

## The shadow

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One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious.

(Jung 1967: 265)

### Introduction

The concept of the *shadow* is one of Jung's great contributions to psychology which he adapted early on in the twentieth century from Freud's original division between the light and dark sides of the human psyche. According to Jung, when the *shadow* is activated, usually through projection, it is charged with *affect* and takes on an autonomous life of its own beyond the ego's control. It is possible to depict Jung as a *structuralist* thinker who was not so much interested in creating a highly systematised metapsychology, but who was, instead, concerned with the interrelationships between different psychic phenomena. As a result, he did not develop clear-cut definitions of the latter and this included his thinking about *shadow*. Inextricably linked to this concept is that of *compensation* so that *shadow* – both individual and collective – is compensatory to a consciously held attitude.

In a classical Jungian analysis, problems related to *shadow* are thought to be the first to need attention. These largely arise from the realm of *personal shadow* which may be conceived of as the repository of all the aspects of a person that are unacceptable or distasteful to them. As a clinician, one encounters a variety of *shadow* phenomena which include envy, aggression, greed, laziness and jealousy (the latter being one that is particularly hedged around with shame). This is by no means an exhaustive list. However, it is important to note that *shadow* is not always negative, for instance, where the more positive side of the individual is repressed and consequently lives in the *shadow*. In these instances, the ego plays an essentially negative role while a *positive shadow* projection may be activated by an admired or liked outer object, for example, in the analytic setting where the *wounded healer*

archetype often gets constellated with the analyst having to carry the analysand's 'healer' projection until the latter can reclaim and own it for him or herself.

Many aspects of the *personal shadow* may be traced back to the relationship to the parents or parental surrogates and siblings. An individual who has a huge *shadow* problem with jealousy may have felt excluded from the parental relationship. Equally, there may be an attractive high-achieving older sibling to whom the individual has felt unfavourably compared or a spoilt younger sibling who is the centre of attention in the family.

The resulting *shadow* problem from such family dynamics plays an important part in the individual's life and will often carry over into relationships with the opposite sex where excessive jealousy can become a destructive force. This will infiltrate the individual's other interactions and may cripple their functioning as a well-adapted social being. In analysis, *personal shadow* problems of this kind will manifest in the transference where the patient/analysand may experience the analyst as an excluding parent or as a rival either to be competed with or be subservient to. The latter kind of transference can evoke a powerful countertransference on the analyst's part in the form of feelings of superiority or of being the all-wise one.

Jung gives an example of this kind of *transference/countertransference* in his analysis of a philosophy student. He diagnosed the patient as having a father fixation which led her to seek out a male analyst like her father with whom she could jostle intellectually, and, at the same time, force into a superior position making him into an object of admiration. Jung writes that her authentic self lay hidden behind her persona of 'the supremely wise, very grown-up, all-understanding mother-daughter-beloved' (Jung 1953b: 159).

The patient had experienced the oedipal triumph in winning father from mother at an early age so that father became the idealised parent and mother the patient's *shadow* rival. Jung's evident countertransference irritation with the patient is an expression of the latter. *Personal shadow* transference/countertransference would need to be worked through in the early part of the analysis, but behind this can lie an archetypal oedipal conflict emanating from the *collective unconscious*. The latter is the innate, non-personal part of the psyche which is the realm of archetypal imagery that expresses itself symbolically.

Jung points to the fact that the kind of analysis that is advocated in analytical psychology is nothing other than the scientific rediscovery of an ancient truth which is the healing power of catharsis or cleansing. This comes about as a result of the analytic work during which the patient begins to become aware of their darker side and can confess to it. As Jung expresses it: 'The first beginnings of all analytical treatment of the soul are to be found in its prototype, the confessional' (Jung 1954: 55). Through the

observation of images and feelings that detach themselves from the invisible realm of the unconscious, repressed and forgotten *shadow* contents manifest themselves. According to Jung, the individuating process invariably starts off by the patient's becoming conscious of their *shadow*, which is experienced at first as the inferior personality made up of everything that does not fit with conscious demands. This is a gain, albeit a painful one, as it gives the person substance. There has to be a dark side in order for a person to become whole and by becoming conscious of that they remember they are human like everyone else.

Apart from the *personal shadow* there is also the *collective shadow* of which history provides many examples. The most notorious example from the twentieth century was the projection of *collective shadow* by the Nazis into the Jews, who could then be portrayed as inferior or evil beings to be exterminated. As Jung says: 'In Hitler, every German should have seen his own shadow, his own worst danger' (Jung 1964: 223).

