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Othering as the Shadow of the Shadow – Beyond the Metaphysics of Despair

> "I have gone through the most terrible affair that could possibly happen", said the shadow; "only imagine, my shadow has gone mad; I suppose such a poor, shallow brain, could not bear much; he fancies that he has become a real man, and that I am his shadow" (H.C. Andersen 1847, *The Shadow*)

Introduction

We are inexorably attracted to the shadow. Our times seem uniquely attuned to the quest of the dark side of this or that, the horrors of this or that, the hidden this or that. Our fascination with shadows arguably grows out of a justified mistrust with a world dominated by image and pretence, falsehood and untruth (Kociatkiewicz, Kostera 2010). We mistrust the perfectly shining surfaces of celebrities and leaders, logos and shows, hypes and frauds. In this essay, I argue that there is a shadow to the shadow. In our fascination with the shadow, we avoid confronting ourselves, our organizations and our societies. We thus risk enhancing the shadow's grip over mental and social dynamics, exacerbating othering, scapegoating and a culture of blame.

In particular, I will try to show that, all too often, the shadow has come to represent a shallow and cost-free type of othering where every kind of negative attribute is projected onto an object outside the self, the group, the nation or any type of construction, cognitive and emotional, of a collective 'we'. I ask whether it is possible to reclaim or emancipate the shadow from its current servitude to Manichean narratives and rediscover some conceptual hardness by placing it squarely inside the self, the group and the collective 'we'. If the shadow is to have any critical sharpness it must eschew facile and wish-fulfilling projections onto the other and be redirected inwards towards those parts of ourselves that seek disavowal and repression. It must also call forth a renewed sense of responsibility for our own predicaments that avoids blaming others for them.

The idea of the shadow can be traced in the Gothic fiction of the 19th century, such as the works of E.T.A. Hoffmann. Its prime specimen is undoubtedly H.C. Andersen's homonymous story. In it, a man travelling in a foreign land and exposed to fascinating sights is separated from his shadow which assumes an independent existence. The anonymous man returns home and, years later, his shadow returns and is reunited with him. Only now, the man realizes that, instead of being the master of the shadow, he has become its slave. In the story's grim end, the man's shadow marries a hard-nosed princess, while he is summarily executed. The story has been widely interpreted in many different ways (for a particularly intriguing account, see Le Guin 1975), but at its core we have a shadow that stands not just for the return of the repressed, but the rebellion and the revenge of the repressed against the cultured man.

In psychology, the concept of the shadow was developed in the pioneering studies of C.G. Jung who argued that the shadow is an archetype embedded in humanity's collective unconscious. It is one of the core symbolic structures with which the psyche of every new-born child is equipped, just as her/his body is equipped with a variety of organs. As an archetype, the shadow cannot be directly experienced, but it can be observed in a multitude of symbolic expressions across individuals, cultures and historical eras, in religious and spiritual myths and images that recur across the ages, in stories and narratives, ceremonies and rituals, dreams and fantasies. Archetypes, according to this view, make up humanity's spiritual and symbolic legacy, the river that runs deeply underground and out of sight of consciousness, which surfaces with regularity in a range of phenomena that reach our conscious minds.

The archetype of the shadow stands for the dark side of every human being, a side which is not merely unknown to the subject but actively disavowed and kept away from consciousness (Jung 1953, 1968, 2009). In this regard, Jung's concept of the shadow is not dissimilar from the repressed unconscious of Freud (1915/1984), a man from whose shadow Jung struggled to escape for many years. In this regard, Jung's concept is undoubtedly more poetic and maybe gripping than Freud's but, as we shall see, less precise. Nor is Jung's notion of integrating our shadow in our lives

and learning to live with it so different from Freud's (1933/1988) concept of the return of the repressed. Where Jung deviates from Freud is in the idea that the shadow is projected outwards onto others, who become the repositories of all the disavowed qualities in ourselves, especially destructiveness and aggression. In this respect, the Jungian shadow merges two psychoanalytic defence mechanisms, repression and projection, into a single process.

