the collective shadow as part and parcel of our being. In our blind pursuit of personas we fail to see them as part of ourselves. The result is that we demonize and "otherize" these humble contents of society. This alienated "unbroken knot / Of human Beings" is the subject of our "scorn" ("Gipsies," 1-2, 26). The slaves are a good example of marginalization. Collective marginalization of humans on racial, religious, and social or cultural grounds is more dangerous than the individual shadow. The collective shadow often leads to counter move on continuous suppression as "crossed fingers, gives us an 'out' when pressed too far" (Wilmer, 17). Bloody revolutions and holocausts are good examples. Talking about the collective shadow Mattoon says:

The collective shadow is more consistently destructive. It is sometimes described as "absolute" evil. I prefer to say that the evil of the collective shadow is as absolute as possible in human life...The collective shadow's manifestations are the offences of the racial, economic and social groups against each other (Mattoon, Preface, ix).

All marginalized minorities in the world exhibit features of the collective shadow as they are deemed "less" and "inferior" on the basis of caste, colour, creed, profession or politics. This leads to racism, extremism, and hatred in the society.

Whitmont says, “Every minority and every dissenting group carries the shadow projection of the majority, be it Negro, white, Gentile, Jew, Italian, Irish, Chinese or French” (168). While referring to Jung, Massimo Lanzaro says that “not only the individual, but also whole nations, communities, and groups had shadows that had to be encountered. He [Jung] felt that the shadow has typically been demonized and ‘made evil,’ rather than viewed in a philosophical and more fair or equitable light”(1). This attitude of the people leads to communal riots, mass massacre, and terrorism in the society. Jung, while talking about the Psychology of Nazism, points to this collective shadow of the mass psychology as “‘blond beast’ [which] was stirring in an uneasy slumber and that an outburst was not impossible” (*Essays*, 2).<sup>15</sup>

In the present day world of conflicts and disintegration, to acknowledge the collective shadow has become a challenging task for all of us. That is why Martin Drahon Gallard says, “Consequently one must act, not only in relation to the conscious personality, but in relation to the contents of the shadow which is often in contradiction with consciousness” (in Mattoon, *Archetype of the Shadow*, 201). Instead of coming to terms with the shadow as “the ever-present dark brother or sister” (Whitmont, 168), we are spending lots of resources on the eradication of the shadow which is our futile attempt. In other words, we wage wars with what (shadow) cannot be eliminated. That is why Wilmer says, “How appetizing is the next shadow after you have one under your belt” (99)! Instead of bringing marginalized humans and societies closer to ourselves, we are bent upon eliminating them which leads to further disintegration of the society and the world.

We can integrate or become conscious of the collective shadow only when we interact with the unconscious. The images and expressions Wordsworth uses and which are analyzed below come remarkably close to how a Jungian would describe the same thought or situation of interaction with the unconscious that Wordsworth illustrates. For example, “peopling the dark woods” (*Excursion* I, 165) is one such image. The basic human instincts that become desirable or undesirable based on the social norms and mores which surround us are the contents of the dark woods which people the unconscious. One may also look at the same image in terms of individuals or societies with overdeveloped persona but turning to the woods (the unconscious) enable them to recognize and integrate the contents of the unconscious into the conscious. The idea of spending time in the woods or the wilderness when one has been overwhelmed by the fast pace of life is one of the most popular pastimes even today; we get a chance to reconnect with the aspects

of life that we otherwise do not find time to acknowledge. The sojourn into the woods, mountains, or deserts gives us the much needed respite from the otherwise hectic schedule in which we blindly pursue the dos and don'ts of our profession. We feel refreshed and revived, which is exactly what re-connecting with the unconscious does. Hence entering "the dark woods" is symbolically equivalent to staying in touch with the unconscious and assimilating its contents into the conscious which ennoble us with "that blessed mood:"

In which the burthen of the mystery,  
 In which the heavy and the weary weight  
 Of all this unintelligible world,  
 Is lightened:--that serene and blessed mood,  
 In which the affections gently lead us on ("Tintern Abbey," 37- 42).

It will not be inappropriate to say that keeping in touch with the unconscious leads humans to shed their unnatural selves and stand psychologically transformed or converted.