The phenomenon of *shadow* also varies from one culture to another so that what is acceptable in the United States may not be in Japan. This may vary within the same culture at different times in history so that in English society at one time good manners and social status were paramount. Nowadays that would be considered rather old-fashioned as other priorities such as a more egalitarian society have superseded them.

A further aspect, touched on above, is that of *archetypal shadow* which would emanate from the archetypal or mythological realm of the *collective unconscious*. In Jung's thought this would be equated with evil. A more detailed exploration of this will be undertaken later in the chapter.

### Jung's writings on shadow

Jung acknowledged Freud as the medical man who at the turn of the nineteenth century showed that reason was not the ruler in the human psyche but that human nature was instead steeped in an abysmal darkness. Since then psychotherapy has explored this darkness in one way or another.

In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung wrote of a personal encounter with the *shadow* in December 1913, while he was going through his 'creative illness'. As Ellenberger expresses it: 'the intermediate period from 1913 to 1919 was that of a *creative illness* . . . a period of intense preoccupation with the mysteries of the human soul' (Ellenberger 1970: 672). At this time, he had a dream in which he killed the heroic Siegfried at the behest of a brown-skinned savage. He was distraught with grief when he awoke but came to see the latter as an aspect of the 'primitive' *shadow* at whose urging he now had to let go of his heroic, idealised conscious attitude. An alternative view of this dream could relate Siegfried to the child Sabina Spielrein yearned to have with Jung. She was his first psychoanalytic

patient which resulted in both parties becoming embroiled in powerful erotic transference/countertransference enactments.

In Jung's writings, *shadow* from the personal unconscious is said to be projected onto a person of the same sex, whereas projections onto persons of the opposite sex are thought to emanate from the *animal animus* and lead to confrontation with contra-sexuality and the *collective unconscious*. This is touched on below in an example from Jung's (1956) *Symbols of Transformation*, an early work frequently updated by him. Jung tended to do a cut-and-paste job when he was revising, and, in the process, would completely rewrite large passages of text. In the earliest version of this work, which was then entitled *The Psychology of the Unconscious* and published in 1912, there is no mention of *shadow*, which came later in his theory, and the word used instead was *complex*. In the later *Symbols of Transformation*, Jung writes: 'I have frequently observed in the analysis of Americans that the inferior side of the personality, the "shadow", is represented by a Negro or Indian' (Jung 1956: 183). This is in reference to the patient whose material he was studying in the book, a young American woman, who was being treated by Jung's colleague, Théodore Flournoy. Jung thought the Aztec figure in one of her dreams could not be a *shadow* aspect of herself as it was a male figure so that it must instead be regarded as a masculine component of her personality.

It is important to note with regard to the above that Jung was a man of his time when the kind of thinking he puts forward in connection with *shadow* representations was acceptable, even taken for granted. Post-Jungians take a very different approach to this and would not automatically assume that a black person in a white person's dream was a *shadow* figure or vice versa. Their thinking has also changed about seeing *shadow* figures as not only associated with persons of the same sex. In other words, a male may be equally a *shadow* figure for a woman as a female can be for a man.

The book Jung wrote after this was *Psychological Types* (published in 1921). Although this work contains only three references to *shadow* in the index, the whole work centres around that concept. It was, in part, inspired by William James's characterisation of two temperaments: the *tough-minded* and the *tender-minded*, each of which is the *shadow* of the other. In *Psychological Types* Jung developed his theory of two attitudes: the *extravert* and the *introvert* who are equally each other's *shadow*. The *extravert* is orientated to the data supplied by the outer objective world. The *introvert*, on the other hand, relates to data supplied by the inner subjective world. Jung marries the concepts of *introvert* and *extravert* to the four functions of *thinking*, *feeling*, *sensation* and *intuition* and points to how Darwin, as an extraverted thinker, would be the *shadow* of Kant as an introverted thinker.

In the same work, Jung examines the Apollonian and Dionysian aesthetic that Nietzsche applied to the ancient Greeks, who saw the latter as being

caught in a conflict between the two. According to Nietzsche, the antagonism between them – the domesticated Apollonian and the barbarian nature of the Dionysian – could be bridged only by art. An important new work, *Nietzsche and Jung: The Whole Self in the Union of Opposites* by Lucy Huskinson (2004), demonstrates Nietzsche's enormous contribution to Jung's central concepts. For instance, she relates Nietzsche's *Übermensch* to Jung's *self*, both of which are involved in confrontation with the *shadow*. Compare Nietzsche's: 'For a shadow came to me – the most silent, the lightest of all things once came to me! The beauty of the Superman came to me as a shadow' with Jung's: 'the shadow contains the self. Behind the shadow looms up the self' (Huskinson 2004: 103).

