

Why We Make Bad Choices

THE GOD'S LABYRINTH OF GOOD AND EVIL
ENCOUNTERING THE SELF

MARIA LIVIERO



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CHAPTER ONE

Genesis 1

PART ONE

As Eve found herself staring into the mirror one morning, she began to reflect on her past hurts, regrets, and actions toward herself and others, and realised how detached she had become from the world around her. She stood, contemplating, hoping for some kind of answers to her questions, when suddenly the reflection in the mirror began to move and shimmer and her image was transformed into a labyrinth. To Eve's astonishment and apprehension, she was transported to the entrance of that labyrinth—but the journey didn't stop there. It continued to take her back in time with such speed she was unable to understand how it happened. And then, as abruptly as it had begun the journey ended. Eve noticed she felt no sense of threat or fear, aware that she was in the midst of something greater than herself, almost as if she were an onlooker. She felt different. She realised her physical body no longer present, which was a strange and weird feeling, and she marvelled at the fact that she existed and yet could not see her body.

Eve had been transformed into energy, and it seemed that she had been transported to the beginning of the universe (the primordial life of the unconscious). She started to experience conflicting feelings, of anxiety and trepidation, at the same time as sensing she was safe and protected.

Eve found herself witnessing the Beginning, the creation as it happened in Genesis, when God created the universe, all living creatures, and man. Eve was awed by the experience. God had permitted her to witness His good work, but as a bystander and not to interfere with the creation process.

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Eve felt an inner peace, tranquillity, and a sense of safety that assured her all was well, implying a sense of connection with the universe.

She was attestant to a miracle—not only that of creation, but of the feeling of oneness that she had been looking for yet had never found.

Meanwhile, Elohim continued to create the universe with sea and land creatures according to their kind. There was one creature Elohim created—the serpent¹⁰—that Eve considered to be suspicious or threatening because of the negative and evil connotations the creature evoked, and she was unsettled by how it would glide and slither both in the sea and land. She observed the serpent lying undisturbed, yet to be woken to its powerful, evil character as portrayed in Genesis 3, and its penetrating ability to bring about destruction and death.

Nevertheless, God created such creature to be among its kind, and God saw that it was good.

Then Eve unexpectedly found herself back on the streets of New York and saw the serpent moving and slithering through the spines of the people around her. The serpent's character was lying dormant, its potent force waiting to be awoken, but its odour, mood, and enticing qualities were in every crack and corner of the streets. Eve's head spun with the image of the sea serpent as described in Genesis 1:27, aware of the potential harm of the serpent's power and dominance over the fragile human mind, which craves a never-ending surge of more. And then, something dawned on Eve: no matter how much she tried to run from herself, the serpent would always be present, waiting patiently in her unconscious to react to her self-deprecating mind.

¹⁰ Leviathan (/lɪˈvaɪ.əθən/; לִוְיָתָן, Līvəyātān) is a mythic multiheaded sea serpent from the Old Hebrew name לִוְיָתָן, Livyatan, or Liwyātān, which means “Twisted; coiled” and in modern Hebrew means “whale,” and in Greek refers to dragon <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Leviathan>.

John Skinner, (1910) said that the sea monster in Genesis “...may have been originally the name of a class of legendary monsters like Tiamat.”^{4 5} In the Babylonian creation myth, Tiamat is usually described as a female dragon or serpent that symbolizes the chaos of primordial creation.

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Often it was the fear or threat of nonexistence or imperfection, of not embracing who she was, that gave the serpent the ammunition it needed to open the gateway of self-betrayal. She understood that negative mood states, such as depression and anxiety gravitated her toward the serpent, which was gradually enticing its victim to withdraw from their divine/authentic self, creating a façade, a mask called false-self syndrome: an inauthentic existence “as-if” personality, which plans and plods, always contracting, fearful yet withholding, perfectionistic, that loves conditionally, remains aggressive/passive, believes it is a higher power, forgets Oneness, feels separate, and represents the public self. The false self that exacerbates the inner torment; the negative inner voices smiles at you, relishing the tidal waves of emotions, the outcome of the false-self syndrome.

Across the street, Eve noticed a pregnant mother paying for drugs, and another mother crossing the road, dragging her child by the scruff of his neck and shouting “Hurry up!” She thought about how an unborn foetus is dependent on its mother’s well-being, and if the mother experiences persistent, negative mood states or maintains harmful behaviours this contributes to developmental trauma in the womb. These moments of repeated, heightened stress and agitation in the mother have the potential to harm the unborn, which internalises those fears and insecurities. We are never safe from the sea serpent—

even when we are contained and loved within the mother’s womb; the serpent resides in the collective unconscious, waiting calmly to be awakened.

Eve could see how the malevolent serpent in her tormented her by sabotaging her own life: how she never felt good enough and tended to focus on her weaknesses, and how these thoughts had evolved to change her into who she was. These negative traits motivated Eve to binge on various addictions, which only exacerbated her dysfunctional

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self. Anxiety had become an integral part of Eve, as were the addictive traits present within her broken and annihilated self.

Feelings of self-annihilation activated her psyche to reflect the serpent's character, thrusting Eve into a life of unfulfilling relationships and a distorted way of thinking. After all, it is surely better to be in the serpent's abyss than to live with the excruciating pain of emptiness, boredom, and feelings of nonexistence. This intense fear of nonbeing caused Eve tremendous internal suffering, and as a result a strong sense of self-will, a tendency to act impulsively in a need to fulfil her desires, a cycle of wanting and needing emerged. Because Eve could not function without a negative coping mechanism, she filled these self-centred feelings by replacing them with an addictive stimuli, in the form of a person, or a thing. Relationships were a significant self-soother. **11** Even though she spent a great deal of time alone, she craved friendships that were nurturing, caring, and mutual. How could Eve ever hope to have positive experiences if she did not even know herself? She could only give away what she had, so her internal anger and fear was what she projected to the world, and as a result, attracted similar people— and so Eve perceived the world as a hostile place.

To protect herself Eve preferred to communicate through texting in relationships and thought it was great because it acted as a shield. To her, intimacy represented fear, but texting was a fix in moments of boredom, temporarily filling the emptiness. Texting allowed Eve to say anything without direct consequences; she could pretend to be the person the recipient wanted her to be or say the things they wanted to **11** “Self-soothing refers to behaviours that we use to restore emotional equilibrium when we have experienced a setback or feel stressed out. When we find ways to self-soothe, we are able to decrease our anxiety and minimize the detrimental effects of stress and anxiety.

Opting for the wrong type of self-soothing, you can actually do a lot more harm than good!”

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/lifetime-connections/202001/self-soothing-first-aid- stress-and-burnout>

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hear, and it was a good way to act out her frustrations, annoyances, and anger. After all, they could not see how she really felt inside.

Thus, texting became a regular way of communicating as it didn't require her to reveal her true self, which was still hidden, yet to be reconnected. Eve had yet to learn that social-media sites like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, when not used appropriately, are similar to texting in the sense that you can hide your true self—use them as a tool to release frustrations, displaced emotions, and triggers, and connect without true intimacy. This type of communication can be a dysfunctional therapeutic tool to express ourselves, enhance our self-esteem and self-worth, and release what we may not say in person.