By projecting unwanted and painful psychic elements of ourselves outwards, we distil idealized images of ourselves, shorn of greed, envy, shame, anger, ambition and so forth. In this regard, Jung offers a simple and elegant explanation why we always encounter these feelings in others and very rarely in ourselves. In integrating or incorporating the shadow in our own psyche, Jung emphasizes the role of personal responsibility which involves "recollecting or re-owning the projections of psyche onto others and the world" (Diamond 2018, p. 21). In this way, Jung's conceptualization suggests that when we find ourselves criticizing others, blaming others or diminishing others in order to make sense of our predicament, we should question whether responsibility may not lie in ourselves. When we attribute negative qualities to others, we should persistently look inwards and try to identify whether, in fact, what we castigate in others is not something that we seek to disavow from ourselves. Learning to acknowledge the shadow, accept it and live with it demands more than introspection. It calls for a constant state of vigilance and self-interrogation and a willingness to take responsibility for our choices and our lives. Jung's call for self-interrogation and vigilance again is not so difference from Freud's self--analytic attitude, but the gulf between the two widens with regards to the success of these efforts. Where Freud saw human beings confronting a tragic predicament with the forces of society, culture and nature stacked against them, Jung leaves open the possibility of emancipation through the reintegration of the shadow. In such circumstances, the shadow may actually unleash creative and positive potentials, opening possibilities for enlightenment, wisdom and fulfilment.

What is not clear in Jung is whether the reclamation of the shadow can be achieved by an individual or a group without a dramatic change in the social and political institutions (and as we shall see presently, whether the social and political institutions are themselves part of the collective shadow). By contrast, Jung is positive that failing to acknowledge and integrate our shadow in our mental lives has dire consequences. It unleashes destructive energies onto others and 'demons' onto ourselves:

> From the psychological point of view, demons are nothing other than intruders from the unconscious, spontaneous irruptions of unconscious complexes into the continuity of the conscious process. Complexes are comparable to demons which fitfully harass our thought and actions; hence in antiquity and the Middle Ages acute neurotic disturbances were conceived as possession (Jung 1923/1953, p. 138) (also cited in Diamond 2018, p. 26).

It is in this way that we lose control of our mental functioning, abandoning ourselves to dark fantasies which reinforce the grip of the shadow over ourselves. We become literally possessed by our shadows or demonized by them.

Collective shadows

An important and natural development of Jung's concept of the shadow lies in its collective manifestations. Seeing as the shadow is an archetype buried in the collective unconscious, it stands to reason that it surfaces in individual mental phenomena like dreams and fantasies, but it also assumes collective symbolic expressions in myths, rituals, collective fantasies, religious and political beliefs and so forth. Thus, groups, organizations, communities and nations, all possess collective shadows, composed of shared but disavowed psychic contents. These may include collective traumas and failures, shameful episodes in their histories, unrealized ideals and ambitions, shared fears, obsessions and suspicions, what, in other words, we would characterize in common parlance as the 'dark side' of the group, the organization, the community or the nation.

Each group collectively tries to manage its shadow, by offering it legitimate means of conscious expression or by keeping it firmly subordinated to idealized collective achievements and triumphs. These idealized elements and qualities form part of what, using a psychoanalytic vocabulary, we would call a 'cultural ego-ideal' or an 'organizational' ego-ideal (Chasseguet-Smirgel 1976; Schwartz 1987). By analogy to the individual ego-ideal, these collective ideals are clusters of idealized shared fantasies about a group or an organization, made of myths and stories, commemorations, relics, museums, celebrations and so forth. These bind groups together, acting as anchors of group identities and also as standards to uphold (Gabriel 1999).