The most concerted attempt Jung made to define the concept of *shadow* is in his book, *Aion*. A summary of what he writes in that may be useful here in order to orientate the reader towards this central Jungian idea.

To start with, Jung briefly touches on the difference between the *personal unconscious* and the *collective unconscious*. The contents of the former are acquired during the individual's lifetime; whereas those of the latter are from the realm of the archetypes. The ones that are experienced empirically most frequently, usually through projection, are those of the *shadow* and the *animus/animus*.

As has been said above, in a classical Jungian analysis it is problems to do with the personal *shadow* where 'it represents first and foremost the personal unconscious' (Jung 1959a: 10) that are initially worked on and Jung says that no one can gain any insight into themselves or acquire self-knowledge without first tackling their *shadow*. He alludes to this as a moral problem and says that it is a huge challenge to the ego-personality requiring painstaking work over a long period of time.

Some aspects of the *shadow* are more resistant to being assimilated to consciousness since they are lived through powerful affect by way of projection onto another. Where there is complete failure to gain insight into the phenomenon, the outer world becomes increasingly impoverished and illusory, and, in extreme cases, the individual is trapped in an autistic condition isolated from the environment. This is because the shadow is being lived through projection and the outer world becomes a replica of the person's unknown side. In this way, one may speak of someone being afraid of their own shadow.

This more severe manifestation 'when it appears as an archetype' (Jung 1959a: 10) belongs in the realm of the *collective unconscious* and represents an encounter with evil. This results in a shattering experience for the person gazing into the face of absolute evil. However, Jung does point to the fact that the contents of the *personal unconscious* or *shadow* are merged with the archetypal contents of the *collective unconscious* and bring the latter into consciousness with them when *shadow* is activated. Evil then may result from the fusion of a negative parental introject with the dark side of the *self*

which results in the introject becoming infused with archetypal power. This might be encountered in analysis through an archetypal negative father transference being constellated and then projected onto the analyst, who is consequently experienced as a bullying tyrant.

The individual who lives through projection is convinced that it is others who have all the bad qualities and who practise all the vices. Therefore, it is *they* who are wrong and *they* who must be fought against. On the other hand, the individual who succeeds in shouldering some of the burdens of the world and seeing that whatever is wrong with the world is not unrelated to themselves becomes a serious problem to him or herself. As Jung says, only the individual who learns to deal with his/her own *shadow* has done something real for the world for no one can see straight if they do not see themselves.

In this same work, *Aion*, he goes on to talk about the necessity for the individual's welfare of embodying the *shadow* in consciousness. In this way, if a feeling of inferiority is conscious there is a chance of correcting it. If, on the other hand, it is repressed and isolated from consciousness, it remains uncorrected and liable to erupt in a moment of unawareness. This explains why the most carefully laid plans may go awry or well-meaning intentions may turn out badly as the mere suppression of *shadow* is not the answer.

When the *shadow* results in neurosis it becomes considerably intensified and it then becomes a necessity for the individual to find a way for the conscious personality and *shadow* to live together. Suppression is of little use and the reconciliation of the two poses a major problem both for the individual and for society at large but it is a problem that must be engaged with if the person is to become more than two-dimensional.

Jung equated the inferior function with *shadow* as it is hedged around with a great deal of autonomy and affect and has the character of an instinct. Jung's thinking on typology posited that there are four functions: thinking, feeling, intuition and sensation. In his model, the first two are the rational functions lying at either end of a vertical continuum; while the second two are the non-rational ones which are located at different ends of a horizontal line. 'Jung went on to postulate that the superior function had its opposing inferior function in the one at the other end of a vertical spine' (Casement 2001: 151). However, the individual who has achieved rational orientation at the expense of not integrating the inferior function into their conscious personality may, according to Jung, remain as ignorant of themselves as an infant because 'the fourth would not come' (Jung 1958a: 166). The 'fourth' here refers to the least differentiated function which is, as a consequence, the least conscious one and brings with it unconscious, archetypal contents when it is activated. Jung even says that the inferior function is identical with the dark side of the personality which is the door into the unconscious.

There are various traps any individual may fall into, one of which is identifying with the *shadow*. A person of this kind will always prefer to make an unfavourable impression on others and will create obstacles for himself where none exist. However, the opposite way of living can equally be a trap – that is, identification with the *persona*, which is the outer front one presents to the world. If this becomes too much part of the individual's identity then the person is condemned to live a false self identical with their own inauthentic biography. The temptation to identify with what one seems to be is great because, as Jung says, 'the persona is usually rewarded in cash' (Jung 1959b: 123).

