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The Hidden Side of the Soul

How the Shadow Archetype Relates to Human Evil

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Ágrip

Ég valdi mér hugmynd Carl Jung um skuggann sem efni fyrir þetta verkefni, að hluta til vegna persónulegs áhuga og að hluta til vegna þess að mér finnst hún mikilvægur þáttur í áframhaldandi tilraunum mannkyns til að skilja sig. Þessi texti er til þess ætlaður að lýsa undirstöðuatriðum skugga-erkitýpunnar, sem og þeim ramma sem hugmyndir Jungs skapa í kringum hana. Ég ætla mér að fara yfir feril Jungs og það hvernig hann mótaði sína eigin sálfræði, og síðan helstu atriði þess hvernig hún lýsir sér og hvaða mynd hún dregur upp af mannssálinni. Næst tek ég fyrir skuggann; þessa földu, ómeðvituðu hlið persónuleikans, hvernig hann er byggður upp og hvaða áhrif hann hefur. Þó svo Carl Jung sé upphafsmaður þessarar hugmyndar þá hefur hún haldið áfram að lifa eigin lífi eftir fráfal hans, og eins og allar stefnur sem vert er að nefna hefur sálfræði Jungs verið tekin fyrir, nýtt og rannsökuð af mörgum mismunandi aðilum. Því styðst ég við mun fleiri raddir en bara Jung sjálfan. Niðurstaða mín er sú að þó svo hugmyndir Jungs séu ef til vill ekki fullkomnar, þá hafi hann vissulega sett fram áhugaverða túlkun á okkar innra lífi, og skugginn útskýrir of margt í mannlegri hegðun til að vera annað en sannleikur. Málið er ekki svo einfalt að skugginn sé illskan í okkur, en það er óneitanlega samband þarna á milli.

Abstract

I chose Carl Jung's ideas of the shadow as the subject for this thesis, partially out of personal interest, and partially because I feel it is an important part in mankind's ongoing attempts at understanding itself. This text is intended to describe the fundamentals of the shadow archetype, as well as the frame around it that are Jung's overall ideas. I mean to go over Jung's career and how he shaped his own branch of psychology, and then the core of how it is set up and what kind of picture it draws of the human soul. Next I cover the shadow; that hidden, unconscious part of the personality, how it is created and its effects on us. Although Carl Jung is the originator of these concepts, they have continued on with a life of their own after his death, and as with all movements worth mentioning Jung's analytical psychology has been taken in, used and examined by many different people. Therefore, I will rely on more voices than just Jung's own. My conclusion is that although Jung's ideas may not be above criticism, he certainly put forth an interesting interpretation of our inner workings, and the shadow archetype explains too much within human behaviour to be anything other than reality. And while things aren't so simple as the shadow being our inner evil, there is undeniably a relationship between the two.

Introduction

The problem of human evil is remarkably persistent. Every society in history has had to contend with it. Religious doctrine, laws, social reform and various ideologies have attempted to grapple with the problem, and yet it persists. No one has found the cure for evil, and its most notable feature has to be its sheer universality. We cannot point our fingers at any one situational cause, that much is clear.

For all of humanity's advancement and learning and search for greater understanding of the entire universe, we still have spousal abuse, parents who mistreat their children, children who bully one another, and vicious bigots who devote their identity to hatred of some group or another. We have horrible acts of violence and cruelty, with flat-out genocide being the most extreme manifestation of this, but also more subtle, everyday evils, such as petty sniping, workplace harassment, and rudeness to cashiers.

Clearly there is something universal to the human condition that causes all the constant evils that we all recognise. Evil is not an accident. It is a result of our basic components as human beings. And yet we recognise it as being wrong, so it is not a dominant feature. Most of us will unite in condemnation upon witnessing terrible behaviour, even though all of us are guilty of at least small failures in our interactions with people now and then.

I feel that a very strong contender for the explanation can be found in the theory of the shadow archetype, put forth by Carl Gustav Jung. His overall dissemination of the human psyche into analytical psychology makes for interesting reading, but his ideas of the shadow specifically go into our own negative aspects. Or rather, the aspects we ourselves consider negative. It is not all so simple as "the shadow is our evil side". Rather, it is our *unacknowledged* side, and being unacknowledged leaves it free to affect us in subtle and unexpected ways.

