



Confronting the Collective Shadow



I am nearing the end of my almost 4-week journey in Europe. As I write this, I am on a train from Berlin headed for Amsterdam, which will be the last leg of my trip before I fly back to the U.S. in four days. The time has been so rich in connections

and learning that it will take a while for me to digest it all, but let me start with one of the main themes that emerged.

The purpose of the trip was to teach and talk about Integral Recovery, with some extra time between talks and workshops to see if God had any other things in mind. As usual, She did. One of the first things that struck me was the amazing transformation of Germany and Europe since the end of the second WW, some 67 years ago. The transformation has been enormous - even since I was here as a soldier in the U.S. Army some 27 years ago. Europe is at peace, united and prosperous, and far ahead of us in the production of clean, renewable energy. Europe took care of the business of being a civilization to a much greater extent than we did, as we dawdled in cynicism, greed and paranoia. Now, however, things are changing.

One of the themes that kept reoccurring in different places and different spaces was the theme of "shadow" and collective shadow. At the Integrales Forum Conference in Bremen, the theme of the collective German shadow kept reoccurring, often from the mouths of American teachers. This made me a little

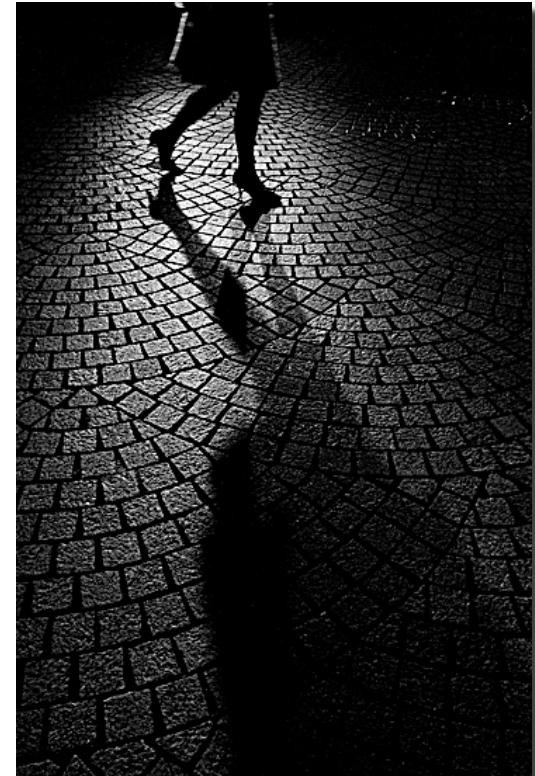
uncomfortable... as if we don't have our own collective shadow. In my closing comments to the gathered assembly at the conference, I said as much. And also mentioned that with the election of Barack Obama, we have, as a nation, and perhaps as a world, taken a huge step in addressing that particular American shadow.

I told the group that when I had been in Europe two years earlier, I had felt so amazed and proud of Europe's accomplishments and was feeling very sad and depressed about my country, but how I was currently feeling much better. Everyone clapped. The world, at least Europe, loves Obama and is falling in love with the U.S. again. I've never seen the likes of it, except perhaps when I was a little boy living in Mexico. JFK was much beloved by the Mexicans, who seemed to be more devastated by his assassination than the Americans, according to my observations!

Anyway, it is a heck of a thing. And the election of President Obama has made a huge difference. Still gives me goose bumps.

Back to the Shadow... I said in my closing remarks that we (Americans) certainly have our own shadow stuff, centering largely on slavery and racism and how we treated the native peoples of our land, but that really there was only one

Shadow— and that your pain is my pain; your shadow is my shadow, and we truly are one. When I said this, there was a palpable surge of love and connection in the room. I ended my comments by saying that my current understanding of the Christian mystery is that we are called, like Christ, to take on this collective Shadow/sin and let it crucify us and kill



us, so that we can resurrect as a transformed self with new wisdom and compassion to bring to the healing of our world.

The theme of the collective shadow kept emerging and re-emerging in my talks with my close friend, German Integral leader Dennis Wittrock, with people I was working with, with spiritual teacher Thomas Huebl, Dr. Edda Gottschaldt, et al.