He writes at some length equating the inferior function with *shadow* and says the individuation process is invariably started by the individual becoming conscious of the *shadow*. It is the inferior function that acts autonomously towards consciousness and that cannot be harnessed and controlled. Individuating may come about only through the realisation of *shadow* which does not mean giving into one's Mr Hyde side, but, instead, of struggling with it so that in place of a neurotic dissociation of that aspect, there is a real attempt to bring it into consciousness. Jung was impressed by the Jekyll and Hyde story and made frequent reference to it in his own writings.

Neurosis, according to Jung, is an inner cleavage – a state of being at war with oneself. What drives individuals to this state is the suspicion of being two people in opposition to each other – the *shadow* and the *ego*. To illustrate this, Jung quotes Faust's saying that two souls are housed within his breast.

If the individual cannot reconcile these two aspects then it can lead to a neurotic split in the personality and Jung says that the healing of this split is a religious problem. Just as Christian teaching exalts forgiveness of one's enemy in an external situation, this needs to be turned inward by the individual in learning to live with the enemy within and to call the wolf one's sibling. However, Jung warns against seeing this as simple as in reality the acceptance of the shadow-side of human nature verges on the impossible as this means coming to terms with what is unreasonable, senseless and even evil.

However, as Jung points out, the dangers of not undertaking this super-human struggle is that a weak ego can identify with the transcendent *self* if the *shadow* has not been sufficiently realised. This in turn leads to the inflation of the ego with consequent delusions of omniscience and omnipotence – the ultimate road to madness. Just as the *self* may be seen as the inner God-image so Jung (1953b) says in *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* that the devil is a variant of the *shadow* archetype.

Jung saw in alchemical symbolism an analogy with the *individuating* process, that is, the way in which individuals may become themselves undivided, distinct from others and whole. Jung equates the *nigredo*, the

first stage of the work in alchemy, with the encounter with the *shadow* in psychology. This is the stage of melancholy and stasis when everything comes to a standstill. The *shadow* presents a fundamental contrast to the conscious personality as a positive virtue is usually the result of a victory over the corresponding vice. Indeed, for Jung the problem of opposites called up by the *shadow* plays the decisive role in alchemy since it leads to the ultimate union of opposites in the archetypal *hierosgamos* or higher marriage. When the conflict is brought into consciousness it leads to the recognition of an alien other in oneself. The alchemists named this Mercurius, which they conceptualised as God, daemon, person, thing and as psyche as well as soma. In other words, as the source of all opposites.

Jung points to Christ and the infernal or chthonic side of the self as autonomous images and says our psychic conditions are derived from these archetypal figures in the *collective unconscious*. From this standpoint, Jung points to Christ as the archetype of consciousness and Mercurius as the archetype of the unconscious.

The alchemical text, the *Chymical Wedding*, written by the seventeenth-century alchemist Christian Rosencreutz, was concerned with the transformation and union of the royal pair depicted in it but it was also concerned with the moral development of the individual undertaking the alchemical work. This is based on the union with the *shadow* and the problem of opposites that become constellated and in turn activate opposing archetypal contents in the *collective unconscious*. This process results in *numinous* or awesome experiences.

According to Jung, Mercurius signifies by its very nature the unconscious itself and is also by nature both active and passive. In alchemy, the active or 'ascending' part of him is called Sol or King and the passive or 'descending' part Luna or Queen. This duality of light and shadow in alchemy is for Jung also the duality of psychic life. Alchemy may be seen as a subversive force compensating for the purified imagery of medieval Christianity. In a similar way, it could be said that dynamic psychology led to the lifting of the repression of sexuality of the nineteenth century. Jung goes on to say: 'The arcanum of alchemy is one of those archetypal ideas that fills a gap in the Christian view of the world, namely, the unbridged gulf between the opposites, in particular between good and evil' (Jung 1963: 473).

The conflict that ensues from confrontation with the *shadow* in both alchemy and analytical psychology must eventually result in a union or *coniunctio*, the term Jung borrows from alchemy. It is a struggle that has to be lived through and experienced and cannot be abolished by rational means or repression, as the latter means that it lives in the unconscious, and, in that way, is all the more subversive to the conscious personality. The *shadow* is synonymous with the primitive aspects of the psyche to which reason means nothing.

If, through analysis, a conjunction results then what was hidden behind the conventional mask – i.e., the *shadow* – is raised to consciousness and integrated with the ego. This means, according to Jung, a move in the direction of wholeness as the assimilation of the *shadow* gives a person body as the animal sphere of instinct emerges into consciousness.

