

THE WAY OF METAMORPHOSIS

Michel Chiambretto

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	13
ASSESSMENT: the emerged part	17
The beginning of life	18
ASSESSMENT: the submerged part	27
OBSERVING YOUR IMPULSES	37
The ritual of “territory”	38
The ritual of seduction	39
The ritual of submission	41
The ritual of domination	41
The ritual of provocation	42
The ritual of confrontation	43
Learn to observe oneself	44
ARE YOU INTELLIGENT?	47
THE CENTER OF THE WORLD	53
BECOME PASSERSBY	61
LEARNING TO OBSERVE "THE WORLD"	67
OUTGOING OR RESERVED, SAME STRUGGLE!	73
Profile: outgoing	73
Profile: reserved	74
For both profiles	75

COMPASSION AND EMPATHY	81
RELIGIONS, AWAKENING AND IDOLATRY	87
MAKING YOUR OWN ASSESSMENT	101
CONCLUSION	107
BIBLIOGRAPHY	111

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“[...] The shade of the laurel intoxicates or puts to sleep.¹”
—Pythagoras

¹ «Extrait des lois politiques et morales de Pythagore», *La Ruche d'Aquitaine*, Tome III, Éditions Racle, 1818, p. 120

FOREWORD

“**T**his isn’t like me!”, how many times have we said this to ourselves?

Well, yes, countless times! Not only does what surrounds us seem incredibly stupid, but often our own actions and decisions seem to be marked by the seal of stupidity.

And when we look at ourselves, the image we discover is that of an “other”, who has to be reconsidered in a different, less limited, less petty, less conditioned “format”.

You realize then that your own reflection is nothing but the product of the societal role allotted to you. Exactly like those nobodies whom you have been able to observe over the course of your lifetime or in the media at your disposal, all full of certainties, the main one being the belief in their own importance.

And when you turn yourself toward the world, what do you see in others?

Other “masks”¹ modeled after societal stereotypes, hate conditioned by that same society, covetousness as a result of an imposed economy, limited beliefs and above all an unbearable self-satisfaction whose obvious origin is egocentrism. An egocentrism so natural to Man that he is still, even today, convinced that he is the center of the Universe.

Everything revolves around him, nature, insects, animals, the world, but also the other planets, and without forgetting: gods, saints, awakened, hell, paradise, reincarnation, in one word the infinite.

And you, in the midst of all this, like any good mammal who

¹ Mask, or *Persona*, according to C.G. Jung, denotes the part of the personality that organizes the relation between the individual and society.

does not have a choice, constrained by the obligation to fit into the herd, you act and think the same, the “animal mimicry” acting in fact. Every now and then, the echo of your own limitations, through a rare impetus of the heart that runs through you when you are looking at your dog’s eyes, resonates in you. Echo of your inner child who was ephemeral, soon to be covered by thick layers of sediment, consequence of not only your animal nature, but also of the conditioning that each society imposes on its flock to control it.

Deep inside you still resonates that time of childhood where everything was not black and white, the fruit of the tree of binary knowledge not having been eaten yet. Your mind was open, able to see everything without preconceived judgment, perceiving what would later be defined to you as an illusion or a fabrication. Your friends were nature, animals and even people, everyone, of any origin and aspect. Your perception was allowing you to grasp the ungraspable, to hear the inaudible, to see the invisible, to feel the variation of a thousand scents, to be really present.

But today, what is left of it?

A being who approaches everything with pre-learned definitions, who takes refuge in its thoughts, cut from everything that surrounds it and to whom answers have been provided to questions it never asked. This is good, bad, positive, negative, why? That is the way it is. I am hungry, thirsty, cold, hot, the future worries me, I love, I do not love, I fornicate, I reproduce, I must fit, revolt, why? That is the way it is.

And what if everything is not binary? What if we could still apprehend each thing, each fact, openly, without using the sieve of duality — *yes/no, good/bad?*

Intellectually?

Certainly not, because as we shall see, our analytical thinking can approach things only in this particular way.

Call upon one’s intuition, as in one’s childhood?

Perhaps, but the conditioning received is at the level of the long and unconscious memory, which we do not control.

So what should we do?