Wordsworth's urge to interact with the unconscious is so vibrant that one feels, while reading his poetry, as if he/she joins a venture to explore "the darkest pit" of the unconscious in order to bring its contents into the conscious. This urge of the poet "To illuminate the abyss of ages past" (*Prelude* XII, 63) symbolically points to highlight and integrate the contents of the unconscious into the conscious. The achievement of psychic balance comes from accessing the unconscious in a positive way. The symbolic act of integrating the shadow/unconscious is also traced in Wordsworth's "Beggars." His interaction with those whom he calls "a weed of glorious feature" (18) and gives the woman beggar "a boon" (17) highlights the problem of how we ignore to integrate the contents of the collective shadow. Wordsworth, through this poem, gives us a message to be accommodative, tolerant, and benign towards marginalized humans as our collective shadow which is an essential part of ourselves both at individual and collective levels.

Becoming conscious of the shadow leads to the discovery of the self; we see our personality and that of the others as a blend of both the desirable (the persona) and the undesirable (the shadow). The image, "Hermit's cave where by his fire / The hermit sits alone" ("Tintern Abbey," 21-22), symbolically points to this situation. The "cave" being dark symbolizes the unconscious and the fire the hermit lights

symbolizes the conscious. The hermit sees of the cave as much as the light allows him to exactly the way we know of ourselves as much as we have been able to integrate into the conscious. Believing that what the hermit can see is all that is there to the cave is not acknowledging the immense potential that might be there in the form of dangerous chasms and beautiful and precious crystals in the cave. The hermit being “alone” in the dark cave symbolizes the disregard that we ought to have at times for the social mores and norms so we can connect with the inner being where we have more than we are conscious of. This, however, does not mean that we have to be necessarily hermitic to reconnect with the unconscious. But the ability to be flexible enough to suit ourselves to the social environment and simultaneously be conscious of how we are being desirable at the cost of turning our back on the undesirable is in fact acknowledging the known and the unknown both. We have to be conscious that we are good at the cost of ignoring the bad in us, and that both are essential parts of our being. Being conscious of the persona and of the shadow means we have better self-knowledge. The image of a hermit in his hut stands for the effort to have the self-knowledge that makes us tolerant and mindful of the preferences and choices of others. Instead of being judgmental and hateful we accept others as different faces of the diverse society or societies that we have around us.

The characters found in Wordsworth’s poetry belong to the lower stratum of human society: beggars, leech-gatherers, stranded females, gypsies, and convicts. Compressed into a single expression, the above figures can be described as a “stranger,” which we are never ready to recognize as a functional mechanism of our psychological dynamics. It is Wordsworth’s feeling antenna that captures the repressed side as beggars and gypsies and their other nomenclatures. These beggars and gypsies symbolically refer to an abyss in our psychological lives—the lack of integration of the collective shadow.

Our interaction with the unconscious helps us acknowledge all those weaknesses and “inferiorities constituting the shadow” (Jung, *Portable*, 145). Instead of demonizing them for the behaviours and attitudes that we find disgusting, we accept them as an integral part of every individual and society. It is only after we have recognized weaknesses, blemishes that we can work on them and can turn them into our strengths. Not that we are able to integrate all the suppressed aspects into the conscious. Being conscious of the shadow is a continuous struggle, and at times very painful too; it takes a lot of courage to publicly own our weaknesses. Being an archetype, the shadow is an essential part of our being. We

cannot eliminate it at all; there is always the Achilles' Heel, but the mere awareness and consciousness of our vulnerabilities is what ensures the harmony that we all need at the individual and societal levels. Without this, we only look for scapegoats on whom we thrust the undesirable aspects of our personality and society—aspects which essentially define us. Believing conspiracy theories is a good example of this phenomenon so common today.

The recognition of the shadow is beneficial and healthy for balanced growth of individual and society. Knowing and being conscious that there is a dark side to us is indeed very humbling; it makes us more empathic and accommodating. Actions and behaviours that we hate in others are mostly part and parcel of our day to day life. We may laugh at others for being thrifty, but fail to see how we are not generous enough to accept the thriftiness of others—something which is symptomatic of the shadow. Becoming conscious of the shadow helps us understand that we also have in our personality traits and behaviours that we hate in others. We realize that what we pursue as a desirable norm is a temporary role and an adjustment to our social environment; not the whole and absolute identity. Being conscious of the shadow helps us stay rooted in reality; we become conscious of how people in other social environments have their desirable and undesirable norms. While we consciously pursue the persona, we also remain conscious of how there is a dark side to us that we hide from others. As such, being conscious of the shadow is like having the proverbial “wise old man” next to us who reminds us of our weaknesses; our drawbacks; and of the side of our personality that we hide from people. Wilmer says that the ancient Romans were aware of the danger of turning one's back on the shadow and of becoming unconscious of it. He says:

In ancient Rome it was the custom of the conquering hero to ride triumphantly through the city. By the side in the chariot sat a wise man whispering into the hero's ear, over and over “You are mortal. Remember you are mortal” (99).