This is the only way that humans can develop as repression leads to dissociation in an attempt to get rid of the *shadow*. As opposed to that one-sided way of living, individuals have to learn to live with the *shadow* without it leading to a series of disasters. Recognition of the *shadow* leads to humility and genuine fear of what lies in the depths of humanity. It is ignorance of this that is the most dangerous thing for humans.

## The meanings and definitions of shadow

### Personal shadow

Three kinds of *shadow* were touched on above – *personal*, *collective* and *archetypal* – and these will now be elaborated further. It is important to bear in mind that these are not three entirely discrete entities but that there is a large degree of overlap between them as there is in everything in Jung's schema.

The *personal*, *collective* and *archetypal shadow* may be seen at work in the complex relationship between Jung and Freud. This, of course, does not mean that their complex relationship can be reduced to an interaction of shadow projections; however, it would be useful to be used for illustration purposes. With regard to *personal shadow*, the relationship started with a mutual projection of positive *shadow* contents as each filled an important gap in the other's work. Freud needed Jung's work on the Word Association Test to underwrite his theory of unconscious contents and Jung needed Freud's ideas on the latter to bolster his work on complexes.

In 1906 Jung wrote that even a superficial glance would show how indebted he was to the brilliant discoveries of Freud. In his turn, Freud unreservedly acknowledged the services rendered to the spread of psychoanalysis by the Zurich School, particularly by Jung and Bleuler (who was Jung's director at the mental hospital where he worked).

The long correspondence between the two men over the next seven years charts the increasing *positive shadow* projections between them in the form of growing mutual regard, affection and the sharing of confidences and ideas. This gradually changed until the final descent into the negative side of the *shadow* that grew between the two and destroyed both their friendship and their working collaboration.

This splitting of *shadow* into 'positive' and 'negative' may be clinically insightful as it can throw light on where and how an idealising transference arises as well as a demonising one. This can be specially useful in working

with borderline patients who often manifest powerfully split transferences in the course of analysis.

In 1907, Jung wrote fulsomely about Freud's *Gradiva* claiming that it was magnificent and that he gulped it in one go. Freud reciprocated by saying that he was very much surprised to hear that he was the rich man from whose table Jung could glean a few crumbs.

Later in 1907 Jung admitted to Freud that his admiration for the latter bordered on being a religious crush. However, by 1912 relations between the two were increasingly fraught and Freud eventually wrote to Jung denying that he was trying to tyrannise him intellectually.

Jung responded by saying that Freud's technique of treating his pupils like patients or sons and daughters was a blunder and was motivated by the fact that Freud could then remain on top as the father. In 1913, Freud finally proposed that they abandon their personal relations to which Jung assented saying he never thrust his friendship on anyone. He ended with: 'The rest is silence' (McGuire 1974: 540).

The relationship between the two thinkers was in essence a *shadow* one which was to a large extent based on the attraction of opposites. The latter always carries the potential for turning into repulsion so that a *positive shadow* projection may end up becoming a negative *shadow* one. In Freud and Jung's case there were a number of *shadow* components to their interaction: they came from different cultures and generations; they functioned in quite disparate ways with Freud having extraverted feeling as his primary function and Jung introverted intuition. In addition, there was a strong homo-erotic element to the relationship accompanied by unresolved father-son transference feelings. Freud called Jung his heir apparent and Jung projected the disappointed longings from his relationship to his own father into Freud.

### Collective shadow

In his writings, Jung refers to a 'collective shadow figure . . . which . . . is in part descended from a numinous collective shadow figure' (Jung 1959b: 262). A terrifying example in recent history of a take-over of large numbers of people by *collective shadow* is that of the Nazi movement. Again, this claim does not mean that the entire Nazi movement can be reduced to a psychological level of explanation based on the *shadow*; however, it is instructive to look at this disturbing phenomenon from the perspective of Jung's theory of the shadow. Many fell under the spell of the Nazi movement and Jung's ambiguous relationship to it over a period of time seems to suggest that he was also affected. His actions between 1933 and 1940 in relation to the Nazis have been the subject of a great deal of controversy. Some of the main sources for this are catalogued in Ann Casement's *Carl Gustav Jung* (2001) where different viewpoints are expressed by writers such

as Geoffrey Cocks, James and Thomas Kirsch, Micha Neumann and Andrew Samuels. However, as this chapter is about *shadow*, only the critical comments will be highlighted in it.

Jung provoked most criticism in his role as editor of the *Zentralblatt*, a psychotherapy journal published in Germany. An article he wrote for the journal on the distinction between Jewish and German science was attacked by many people outside Germany as it echoed the claims put forward by the Nazis to underwrite the Nazi regime. A brief reference from it will serve to make the point. Jung states that perceptive people have for a long time recognised that science would only benefit from recognising that there is a difference between German and Jewish psychology. The impact of this statement was made the greater by the inclusion in the same issue of an article by Matthias Göring full of pro-Nazi rhetoric. In this way, Jung's remarks could be used to underwrite the racist claims of the Nazi regime.