Firstly, something obvious: it is important to understand our mental functioning so as to be able to act on the submerged part of the iceberg that is our deep brain — *indeed, how can a cup be emptied if one is not aware that it is full?*

After that, fields of unsuspected possibilities must be opened, shocking, perturbing, bringing the useful disturbance. Derision at our own condition, diatribes annoying our mask of serenity, questionings removing our layers of sediment. Of course, for all of this to happen, one must accept these eventualities and move forward on the newly opened paths with a free and detached mind.

Lastly, it is necessary to include exercises allowing to observe one's own reactions in a sensitive manner. Exercises based on both receptivity and emotiveness, same as those within any tradition trying to impact the layman. And above all, it is essential not to get a feeling of superiority out of it, as is often the case for those who have been through a series of initiations aiming to bring about a different or even superior perception.

Indeed, only the removal of one's own "egocentrism", even of one's "self", allows to finally erase one's bursts of stupidity, as well as the spontaneous regurgitation of the "standards" anchored in the deep memory.

We must also not forget our mammalian nature, which makes us think and act like the animal that we are and that we superbly ignore. It completely guides and controls our instinct of a sexed animal, be it male or female. The rejection of this reality anchors the human being in its daily actions and reactions. The only solution to break away from it is to accept early on this obvious fact so as to be able to observe it. We will see how.

Of course, all of this will not bring you the Happiness with a big H, as promised by the "New Age" or the representatives

of seductive spirituality, nor Health, today a sales argument for most large distribution publications. On the contrary, you will find even more evidence that what surrounds you is a world of total “absurdity”. And you will not be the first one to make this observation, Jesus said it two thousand years ago: “I found them all drunk; I found none of them thirsting¹”, so you will not be better off.

But then what is the point?

Only one, to finally be freer to think, more free to act and mainly to “try to finally become Yourself”.

A vast undertaking...

¹ Gospel of Thomas, Logion 28

ASSESSMENT: the emerged part

Before undertaking a renovation project, it is essential to make a precise assessment of the existing structure. One must take into account the composition of the structure, the state of each of its composing elements, and a precise plan of the whole. Only then can the renovation work begin.

As you understood, you are the construction site and the work will consist in removing everything or a part of that which can contribute to the creation of those thoughts, actions and reactions that can be classified as stupid, silly, dumb, foolish, those that make you swear at yourself.

To this end, it is necessary to dig, more and more, to remove what is deeply buried inside you.

In order to highlight the precise outlines of this assessment, I have chosen to present it as a critical summary. This will help emphasize in the eyes of the reader the elements at the origin of the thoughts and behaviors that he considers to be the product of his personality.

So, do not be shocked by what follows, but rather try to memorize that which could be useful to you. If you think that this part of the text does not concern you, wait for the end of this book before making a final decision.

Let us start digging through the superficial layers that have been applied to you, the ones covering your animal nature.

In the best of cases, the “common man” — *that is to say you* — is at the adult age a well-oiled cog in the societal apparatus — *exceptionally, due to some programming flaws, the end “format” can present defects detrimental to the intended functionality.*

Everything has been done so that you, as a microcosm, can be integrated into the family unit, part of the regional whole, which itself is a part of the national, and the latter of the global — *and the global of the Universal...*

The specific case of certain communities living “on the fringes” of society does not change anything. They are as much a part of the whole, with a “format” corresponding to their role.

It can be said then that you are a “conditioned product” — *for your own good and that of society* — conditioned by the people close to you, by your community, by your teachers, by the media, by the rulers, by society.

Like everyone else, you are not aware of this, or if yes only to a small extent. You are satisfied, and in your turn you participate in the conditioning of your children and your relations.

You think this is a ludicrous assertion?

In that case, let us analyze the life of an ordinary western person — *that is to say, you.*

Western does not differ whatsoever from Eastern or Far Eastern, the herd instinct is present in the nature of every person.

The beginning of life

Certain theories show that the embryo, and later the fetus, suffer the positive or negative experiences of their future mother. Other hypotheses, developed from the allegory of the exit of Adam and Eve from Paradise, reveal that the soul, itself of a pristine nature, only progressively becomes human, then sexed, beginning at birth — *or in the embryo.*

This topic, relating to the deep nature of humans, will be addressed in the next chapter.

Our objective will be to retrace, in the following lines, the unrelenting process that begins right from the birth of the soci-

etal man. A process with the goal to progressively “*shape*” him, thus enabling him to integrate his environment.