Group ideals function to keep the collective shadow at bay. From time to time, however, a collective shadow comes to dominate a group's mental functioning and dynamics. In these situations, a group projects its unwanted and disavowed qualities onto outsiders, unleashing large amount of destructiveness and aggression against them. By targeting repressed anger, shame, resentment and contempt onto outgroups, a group thus seeks to defend its own identity (Bowles 1991; Kociatkiewicz, Kostera 2010; M. Stein 2000). An integral aspect of this process, when the shadow comes to dominate the mental life of a group or collectivity, is the process of *othering* (Gabriel 2008), whereby, in protecting a collective identity from anything likely to tarnish or pollute it, organizations and groups may engage in a process of anchoring their identities in opposition to all the disowned and unwanted qualities that have been projected onto outsiders.

The process of othering has been a defining feature of colonization and colonial and postcolonial mindsets (Said 1994) where a primitive, uncivilized, indolent,

deceitful (the list can be extended almost indefinitely) 'native' provides the reference point against which a European identity of the civilized, disciplined, rational and moral man is constructed. In this account, the 'heart of Africa' in Konrad's famous novel, in an archetypal way represents the Jungian shadow of the 'civilized' European collective identity. More recently, the collective shadow features prominently in populist ideologies where a Manichean split juxtaposes the purity and goodness of 'the people' to the corruption and malevolence of the elites (Mudde 2014; Rosenthal 2018). Another part of the shadow in populist ideologies is cast onto the needy and undeserving outsiders and shirkers, the 'parasites' who suck the life out of the people. If the elites become the targets for projections of greed, arrogance and contempt for the people, the parasites are targeted for their ungratefulness, their envy and their neediness. All of which are projections of disavowed elements that allow for an idealized image of the people as authentic, pure and wholesome.

The destructive and primitive forces of the collective shadow and the risks they pose for any group or collectivity cannot be mitigated purely by idealized communal ideals and shared values. These are also consolidated through a variety of social, political and legal institutions that seek to regulate the shadow's potential for aggression and disorder. To the extent that institutions, like 'the law', 'the state' or 'the Constitution' enjoy wide-spread legitimacy, they too may be absorbed in the cultural ego-ideal of a group or a nation. They become idealized anchors of collective identities. Yet, institutions too may be subverted and become part of the shadow. This is what happens when 'the bureaucracy', 'officialdom' or 'the government' come to be seen as forces of oppression and exploitation, serving the elites and sustaining the parasites. How can we determine which institutions protect us from our collective shadow, which institutions represent the collective shadow and which have been drawn into the collective shadow? Having pondered these questions for some time, I find myself unable to reach any firm conclusion, without assuming a separate position, political, moral or social, from which a pronouncement can be made. This is one of the ambiguities of the shadow – it looks different depending on one's position. This is also one reason for its versatility and its incorporation in numerous different discourses and narratives.

Organizational shadows

Organizations, like other social spaces, are arenas where archetypes regularly surface in different forms, acted out, and confront each other (Kostera 2007, 2012). It is not surprising then to discover that the shadow, as one of the core archetypes, has been studied and discussed in organizational settings (Bowles 1991; Hubbell 1992; Kociatkiewicz, Kostera 2010). In organizational settings, a collective shadow descends when a particular department, a group of employees or managers, a union, a group

of customers or sponsors, becomes the scapegoat for an organization's collective failings and becomes the recipient of large amounts of vilification and hate. In ordinary circumstances, routine ribbing, teasing and joking may offer legitimate outlets for the shadow and a safety valve against the build-up of anxiety, resentment, fear, shame and other toxic emotions. When these however turn into persistent vilification, demonizing and bullying, the organizational shadow gives full vent to primitive emotions leading to destructiveness and, almost inevitably, organizational failure.

In certain organizations, the 'old guard' or 'dead wood' come to be viewed as inhibiting the health and prosperity of an organization, sapping the organization of its creativity and energy. In extreme cases, such organizations may sink into a state of *miasma*, a state of contagion and pollution which afflict all who work in them (Gabriel 2012). Feelings of depression and worthlessness become endemic in such organizations along with a paralysis of any fighting spirit or resistance. In these circumstances, leadership attempts to cleanse the organization by relieving it of the 'dead wood' exacerbate the state of *miasma* and uncleanliness, or, in Jungian terms, consolidate the grip of the organizational shadow over the organization. Successive waves of downsizing and dismissals, far from restoring the organization to health, represent a symbolic shedding of blood, a sacrifice in the name of the gods of profit efficiency who are never assuaged (H.F. Stein 1997, 2001). If genocide marks the uncontested sovereignty of the shadow in political life, miasmatic organizations mark the uncontested dominance of the shadow in corporate and organizational life.