I will not be focusing exclusively on Carl Jung's own writings in this paper; this text is about the shadow and its relationship with evil. But since he is the father of analytical psychology I will begin with a brief biography, explaining his origins and how he developed

his ideas. I will follow with a summation of analytical psychology itself, and its basic elements. Then I will go into archetype theory, the section of Jung's ideas that includes the shadow, before moving on to a section explaining the workings of the shadow itself.

After this I will finally take a look at the issue of evil, and the various ways the shadow manifests through our misdeeds. Much has been written on this subject and many examples given by a great many people, and here I will reference the writings of ten individuals in support of this text, in addition to Jung himself. After this explanation of evil I will then examine Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany, as probably the most spectacular example of the shadow at work imaginable. I will then finish with my own analysis and conclusions about this material and the role of the shadow.

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1. BIOGRAPHY

Carl Gustav Jung was born on July 26, 1875, in Switzerland, to Paul Jung and Emilie Preiswerk. Paul was a clergyman, following something of a tradition within the family, although his faith faded over time. Emilie was a strange and troubled woman, prone to bouts of depression. Carl had a rather lonely childhood, although he had a sharp mind and took to observing the adults around him, most notably his father and his troubling failure of faith.

(Fordham and Fordham, 2020)

In his teens he got into philosophy, and rather than follow in his father's footsteps Carl went into medicine and became a psychiatrist. He attended the universities of Basel and Zurich, and got his medical licence in 1902. It is perhaps relevant to his later work that while at Basel, before deciding to focus on medicine he looked into various other fields of study, such as paleontology, archeology, and religion. **(Biography.com, 2019), (Fordham and Fordham, 2020)**

He worked in Burgholzli Asylum in Zurich, at a time when it was directed by Eugen Bleuler, an important name in the history of psychology. During this time Jung took a particular interest in observing patients' strange reactions to certain stimulus words and images; a reaction he linked to emotionally difficult associations the subject kept from their own consciousness due to considering them "wrong" for various reasons. He coined the term "complex" to describe this phenomenon, and this would become hugely important to his later findings and place in modern psychology. **(Fordham and Fordham, 2020)**

His studies earned him international renown and meshed nicely with many of Sigmund Freud's ideas. This led to their collaboration between the years 1907 and 1912. Jung was elected president of the International Psychoanalytic Society in 1911, and he was important enough within the psychoanalytical movement that he was expected to become Freud's successor. However, Jung and Freud ended up falling out, partly for personal reasons but also over diverging ideas. Among other things, Jung felt that Freud's narrow focus on sexuality was a mistake. It was Jung's book, *Psychology of the Unconscious*, released in 1912, that served as the final nail in their partnership. Not only did it clash with Freud's ideas, it directly attacked some of them. He resigned from the IPS in 1914. **(Biography.com, 2019), (Fordham and Fordham, 2020)**

Writing later in life, Jung observed:

“It is well known that the Freudian school presents the unconscious in a thoroughly negative light, much as it regards primitive man as little better than a monster. Its nursery-tales about the terrible old man of the tribe and its teachings about the “infantile-perverse-criminal” unconscious have led people to make a dangerous ogre out of something perfectly natural. As if all that is good, reasonable, worth while, and beautiful had taken up its abode in the conscious mind! Have the horrors of the World War done nothing to open our eyes, so that we still cannot see that the conscious mind is even more devilish and perverse than the naturalness of the unconscious?”

(Jung, 1982, para. 327)

After this separation Carl Jung began studying the irrational in a rational fashion. He turned his attention back to the dreams and vivid fantasies that had marked his childhood and allowed both to run wild without any attempt at restraint, so that this illogical part of his mind could be observed. Yet he did this as a proper scientist, by logging and documenting his experience. In time this helped establish his ideas of the “collective unconscious”, which in brief consists of the hidden features of our minds that are shared by all human beings.

(Fordham and Fordham, 2020)

He gave the name “analytical psychology” to his work, and his explorations of the mind, including his own, as well as myths and legends from all over the world and human history, led him to the idea that there is not just a personal unconscious which we are largely unaware of, but also a collective unconscious, which serves as the source for certain patterns and images that repeat throughout far-flung human cultures and periods. **(Biography.com, 2019), (Hopcke, 1989)**

This is because they are natural to the human psyche. In addition to the personal unconscious, made up of an individual’s own experiences and hidden thoughts there is, in Jung’s view, a *collective* unconscious, which became a cornerstone of his theories.

