

The Double

Human beings have always had a presentiment that they carry within themselves another being. Myths and legends tell of the monster that must be conquered if the human being is to progress. The Persian saw him as the hairy rough living Enkindu companion of Gilgamesh, the Greeks saw him as the Minotaur that had to be overcome by Theseus, the Grimm brothers portray him as Rumpelstiltskin the clever little man that eventually drives his leg into the earth and tears himself in two when the girl solves the riddle of his name. Once again this being was portrayed by Hermann Hess in his book *Stepenwolf* and by Dostoyevsky in his poem 'the Double'. The enigmatic creature that feeds off the blood of human beings could even be the vampire of old legends. A parasite that hates the light of day and only lives in darkness. The Werewolf is another example as is the tale of Frankenstein. Most recently we see him in the creature Gollum of the Lord of the Rings.

Tonight we will explore the double according to Rudolf Steiner and his knowledge of the human being as a triune of members.

Lets remember what we have been saying about the human being.

Rudolf Steiner has told us that the human being is made up of three physical members, three soul members, an ego and one day will develop three spiritual members.

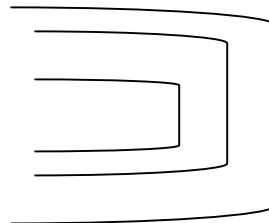
Tonight we will concentrate particularly on the body and the soul.

The physical members are:

- Physical body - Bones/limbs
- Etheric body – Blood / Organs
- Astral body – Nerves/ senses

The soul members are:

- Sentient soul - Feeling
- Intellectual soul -Thinking
- Consciousness soul - Willing



The human being is not so insular as he may imagine. In every breath, in every perception, in every intake of food, in every sensation, thought and act of will human beings are accompanied by beings of a spiritual nature.¹ Luciferic beings and Ahrimanic beings (retarded beings of opposition) enter into the human soul during evolution, and it is a fact that they live side by side with elemental beings or nature spirits and also higher (progressive) spiritual beings in our Physical, Etheric and Astral bodies.

¹Rudolf Steiner *The Festivals and their Meaning IV Michaelmas III the Michael Inspiration* see also Earst Hagmann *World Ether - Elemental Beings –Kingdoms of Nature* pg 15 and *Theosophy of the Rosicrucians IV*

We have heard in past lectures how Lucifer entered into the human being through his nerves and senses that is, into his Astral body during Lemurian times. This made it possible for Ahriman who exists around us in the material world to enter into man through his senses. Ahriman longs to reside in the Etheric body for it is in the Etheric body, in the body of formative forces, the life body where resides memory that he finds it most suitable for his development. Along with these beings there are elemental nature spirits that enter man through his food, enchanted in the minerals and vitamins that he ingests. Through his eyes man also takes in these elemental beings that live in the Etheric element of the Earth, through his sense of smell and all his other senses taste touch etc. These beings have no ego and must rely on man in order to progress. A man of moral character disenchants these beings and allows them to progress further in their evolution. A man who is not moral traps them inside himself and they become prey to Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings.

There is however another being that enters man just before he is born. This forms a part of what Rudolf Steiner calls 'the Double'.

When man is born he cannot at first penetrate all the way down into his Etheric and physical body with his ego and his soul members. That is he remains unconscious to the physical part of human existence. Into these the human being does not dive down. We see this in the biblical tale of the fall when the tree of life (Etheric body) is denied man when he eats from the Tree of Knowledge. This happened for our own good, because knowledge concerning these processes was not only dangerous - man would have been able to manipulate his physical body that is right down into his bones as well as his blood etc – but also would have taken his focus away from developing his ego consciousness. Just think how little you can concentrate when you have pain, or when you are ill. At these times you cannot use your higher faculties because your physical processes are overpowering them. We must not be able to sense every process of digestion, every impulse from our brains to our muscles. This would be extremely distracting and occurs only during illness.

It was therefore necessary for human beings to forget this knowledge and unconsciousness of it resulted.

Rudolf Steiner tells us that wherever there occurs unconsciousness this creates opportunities for spiritual beings to enter into man. Therefore the fact that man is unconscious into his physical nature creates an opportunity for spiritual beings to enter into the void left by the soul and spirit. It is into this space that a being enters a short time before we are born who takes possession of those unconscious physical processes.

This being Rudolf Steiner tells us falls into the category of an Ahrimanic being. A being that is connected with the great being of opposition Ahriman whose realm is matter, the earth and the fallen ethers.

This double being under the service of Ahriman continues to live within us during our life predominantly in our Etheric body in the same way that our spirit lives predominantly within our soul.

Why do they enter man?

These beings are Ahrimanic in character and so they are retarded beings that serve the beings that fell behind during the old Sun evolution of the earth. Ahrimanic beings that could not pass through their human stage at this time had to undergo their development at another time not suitable to their existence – on a Physical earth. Having no physical bodies with which to undergo their development they had to take up residence in the physical body of human beings if they were not to suffer greatly.

Their particular sphere of action is the Etheric body.

In the Etheric body lies our potential for memory and therefore our Intellect. In it also there lies the power of love and the beginnings of what will one day be true conscience. It is not then difficult to see why these beings are attracted to this sphere as they have an extremely high Mephistophelian intelligence, but it is an Ahrimanic intelligence that has no warmth of heart and no conscience. In the Etheric body lies our temperaments and we can see the connection here with these beings that are possessed of a strong will akin to the nature of the elements. What does this mean?