Therefore, there may be a tendency to objectify a person or situation, which serves to devalue, disavow, and dismiss a genuine connection.

Eve was to discover that there is a negative side to social media: it gradually lures you in and sooner or later becomes your best friend. It acts like a drug, especially for those, like Eve, who find it difficult to establish intimacy or connection with others, who suffer from anxiety, and who hide their true motives. Depending on the context and the motives for using social media, continued use can eventually lead to the formation of a relationship with an image and words rather than an actual person. Like any other drug, social media has a detrimental impact on our minds that can increase the risk of depression, anxiety, loneliness, self-harm, neurosis, and even suicidal thoughts. Taking all this into account, a negative attachment to social media leads to psychological dependency that serves as a blanket to cover what lies beneath: the unconscious mind is beyond our awareness. However, one's dependency often reveals psychological insecurities. Perhaps the compelling urge to connect to others is actually an urge to reconnect with *yourself*.

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Food for Thought:

Can you name traits of your true self?

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Can you identify traits of your false self?

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How does your false self compromise your true self? Can you name situations in which your false self plays out the most?

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How do you self-soothe? Do you relax, play music, meditate, yoga, exercise, read, participate in hobbies, talk to friends? Or do you use the internet, shop, text, seek relationships, struggle with addiction—be it with social media, alcohol, eating, drugs, gambling, sex, and compulsive and obsessive thinking and behaviours?

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Additional notes for yourself

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PART TWO

Walking home through the New York streets, Eve could see what others could not: the venomous energy of the serpent, hissing with its intoxicating tongue, poisoning those who had fallen into the abyss of addiction. Once at home, she was flooded with overwhelming fear and panic at how the serpent plays out people's unconscious, and began to sob asking herself, how all this had happened. How could she have treated herself so badly? During her life Eve had encountered those with obvious serpent-type personalities who exploited others, but she was shocked to realize that she, too, possessed snake-like energy that had enthralled and beguiled others to ensure her own needs were met.

The pain of this insight compelled Eve to eventually enter therapy, where she portrayed to the therapist a kind outward demeanour because the fear of rejection was so deep-seated and saturated with toxic and highly emotive thoughts. Eve was afraid to reveal her true feelings which usually exploded out of her causing struggles and attracting negativity—it's no wonder life was such a strain for her. In the session, Eve presented with a false self/image that she showed to herself and the world. But over time, Eve began to see that the reason her anxiety and depressive states had become a regular occurrence was because she had no connection with her true self, the repressed, divine self. She learned that, living a lie of who you are is the greatest sin of all because God endowed you with gifts and qualities that are unique to you and denying these qualities is saying "No" to yourself.

Therapy showed Eve how to reconnect with those parts of her that had been lost or devoured by this dark side of her nature.

With the help of her therapist, Eve learned that fear of nonexistence is commonly masked by various addictions, such as: co-dependency, idealism, chronic low-self-esteem, and these were the things which had caused Eve to gravitate away from her true self. The result was

that she had created a façade designed to appease others, while at the same time worrying about the past and future. Reflecting on her past, Eve realised that she had periodically experienced these conditions; she had often felt that her creativity and life force had to be repressed rather than feeling able to allow these qualities to surface, so she could experience these gifts and reach her potential. Over and over, Eve self-sabotaged opportunities because of anxiety, worrying if she would ever be good enough, and focusing on her weaknesses. These negative thought patterns motivated Eve to eat more and exercise more—the act of *more* was the by-product of her non-living state, which only exacerbated her negative perception toward herself and others.

It became apparent that Eve’s addictive traits were part of her psychological processes, and by maintaining her dysfunctional self she was also preventing her fragmented true self from becoming conscious. And although addictions and negative behaviours can often present the broken and self-annihilating person to the world, they had become a way for Eve to hide her broken heart. Denying or hiding her internal fear of personal annihilation of nonbeing seemed to be the perfect answer.

Eve discovered that childhood trauma causes something within the psyche to lose its connection to other parts of the psyche, and that this can occur even in the prenatal stages and during the first year of life. This means that an infant can internalise or sense the mother’s experiences. For the unborn, the garden of Eden is either a paradise or an abyss (or both). For example, Stanislav Grof, a renowned psychiatrist and transpersonal theorist, **12** conducted extensive scientific research demonstrating how the mother’s experiences are ¹² The term “**transpersonal**” means “beyond the personal” and is not limited to the bodily experiences. The term goes beyond the physical realm, offering meaning to different dimensions of the individual within the disciplines of modern psychology.

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directly filtered to her unborn child, giving rise to the question of whether the womb is a safe, trusting environment or a daunting and suspicious place. Grof introduced the concept of the basic perinatal matrices (BPMs), which shape human consciousness and shows evidence in the human

psyche of imprinted birth trauma. Grof has illustrated images that show a good uterus and a bad uterus, either of which can affect the unborn's experiences. **13** Grof associated BPM III stage with a difficult prenatal experience in the womb, for example, he writes of: "danger, the existence in risk, tightness, overwhelming, symbolic contents of human violence: revolutions, massacres, riots, murders perinatal matrices mythical and spiritual elements: good and evil struggle creation and destruction of the world." From a transpersonal perspective the unborn child inherits symbolic images or archetypal themes from this BPM III stage that can be activated at different stages of life.

Therapy opened the door for Eve to explore such themes and identify those which had driven her negative or false self into existence.

Mythologically, addiction can be a substitute for filling up the abyss where the infant's fear and the falling apart resides. The child develops negative schemas¹⁴ about their inner and outer world that have profound effects on the development of their sense of self and can cause distorted blueprints to form in the psyche. If the attachment between the mother and the child at any stage during the first years of life is fragmented, impinged, or without reparation, the child cannot psychically survive; trauma experts say, trauma exists *inside* of you—

it is not what *happens* to you that is considered a traumatic experience.

Early childhood trauma infringes on psychological development and 13 Resende. (2010)

14 Schemas are cognitive frameworks that help us to organise and interpret information.

They are developed through experience and can affect our cognitive processing [https://www.](https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology/topics/schemas)

[tutor2u.net/psychology/topics/schemas](https://www.tutor2u.net/psychology/topics/schemas)

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creates a distorted view of yourself and the world around you, giving the authentic self a reason to hide away or suppress itself. Eve had therefore found herself adrift, lost in the midst of the abyss—she had lost *herself*. And while in this state, Eve was unconsciously co-operating with the serpent that was strengthening her false self, and so the depths of her inner self became darker and darker, as the serpent was in awe of its work that it had manifested over time. The serpent utters with a hiss being a *kiss* rattling with glee, reflecting on Eve's torments, and plagues her with self-condemnation, shame, and self-hatred.

The coils of Eve's personal serpent illustrate the many twists and turns in life by showing the false self that penetrates into consciousness, the ego, "I," reveals the hideous and tormented aspect of her mind. The suffering Eve had endured created invisible, emotional wounds that were a symbol of her desperate need to heal her mind/body split. But this psychological split would not become apparent until much later.