Put simply, rather than being made up of experiences, this collective unconscious is made up of our instincts as human beings, hence why all cultures share certain traits. Jung travelled extensively, getting to know foreign cultures, their ways of thinking and their mystical traditions. He took a particular interest in Eastern mysticism due to feeling that they

had a closer connection with these core instincts than the contemporary Western world, which is affected with secularism and rationalism on top of millennia of Christian indoctrination.

(Jung, 1969)

Jung felt that the disastrous events of the Twentieth Century perfectly demonstrated the results of psychic forces not being accounted for. Civilised Germany descended into the utter bestiality of the Nazis because modern man has too much faith in rationality, which leaves him ignorant of and vulnerable to his own primitive, irrational aspects. Civilised man lacks the tools to put these psychic factors into some coherent system, compared to a primitive man who believes in gods, spirits and other magical forces. **(Jung, von Franz and Freeman 1964)**

Jung named these instinctual manifestations “archetypes”, and a central concern of analytical psychology is to hone the self by working to become aware of these hidden psychic forces. By going through this process a person can become their own “true self”.

(Biography.com, 2019)

Jung continually developed his ideas and wrote and published extensively during his lifetime. He would come to hold positions at the universities of Zurich and Basel, and his historical knowledge and psychiatric research put him in a strong position to observe and analyze world events, such as the rise of Nazi Germany. **(Fordham and Fordham, 2020)**

He would in time describe present-day western civilisation, even though he put a bit of a question mark behind the ‘civilisation’ part, as a cult of consciousness with a Christian stamp. Since an intellect that regards itself as enlightened cannot conceive of something greater than itself, save for the false gods that totalitarian leaders are. He named the mess in Germany as the perfect example of this regression and tied it in with a general catastrophic disturbance of human relationships caused by projections, which needs to be repaired by healing the aspect of a human being he called simply the self. **(Jung, 1982)**

In his lifetime he was awarded Zurich’s literature prize (1932), elected an honorary fellow of England’s Royal Society of Medicine (1938), and named an honorary member of the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences. He married Emma Rauschenbach in 1903, with whom he had five children. He passed away in 1961, at the age of 85, but remains a highly influential and much-quoted figure. **(Biography.com, 2019)**

2. ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY

No matter how primitive or supposedly civilised, humans are always moved by irrational forces. Put in an uncivilised position, modern man is quick to be overtaken by primal instincts. The simplest example of this is probably fear, such as the stark panic of a person suddenly faced with violence, or unease with the dark when in unfamiliar surroundings, when anything could be lurking out of sight. (Jung, 1969)

We are all familiar with being moved by forces beyond our conscious understanding, and it is the same for mankind in large groups, as the masses get moved by their own actions towards consequences they do not want. As Jung said: **“The whole world wants peace and the whole world prepares for war”** (Jung, 1969, para. 49). Most people do not want war, and yet it marks all of human history. Mankind can overcome almost any obstacle but cannot overcome itself. It may be profoundly unpleasant to face our animalistic, primitive aspects, but simply remaining in blissful ignorance does us no good at all. (Jung, 1969)

When it comes to mankind’s propensity for self-inflicted disasters, Jung did not believe in blaming them on external historical factors. Rather, he viewed things as being the other way around: The large-scale historical factors are born from the collective unconscious, and so are consequences rather than causes. Every human society throughout history has faced the same vices and the same human flaws and propensity for corruption and prejudices, and so clearly the problem cuts deeper than mere outside circumstances can account for.

Analytical psychology can be summed up as an examination of the deep, instinctual self. It does not deal in abstractions, and at its core is a remarkably detailed and thorough layout of our psychic makeup. He divides our inner selves into recognisable and interrelated parts, and their most important feature is the mapping out of the primal, instinctual images that constitute the archetypes of the collective unconscious. (Edinger, 2009)

It is this collective outlook that sets analytical psychology apart from other disciplines. Given its applicability to all human beings it is useful for more than simply battling to resolve emotional problems, but can be used by healthy, functioning individuals to gain a greater understanding of themselves and reach a fuller state of being. (Edinger, 2009)