Our conscious integration of the shadow helps us see through the complex world around us. The divisions and differences that we have in society and in the world are most of the times beyond our comprehension. We thrive on the divisions we make based on sects, colours, ethnicities, politics etc. The result is that human society and the world around us seems to shrink. We have walls around us which we continue to strengthen. And in the process, the serious problems facing all denizens of society or

citizens of the world continue to challenge us. Feuds, rivalries, and enmities, which are the ultimate symptoms of the shadow, pose more and more threats to us on individual and global levels. We take pride in building more and more weapons to destroy humanity in the name of strengthening our defence, but overlook research on epidemics, life-threatening diseases, famine, and abysmal poverty. Human actions like these tax us with questions the answers to which are lost in the blind pursuit of being the best, the mighty, or the super power of the world.

What we learn from the analysis of “the darkest pit” is that denial of the shadow disturbs our inner and outer adjustment in the society and the world around. The more we suppress the shadow or the dark side of our personality, the farther we go from ourselves and from the bigger whole of humanity. Neglect of the individual shadow damages us individually, but neglect or marginalization of the collective shadow damages the whole society or the whole world. Our denial to embrace the collective shadow leads to racism, sectarianism, extremism, hatred, violence and holocausts.

Healthy, peaceful, and productive life essentially demand our conscious integration of the shadow into our attitudes and accept the rights of others as we assert ours. Our conscious acceptance of the shadow within ourselves and in the society leads to the solution of many problems, conflicts, and discords within and without. Knowing ourselves through knowing the shadow is the road to reach harmony within ourselves and in the society. The study of the image “the darkest pit” in its various forms helps us to connect with the shadow which is like an inner guide who prevents us from going astray and helps to connect ourselves with the bigger whole. Conscious acceptance of the shadow helps us know our origin as to who we are; where we are from; and what relation we have with others around us. In order to reach harmony within ourselves and in the society around us is not possible without integrating the collective shadow which leads us to rehabilitate the rejected and the marginalized humans back into the main stream of the society. This helps the individuals meet each other like sovereign states with all mutual respect and dignity, and who never lose sight of each other’s humanity.



## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The image, “The Darkest Pit,” placed in the title of this paper is from *The Excursion*: Preface to the Edition of 1814, line 36. The image symbolizes the unconscious and the shadow. The latter is the main focus of this paper.
- <sup>2</sup> Jung’s psychological theory is based upon the primary assumption that the human psyche has two aspects—the conscious or an outer realm and the unconscious or an inner realm. Jung believes that the unconscious is an essential part of the psyche which, being a hidden counterpart is compensatory to the conscious. It is an infinite storehouse of immense potential the contents of which cannot be all known to the conscious. Only its parts can be accessed, illumined and integrated into the conscious attitude. The qualities Jung attributes to the unconscious are freedom, flexibility, vastness, immensity, irrationality, disorder, chaos, darkness, primitiveness, infiniteness etc. He further says that the conscious and the unconscious are complementary to one another and form a totality which he calls the *self*. For further detail see C.G. Jung, “The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious,” *The Portable Jung*. Trans. R. F.C. Hull. Ed. Joseph Campbell (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), pp. 70-138. Also see C.G. Jung, *On the Nature of Psyche*. Trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Princeton University Press, 1960) Rept. by Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1982, pp. 94-109.
- <sup>3</sup> Jung believes that persona is only a mask of the collective psyche. It is not the real face but an outer covering exposed to the outer world which a person puts on in order to adjust himself/herself to the social environment or norms. He says, “It is a compromise between individual and society as to what a man appears to be” (*Portable*, 106). A well-known Jungian, Marry Ann Mattoon, says:

*Persona*, the Latin word for mask, designates the part of the personality that one presents to the world to gain social approval or other advantages, and to coincide with one’s idea of how one should appear in public. Thus the persona reveals little of what the person is; it is the public face, determined by what one perceives to be acceptable to other people....The persona ... is the “presentable” alternative to the “unpresentable” shadow (28. Italics original).