In a similar way to political life, organizational institutions (procedures, rules, schedules, policies statements, ethical guidelines and so forth) seek to manage and regulate the shadow, by establishing what is acceptable behaviour, handling grievances and malpractices and ensuring fair treatment of all members. As du Gay (2000) has emphatically argued, 'bureaucracy' is the first line of defence against corruption, arbitrariness and nepotism. Bureaucracy itself, however, has come under persistent attack from many quarters. Populist and other politicians routinely vilify 'the state bureaucracy', running down the civil service and the machinery of government. Management gurus, like Tom Peters (1987, 1992), have staged their own assault on bureaucracy, blaming it for every conceivable social and organizational ill. Academics calling themselves 'organization theorists' have developed a kneejerk reaction against formal administration for a wide variety of reasons (du Gay, Lopdrup-Hjorth 2016; du Gay, Vikkelsø 2016), preferring instead to focus their attention on institutional logics, dynamic capabilities, networks, transformational changes, and so forth. The result of this multi-pronged assault on formal organization has been to substantially cast organizational rules, regulations, procedures, schedules and plans as enemies of innovation and defenders of an oppressive and corrupt establishment, in short, the heart of the organization's shadow.

Even organizations that appear to be operating with the perfect coordination and efficiency of a machine, it has been argued, may be in the grip of the organizational

shadow. Martin Bowles (1991), whose profound studies of organizational symbolism remain underappreciated, proposed that, in Western capitalist organizations, the very organization of work under a managerialist, technicist ethos consigns employees to the level of resources:

> The Organization Shadow (...) manifests itself in contemporary organization in the way the labour process is managed where a logic of efficiency and rational design often denies meaning for human experience (Bowles 1991, p. 394).

In this view, the very essence of the capitalist organization is as the shadow of all that is vibrant, meaningful and true in social life. Organizations deny their members opportunities for what Jung calls individuation, the process whereby each individual shapes her/his individual personality (identity), distinct from collective identities, by developing their individual consciousness in a way that integrates of their unconscious shadow (Jung 1923/1953, p. 561ff). Bureaucracy, through its essential impersonality, homogenizing and efficiency-mindedness, stunts individuation, thus consolidating the dominance of the collective shadow over its members.

Extending this view of the organizational shadow, Kociatkiewicz and Kostera (2010) argue that, beyond shrouding the experience of employees, the organizational shadow in our times also entraps an organization's customers. In economies where the emphasis has shifted from the efficient production of goods to the supply of quasi-magical experiences, alienated consumers come to represent the shadow of an economy of shows that seeks to disenfranchise ugliness, disorder, poverty, dirt and every negative attribute from its spaces. Thus, the artificially re-enchanted cathedrals of consumptions cast their shadow on the alienated consumer, every bit as decisively as machine bureaucracies and Taylorist assembly lines do on the alienated worker. Mass consumption, like mass production, denies individuation and the reintegration of the shadow into our lives through the same homogenizing and conformity-inducing forces.