The **libido** is nowadays mostly used to refer to one’s sex drive, but in Jungian psychology it refers to our inner reserve of energy and drive. It is our dynamism and source of motivation, in its various forms. And much like energy in the physical sense it cannot be destroyed, only relocated or made to change its form, so making the libido overly dominant in

some aspect will lead to its opposite developing on the other side of the conscious/unconscious divide. (Edinger, 2009)

Jung's theories divide people into psychological types, although it also acknowledges that these are on a scale, rather than being a black-and-white either/or. There are **extroverts** and **introverts**, who respectively act and think in an external fashion, experiencing people and objects, or who look inwards, at imagination, creativity and the personal inner life. (Edinger, 2009)

Aside from this scale of **attitude** there are also the four **function** types: **Thinking** versus **feeling**, and **sensation** versus **intuition**. Obviously, all humans think and feel and sense and intuit, but the view of analytical psychology is that an individual is usually dominated by one of these above the rest; the **superior function**. (Edinger, 2009)

Then there is the **anima/animus** dichotomy. It is an inner force that in men manifests as the anima; a man's inner "feminine" qualities that he will typically repress out of societal expectations, while the animus is a woman's corresponding "masculine" qualities. Each person's anima/animus affects their outlook on the opposite gender, and romantic feelings are a result of this force being projected onto a person. (Edinger, 2009)

The ego is the core of all of our conscious, thinking aspects, which our unconscious is unconnected to. Instead of a core of its own the unconscious is made up of archetypes and is primarily experienced through complexes resulting from this or that archetype. A complex, in Jungian language, manifests by disturbing the balance of our egos, the behaviour we think of as being "me". Between the ego, our thinking core, and the world beyond ourselves, is the mask referred to as the **persona**, partially made up of our real selves and partially of societal expectations that we seek to meet. On the internal side of things, between the ego and the unconscious sits the **shadow**. (Edinger, 2009)

Jungian psychotherapy is, by the nature of his map of the human psyche, highly detailed, but still heavily dependent on the therapist already having gone through extensive personal analysis. The accepted wisdom is that a psychotherapist's patient cannot develop any further than the therapist themselves. At its core this particular approach to inner development is about a patient having a dialogue with a more conscious personality. (Edinger, 2009)

The process starts with a detailed summary of the subject's personal history and life-shaping events. This is followed by an examination of the present and its recognised problems. The points of all this is to prepare for what comes next: The examination of the unconscious. The most important weapon in this struggle is interpretation of dreams. Rather

than being in any way a random jumble of images and memories, a dream is viewed as an expression of a person's inner state; it is the objective psyche expressing itself through symbolic imagery. In Jungian psychotherapy a dream is classified as a symbol, an important and specific term. It is not assumed to stand for something obvious and known, but rather to be the best attempt at expressing something not fully known to the conscious mind. After this process the patient is asked about their immediate, gut-reaction associations with the symbols of his dreams. And finally the therapist steps in, identifying archetypal elements within these symbols and presents them to the patient, freeing them from seeing their problems as entirely personal and opening his ego to the collective unconscious. **(Edinger, 2009)**

Jungian psychotherapy is not only suited to battling emotional problems but to simply seek a better understanding of oneself and a fuller inner wellness. The most important tool in the therapist's arsenal is interpretation of the subject's dreams. They are, after all, born not of conscious, higher thinking but out of instinct and the subconscious. In dreams our basic human-ness is active through our universal symbols. **(Edinger, 2009)**

On the critical side of things, it has been pointed out that Jung lacks any focus on environmental factors, which are so important to modern-day psychology. He is also hampered by his heavy use of mystical language and word choice, but also by what a change in what psychology even IS. Today it is essentially a merger with more clinical and behavioral disciplines, whereas in Jung's time those were kept at more of a distance from one another. It can also be argued that he took large leaps from observation to theory, as he sought to understand something so immensely complex as the human mind. **(St.Hilaire, 2018)**

Even so it is hard to deny that Jung's archetypes remain an important idea, noteworthy among other things for defying the notion that only things that are composed of matter can be truly said to exist. One cannot point to the shadow self or weigh it on a scale, but it is there nonetheless. The unconscious mind is very real, and that is a very important fact in our ongoing battle to understand ourselves. **(St.Hilaire, 2018)**