In the meantime, Eve continued to explore the distorted labyrinth, the symbolisation of her addictions and negative behaviours. She had not expected that therapy would, in some ways, be worse than her own active addiction. But being in therapy meant she had to look in the mirror at herself and see the reality of who she had become over the years. This honest evaluation of herself showed Eve how she had allowed others to objectify her, and to realise that they were not to blame, as her own false self had projected the role of a victim. Therapy offered a safe and contained place to dive into her sea of emotions: regressing to specific child development stages which transformed her psyche and personality, owning up to her projections and being accountable for both good and bad aspects of herself. Therapy enabled Eve to reconnect with her feelings to allow compassion and empathy back in, enabling her to meet with her false self, to confront the serpent in all its archetypal guises and subpersonalities of the

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collective unconscious, and reclaiming her authentic self and the positive qualities that came with it.

Therapy helped Eve explore the subpersonalities that were part of her, bringing awareness so that she could face her shadows and integrate with those subpersonalities so as to transcend her ego into wholeness.

As she explored, Eve gradually realised that her subpersonalities were rooted in deep-seated wounds of the heart, which in time were to become catalysts for the process of integration. Subpersonalities vary in nature: there is the rebel, the martyr, the seducer, the saboteur, the judge and the critic, the addict, and a host of others which are positive, such as the teacher, the philosopher, the athlete, the mother, the lover, the protector, and the caregiver, each with its own mythology and ability to co-exist within a person. In the process of healing, Eve found she had one particular subpersonality that was constantly at the forefront of her thinking: the wounded child. **15** Once she realised this, Eve considered the imprinting effects of abandonment, learning that if our inner voice repeatedly criticizes us by saying, “You are not good enough.” we are experiencing the subpersonality of an inner critic.

This isn't always outwardly obvious, as a person who has experienced trauma carries invisible emotional wounds, but the overall effect of various traumatic events can cause us to overidentify with a certain subpersonality. For example, witnessing or experiencing physical violence may cause us to internalise the passive-aggressive tendencies of violent behaviours, or become a victim of abuse which causes a subpersonality to become a prominent feature of the personality.

Without realising it, we can build our identity around this blueprint, and consequently come to believe that it is who we really are, ¹⁵ “The Wounded Child is an archetype that contains negative emotional patterns children experienced. The wounds could have been abuse, neglect, or trauma, but they usually occur before seven. There is permanent damage that is haunting them” <https://>

gowithinspiritualcoaching.com/the-wounded-child-archetype

which can result in losing or repressing our true self. Eve wondered for a while if this subpersonality was her *real* self, but eventually learned that it was only a false part of who she was. These kind of subpersonalities result from low self-esteem and low self-worth, and one way for them to survive is to create negative feelings—of self-criticism anxiety, anger, shame, or guilt. Or they can swing to the opposite extreme, resulting in dominant, controlling, deceitful, or manipulative behaviours in someone whose inadequacies cannot manage their imperfections, limitations, or flaws.

Eve thought that a subpersonality may not originate from early childhood but from one's prenatal life, when the mother cannot escape from her own shadow, which unconsciously influences the psyche of the unborn child. On the other hand, the mother is the source of life, and qualities of love and security are also felt by the unborn child, who experiences feelings of being wanted, accepted, and adored.

Theorising that positive and dark connections of these qualities provide a blueprint in the psyche of the unborn to be activated in the weeks after birth and months ahead, forming the healthy ego that permits both good and bad. However, if the mother has a schema of abandonment, or the wounded child subpersonality that she has not confronted, she is likely to unconsciously imprint these traits on her unborn child because she has made them a part of her personality.

Eve realised that she had developed schemas of rejection and abandonment that were saturated with shame and guilt; and became aware of the permeability of the boundaries she had created in order to avoid toxic feelings. Her personal boundaries were fragile, and she inflicted self-abuse by devaluing herself. Becoming aware of her responsibility and the need to take ownership of her psychological shackles rather than blaming others and victimising herself, produced a transformation effect in Eve. She was learning to use therapy to understand and get to know herself by gradually reconnecting to

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the person she did not know. Addiction and other psychological infringements for Eve were forms of escapism originating from a nonbeing

state. She knew that the serpent would do its utmost to entangle her in fear and confusion, and that in order to escape the torment and misery of the serpent's abyss, she had to undergo an internal transformation.

The transformed Eve often relived her experiences of addiction, her mind taking her back to those days, ruminating over how empty and lifeless she had become. She saw how, as the wounded child, she had been an emotional doormat, accepting crumbs and being happy with them. Throughout Eve's life, feelings had been deeply repressed and this had caused much of her pain. Feelings provide an internal compass, a reference point for what is acceptable or unacceptable in any relationship, and facilitate healthy boundaries, but because Eve's feelings were repressed, she had no boundaries. Eve's state had been quite infantile as her feelings had not been allowed to develop. Her childhood experiences were difficult; she found no sanctuary in them.

She remembered how, as a child, she had sought shelter either under the bed or in the wardrobe to hide how she felt inside, becoming increasingly introverted and anxious, eventually developing a nervous disposition, which was only heightened by feelings of anxiety or shame that contributed to her discomfort around people.

During her time in therapy, Eve discovered, how over the years, her non-existent self had become tangible and well-defined. How she had been a blank canvas that other people had filled up with their wants and needs—and how she had even adopted some of those people's personality traits because she did not know how to *be*, nor did she know who she was. She had no sense of choice and had never learned how to create boundaries and say "No." Ultimately, Eve had generally appeased, and accepted unscrupulous behaviours, from others, thus giving them permission to continue with their negative behaviour's.

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Eve's internal life had been subdued and there had been no vibrancy that would have attracted healthy connections, so she lived with a few intimate and dysfunctional relationships. Eve's disposition and naivety always drew in negativity and individuals who projected a similar view of themselves,

those who preferred to be outside the norm of society. The idea of taking drugs appealed to Eve's psyche—

she was curious, and at the same time beguiled by the serpent inside of her. For a while, two or three addictions simultaneously ran riot: food, exercise, and drugs provided a cocktail of mayhem in Eve's life. Serving to increase the chaos, adrenaline showed itself in many forms: through people, places, and things that furthered the addiction, humiliating her core self and removing Eve from her inner reality, crushing her capacity to distinguish between good and evil. The inner and outer realities became a blur, meaning that often the experiences of those around her became her inner world—therefore reinforcing her negative subpersonalities.

Eve's greatest challenge had been in forming healthy relationships, as she was trapped in the false-self syndrome, projecting negative qualities that resulted in difficult relationships, and she developed an awkward and difficult personality. This only amplified her negative, distorted image of herself. However, that same amplification provided the therapist a route into Eve's unconscious, allowing them to draw Eve's attention to her projections, transferences, and denial. Metaphorically, it seemed that with every move Eve made, the serpent's abyss continued to grow, entangling her with complexes, distortions, apathy, and dissociations, all of which represented the serpent's venomous instinct. The journey toward her centre, the self, became longer and more complicated as the nonbeing Eve accepted various covert and overt abusive behaviours. The intensity of the denial of varying kinds of abuse resulted in her forming a pattern of dysfunctional relationships, where she returned over and over for more psychological battering. However, at the same time, somehow,

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it seemed that Eve was in fact growing closer and closer to the centre of the labyrinth, closer to herself, as she gradually tore down the walls of her false self.