Theorizing the shadow in relation to institutions, whether at the social and political or the organizational level, leaves us with an enduring ambiguity as to whether institutions offer a protection against the shadow or whether they themselves are part of the collective shadow. It would seem to me that, if we are to stay faithful to Jung's thinking, institutions themselves are part of the dynamic interplay of psychic forces and can represent both. On the one hand, they seek to control the disavowed, repressed forces of destructiveness, aggression and envy, allowing legitimate outlets, and permitting a partial integration of the shadow in social life. On the other hand, these same institutions may legitimize and validate the very destructive and corruptive practices they purport to control, by offering a veil behind which such practices can continue unabated. An organizational institution, like a sexual harassment

policy, may act as an appropriate deterrent against the sexual exploitation of its vulnerable members by more powerful ones. In this regard it offers subordinates some protection against their superiors' shadow. The same sexual harassment policy, may, however, inhibit permissible expressions of sexual interest, instil suspicion and even paranoia, normalizing the belief that every member in a position of power is a potential sexual predator and abuser. It may further normalize the belief that subordinates are likely to use harassment accusations as a 'weapon' against their superiors, further exacerbating mistrust and undermining solidarity. In all these ways, the sexual harassment policy may become part of the organizational shadow, reinforcing abusive relations, mistrust and hostility. In a similar way, diversity training, now embraced by many organizations, may ostensibly be claiming to address organizational inequalities and injustices by off-loading responsibility for these to the prejudices and personalities of individuals rather than their institutional and structural sources. The individual's shadow, his/her prejudices, resentments, anger and so forth, offers a convenient veneer which masks the institutional shadow of injustice and inequality.

The ambiguities in Jung's conceptualization of the shadow run even deeper. The shadow is both an archetype in its own right, but also a quality of other archetypes. Thus, the important archetype of 'senex' or wise old man also contains its own shadow, "a dark chthonic figure (…) namely the magical (and sometimes destructive) Luciferian element" (Jung 1968, p. 374). Furthermore, the shadow while containing much that is destructive, is also said to contain "a number of good qualities, such as normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights, creative impulses, etc." (Jung 1951, p. 266). The circumstances under which the shadow's 'good qualities' find expression are highly debatable as indeed is the question of which qualities are deemed to be 'good'. As we argued earlier, this depends on the moral and political standpoint that we adopt rather than something embedded in the deep archetypal structure of the shadow itself.

Still further, and maybe more perplexingly, the shadow is both an archetype, in other words a timeless mental structure that runs through every member of the human race, immutable and unchanging, and the very specific contents of this structure, which are highly individual and unique. As used by Jung, it is a concept, a primordial image, as well as a psychic structure. In this way, it fuses together the process of repression, the content of the repression and the mental structures that effect the repression. Or, to put it simply, the shadow is a door, as Jung referred to it in several of his writings, but also the place behind the door and the materials that one discovers once they have managed to open the door and look inside.

The Shadow in contemporary narratives

In spite of these ambiguities and tensions or possibly because of them, the idea of the shadow has proven enduring, useful and versatile. In our times, the shadow has found its way in many narratives and discourses, both scientific and popular. It has crossed boundaries from psychology to popular psychology, from academic research to popular culture, and from politics to identity politics. In this way, the shadow or the 'dark side' has become a regular feature of what I call the narrative ecologies (Gabriel 2016) of our time, reflecting many of its anxieties and discontents.

The *external* causes of these anxieties and discontents, at least for people living in Western democracies, have been widely discussed: the escalating social inequalities and injustices that proliferate in these cultures; globalization and the disrupting movements of people and jobs across countries and continents; the increasing fragmentation and mixing of cultures within national frontiers; the voices of disadvantaged and stigmatized groups demanding justice and equality and challenging many mainstream values; the rise of the social media and unprecedented invasion of private life by numerous perplexing technologies; the dramatic and irreversible changes to the earth's climate. The onslaught of the COVID-19 virus has exacerbated many of these fears and anxieties, adding new layers of uncertainty and threat in most people's lives.