Professor Andrew Samuels argues that while Freud's ideas undergird modern psychotherapy, they have been greatly refined and expanded on by thinkers since his day, a trend for which Jung was a precursor. For instance, Freud put forth an Oedipal, father-centered psychology, but it was Jung who added a mother dimension to it as well. Modern psychoanalysis is in the process of leaving behind its patriarchal roots, and a new focus on the feminine in the psyche can be traced back to Jung. Freud viewed the unconscious as being

created by personal repression, but it was Jung who put forth the collective, inherent element in it. Until very recently Jung was almost the only psychoanalyst to create a psychology that includes the entirety of life, including death, and his contribution is acknowledged by modern developmentalists. **(Samuels, 2013)**

Samuels divided current, post-jungian analytical psychology into four traditions: The classical school, which follows directly in Jung's footsteps, the developmental school, which focuses on the effects of childhood on adulthood development, and the fundamentalist school and the psychoanalytic school, which he characterized simply as extremist versions of the previous two schools. **(Samuels, 2013)**

3: ARCHETYPE THEORY

It has been noted that a more fitting name for Jung's ideas in general would be "archetypal psychology", given how utterly central his concept of archetypes is. Analytical psychology simply cannot stand without them. **(Hopcke, 1989)**

While Jung did not come up with the word "archetype" he was the one to introduce it as a psychological concept. In essence they can be described as core ideas inherent to all of humanity regardless of culture; they are evolutionarily-derived patterns of thought and perception, which often manifest in culture as reoccurring figures whose fine details vary depending on place and time, but whose essence is always the same. **(Hopcke, 1989)**

This is a conclusion he reached by noting reoccurring patterns in his studies of unrelated cultures, mythologies and ancient art. The patients he worked with early in his career also had a part to play in this realisation. Often he was unable to link the appearances of notable symbols in the dreams of his patients with anything in their personal lives. **(Hopcke, 1989)**

While he did not invent the concept of the subconscious, his innovation was in dividing it into two layers; an idea that is in fact a core tenet of his theories. There is the personal unconscious, made up of an individual's own experiences and emotions, pressed out of conscious awareness, and then there is the collective unconscious inherent to all humans. **(Hopcke, 1989)**

And with the collective unconscious being so integral to us as human beings he viewed it as far more important than the personal unconscious. The collective is the ground on which our personalities are built. Examining it means examining the core of what it means to be human, and so Jung viewed it as the source of all of our mental power and ability to change ourselves. **(Hopcke, 1989)**

To clarify on this; folk myth or the religious lore of a primitive tribe will embody universal concepts in the form of figures, gods, ancient heroes or songs. This, according to Jung, is why the wise old mentor, just to name one, is a reoccurring figure. In lore, fiction or myth this mentor does not take much direct action but serves to grant needed knowledge and perspective to a younger person, mirroring the way older folk serve as founts of wisdom and life experience in the real world. The character Obi-Wan Kenobi of the Star Wars franchise is a well-known modern example of this in popular culture. This is also why religions apply anthropomorphised explanations to natural processes, such as the sun. Whether the sun is an

actual, living god in its own right, dying every evening to be reborn every morning, or pulled across the sky in a chariot by the will of the gods, this is another example of an archetype. Even today, as people know better, the sun may be given a personality by poets or songwriters, just to name an example. Our evolutionary instinct does not assume for our modern understanding of the universe. **(Jung, 1969)**

In Jung's view it is necessary to confront oneself; one's deep, hidden, instinctual aspects, found in the collective unconscious and the buried archetypes. He stressed that in this realm a person is one with the whole world; this is where the fundamental facts of humankind are to be found, and the only place where they can be understood and we can learn about ourselves and each other. **(Jung, 1969)**

But by its very nature, examining our collective unconscious requires stepping away from our *conscious* selves, the thoughts and motivations and emotional workings that we consider to be *us*. It is a step away from the reason with which we try to build our lives around for the sake of ourselves and of society. Jung blamed "possessions" by demons or spirits in primitive societies on these primal emotional forces, and believed dogmas and customs came about as a way of handling them. They were developed by early, primitive man as a rational tool with which to handle our irrational aspects and keep monstrous psychic forces at bay. **(Jung, 1969)**

These customs developed over time, increasing in complexity over the ages and serving as the foundations on which organised religion was built. But as customs change they gradually move away from their original point and purpose. The primal symbols weaken, losing their connection to our primal selves as generations of holy men, political shifts and cultural development add to, remove from, and mould the religion around which people are told to structure their lives and mindsets. To take Christianity as an example, it has now existed in some form for two thousand years and has gone through uncounted schisms, interpretation of God's holy will, theistic theorising and adaptation to different mindsets. What remains of the fundamental, primitive force after such a period of constant change? **(Jung, 1969)**

In Jung's own words:

"This is a new problem. All ages before us have believed in gods in some form or other. Only an unparalleled impoverishment of symbolism could enable us to rediscover the gods as psychic factors, that is, as archetypes of the unconscious.