Eve's disconnection with herself had limited her capacity to acknowledge the reality of the harm that she had suffered, which, in turn, caused her desire to connect with unhealthy people, thus distorting and overriding all

rational thinking. Eve continued to return to destructive relationships with those had taken advantage of her vulnerabilities and had sucked her vibrant energy out, only to reunite her with her feelings of emptiness. There was no love between them—both parties existed in the relationship to fulfil their own needs. Eve described one situation to her therapist that she had found difficult to resolve: At the time, Eve had blamed her partner for the mistreatment, and by blaming had victimised herself, and it wasn't until later (after she had strengthened her ego) that she became strong enough to accept responsibility for the role she played in allowing negative behaviours towards her. It was a difficult lesson for Eve, but eventually she learned that it was only through transformation that you can attract love, kindness, understanding. Eve's distorted self had paved the way for assimilating the "evil" that connected to the lower vibrations of the soul embedded with feelings of cruelty, humiliation, and a desire to attack the authentic self.

Distortions of reality can be illustrated by the use of denial as a defence mechanism, and this became a regular occurrence in Eve's life—what she wanted to be positive was negative and harmful to her. Eve's inner and external reality had been at a mismatch. Eve's lack of her nonauthentic self was driven by her false self, and her perception of her social relationships had become a burden. Socializing was difficult because unconsciously there was always a sense of lack within herself, and Eve managed to present in such a way that she unconsciously attracted individuals who were emotionally unavailable. This was

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preferable because intimacy was about authenticity, which she had no idea how to embody. Eve's experience of emotionally unavailable relationships taught her it was normal to be evasive, flaky, or hard to read.

As therapy continued, Eve began to be more conscious of her self and to accept her flaws. Historically, her thinking had separated people into categories of good and bad rather than perceiving them as whole individuals with flaws. Whenever Eve did make a mistake, she had always felt a flood of emotions laced with defensiveness and shame that caused her to dramatize situations, as her inner critic became punitive and full of condemnations—her failures became a war between Eve's thoughts and

herself. The process of self-development was an arduous one that required that she replace a lifetime of behavioural habits of repression, denial, submission, detachment, displacement, dishonesty, and relegation with “I exist.” Gradually, Eve began to understand she was an imperfect human being with flaws, and by accepting her failings, she would be able to accept herself and others, and to not perceive herself as a “mistake.”

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Food for Thought

Stanislav Grof, a renowned psychiatrist and transpersonal theorist, conducted extensive scientific research demonstrating that the mother’s experiences directly affect their unborn child.

Grof introduced the concept of the “basic perinatal matrices” that shapes human consciousness and shows evidence of imprinting the birth trauma on the human psyche.

An infant can internalise or sense the mother’s experiences from prenatal stages onwards.

The young person or child develops negative schemas about their inner and outer world that has a profound effect on their sense of self, leaving the child without a blueprint of a positive attachment style in the psyche.

If you were to start therapy, what issues that currently affect your life would you explore?

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Think about your subpersonalities. These may be teacher, partner, friend, criminal, addict, mother, adulterer, child, critic, victim, perfectionist, tyrant, abuser, helper, or spiritual thinker. What traits of these subpersonalities support or hinder you?

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How does your subpersonality act out?

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PART THREE

Abruptly, Eve found herself transported back to the parallel universe of Genesis 1, where she became aware of a voice. She looked for the owner of the voice but there was no one.

“Who and what are you?” Eve asked. “Where are you coming from?”

“I come from you,” the voice replied. “I am the voice inside of you, known as Soul. The inner knowing that you sometimes choose to ignore and punish by pushing me down so far that my light has diminished to the point of nonexistence. I am partly good and partly evil, a reflection of yourself as described in the verses of Genesis 1.

I have characteristics such as light and darkness – good and evil—

which have always been present from dawn of time.”

“I don’t understand how this has happened. I’m speaking to something that I can’t see. You are talking to me, but how?” Eve was confused.

“You asked to be here, remember?” Soul reminded her. “When you looked into the mirror and asked questions, you called for this experience.”

“Yeah, but...”

“Do not worry, you are safe,” Soul reassured her. “This is life before physical man existed. You are one with the creation, with God, and no harm will come to you. This will be a journey of self-discovery where the whys and hows of life will be revealed, but it is *your* experience, thinking, and feelings, and as I am part of you, you are part of me.” Soul continued, “Now that you have got over the shock of being here, we can get on with answering your questions—

but remember, the journey will not be smooth sailing. Keep in mind that you are with God and that everything happens *for you* not *to you*.” “I know that quote by Byron Katie... my therapist said it to me,”

Eve said, surprised. “How do you know about that?”

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“I told you, I am part of you and I know everything about you, what you have experienced, read, said, done, thought, and felt. Relax and get ready to know who you are.”

But Eve had a few more questions before she was ready to move on: “When I arrived here the first time, I had an overwhelming sensation of my mind and body splitting in a kind of energetic way—a sort of disconnection, although I simultaneously knew I was a whole part. What was going on there? Also, do you know God, personally?”

I have so many questions.”

“Yes, the split you experienced was an energetic one,” Soul explained. “To understand and relate to God’s experience of creation you needed to be split into opposites but still be contained as one, as all creation is endowed with opposites, like the Maker. Oneness cannot be borne without the two halves. One cannot stand alone without the other, which equals a whole, nonduality.”

“Where were you when I came here the first time?”

“I was with you but stood back so you could experience the serpent’s presence. In your world, you saw how the serpent’s character beguiles the mind.”

“I knew there was something wrong with me,” Eve sighed.

“No, there is nothing wrong with you. Humans have inherited evil, and God has given man free will to love Him and choices about what to do with the power of good and evil. The two opposites make you whole, like God.”

“I guess, right now, I am whole, with opposites, like God.”

“It is good you feel a sense of wholeness within you. This is your Original Self. Even though there is a feeling of disconnection or separateness, you

are One because God is whole—representing union—an amalgamation of all living things. Your Original Self knows the intimate relationship with God, but you had forgotten it. The divine element in you was diminished, and at certain times has been erased. The human part in us alienates the spirit and soul

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because man's nature wants us to be god-like, an omniscient being, with knowledge of all things—ultimately, an authority against God.”

“Let's go back a bit... the thought that God is also evil is overwhelming. I always thought God was pure and all good, but then you mention He is evil. How can evil be part of God?”

“You ask about God and the concepts of good and evil, but let me remind you,” mused Soul, “God is not just a God of love, but a God of hate as well, look at Malachi 1:2–3 in the Bible. He is a God of mercy and justice. He is also a God of war and peace. He creates light and darkness, good and evil, as Isaiah 45:7 says. Throughout the scriptures, we see God raising up nations and tearing down nations all for the purpose of bringing about His will. Although God manifests himself within two extremes, they are always in balance and in unity.

The Canadian psychologist, Benner, wrote about this in 2018.”

“Wow, so you're saying that God represents good and bad in humanity and in our core self. I guess this means we were originally created whole, not in parts. But when you quoted from Malachi and Isaiah, you spoke about God in terms of opposite sides.”

“Yes, God projected himself onto the creation of man; therefore, the good and evil in humanity is part of Him. You see, without evil, the light or goodness cannot be experienced, nor can it shine to combat the darkness; there would be no wholeness,” Soul explained.