Jung's involvement with the Nazi movement is well documented in Cocks' (1997) book *Psychotherapy in the Third Reich: The Göring Institute*, where the latter holds a middle position between condemning him outright while also pointing to his lack of judgement in making statements like the one above. He stresses what he sees as disturbing ambiguities in Jung's thought and 'asserts that uncritical admirers of Jung have tried to render harmless the latter's assertions at a politically sensitive time' (Casement 2001: 107).

Cocks disagrees with the kind of statement that claims that Jung was purposefully engaging with the shadow of prejudice in order to destroy it. He asserts that such a judgement not only naively ignores the multiplicity of motives that lie behind any human action but also turns a blind eye to Jung's early lack of criticism of Hitler and the negative effects that had.

Jung's attitude also created difficulties between himself and his close colleague, Erich Neumann. The latter eventually opted for the inner connection to Jung over and above their differences as Jew and Christian. However, his son, the psychoanalyst Micha Neumann, takes a different view, claiming that Jung had a blind spot towards the Jews because of the complicated father-son relationship with Freud but also because of the strong elements of religious content in the Nazi ideology. Neumann claims that Jung unconsciously identified with Nazi symbols, ideology and anti-semitism and 'believed in the positive collective "Germanic soul," to which he felt he belonged' (Maidenbaum and Martin 1991: 276).

Another contributor to the above work, Andrew Samuels, in his book *The Political Psyche* (1993), says that the *shadows* surrounding Jung are going to linger as they want psychological attention paid to them. Apart from criticising Jung for his part in Nazi-run psychotherapy and the *Zentralblatt*, Samuels is also critical of two other aspects in Jung's approach, for instance, his attempt to found a cultural psychology akin to Nazi thinking. This, linked to his fascination with the question of leadership, has its roots in

German Romantic philosophy which, when activated, can unleash powerful forces in the psyche. 'In Zurich in 1946 Jung admitted to Rabbi Leo Baeck that he had "slipped up"' (Casement 2001: 114). This brief excursion away from the central theme of shadow has been introduced to throw some light on Jung's complicated relationship to Nazism. Dazzled by the mythological charisma combined with the world dominance exhorted by the latter, Jung appears to have fallen prey to a *shadow* power complex.

Another example of the destructive potential of *collective shadow* is portrayed in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

The white colonialist, Kurtz, . . . is confronted with the Colonial Ego's tyrannical control and exploitation of the Congo and becomes totally identified with it. This is a sort of psychic inflation that can overcome anyone who is exposed to powerful forces in the environment, which can then activate the darkest recesses of *shadow* in the individual's unconscious. By enacting rather than integrating his *shadow*, Kurtz unleashed deeply destructive forces both in himself and in the community he created. The Congo was rendered savage by the colonialists who exploited it and who unleashed evil by the projection of their collective *shadow* onto it.

(Casement 2003: 44; original italics)

### Archetypal shadow

The God-image or 'archetype of Deity' as Jung (1958b) expresses it in his book *Answer to Job*, is 'an *antimony* – a totality of inner opposites – and this is the indispensable condition for his tremendous dynamism, his omniscience and omnipotence' (Jung 1958b: 7). In this late work, Jung sets out to show nothing less than the *shadow* side of Deity and to demonstrate that the Old Testament Yahweh and Satan are two sides of the same God. The book was the culmination for Jung of many years of struggle with this problem. As he reports in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung (1963/1983) dreamt that he was in the gloomy courtyard of the beautiful medieval Gymnasium at Basel. From there he went through the big entrance and saw before him the cathedral of Basel with the sun shining on the roof of coloured tiles. This impressive sight was topped by God sitting above the cathedral on his throne. Jung thought it was beautiful and was filled with wonder at the perfection and harmony of the world. Suddenly, unexpectedly, God dropped a vast faeces on the cathedral and smashed it to pieces. This was so shattering that Jung woke up.

For Jung this was the revelation of the *shadow* of the Christian God. In *Answer to Job*, Jung concludes that Yahweh's harsh treatment of Job brought about through the initiative of his son, Satan, brought Yahweh to

the realisation of Job's moral superiority in relation to himself. 'In this respect the creature has surpassed the creator' (Jung 1958b: 43). This situation gives rise to the need for real reflection and this is where, according to Jung, Sophia, or feminine wisdom, steps in. Through 'her' reinforcement of the need for reflection, Yahweh decides to become man as he recognises he has done wrong. As so often with the eruption of *shadow*, there is the possibility of the attainment of the feminine goal of completeness as opposed to the masculine one of perfection.