No doubt this discovery is hardly credible at present. To be convinced, we need to have the experience pictured in the dream of the theologian, for only then do we experience the self-activity of the spirit moving over the waters. Since the stars have fallen from heaven and our highest symbols have paled, a secret life holds sway in the unconscious. That is why we have a psychology today, and why we speak of the unconscious. All this would be quite superfluous in an age or culture that possessed symbols.” (Jung, 1969, para. 50)

His point, put in more plain language, is about our understanding of the world. In previous eras people used symbols by way of gods and myths as something of a filter to understand the world and themselves, as well as concepts such as justice. In this current age of facts and science and cold analysis we are missing this tool that is as old as mankind. Stripped of a support network, modern society is quite prone to complexes as well as shadow projection; that being the act of seeing one’s own flaws in other people and condemning them for it. And so psychology has arisen out of necessity; a natural reaction to fill a void. **(Jung, 1969)**

While Jung acknowledged many different smaller archetypes, and admitted that they can be fluid, at the centre of all of this are the three main ones, the persona, the anima/animus and the shadow, which together with the self form a certain core of our being.

The **persona** is a very aptly named archetype, because it is drawn from a Latin word that simply means “mask”. And that is precisely what the persona archetype is. It consists of the various masks we wear socially to protect our ego from the outside world. **(Cherry, 2019)**

“Whoever goes to himself risks a confrontation with himself. The mirror does not flatter, it faithfully shows whatever looks into it; namely, the face we never show to the world because we cover it with the persona, the mask of the actor. But the mirror lies behind the mask and shows the true face.” (Jung, 1969, para. 43)

As we are taught from the earliest days of childhood, we are expected to behave in certain ways, depending on circumstances, or face social backlash. We build up the persona to cover up all of our basic, instinctual aspects that society does not accept. Human beings are expected to maintain a certain composure at near all times and adhere to certain, often

unwritten, rules. The danger that comes with this archetype is the possibility that we might start fooling ourselves and take our constructed personas to be our true self. (Cherry, 2019)

Jung himself summed this up quite formally as “... **the individual’s system of adaptation to, or the manner he assumes in dealing with, the world.**” (Jung, 1969, para. 221)

For example, every role within society, such as occupation, comes with a certain persona that society expects from it. This particular mien is pushed onto the individual, who will usually strive to adopt it as a front, and as a set of rules of behaviour. The potential danger here is the same as with a more general, everyday persona; that the individual becomes absorbed and overtaken with their role, which buries their true psychic self, leaving them fully absorbed in a character. (Jung, 1969)

If I may make up an example myself: Imagine a professional entertainer, who simply gets stuck in entertainment mode. They are always wearing their stage smile, always out to amuse the people around them, burying any negative, earnest feelings deep down beneath layers of this persona. Celebrities have a well-known tendency to fall into substance abuse and other self-damaging behaviour, and I think this danger of the persona may contribute to this, at least in part.

As Jung said: “**In any case the temptation to be what one seems to be is great, because the persona is usually rewarded in cash.**” (Jung, 1969, para. 221)

As mentioned before, the **anima/animus**, is a double archetype. The anima is an embodiment of the feminine within a man, and the animus is the male within a woman. Jung saw the expectations society places on us regarding gender roles and gendered behaviour as dangerous to psychological development: People are steered away from exploring these alternate aspects of themselves, and directly or indirectly told they are shameful. So rather than being integrated our anima/animus gets pushed from conscious awareness and can easily result in issues with expressing behaviours or feelings we associate with the other sex.