“Humanity has developed and nurtured evil to become what evil is.”

“It seems to me that good and evil are bound together.”

“Yes, that is one perspective. Creation is made up of opposites that complement each other; it is a natural manifestation of the universe, and symbolically, the unconscious is also made up of opposites. Therefore, primal human nature is composed of opposites, such as good and evil.”

“I’m confused about something else. After I was here the first time, when I stepped back into my world, I saw people embodying the same serpent-like energy that I saw when God created the universe; however, some were at the beginning of their journey of transforma-

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tion. Is this what is shown by the Ouroboros symbol?” **16**

“Yes, the serpent eating its own tail represents death and rebirth—

eating away the negative side of the ego and allowing the new and good qualities to arise.”

Eve was fascinated. “I suppose the symbol of the Ouroboros¹⁷ is also found in the collective unconscious because of the mythological and symbolic nature of our ancestral past.”

“There are those who fully embody the serpent’s negative character, and there are those who are both the serpent and the Ouroboros because they connect with both the negative and positive side of themselves, and there are also those who embrace the spiritual side but have a hint of the serpent’s traits in their lives; there is no such thing as a perfect being. The serpent/Uroboros is similar to the ancient Chinese yin/yang symbol in that it is two sides of the same coin. The symbol illustrates the two sides, which complement each other, supporting its existence. The small dots on each side represent the element, the core energy of the opposite, signifying that neither pole is dominate or superior. However, when out of balance, an increase in one brings the corresponding decrease in the other, as Cartwright noted in 2018. The primary aim of the symbol is to bring both poles to a state of working harmony—that is, the duality of balance.”

“Out of balance?” Eve asked. “When something is out of balance what happens? Like, if I were out of balance, for example.”

“When we are out of balance, it affects our thinking, body, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the self. These areas are interconnect-ed, so if we are out of sync, other areas will also be out of sync.”

“Yes!” Eve started. “When I become unbalanced, it seems to 16 Serpents in different periods possess either good or evil qualities. For example, in ancient Egyptian mythology, serpents were known as Uroboros and were a symbol for healing and rejuvenation of the body. Serpents were worshiped as a god, signifying “god of healing” and a “life restorer” and also served as a symbol of wholeness.

17 In this context, the Ouroboros is an analogy for the libido, positive psyche energy, which is the opposite of the serpent, the death drive.

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trigger a range of difficult thoughts and feelings, like anxiety and negative thinking, and I end up telling myself a story about a situation or person that it isn't even true. I recognise how my actions can have an adverse effect on myself and others. When I think too much, I am in my head and there is no room for feeling; therefore, I am removed from my body and feelings, and, for example, I'm unable to maintain boundaries.”

“This is a good example,” Soul agreed, “of a person out of sync with their centre.”

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Food for Thought

God must be made up of the opposites of good and evil; otherwise, the nature of good cannot exist. Therefore, God is an archetype that represents good and evil.

God offers good and evil to the universe, and thus has projected His qualities onto humanity; therefore, evil may have existed from the time of Genesis 1:21, the creation of the sea creature.

God is the true essence of the meaning of opposites: a balanced and equal distribution of energies that cannot tip the scales.

The balanced nature of God represents wholeness and refers to human nature, which was originally whole rather than in parts or split.

At the time of creation, evil was a symbol—the sea creature had yet to claim its full capacity of evil.

Because the serpent is presented as a symbol of evil, the nature of evil resides in the collective unconscious, which is the primitive part of the psyche.

The energy of the serpent is present in all of us, but in some the Uroboros is triggered, to be entwined with the serpent for transformation purposes—for example, when a person enters therapy or alternative practices like meditation or prayer.

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How do the positive attributes work for you?

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What does unbalance mean to you?

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What happens when you are out balance? Do you overthink or over-analyse, or maybe you overreact in a way that doesn't make sense?

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How does your being out of balance affect others?

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PART FOUR

“You are attending therapy,” Soul said to Eve.

“How do you know that? You seem to know everything that I do.”

“As I mentioned before, I am part of you, so I know everything about you, as God does. So, how do you see God?”

“I must admit I don’t have a good relationship with God at all. I doubted and distrusted His every word, and I don’t feel I am a part or connected to Him in any way. He was a disappointment. But, I suppose, unconsciously, I stepped into His shoes to become a god myself, in order to fulfil my needs because I didn’t believe in Him, and so I felt I had to control the direction of my life. As it says in Genesis 3:5, ...ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. The false perception that I was a god proved to be disastrous and caused a calamity in the relationship between myself, God and others.”

“I witnessed the pain you projected onto God. He understood, but the more you strived to be a god and the author of your own life, the more your internal suffering increased.”

“I believed I had the power to change outer circumstances according to my internal state, that I could ensure my every fantasy, desire, and need was met or fulfilled. I guess I manipulated, controlled, forced, and charmed my way through life to make things happen—

but to little or no avail.” Eve thought for a few minutes. “By trying to step into God’s shoes, I essentially created adverse situations that led to more detrimental thinking and behaviours. Actually, a quote from Woody Allen describes this, if you’ve heard of him. ‘If you want to make God laugh, tell him about your plans.’ God must have been constantly in hysterics with mine!”

“Pretending to be a god is no fun and is a waste of creative energy, energy that could have been applied to unlocking potential and abundance. This is

what I assume you wanted but you made the mistake of turning away from God. You have already learned much about self-will, but we can explore more about this later.”

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“This is such an impressive and humbling experience; a lived experience that puts parts of my life into perspective with reality.”

“You could say that you, Eve, are presently in the collective unconscious witnessing the Beginning and seeing how mythology and archetypes interact and form a story that affects your personality in your present world. At the moment, your unconscious is in action, conversing with your inner self—and the answers are always within.”

Soul was ready to shift gears.

“Let’s go back and explore the idea that evil was present before humanity was created, which opens the door to Jung’s philosophical supposition that evil is partly unavoidable and relative since it is part of human nature. This is not suggesting that we should not take responsibility for our negative thoughts or destructive behaviours; on the contrary, it is important to acknowledge the inner turmoil we experience if we are ever to heal.”

“If evil was present before man’s arrival, can anything tell us about the origin of evil or dark forces?” Eve asked. She continued,

“This is what I read from Carl Jung:

Life, being an energetic process, needs the opposites, for without opposition there is, as we know, no energy. Good and evil are simply the moral aspects of this natural polarity.

The fact that we have to feel this polarity so excruciatingly makes human existence all the more complicated. Yet the suffering that necessarily attaches to life cannot be evaded. The tension of opposites that makes energy possible is a universal law, fittingly expressed in the yang and yin of

Chinese philosophy. Good and evil are feeling-values of human provenance, and we cannot extend them beyond the human realm.

From what I have witnessed so far, I think the origin of evil comes from God because He created the universe and all creatures and positive and negative ideas and thoughts. So evil seems to come from

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Him to create free will, but what we do with this free will is our choice—to have a relationship with our spiritual selves or not.”

Does that make sense?”

“Yes, I think you’ve got it: good and evil is part of what it means to be human, there is no escape from the two. As Angelus Silesius said, ‘He cannot live without me, nor I without him.’ It is a working partnership, so to speak. Life is comprised of opposites to challenge the self.”