Indeed, it is deemed essential for his future, by both parents and society, that he should be able to inscribe himself not only in the existing macrocosm — *and so to correspond to the definition of an integrable component* — but also participate in the collective effort.

This desire to integrate into the group originates in the herd instinct — same as with any other herd animal following the same instinct — but also in the will to survive of any society.

In accordance with this predefined goal begins the ingurgitation by the child of the required qualities to be accepted. This absorption will happen through the parental education, as well as the societal one, without forgetting the unconscious assimilation — “animal mimicry”.

This aspect of our animal nature is confirmed by the psychiatrist C. G. Jung: “Human beings have one faculty which, though it is of the greatest utility for collective purposes, is most pernicious for individuation, and that is the faculty of imitation. Collective psychology cannot dispense with imitation, for without it all mass organizations, the State and the social order, are impossible.”¹

To list the main required qualities:

- to be considerate toward one’s parents, family, teachers, rulers,...
- to respect the society, the community in which one lives and accordingly, to accept the social and communal references;
- to be honest and respect the law — *and most of all the property of others*;
- to accept the existing hierarchical structures;

¹ C.G. Jung, *Two essays on analytical psychology*, Collected Works, Vol. 7, Princeton University Press, 1967, p. 155

- to be a conscious worker, participate in the collective effort *and/or* achieve a social status;
- to want to become a good father, a good mother, a good citizen.

All of the above will be rehashed and consolidated by public or private education.

In the school, in the college, even in the university, the same precepts will be taught, but also the instructions allowing to be part of the social apparatus. Everything is done and organized in a way so that the citizen focuses his entire life on his future integration into that whole.

Evidently, the adolescent could ask himself the following question:

“Why is this type of education imposed on me, an education opposed to the development of any personality not corresponding to the predefined format?”

An intimate questioning often triggering the ill-being of the adolescent — *and the “middle age” crisis.*

But he will not be able to express it, because the answer is provided in parallel:

- he has the duty to conform himself, and if he does not, he will not correspond to the image that he, and most of all that his relatives can be proud of.

Moreover, the doubt cannot exist.

Everything around him confirms that this is the only way possible to obtain what everyone wants, namely

- to be loved by one’s relatives;
- to be recognized socially;
- to be attractive to the opposite sex;
- to be serene, not afraid of the future, of the unknown.

The established hierarchy will only reinforce the system by basing everything on the obtained diploma. It will allow or not

the individual to pretend for this or that job and thus acquire the corresponding social status.

It is important to note that, same as the standardized level of intelligence — *calculated by the IQ test, the leading reference of our contemporaries* — , the diplomas of all kinds depend first and foremost on “logico-mathematical” intelligence. Manual, artistic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist or even “extra-sensorial” (*completely excluded*) aptitudes will not provide access to socially rewarding education if those who possess them do not exhibit right from their childhood an acceptable IQ.

It seems obvious that knowing oneself too well — *intra-personal intelligence* — conflicts with any molding of the masses (see chapter “Are you intelligent?”).

To complete the logic of the system, rewards are used in the form of all kinds of gratifications: titles, medals, prizes, trophies — *society’s frame of reference*. This starts at a very early age, with the introduction of competition through rankings and rewards. It continues with a full range of more or less gratifying benchmarks, which underpin the hierarchy of any human society.

At this stage of development, one would think that people have the possibility to regain contact with their essential nature through their relation with religion.

However, here too, everything is conditioned in the form of dogmatic definitions of good and bad. This is good, that is bad, and the person, molded by society, finds again the outlines of his “format”.

Everything is kept in boxes. When you open the box of good, or that of evil, you find an array of predefined principles. A logical consequence is that, whenever you approach anything new in your life, you are required to put it in this or that box. When in doubt, you will analyze it according to the instilled parameters, which will allow you to find the appropriate box for it. Also, you will have learned beforehand that it is not possible

to put it in two boxes at the same time or not to put it into one.

Religious education, same as secular education, is completed by the appeal of the “reward”.

If you conform yourself to the definition of Good, the paradise is open to you, that paradise where people live in Happiness, without working, because everything is offered to them, where there is no hate, aggression, sickness, poverty, misery, aging, death; the opposite of life. On the other hand, if you deviate by actualizing what is defined as Evil, then hell will welcome you: there, you will suffer eternally the torments of life — *similarly, we find here Buddhism whose objective is the end of the cycles of life and above all an escape from the suffering stemming from them.*

This is obviously a limited approach to religion — an approach described as “static” by Bergson¹. Knowing that every religion can offer an authentic spiritual path in its “dynamic” aspect.