In line with the spirit of catastrophology in our times, a world of constant looming menaces magnified and augmented by the media, the shadow has entered public narratives whenever a threat, whether concrete or fantastic, seems to be following us and we are unable to shake it off. We live under the shadow of epidemics and disease, the shadow of financial crisis, the shadow of job loss and penury, the shadow of terrorism and war, the shadow of climate Armageddon. In this climate, conspiracy theories have emerged as a hegemonic narrative genre for casting shadows against groups, individuals and institutions. The notion that there is no smoke without fire becomes the guiding metaphor that inoculates the most outrageous fabrications from rational scrutiny and investigation. A conspiracy theory is in the first place a paranoid construction whereby a group (the Jews, the elites, the migrants or, indeed, 'conspiracy theorists') or an individual becomes the recipient of various shadowy projections and held responsible for every conceivable calamity (Brown, Jones 1998; Gabriel 2016). At the same time, however, the charge that someone is spreading conspiracy theories can assume the quality of a conspiracy theory in its own right, leading to exclusion – the alleged conspiracy theorist now becomes target of othering and vilification (Schreven 2017).

Conspiracy theories contribute to a climate of generalized mistrust and suspiciousness that at times reaches the level of a paranoia that triggers witch-hunts for scapegoats and fall guys. As Fineman (2014) has noted, Western societies have evolved into blame cultures, the attribution of blame a constant obsession, indeed

a business, whenever we are confronted with an accident, a calamity or simply a problem. These cultures become literally cultures of shadows. We are pursued by shadows everywhere and we pursue shadows everywhere, as trust in leaders, in the professions and science, and in all in public institutions, economic, political, legal, educational, has dramatically declined. Trust in the very notion of truth has been shaken in a society of fake-news and hoaxes, where every kind of authority, legal, political, scientific comes under scrutiny. The authority of every expert is constantly challenged by the authority of the individual speaking "from experience" (Gabriel 2004), as amplified by both the traditional mass media and, even more, the social media.

Leaders are inevitably the first to blame for many of our anxieties, discontents and disappointments. In line with the dictum "the brighter the light, the darker the shadow", we now not only accept that exceptional individuals also harbour the capacity for evil, but we have come to view it as inevitable. Even non-exceptional individuals in positions of power are now assumed to be Jekyll and Hyde personalities, harbouring dark sides behind their public personas. By allowing us to conceptualize a co-existence in an individual of different positive and negative qualities, the idea of the shadow offered a readily believable understanding for why prominent individuals lapse into dysfunctional, destructive and self-destructive actions. This has lent itself to numerous academic studies of the dark side of leadership and other organizational phenomena (e.g., Kets de Vries 1985; H.F. Stein 1998, 2001; Gabriel 2012; Tourish 2013). It has also played widely into popular and facile narratives of 'fallen idols', whether these are politicians, public personalities, celebrities and stars which provide daily fodder for tabloids, gossip columns and of course the social media.

An important use of the shadow in current narratives has emerged from the recognition that many of the good and the great of the past, along with their statues and memorials, are deeply tarnished. Some of them made their fortunes from the horrors of the slave trade, others from the exploitation, oppression and genocide of defenseless groups. It is not just that Western cities and those who live in them have lived under the shadow of criminals but also that the crimes of these individuals have long been erased from history. Following the Black Lives Matter movement, the shadow of enslavement and genocide has been reinforced, shrouding a large part of Western culture and tarnishing many of its accomplishments and triumphs. The fact that the revered fathers of the American Revolution not only had slaves, but (at least some of them) maltreated and abused them and that many celebrated heroes of Western culture had a record of violence and abuse has now emerged almost as an archetypal shadow narrative of our times.

In cultures of blame, Jung's fusion of the defences of disavowal and projection in the concept of the shadow has proved very useful. By projecting negative attributes outwards on some target who must take the blame for our troubles, we seek to inoculate ourselves from any responsibility for these troubles. In the same manner, communities and groups seek to preserve their own authenticity and goodness, by

projecting unwanted qualities outwards. In this way, the idea of the shadow has lent itself to various narratives regarding 'the enemy within'. It enables the off-loading of undesirable attributes within a community onto an 'other' who is blamed for collective failures, stigmatized or scapegoated. This plays into popular narratives of parasites, shirkers, fat cats and every other malignant construction, all of which arouse the anger and resentment of those who see themselves as representing the positive in their community. In this way, there has been a proliferation of Manichean narratives in which a pristine and idealized 'us' is constantly subverted and victimized by the shadow of a totally evil 'other'. The subject positions of 'victim' and 'survivor' are, in this way, bestowed to an individual or a collective that can demonstrate themselves to have been wronged, exploited or stigmatized by an 'other', positions from which they can now vilify this other, at little or no cost, often reducing them to nothing more than a caricature.