“So, you’re saying one cannot live without evil. So, what *is* evil?” Eve pressed. “We have talked about it and I’ve got a basic understanding of the meaning, but you have not really explained what it means.”

“If you recall, we inherit our ancestral past which consists of themes, patterns, motifs stories, myths, and images of different times and places. In the period when Genesis was written, the meaning of evil was different from the present day. In Genesis 2, the Lord God introduces the symbol of the tree of knowledge of good and evil to represent one idea of what is evil. The term ‘evil’ in Biblical times refers to not following God’s will, seizing power to decide, and making a judgement for ourselves between what is good and evil, as Victor Hamilton explained.”

Soul continued:

“To explain this further, the act of disobeying or going against God’s prohibition of eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil is regarded as ‘to be as God’ referring to the ‘role of God’ The power is in the role, as if we are ‘stepping in His shoes.’ To be as God makes knowledge of

good and evil possible, and to ‘take and eat’ signify the language of defiance when the woman ‘took’ and ‘ate’

from the tree of knowledge (Gen. 3:6.) Thus, man overrode God’s instruction and self-will became the new evil rather than a personal co-relationship with God.”

“So, evil could mean feeding ourselves with dysfunctional and

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negative thoughts, feelings, or behaviours that reinforce negative psychic energies that limits and arrests personal growth.”

Eve thought about evil, and then she considered:

“Look at this another way: if creativity is one mode of expression of the self, then the creation of the universe is an expression of God since He made the sea monster in Genesis 1, which then poses the question of whether good and evil comes from God. This is a challenging thought: that God can be evil, or that He projects good and evil on to the universe for man to decide his fate, whether to follow God’s will or to go with self-will. At this point, it seems to me that suffering or inner tension was part of the divine plan for man. I found these quotes by Jung reinforced my idea about the link between God and evil: Jung refers to the Devil or evil in a few ways: as aspects of God, as a force in life, and a psychological phenomenon. He points out that ‘all opposites are of God, therefore man must bend to this burden and in so doing he finds that God in his “oppositeness” has taken possession of him, incarnated himself in him. He becomes a vessel filled with divine conflict. Jung also said, ‘...The paradoxical nature of God plays havoc in man it rips him apart with opposites colliding with one another which stirs deep down in the soul.’”

“You do like your quotes,” Soul remarked.

“I do,” Eve admitted. “Well, this a delicate subject: the thought that an aspect of God is bad is an eerie thought.” She paused and then asked, “I am curious though, who decides whether a person is good or bad?”

“This is a good question. I believe no one decides who is bad or good—both are relative, and, as Jung says, unavoidable. It is relative—

meaning that evil is a natural experience —and is part of the human psyche, and we all have that dark nature in us, so it is unavoidable. In the end, the dark aspect humanity is an inherited factor of man. The low vibration of the soul resides in the body so the soul, like me, can drive good or bad into the world. This means that our thoughts and feelings can distort reality. In this context, the bad or evil is about

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suffering; as you know, your suffering led you here to the Beginning and seeing how it relates to parts of yourself.”

“It seems then suffering is needed.”

“Suffering is required, yes. The symbol of the snake eating its own tail for instance represents transcending the different ego states.

What I mean by ego states is what happens when we talk about how a person thinks, feels or behaves. By attending to each ego state, we become increasingly self-aware and can deal with qualities like resentment, fury, vitriol, antipathy, bitterness, wrath, bile, and jealousy, all of which affect the self. This type of suffering ultimately turns inwards, affecting the mind, body, and soul—there is no escape from this suffering. Because our unconscious is partly made up of negativity, like the subpersonalities that can take hold of the true self, it can be difficult to become fully aware of the extent of the problem.”

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Food for Thought

From a symbolic and archetypal view, the connotation of evil was present in Genesis 1 with the description of “great whales” that scholars have interpreted to mean sea serpents or monsters, owing to the era of the Old Testament.

God created all creatures and saw that they were good. God’s creation could be His projection of good and evil onto humanity, which presents the question of whether God is also evil, thus bringing suffering to humanity.

Jung commented that life, being an energetic process, is both good and evil, and like other polarities, the two opposing forces cannot be avoided; the energy of opposites make up universal laws.

In this context, evil is interpreted into how we treat ourselves, dishonouring the true self, acting out with addictions, embarrassing, or shaming others, playing god in other people’s lives (e.g., controlling, withholding, dominating), ignoring our reality and our truths as opposed to accepting the reality of others knowing that it may not actually be your truth. Can you give examples of similar experiences of how evil might be an undercurrent in your life?

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In Biblical times, evil was represented by man choosing to separate himself from God through self-will rather than choosing a personal relationship with God. In today’s thinking, evil can be interpreted as humiliating yourself with the subpersonalities that devour your true self or repressing your true self.

If any, can you describe situations when your self-will has run rampant, and can you explain the outcome and effect it had on yourself and on others?

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PART FIVE

“The creation story of Genesis 1 not only represents the symbolic creation of the universe but also illustrates how the archaic aspect of the psyche, the collective unconscious, revives, and supports the idea that nothing really dies,” Soul said.

“I remember that Genesis 1 contains opposites like good and evil, dark and light, good and bad. Therefore, the psyche contains a split, like the yin and yang symbol; a person may feed one side more than the other side. I guess the evil side starts as a seed that gradually grows because people nurture the plant of wants and desires, which gradually develop the shadow side of their personality. As a result, the good withers—and it can be difficult to recognise the good parts of ourselves—it consequently becomes a shadow as well.”

Eve paused briefly, but soon had more questions.

“But, Soul, how does a creation myth like Genesis 1 influence whether a person is good, bad, or both?”

“Remember the meaning of the collective unconscious? Symbols and archetypes derive from the earliest dawn of man. Genesis is just one part of the collective; it is a Biblical source of energy that has resounded throughout history. God and the symbols in Genesis 1 have left an imprint on the human psyche, and various interpretations over generations have profoundly influenced both the collective and the personal unconscious. The collective aspect of the psyche is endowed with universal patterns of human experience and behaviours; thus all humans share particular behavioural characteristics that give them the ability to access the deepest part of their psyches. It is a lot to take in, so reiterating some of the information might help you absorb the answers to your questions.”

“I guess archetypes and symbols have a dominant effect on the conscious, depending upon the person’s interpretation, which can be either good, bad, or both.”

“Let me explain this a little better. I am going to stay with the

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serpent symbol for continuity’s sake. The effect of the serpent symbol can have different meanings depending on culture and era; one can say he or she is a ‘snake in the grass,’ which means treacherous or harmful. Jung noted, ‘As crude animal symbols they represent similar psychological forces in human nature.’ For example, the demonic character of the serpent can be personified as the addict archetype, the devil archetype, or wicked witch archetype because it represents certain character traits.”

“These negative traits somehow became a catalyst to transport me to the creation myth; but witnessing the Beginning and understanding the concepts of good and evil does not take away the inner turmoil of how my life has turned out so far. How did I get here? And why does it seem that things never turn out how I want? These difficult experiences have forced me to look at myself in the mirror to understand life’s obstacles, challenges, pain, hurt, sadness, and the anger I hold toward God who I blamed for being who I am.”