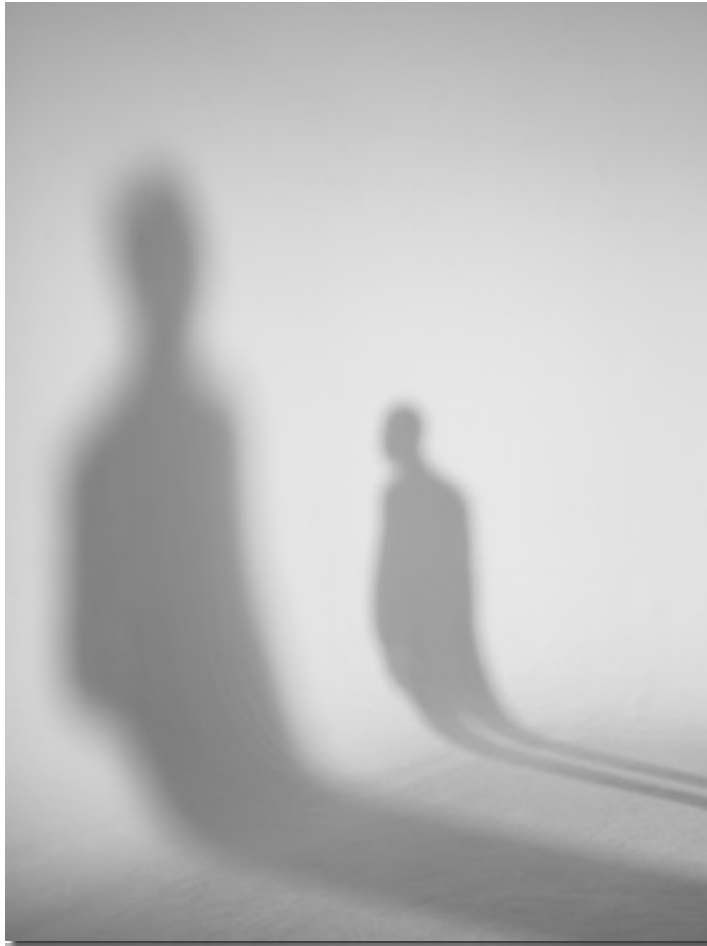
“I think this may be one of the essential spiritual Truths of our time: that in and through our shadow lies our hope, our essence, and our path to renaissance and healing.”

There is a huge shadow of suffering that has been handed down through the generations. And let me be clear, the perpetrators of WWII and the Nazi Holocaust are almost all gone or dead, but their sins and the sufferings they caused live on in those now living. So, whether your grandfather was an SS Storm Trooper or a

concentration camp victim, the shadow and the suffering is passed on from generation to generation.

While I was in Berlin, I was meditating one morning using the Holosync™ level that I am currently on (Purification Level 4, CD 4, for the cognoscenti readers of this), and I began a descent into shadow that at first seemed to be my own stuff, but then became something much deeper and seemed to be connected with history and the current suffering of Berlin, which has been emerging lately, in many ways, as the creative heart of Europe. (An interesting historical footnote here is that in the Battle for Berlin, in May of 1945, almost 500,000 died, if one counts the German POW's that were marched to the Soviet Union never to return. This number doesn't include the wounded, the raped, those who died later from their wounds, the psychologically devastated, etc.) There I was in the former heart of the Nazi Empire tapping into some vast underground unconscious ocean of tremendous darkness and human suffering. I couldn't even sit up, but lay on my back and felt pressed against the floor. I could barely breathe. My only prayer was, “God help me.” The

darkness and the density of the suffering was way more than my individuated ego could hold. I kicked into Big Mind/ Big Heart with very little John left. I witnessed. I felt. I prayed. After two hours, which felt immensely longer, I



came out of it. I went upstairs, where my hosts Helmut and Nadja were, and sat for a while before I could speak about what had transpired.

What came out of the experience were several things (and as of this writing this is ongoing). First, I was left with an after-resonance of deep humility and felt somehow purified of my petty foibles and concerns. Secondly, I was left feeling deeply connected to humanity on the one hand, and God on the other. Silence and depth are the two words that come to mind. And the last was a sense that without this collective shadow confrontation, acceptance, and transmutation, we simply cannot heal and evolve as either a species or as individuals. Jung said, “God comes through our rejected parts.” The amazing thing is, that in the Shadow enormous energy for powerful transformation sleeps. It is splitting the psycho/ spiritual atom. There is a tremendous reservoir of psychic potential energy that we are just sitting on. Untransmuted, it will kill us; transformed, it becomes the raw energy and power for positive evolution, creativity, compassion, healing, and hope of and for the future.

I think this may be one of the essential spiritual Truths of our time: that in and through our shadow lies our hope, our essence, and our path to renaissance and healing. And more than this, I see this knowledge and understanding, as well as new techniques and technologies coming online all over the world, from many different and apparently independent sources, as indicative of something very real and powerful emerging for our time from our collective human consciousness. So, in spite of, or perhaps, in the face of, all of our catastrophic world problems, conditions and forecasts, there is light coming through the fissures and cracks. And somehow we can rest and work in the knowing, as the mystic Andrew Harvey writes, that “God also has an agenda...” and we do not labor alone in our darkness.

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