Jung goes on to say that even when God is incarnated as Christ he shows a lack of self-reflection. Only in the despairing cry from the Cross – 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' – does his human nature attain divinity as he drinks to the dregs what he made his servant Job suffer. According to Jung, in this supreme moment is given the answer to Job.

From the human point of view, says Jung, Yahweh's *shadow* is revolting with his touchiness and suspiciousness and two-faced behaviour when he pointed to the tree of knowledge while at the same time forbidding Adam and Eve to eat of it. In this unconscious way, states Jung, Yahweh precipitated the Fall.

### Major innovations, criticisms and developments of the concept of shadow

Jung's criticism of the Christian doctrine of evil as a *privatio boni* (i.e., absence, privation of the good) lies at the centre of the thesis he expounds in *Answer to Job*. In this way, evil is denied absolute existence and how then can one speak of good if there is no evil? If the latter has no substance then good, too, must remain shadowy and evil becomes a mere privation of good. Jung saw life as an energetic process that needs the opposites and good and evil as simply the moral aspects of this natural polarity.

It is this central thesis of Jung's that was debated at length between himself and the English Dominican priest, Father Victor White, reported by Ann Conrad Lammers (1994) in her book *In God's Shadow: The Collaboration of Victor White and C.G. Jung*. Jung bemoaned the fact that other theologians saw him as an atheistic metaphysician rather than as an agnostic psychologist. In contrast to this, he felt that in Father White he had finally met a member of the clergy who could grasp what he (Jung) was trying to say.

The two men struggled for several years to find a resolution to their diverging views on the problem of the *privatio boni*. In a letter that White wrote to Jung, which is reproduced in Gerhard Adler's (1976) *C.G. Jung Letters*, he states that the *privatio boni* is dogma or a statement of Christian truth that affects all value-judgements. Jung, on the other hand, asserts that the dogma arises out of Christianity's elevation of God to be the source of

ultimate good but that this does not empirically justify theological judgement that God is either good or evil. He is, instead, transcendental which means that he is beyond human logic. White responded he could think of no single empirical example of evil in which the *privatio boni* is not verified. Jung contested this by claiming that Christianity gets out of its inherent dualism by denying the existence of evil.

Jung went on to say that the *privatio boni* is an archetypal symbolic truth and challenged White to show him how many people have finished their dealings with the devil so that they be can rid of the Christian symbol. It is the symbolic conflict with the *shadow* represented in Christianity as Christ versus Satan that points the way to the unity of the self in God. For Jung, Satan is Christ's *shadow* but according to Catholic dogma Christ knew everything so could not have a *shadow*.

In his book, *God and the Unconscious*, White (1982) summarised his view by saying that he understood the Jungian concept of the assimilation of the shadow as signifying the supplying of some absent good in the form of consciousness.

The differences between the two men proved irreconcilable and they parted, although they never broke with each other completely. White had varying reactions to *Answer to Job*. He eventually reproached Jung for publishing it, for it made his own position difficult in his Order and in the wider Catholic community. Ann Lammers gives a more detailed account – too complex to go into here – in her book *In God's Shadow*. This work includes the correspondence cited above between White and Jung. White's final work expressed his strong disagreement with Jung's views in *Answer to Job*. Nevertheless, he wrote to Jung saying that though he felt their ways must part, he would never forget nor lose what he owed to Jung's work and friendship. There continued to be some correspondence between them until White died of cancer in 1960.

In the 1950s, Paul Radin's (1956) work on the *Trickster* in American Indian mythology served to underwrite Jung's concept of *collective shadow*. For Jung, the *Trickster* is synonymous with *collective shadow* and the alchemical figure of *Mercurius* in being sly, mischievous and able to change shape. In Radin's book, Jung wrote a commentary called 'On the psychology of the trickster-figure', in which he says that the trickster haunts the mythology, carnivals and picaresque tales of all ages as it is an archetypal structure.

Christianity rid itself of this emblem of pagan wantonness which was subsequently repressed into the unconscious and lived as the *collective shadow* of civilised human beings. It would occasionally reappear in different forms such as the Italian commedia dell'arte, in alchemy, and in Radin's trickster cycle where *shadow* is preserved in its pristine form before the achievement of a higher state of consciousness by the American Indian. This mythological tale can be told only once the latter stage has been

achieved so that: 'It was only to be expected that a good deal of mockery and contempt should mingle with this retrospect' (Jung 1959b: 263).