Eve thought about her past life experiences and how she had behaved, attracted, and stayed in difficult and dysfunctional relationships. In therapy, Eve had faced how her distorted defence mechanisms¹⁸ kept her in a state of illusion, playing the victim and, metaphorically¹⁹ speaking, she had seen how manipulative and potent the serpent expressed itself in her life. She considered these coping mechanisms:

18 Defence mechanisms can be either positive or negative psychological strategies that we are not aware we adopt. These defences are meant to protect the ego, the self, from unpleasant feelings, thoughts, and experiences that are difficult, to block out and stay stuck in potentially damaging situations and relationships regardless of the adverse effects. The most damaging defences are projection, denial, splitting, and acting out.

19 Not having real existence but representing some truth about a situation or other subject

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/metaphorical>

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Denial is a powerful defence mechanism that can destroy one's reality; Eve read a book called *The Divided Self* by R.D. Laing, a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who explored themes such as denying an individual's inner world. Eve remembers excerpts from a November 2019 reading from Laing:

Human beings seem to have an almost unlimited capacity to deceive themselves, and to deceive themselves into taking their own lies for truth.

We are effectively destroying ourselves by violence masquerading as love.

They are playing a game. They are playing at not playing a game. If I show them, I see they are, I shall break the rules and they will punish me. I must play their game, of not seeing I see the game.

Denial can be used as a sort of protection to avoid painful feelings, truth, and events. It blocks the mind so a person does not have to deal with the emotional impact of something which may be threatening and overwhelming because that person may lack the ability to manage the situation or feelings and is ultimately unable to deal with the challenge. Therefore, denial is a common option to refuse to accept the reality of fact.

Eve thought about how she had been in denial many times—especially when in abusive relationships—and had allowed others to replace her reality for theirs. This led her to behave according to their wishes because her inner world was so fragile and vulnerable that she did not have the capacity, emotional intellect, or strength to bring her reality to the table, so to speak. Eve knew a lot about denial.

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Repression is part of the process of denial, but is particularly concerned with pushing unsavoury and difficult impulses, painful memories, thoughts, and feelings out of the present mind to prevent or minimise feelings of anxiety or trauma that would affect our daily lives. Repression has its benefits because it allows a person to avoid living in the past. However,

while repression helps us avoid reliving some difficult experiences, not dealing with the repressive material can manifest into unhealthy coping strategies, such as addiction, and a wide range of mental health issues—and it can impact future relationships.

Eve thought about how she had used food as a substance to repress thoughts and feelings so as not to face consequences. It had been a really good way to avoid reality. However, repression also has a positive side, and Eve didn't think she would have been able to face daily life if she had been constantly reminded of the past.

Projection is very clever device, like all of them, of course—but this one ties into denial and repression. With projection, we are not looking at ourselves but placing fault and unacceptable or undesirable qualities on to others. Projection works to place others in a negative position. For example, the thought that we are selfish or thoughtless is difficult for our conscious mind to accept, so, unconsciously, we might ascribe the selfishness onto others. This is a good way to maintain disharmonious relationships—as, setting people up to dislike us means we do not have to change or take responsibility for our behaviour, for example.

Dissociation is another effective and powerful defence mechanism that can include elements of denial and repression. The mind has the ability to dissociate, to split (we have spoken about this: the black and white thinking). Disconnection can mean feeling detached from our body (depersonalization) or surroundings (derealization). When

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we experience trauma or an acute emotional stress episode, the mind emotionally withdraws from the healthy sense of self and the world.

In the dissociated state, we are not aware of the concept of time, emotions, thoughts, and bodily sensations become frozen like flight or fight syndrome; all the senses are at a momentary standstill. It can take a split second to come out of the dissociation, and before you know it, you have arrived at your destination not realising you have passed four or five tube stops.

Regression is the act of stepping back into an earlier stage of development, usually because of a stressful situation. We may psychologically revert to a period when we felt safe, or on the other hand, we may be in denial of an abusive situation that replicates an abusive childhood; the ego, on some level, defends the current situation to avoid the reality of the abuse.

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PART SIX

Soul began again. “These and other defence mechanisms manifest themselves in suffering even though their purpose and aim is to protect us from difficult experiences like childhood trauma, or negative experiences. However, when defence mechanisms become distorted and are acted out in drugs, alcohol, food, or unhealthy relationships, facilitating the false self to become stronger—that amplifies qualities of the serpent’s character.”

“Then, negative defence mechanisms can be seen as an alternative view to what is evil because they remove us from the authentic self and the beauty that lies within. But there is a positive side to a defence mechanisms, like projection, is where a person projects feelings of love, compassion, and empathy. I know for myself these defence mechanisms have helped me cope with my anxiety; otherwise, I may have become overwhelmed with stress or fear. But I also used addiction to cope at that time too—it was the only thing I could do to manage my feelings about myself and the distorted view of the world.

Then someone told me to try and use positive self-talk instead, to help with how I felt about myself, but that is hard when you mostly feel negative. However, I guess you have to start somewhere.”

“The defence mechanisms you mentioned are both good and evil in nature. They are based on the belief that we must avoid suffering at all costs. Because I am a part of you, I get the impression that fear never leaves you, trapping you in the serpent’s abyss until you decide a transformational process needs to take place. The pure nature of good and evil, the complementary opposites stemming from God, are shrouded by the negative aspects of defence mechanisms. If suffering is taken away by these distorted copying strategies, who do you become? Have these mechanisms helped you?”

“I fell apart the day I entered therapy. I guess the distorted defence mechanisms heightened the severity of how I was feeling, thinking, and behaving; I was dying inside, with the emptiness.”

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“To help, I would like to share a passage from a book called *The Way and Its Power* by Arthur Waley:

To remain whole, be twisted!

To become straight, let yourself be bent.

To become full, be hollow,

Be tattered, that you may be renewed.

These that have little, may get more,

Those that have much, are but perplexed.

Therefore the Sage

Claps the Primal Unity,

Testing by it everything under heaven.

He does not show himself; therefore he is seen everywhere.

He does not define himself, therefore he is distinct.

He does not boast of what he will do, therefore he succeeds He is not proud of his work, and therefore it endures.

He does not contend,

And for that reason no one under heaven can contend with him.

So then we see that the ancient saying “To remain whole, be twisted!” was no idle word; for true wholeness can only be achieved by return.

“I would say, for you, that the labyrinth transforming into the serpent’s abyss is the meaning of this passage—that twists and turns are inevitable in

life,” Soul said. “Your distorted defence mechanisms are embedded in the abyss, and it is up to you to minimise the negative impact of these mechanisms—but be prepared for a journey that will take you to the deepest part of yourself; you will have to confront negative subpersonalities and symbols that reflect evil, such as the serpent.”

Soul continued: “Distorted defence mechanisms are created by the psyche that can drive you further into the depths of your own misery

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by using anything and anyone to escape the divine self, a powerful and energetic life force of good and evil. You need suffering— though you may characterise it as bad, evil, immoral, or corrupt—to bring the light into existence or God into awareness,”

Eve was ready with a reply.

“You say defence mechanisms are created, but you speak about opposites. There are opposites within defence mechanisms—there is a positive side, as we have mentioned. Also, without the original aspect of evil in the collective unconscious, how can the mechanisms manifest if suffering isn’t attached on some level? And without the negative side of the defences, there can be no negative coping strategies to bring man to his knees.” She paused to think. “But...

why is the good part buried so deeply?”