Also, we should not delude ourselves, whether one is an atheist, agnostic or other, these binary definitions of Good and Evil, and their related principles, are still taught with the help of:

- **fairy tales during childhood;**
- **various scenarios seen or read;**
- **media;**
- **and in general by both “culture” and education.**

The instructional conditioning is complete.

All the principles of deep memory conditioning have been used — *as for any brainwashing* —, that is to say:

- **relentless repetition of the same topics;**
- **emotional dimension; family, society, opposite sex;**

¹ Terms borrowed from Bergson. “Static” is the social aspect of religion, maintaining the cohesion of a society. It is without interpretation or mysticism — exoteric dimension. In contrast, the “dynamic” aspect is the evolving and open side of said religion — esoteric dimension. H. Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, University of Notre Dame Press, 1977

- multiple rewards or various threats and punishments;
- activated “animal mimicry”.

School education works both in the societal and religious domains, which are in complete synergy.

A whole range of definitions and predetermined behaviors bring about the necessary configuration. To perfect the whole every form of thinking is based on the binary: *good/bad, yes/no*.

And what is the effect of this on the Human?

Firstly, it is obvious that this results in being cut off from one’s “animal nature” — *which is desirable, to say the least, as we will see in the next chapter* — and also one’s “essential” nature.

This deep nature is replaced by an amalgam of familial, social and religious components which form a mask — *Jung’s Persona*. And this mask is such an integral part of the individual that he is unable to dissociate himself from it.

I am: last name, first name, from such and such family, with such and such education, with such and such family situation, holder of such and such diploma, with such and such profession, owner of such and such property — *the whole placing me on the social scale* — having received such and such religious education, whether accepted or not.

According to these criteria, the subject has unknowingly shaped his societal mask and especially the false image he has of himself; and the others have helped him perfect it because, by the same conditioned analysis, their eyes and their attitudes confirm it.

As a consequence, the individual thinks that his intimate being is this mask.

To quote C.G. Jung: “[...] a kind of mask, designed, on the one hand, to make a definite impression upon others and, on the other, to conceal the true nature of the individual.¹”

1 C.G. Jung, *Two essays on analytical psychology*, Collected Works, Vol. 7, Princeton

Fortunately, at the perceptual level, some part has been preserved. A sensitive part concerning the love for one's close relatives: children, parents, partner. It is linked to one's instinct — *or Spirit, depending on the definition* — but it is this same part that is often the object of the mental disequilibrium of the subject — *which by the way is treated by bringing back the observed deviations into the desired format (this is the role of the shrink).*

This short overview of your “shaping” is now over.

As you can see, ultimately you are not responsible for your own state, or only to a small extent. Your thoughts, your behavior, are for the most part the result of the received conditioning.

Which is confirmed *elegantly* by Konrad Lorenz, Nobel Prize holder in Physiology: “Those other (cultural, n.t.) rites, which evolve in the course of human civilization, are not hereditarily fixed but are transmitted by tradition and must be learned afresh by every individual.¹” “[...] and it is here, if one wishes, that one may draw the border line between ‘the animal’ and the man.²”

Of course, this overview is incomplete. For each individual the following must be added:

- lived experiences, both positive and negative,
- and also, certain features of the inherited genes.

The above, however, is only able to nuance the result of the common conditioning.

Knowing that human nature can only be uniform.

Everything described corresponds to the superficial “sediment layer” covering your “true nature” — *the latter will be developed in the next chapter.*

To close this chapter, it is important to note that the imple-

University Press, 1967, p. 192

1 Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression*, Routledge, 2002, p. 64

2 Ibid, p. 65



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THE WAY OF METAMORPHOSIS

LIKE MOST INDIVIDUALS, AT SOME POINT IN YOUR LIFE YOU MAY HAVE TOLD YOURSELF, “THIS LIFE CAN’T BE MINE — THIS ISN’T ME — I SURELY HAVE LOST MYSELF ON THE WAY...”

SUCH A REALIZATION SHOULD NOT BE WORRISOME. **O**N THE CONTRARY, IT COULD VERY WELL BE AN OPPORTUNITY IN DISGUISE FOR A NEW START.

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