A critique of the way Jungian writers have approached the concept of *shadow* is to be found in a paper written by Jocelyne James, a graduate of the MA course in Jungian and Post-Jungian Studies at Essex University, England. For instance, she takes up von Franz's statement that 'the shadow is simply the whole unconscious' (James 2000: pages unnumbered). As James says, if this is the case then it could embrace the whole of human history, evolution and culture. Although she demonstrates her awareness of the efficacy of vagueness with regard to defining *shadow*, James also, by implication, appears to be making a Popperian point that if something can explain everything then it cannot be subject to being falsified and lies outside the realm of being tested empirically. But throughout his writings, Jung lays claim to being an empiricist so that von Franz's statement would seem to run contrary to Jung's.

James also challenges Jungians (including myself) who have written on this topic to produce research that will critically reflect on the clinical application of *shadow*. She questions why and tentatively suggests a number of possibilities: that analytical psychologists may still be struggling to comprehend the concept as it evokes a quagmire of epistemological problems. She also points to a popular book on the subject, Zweig and Wolf's (1997) *Romancing the Shadow*, which emphasises sex and potency. James's thesis opens the way to the last section of this chapter, which looks at trends for future developments.

### **An account of the current status and trends for future developments**

The term *shadow* is in constant usage among analytical psychologists but as James (2000) says in her thesis, there is need for a more detailed differentiation than von Franz's assertion that the term *shadow* is simply a mythological one referring to everything in a person that cannot be named. One writer who has tried to elucidate this in relation to the 'helping professions' is Adolf Guggenbühl-Craig. He talks of the *charlatan shadow* that may be constellated in an analyst when the need arises to say difficult things to a patient. At this point, the analyst may become either sadistic or flattering to the patient. Examples of the latter may be the following sorts of interpretation: extolling the positive aspects of the archetype of the queen to a power-hungry woman or lack of courage may be interpreted as positive introversion on the part of a patient. Both interpretations feed the patient's narcissism as does encouraging a lack of a dutiful response to an ageing mother as a liberation from mother's negative animus. Care needs to be taken by the analyst in walking the thin line between enabling the patient to

value his or her own psychic needs without encouraging narcissism. The latter can lead to collusion on the part of the patient so that the serious business of analysis degenerates into its *shadow*. In this way, 'The deeper value of psychic development is betrayed' (Guggenbühl-Craig 1971: 74).

Another *shadow* aspect of the profession is the abuse of the search for meaning. Unfair or disloyal behaviour towards spouse, friend or relative may be exalted as self-realisation and the workings of the unconscious. In promoting him or herself as the Great Healer, an analyst may lay claim to transcendental knowledge. 'Like a little god the analyst sees everything clearly . . . there is no longer any tragedy; any incomprehensible horror' (Guggenbühl-Craig 1971: 77).

Guggenbühl-Craig (1971) also points to the obvious polarity that can develop in any relationship of healer/patient where the former is identified with being all-powerful and the latter carries the *shadow* of the regressed, fearful child. With society's demand for greater accountability on the part of practitioners in the 'helping professions', abuses of power are increasingly being brought out in the open. In this way, instead of analysis holding up the mirror to society's *shadow*, society has for some time been holding up the mirror to the *shadow* in analytic work.

Even though working through the *shadow* is such a feature of Jungian analysis, particularly the classical approach, it is nevertheless widely evident in the analytical psychology world, not least in the destructive splits that are such a conspicuous part of Jungian professional organisations around the world. In 1995 I was commissioned by the *Journal of Analytical Psychology* to write an article on the splits that have been a feature of the evolution of analytical psychology as a profession in the United Kingdom. In the 1970s, difficulties within the Society of Analytical Psychology led to the formation of what came to be known as the 'Adler Group' and finally to a breakaway movement. A middle group had also been forming over the previous seven years and several of its members tried hard to prevent the split that eventually took place. Kathleen Newton, an analyst from this middle group, had the foresight to point to 'the disastrous impact that a split would have, both for the present but also for the future in hardening defensive attitudes and fostering mutually antagonistic projections' (Casement 1995: 335).

Thomas Kirsch's (2000) narrative account of the world-wide Jungian movement, *The Jungians: A Comparative and Historical Perspective*, also features splits in many analytical psychology groups. These splits may, in part, be seen to be a destructive acting-out of *shadow*, although there are clearly many other factors involved – not, by any means, all destructive. Nevertheless, reflection on its own internal *shadow* is probably the most important work to be done within the analytical psychology movement, particularly if it is to be able to offer any enlightenment to the world at large in its on-going struggle with *shadow* in all its aspects.



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