“There is no straightforward answer. The Lord God created all creatures, and God saw it was all good. No matter how destructive the creature, it is part of the universe, and without the destructive force of nature, nothing can be renewed. I suspect God assigns a script to the soul, even to the lower part, to endure the path of darkness, but it can be permanent or temporary.”

Eve thought to herself.

“This must be similar to a priest, nun, or Buddhist who leaves the material world behind. But how does a child become so aware of giving to others in

need and how does a child become a prodigy in their chosen field? How does a child's voice become operative without training? Some may say a child is born with the gift; thus, it is also possible that an individual may well inherit more negative qualities than the other person. For one person, they may believe there is little hope, which translates into helplessness, but in another, there is a glimmer of light translated into strength, hope, and motivation."

"No matter how minute their light is, it can only grow, the light can be switched on at any time. This is the power of the divine self: the energy is always present no matter how difficult life is or who you become. You hear many stories about people who turn their lives

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around after years of living in darkness; evidence that the energy of wholeness prevails. This determined will becomes apparent later when Adam eats the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, illustrating the power of will to do anything good or bad.."

"So, how does a creation myth like the Genesis story influence a person's psyche?"

"Remember the meaning of the collective unconscious? I mentioned that the collective is comprised of archetypes and instincts, **20** as well as symbols that all derive from the earliest dawn of man. Genesis is part of that collective. God and the symbols in the Genesis story have left an imprint on the human psyche, but the various interpretations over generations have profoundly influenced both the collective and the personal unconscious. The collective unconscious, therefore, is endowed with universal patterns of human experience and behaviours.

Therefore, all humans share common behavioural characteristics that give us the ability to access the deepest part of our psyche: the collective unconscious. It is a great deal to take in, so going over it again might be helpful for you to understand the answers to your questions."

“Universal patterns... you mean archetypes, images, and symbols stem from the collective unconscious, like the yin and yang symbol and God, and are recognised by all cultures no matter where you are in the world? So, for example, the serpent in Genesis 3 is usually deemed as a demonic character that can be personified as we mentioned the addict archetype, the devil archetype, or wicked witch archetype because it represents certain character traits that are present in all cultures. Is that what you’re saying?”

“Yes, a blueprint that leaves a stamp in the psyche that has been described in myths, fairy tales, art, literature, religion, and customs –

20 Instinct is like energy for the psyche and is required for us to function. The psyche contains positive (libido) and negative (death drive) energy that keeps good and bad parts of the archetypes and symbols alive and ready for activation from the internal and external cues.

For example, if you are acting like a tyrant (subpersonality), you may activate the death drive that is associated with the serpent’s character.

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and within these forms are images and symbols. For example, the World History Encyclopaedia in its entry about ancient Chinese philosophy describes the yin and yang symbol in the following manner: Ying is:

- feminine
- black
- dark
- north
- water (transformation)
- passive
- moon (weakness and the goddess Changxi)

- earth
- cold
- old
- even numbers
- valleys
- poor
- soft
- provides spirit to all things

Yang is:

- masculine
- white
- light
- south
- fire (creativity)
- active
- sun (strength and the god Xihe)
- heaven
- warm

CHAPTER ONE GENESIS 1 **65**

“You mentioned ‘within these forms;’ do you mean, for instance, the dark, cold aspects of yin can be used to describe a witch in fairy tales and the

yang qualities are connected to the saintly archetype?”

“That’s right! These symbolic descriptions can be associated with the universe and vice versa. This powerful image of the yin and yang symbol also can be interpreted as containing a split or a division, but they are not separated within the symbol, thus illustrating wholeness and balance.”

“So, if I take the idea of splitting the yin and yang—”

“Let me interrupt you there: yin and yang can never be separated, they are like night and day.”

“Okay, but let me imagine the idea. Like I was saying, splitting the symbol into two halves, it disturbs the masculine and feminine energies—I guess then the two sides can become extreme or in opposition, but still remain within the circle. The outcome of the splitting can have adverse effect because the symbol resides in the collective unconscious.”

“The split you speak of has impacted the human psyche from earliest times, but more so now than ever—our world is changing to favour dissonance.”

“It is sad to see the universe undergoing radical changes that seem not to favour our fellow human beings.”

“But don’t direct your attention away from yourself, Eve, you can help to heal the world by starting with yourself.”

“I understand what you mean, the splitting in us causes significant pain that we project on to others such as in the form of black-and-white thinking. In the past, I have seen myself as all bad, negating the positive side of myself, and also projecting that onto others so that I see them all as bad, thus blaming, persecuting, and assigning fault in their personalities.”

“That is one way to think about splitting,” Soul agreed. “You can think about it another way, however: potentially, it is the yin energy that symbolically impregnates the world with evil. Remember that the

concept of evil has changed over time; in today's world, technology in all spectrums has broadened the sphere of evil, and materialism has saturated and consumed man.”

“It is quite a statement to say that yin is more or less responsible for evil in the world, laying blame on the female counterpart.”

“Eve, reflect and think about the yin and yang, good and evil—

there is a natural coexistence. As I previously mentioned, without darkness there can be no suffering and no light bearers. The yin is an essential element; therefore, the feminine nature is a quality from God that stems from the mother to their infant in ways such as expression of love, but it is susceptible to distortions in man, as without pain there is no expansion, just stagnation. If you think about it, the undesirable aspect of yin requires the yang, the spirit, to help with the transformation process, which often occurs during the most painful of times.”

“I still think that feminine nature doesn't get much of a break, I mean in ancient times the feminine was associated with serpents/

snakes. In the Babylonian epic of creation, the serpent-dragon called Tiamat has been described as a personification of primordial sea chaos. In Genesis 3, the serpent has been labelled as the devil itself.”

“I'm wondering if the character of the serpent that we have seen as devious can be activated in the collective unconscious by the destructive side of a personality's experiences.”

“What happens to those traits can become a feature of individual's personality at that given time.”

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Food for Thought

Who decides whether a person is good or bad? We all have badness within us—it cannot be avoided; evil in this context is related to human suffering

or what we do to ourselves.

The labyrinth is a symbol of this passage: "...twists and turns are inevitable in life." To face difficulties, challenges, and adversity, in order to self-develop or expand consciousness means to go through the labyrinth.

The psyche has different ways of coping with suffering, including defence mechanisms, but others can cause negative effects that encourage further trauma, such as denial and splitting. Such distorted mechanisms can lead to unhealthy coping behaviours, like addiction, which create even more evil towards ourselves.

From a Jungian perspective, animal instincts are an aspect of our psyche found in the collective unconscious and are thus part of the human psyche.

Archetypes, images, and symbols stem from the collective unconscious like the god archetype and yin/yang symbol that are universal to all men.

These archetypes, images, and symbols have a dominant effect on the conscious, depending upon the person's interpretation, and can be either positive or negative.

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By doing your own research on the internet, you will find a list of defence mechanisms. How do your defence mechanisms play out in your life?

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What are the impacts of these defence mechanisms? For example, do you stay in negative situations and in unhealthy relationships?

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