(Cherry, 2019)

Jung’s argument was, among other things, that when this inner force is not reckoned with properly it can take hold of us and lash out through negative manifestations of the feminine in a man and the masculine in a woman. The anima becomes fickle, capricious, moody and emotional, while the animus becomes stubborn, domineering and confrontational. (Jung, 1969)

The **self** is the unity of our conscious and unconscious aspects and is created through the integration process known as individuation. The ego may make up the core of conscious awareness, but it is the self that makes up our personality by combining both the inner aspects we are aware of and those we do not, because the latter can affect our behaviour in ways we do not acknowledge. (Cherry, 2019)

“I have suggested calling the total personality which, though present, cannot be fully known, the self. The ego is, by definition, subordinate to the self and is related to it like a part to the whole.” (Jung, 1959, para. 9)

Jung himself described the ego as utterly helpless before the self, which acts upon it as essentially an outside, objective force and at times alters the ego however it will. (Jung, 1959)

And then there is the **shadow**.

4: SHADOW ARCHETYPE

Jung defines the ego as the emotions, thoughts and memories we are aware of. The shadow is the other side of the coin. It is made up of the components of ourselves that we are unwilling to face for whatever reason; such as denial, fear or societal condemnation. It is where we cast the things we are ashamed of because they are too painful to face. People wish to believe themselves to be wholly good, so the things we consider evil get pushed out of conscious thought. (Hopcke, 1989)

“The possession of secrets acts like a psychic poison that alienates their possessor from the community. In small doses, this poison may be an invaluable medicament, even an essential precondition of individual differentiation, so much so that even on the primitive level man feels an irresistible need actually to invent secrets: their possession safeguards him from dissolving in the featureless flow of unconscious community life and thus from deadly peril to his soul.” (Jung, volume 16, para. 124)

Merely denying the shadow does not rob it of its power. It works from the darkness, pulling at us, exerting a hidden influence. It is not, however, so simple as to be our “evil side”. Through cultural influence or personal weakness we may suppress aspects of ourselves that are not harmful to ourselves or to society, and even the ones that are should not simply be denied. (Hopcke, 1989)

Jung strongly believed that it is necessary for the sake of our own well-being, and that of society, for us to face our shadow and all that it contains. This is a harrowing task, and true understanding of this archetype can never be achieved, but it is a worthy undertaking all the same. Through exploring the shadow we gain a fuller understanding of ourselves and rob the shadow of its power to inflict us with complexes and neuroses. This way we avoid the easy but temporary measure of simply not facing our own demons and can instead tackle them with moral responsibility. He strongly disapproved of Christianity’s dogma of utterly denying evil in the form of the Devil, rather than getting to know him/it so as to better live with a fundamental part of ourselves. Evil, selfish and shameful thoughts can be accepted without being indulged. (Hopcke, 1989)

“Even tendencies that might in some circumstances be able to exert a beneficial influence are transformed into demons when they are repressed. This is why many well meaning people are understandably afraid of the unconscious, and incidentally of psychology.” (Jung, Man and his symbols, p. 93)

A quest for spiritual purity is doomed from the start; cleansing oneself of sin simply deepens the shadow, and a man of the cloth who considers himself an exemplar of the word of God simply invites neuroses as he denies anything that challenges perfection. This may go some way to explain the repeated sexual offenses against children committed by Catholic priests; deprived of a standard way of living, schooled in a strict and highly controlled environment and respected by his flock as one closer to God than they, the shadow acts up in unnatural ways.

“What we usually hold back are emotions or affects. Here too it must be stressed that self-restraint is healthy and beneficial; it may even be a virtue. ... But if self-restraint is only a personal matter, unconnected with any religious views, it may become as injurious as the personal secret. Hence the well-known bad moods and irritability of the over-virtuous. ... Nature decidedly abhors a vacuum in this respect; hence there is nothing more unendurable in the long run than a tepid harmony based on the withholding of affects. The repressed emotions are often of a kind we wish to keep secret.” (Jung, volume 16, para. 130)

Examples of shadow behaviour include rash, angry words to a person, whom one then immediately regrets. We might be uncharacteristically cruel, only to cover up and wonder why we would do such a thing. “This is so unlike me”. But this unusual behaviour still came from an aspect of ourselves, or it would not have happened at all. **(Othon, n.d.)**