This means that these beings are connected with the fallen ethers that had once undergone a generation and now are degenerating that is, what once existed in the outer world of the elements, lightning, thunder, fire cyclonic winds, raging seas – results of the effects of Light ether, Chemical ether and Life ether, now exists in a fallen state in the earth as the forces of electricity, magnetism and the power of the Atom.



This drawing by Rudolf Steiner gives us an idea of the Double. Note the seven charkas related to the Etheric body or what the Eastern peoples call Chi. His ray like form, the two horns and the mesmerised eyes – degenerated Light ether or Electricity. The great ears symbolising the degenerated Sound ether or magnetism. And the degenerated Life ether that is symbolised by the wings. His strength comes from a crack in the earth. Man sitting on the mountain of objectivity looks at this double across the abyss or threshold of the spiritual world and sends out beneficent rays to transform the double.

There is one thing these beings cannot tolerate. Death. They must leave the human body before it dies. They can't accompany the human spirit after death. They must wait for that being's next incarnation so that they can slip into that body once again.

They do have one delusion though and this is that they will one day be able to remain in human bodies after death.

This is in fact the object of various black brotherhoods that initiate their members into an Ahrimanic immortality by taking the materialism only appropriate to the thinking process all the way down to the Etheric body. This makes the Etheric body dense so that it does not disintegrate into the world ether after death. This dense Etheric body is the perfect vehicle for these beings. However they have not been able to achieve this in any great number so far because of one momentous event. The mystery of Golgotha

that is the death of Christ. Upon his death the Christ being entered into the very heart of the Etheric element and the physical element of the earth, restraining these beings. This is characterised in the bible by his descent to 'hell'. This made it impossible for these beings to triumphed over death and become the lords of human evolution.

Having said this we must not think this being is not necessary for human development. He is. All hindrances make a person stronger. And it is this very hindrance that makes memory possible. For it is this double that carries with him the memory of all that we have made of ourselves from life to life. Without these beings man would have no memory of all the he experienced consciously and unconsciously when he passed through the gate of death or during initiation.

At a certain point in our development we become capable of reaching the threshold of the sense world and the spiritual worlds. At this time man comes across this being which Rudolf describes in many books as the lesser guardian of the threshold.

'...There arises the phenomenon known as the *Guardian of the Threshold* — the appearance of the *lower double* of man. The spiritual being of man, composed of his impulses of will, his desires and his thoughts, appears to the Initiate in visible form. It is a form that is sometimes repugnant and terrible, for it is the offspring of his good and bad desires and of his *karma* — it is their personification in the astral world...'²

This being bars the way to the spiritual world because while ever we carry the baggage of our faults and fallacies all our lower desires needs wants, all our impulses of will, all that is perishable and not eternal we are too heavy and cannot enter.

It is a real blessing to see this being because on seeing what we have created of this being and its hideous form we are encouraged to work on ourselves to perfect ourselves so that we might do away with the influence of this being.

It is no surprise then that the existence of this being in our life body leads to illnesses of our organs. In the Astral body this being is demonstrated in psychological, nerve illnesses.

How does this happen?

This results from the fallen forces that stream out of the earth and are intimately connected to the double. Where the double is strong in us he attracts the fallen forces that then further feed and enhance him. It is a fact that there are certain beings that prefer certain geographical locations where this or that fallen ether is more prevalent and will enter into human beings born here or there. The fallen forces in man (the double) are especially strengthened by coming into contact with their counterpart in the outer world.

How do we perceive him?

In everyday life we see him in our intellect wherever it becomes cold and hard and lacking in feeling. We see him in our temperaments – wherever something becomes

² Rudolf Steiner An Esoteric Cosmology VIII

habitual, whenever we lose the control over our emotions and whenever we lust over things of a material nature.

One being that comes to mind immediately is Gollum from the Lord of the Rings. He covets the ring of power, which serves the fallen ethers and their lord. "My Precious" is his catch phrase. He is intelligent, quick, clever but has no heart, all he does is for himself and himself alone. He accompanies his master Frodo, who at first wants to kill him and later takes pity on him and wants to redeem him. This is wise because without Gollum the quest could not have been completed.

How do we redeem him?

Firstly, as in Rumpelstiltskin we have to learn his name. That is we have to recognise him through our Ego consciousness, since every time we recognise him he loses power.

Secondly, we have to raise our thinking up from the realms of matter. This is done by

- Ordering our thoughts (will in thinking) through concentration exercises
- Releasing our thinking from the brain through meditations on spiritual truths that are warmed through with feeling (feeling in thinking).

Thirdly we have to work on our feeling life to balance the highs and the lows through

- Equanimity (thought in feeling)
- Positivity (will in feeling)
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Fourthly, we have to work on our life of will to do the good

- Will exercises (Thought in will)
- Open mindedness (feeling in will)

This transforms the human Soul and physical bodies allowing the impulse of Christ to enter in. When the Double comes into contact with the being of Christ he is immediately redeemed. The Christ being is characterised in this sense as the Greater Guardian of the Threshold to the spiritual world. It is he who stands before us as the great Archetype, the ideal to which we must turn in order to model ourselves.

An old sage once said to his pupil:

‘What being is stronger in you, the Dragon or the Lamb?’

The young pupil was puzzled and answered, “I do not know master.”

To which the master replied,

“The stronger is the one that you feed the most.”

Will we feed the dragon or will we create a space in which the lamb can exist. This is up to us.