A common narrative of victimization and othering in our culture is that of 'voice denial', which in some instances has been elevated to the ultimate denial of freedom. Denying someone's voice has come to be viewed as a cardinal sin in such discourses, which sometimes seek to lend legitimacy to the wildest claims and opinions, conspiracy theories and hate speech. In this way, Nazi Holocaust denial ("holohoax") is viewed not as a patent travesty of history and a diminution of the sufferings and deaths of millions, but as a legitimate discourse that needs to be protected from the enemies of free speech. The shadow then shifts from those who perpetrated the Holocaust and those who deny it to those who seek to silence the deniers. In this regard the shadow is remarkably flexible, passing from individual to individual and group to group, always stigmatizing the 'other'. In this way, the shadow assumes different forms, depending on a group's or individual's ability to cast themselves as being victimized or stigmatized by others.

In conclusion, through its protean appearances in contemporary narratives, the shadow enables us to make sense of our predicaments and articulate our grievances, anger and resentment. Along the way, the shadow brings to the surface, hidden or forgotten injustices and iniquities. It lends weight to voices silenced or ignored in the past. The shadow also lends weight to the view that many gifted individuals, many institutions and many progressive social movements have a dark side, inseparable from their many positives. The shadow has prompted us into looking for hidden agendas and dark forces behind the idealized facades of public institutions, organizations and their rhetorics. In all these ways, the shadow has become a hugely compelling idea, that creeps effortlessly into our conversations and narratives. In all of these ways, the shadow *seduces* us. We idealize its very darkness, we fall in love with its loyal servitude, its versatility and its effectiveness. The downside of this seduction is that it enables us, individually and collectively, to project our own failings onto others, to deny our own responsibility for disappointments, to disown

our own destructiveness, envy, greed and resentment and to blame others for much that is wrong in our lives. This is *the shadow of the shadow*.

Living in the shadow's shadow is both comforting and gloomy. It is comforting because there are always others to blame for our troubles and discontents. We embrace the shadow's shadow if not with glee at least with fervour, yet, in doing so, we confine ourselves to a gloomy place of resentment, carping, schadenfreude, cynicism and despair. It is place of hidden menaces and conspiracies, rigged games and invisible agendas, mistrust and permanent darkness.

Conclusion: Beyond the seductions of the shadow?

Perspicacious readers will have noted that in the argument above the shadow underwent a subtle but vital transformation. As we moved from the original conceptualization of the shadow by Jung and his successors to the uses of the shadow in contemporary narratives and discourses, *the shadow turned from concept to idea and from idea to metaphor*. It is as metaphor that the shadow has become a vital discursive resource that can be deployed to off-load blame and disavow our responsibility. It is as metaphor that the shadow detaches itself from the subject, i.e. ourselves, and becomes an abstract entity over which we claim no ownership or control. In this way, it allows us to deny our own destructiveness, greed, envy and other toxic emotions and project them onto others. As a metaphor, the shadow seduces us, precisely because it provides us with a safe place from which to criticize and carp, often by claiming the moral superiority of the underdog, the survivor, the victim. The shadow metaphor does all this invisibly, quietly and indirectly, without ever having to engage in direct confrontation or fight.

Jung would not have been in the slightest surprised by the power and seductiveness of the shadow *qua metaphor*, even when used by people who have no interest in archetypes, symbols or the collective unconscious. As a primordial image, the shadow possesses the qualities of such images:

> [They] have a secret power that works just as much on human reason as on the soul. Wherever they appear they stir something linked with the mysterious, the long gone, and heavy with foreboding. (…) these primordial images dwell in everyone as they are the property of all mankind. This secret power is like a spell, like magic, and causes *elevation just as much as seduction*. It is characteristic of primordial images that they take hold of man where he is utterly human, and a power seizes him, as if the bustling throng were pushing him. And this happens even if individual understanding and feeling rise up against it (Jung 2009, p. 366).