For further detail see C. G Jung, “Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious,” *The Portable Jung*; Frieda Fordham, *Introduction to Jung’s Psychology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1953), pp. 47-49; Edward C. Whitmont, *The symbolic Quest: Basic Concepts Analytical Psychology* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 156-59.

- <sup>4</sup> For immediate reference see Andrew Samuels, Bani Shorter and Fred Plaut. *A Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis* (London and New York: Routledge, 1986). For a relatively detailed discussion on the shadow, see, C. G. Jung, *The Portable Jung*. pp. 144-48; Wilmer, Harry A. M. D. "Shadow Archetype," *Practical Jung: Nuts and Bolts of Jungian Psychotherapy* (Wilmette, Illinois: Chiron Publications, 1987), pp.96-109; Edward C. Whitmont, *The symbolic Quest: Basic Concepts Analytical Psychology*. pp. 160-69; C. G. Jung, *Man and his Symbols* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1964), pp. 171-85.
- <sup>5</sup> In the words of Jung, "Individuation means becoming an "in-dividual", and, in so far as "individuality" embraces our inmost, last and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's own self" (*Portable*, 121). For further detail see Aniela Jaffe, Jaffe, *The Myth of Meaning*, Trans. R. F. C Hull (New York: G.P Putnam's Sons, 1971) pp. 76-94 and Franz, M.L von, "The Process of Individuation," in C. G. Jung's *Man and his Symbols* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1964).
- <sup>6</sup> See C.M. Bowra, *The Romantic Imagination* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), pp. 271-84; Stuart Curran, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 43-44; John Spencer Hill, ed. *The Romantic Imagination* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1977), pp. 94-89.
- <sup>7</sup> This and all other subsequent textual references are to William Wordsworth, *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*, 1904, Eds. Thomas Hutchison and Ernest De Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1936, Rept., 1974), and are shown in the text of this work by title of the poem and line numbers in parenthesis unless otherwise indicated.
- <sup>8</sup> Although examples of individual shadow can be traced in the well-known boat-stealing and incidents of *The Prelude* Bk.1 and in some other poems, yet due to lack of space I will focus in this paper on the collective shadow only.
- <sup>9</sup> See C. G. Jung, *The Portable Jung*. pp. 144-48.
- <sup>10</sup> See Harry A. Wilmer. M. D, *Practical Jung: Nuts and Bolts of Jungian Psychotherapy* (Wilmette, Illinois: Chiron Publications, 1987). Pp. 96-99. Also see Marry Ann Mattoon, *Jungian Psychology in Perspective* (New York: The Free Press, 1981), pp.25-28.
- <sup>11</sup> Jung, *The Portable Jung*, Pp. 144-45.
- <sup>12</sup> For detail see C. G. Jung, "The Concept of the Collective Unconscious," *The Portable Jung*. Also see C. G. Jung "the unconscious as a Multiple consciousness,"

*On the Nature of Psyche*. Trans. R.F.C. Hull (New York: Princeton University Press, 1960). Rept. by Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1982. pp. 100-09; "Patterns of Behaviour" in this book of Jung. Pp. 110-25; and Frieda Fordham, "The Archetypes of the Collective unconscious" *Introduction to Jung's Psychology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1953), pp. 47-68.

<sup>13</sup> See C. George Boeree, "Carl Jung" *Personality Theories* (2006). Last accessed on 5.4.2011. <<http://www.ship.edu>>.

<sup>14</sup> See Frieda Fordham, *Introduction to Jung's Psychology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1953), p. 52. Also see Jaffe, Aniela. *The Myth of Meaning*. Pp. 89-90.

<sup>15</sup> Jung holds Germany first among Western nations to be victim of this collective shadow whose forces, which were lying dormant, broke through all moral and intellectual barriers and flooded the conscious world in order to compensate exaggerated role of what Jung calls the "faulty consciousness" (Essays, 3). For detail see C. G. Jung, Introduction: the fight with the shadow, *Essays on Contemporary Events: The Psychology of Nazism*, Trans. R.F.C. Hull (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1954).

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