What would have surprised Jung would be the extent to which the shadow has been 'weaponized' and commodified, through the media and social media. As

a resource for polemics, the shadow is used to cast aspersion and criticisms on undesirable others, to spread suspicion and cynicism. As a commodity, it is deployed by the merchandizers of meaning (Sievers 1986) to sell opinions and prejudices. In what may appear curious, this commodification and weaponization, has resulted in the domestication and taming of the shadow, the shedding of its troublesome qualities and those that made it a rich but dangerous concept for Jung. As a metaphor, the shadow has become the obedient servant of the scapegoating and 'othering' discourses of our times. As part of the neoliberal discourse of responsibilization (Grey 1997; Shamir 2008; Reinecke, Ansari 2016), the shadow can readily be used to off-load responsibilities and blame for structural and institutional failures to individuals, whether as workers, as consumers or as citizens.

What would it take to emancipate the shadow from its servitude to these Manichean discourses? *As a metaphor*, it seems to me that the shadow is beyond emancipation. It will serve whoever uses it for good and ill. Opinion-shapers, political and cultural stakeholders as well as researchers will continue to use it in whichever way suits them. It is a resource available, cost-free, to all. *As a concept*, the shadow will continue to be used with greater or lesser precision by different scholars, especially those exploring the dysfunctional, oppressive and violent sides of social institutions. It would be far more interesting to see how the concept could be used constructively to shed light on organizations and institutions that are *not* dysfunctional. It would be more instructive to examine, in other words, how organizations and institutions with ordinary everyday problems and tensions manage their shadows. *As a therapeutic resource*, it will continue to be of some use to analysts and their patients enabling some patients to overcome or manage their symptoms. In all these ways, the shadow will continue to be used in more or less effective ways for different purposes and with different degrees of success.

Maybe the more interesting question is whether the shadow could, at some point, individually or collectively unleash the emancipatory potential intriguingly envisaged by Jung: whether, in other words, learning to manage our shadow, individually and collectively, can help us attain greater enlightenment, tolerance and peace. Here too the prospects do not seem to me particularly bright. At both the individual and the collective levels, reclaiming the shadow requires that we resume responsibility for at least some of our actions and predicaments. It requires reclaiming those ugly feelings of envy, resentment and destructiveness that are always easier to offload on others. It calls for building up solidarity with people different from ourselves and a recognition of our shared humanity. It requires that we acknowledge that we are not always victims and survivors of shadows beyond our control and recognize the shadow as *our own*. Reintegrating our own shadow in our lives would call for a persistent self-questioning of our projections, a constant vigilance and suspicion exercised not against others but over ourselves. It would necessitate an acknowledgement of our own destructiveness, not as a result of the frustrations

and privations thrown against us by others, but as an integral, if inadequately integrated part of our selves. All of these things seem unlikely, bordering on utopian. Without a fundamental transformation of the political and cultural landscapes we inhabit, a reintegration of the shadow would make us vulnerable in ways that few would be able to endure.

If we cannot emancipate the shadow or be emancipated by it, we can at least emancipate ourselves from the shadow's shadow, and maybe from the tyranny of the infinite regress of the shadow's shadow's shadow… We may, in other words, hold back from using the shadow as a readily available metaphor for othering and for occluding this othering. As citizens, we may challenge comfortable uses if the shadow to externalize our own discontents and diminish the sufferings of others. As scholars, we may continue to probe Jung's rich but flawed concept, seeking to establish its potential and limitations. As private individuals, we may try to undertake the difficult and painful inner journey that opens up our understanding of our own shadow without lapsing into facile generalizations and wish-fulfilling illusions. We may then be able to catch some glimpses of our own shadow, no matter how unsettling and disturbing this may be and, in doing so, we may be able to move beyond the metaphysics of despair.

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