One might also be unreasonably unpleasant to someone of a particular social group, while making up justifications and denying that it has anything to do with prejudice. Society hammers into us the message that bigotry is evil, and the ego doesn't want to see itself as evil. So it plays a defensive game, burying prejudice away from conscious awareness. “No, I'm not racist! I'm a good person!” But these feelings remain active in the shadow, and like water pouring through any opening they may burst out over any foolish or unsatisfying behaviour

from their target, leading to irrational anger over minor things. Prejudice thinly disguised as legitimate grievance. And the only way a person with such hidden prejudices might improve would be to look within and acknowledge the bad that lurks there; in facing the shadow it can be resolved. **(Othon, n.d.)**

As babies we start out acting on our every impulse, utterly heedless of others. But as we grow up society begins to shape us with its rules and prohibitions. When we exhibit behaviour that disrupts the community around us, the community pushes back with various forms of punishments, even if only exclusion or voiced criticism. As highly social creatures our instinct is generally to avoid exclusion of any kind. And this disruption does not need to be dramatic or criminal. It can be a simple, fundamentally harmless matter that nevertheless clashes with the image the community has of itself, such as burping at the dinner table, a woman showing too much skin, or an atheistic child asking uncomfortable questions in a fundamentalistic family. Sometimes such individuals do start a trend and encourage others to challenge the rules, but most of the time society moves on and the offending individual is kept on the sidelines. So fitting in becomes a fundamental instinct to us. **(Othon, n.d.)**

But we are all simply human and all of us have flaws, and emotions that are important only to us, rather than to society. Frustration, lust for an unattainable person and sadness for personal issues are all perfectly natural things to feel, but admitting them out loud is not something society wants from us. Expressing negative feelings turns a social scene awkward; people often don't know how to respond, nor do they generally have any desire to act as unpaid therapists or have their own mood soured by our problems. So it is customary to put up a mask of either happiness or at least neutrality to avoid meeting with negative receptions from people. And so we bury our problems, our true feelings, down where they can't be seen. **(Othon, n.d.)**

The simple fact is that getting to know the shadow isn't just a matter of personal growth and well-being. It is necessary for the world. The shadow holds our resentment, anger, antisocial behaviour, neuroses and generally negative behaviour. And since society is simply a collective of individuals the shadow is at work in society as well. It is at work in leaders and in mass movements; in general attitude and sweeping waves of feeling. We instinctively fear that which is unfamiliar to us. And if the shadow holds sway this little nagging fear can warp into anger. This is how prejudice and abuse of particular social groups come about. It is one of mankind's greatest problems, and a long time tool for those in power who wish to find scapegoats and ferment division in our society. So clearly the shadow must be confronted.

And so improving society and moving mankind forwards must start with us, as individuals, looking inwards. **(Othon, n.d.)**

Our behaviour towards other people sends a message, even if it is on a small scale for most of us who are neither famous nor powerful. Being pleasant to strangers sends the message that this is how one should behave. And it is the same with unpleasant behaviour. All of us have a ripple effect on society, but a general lack of kindness is never the work of one, or a few. It takes many. This is the community mentality in action. **(Othon, n.d.-a)**

The problem we are faced isn't how to get rid of the shadow, because that simply cannot be done. We should instead ask ourselves how to live with the shadow without disaster. **(Jung, 1982)**

5: THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

John A. Sanford points out that in Christianity the battle lines between good and evil are sharply and clearly drawn: God and the Devil stand on either side of it and battle it out for the souls of mankind; one wins in each case and one loses. This is how we understand Christianity today. But he argues that the Christian tradition originally understood and openly acknowledged that man had darkness within himself. He quotes Saint Paul: “For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do”. These are the words of a man who knows about and acknowledges his own evil, and according to Sandford this is the healthy outlook that keeps things functioning. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

However, this acknowledgement was lost over time and people focused entirely on their own goodness, or at least a *display* of goodness. This shines the spotlight away from the shadow, and in his view this was a terrible misstep. In time it was not only actions that were wicked, but thoughts themselves could be evil; we are all familiar with the concept of “sinful thoughts” of which a person should be ashamed. In Catholic tradition shame was to be bared to a priest, and penance given in some form or another. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

This, in Sanford’s view, is not the way to get a truly good person. Denying one’s own failings and nastier aspects and projecting an image as a virtuous pillar of society is a deception, both towards the world and to oneself. Sanford quotes Fritz Kunkel by arguing that the shadow isn’t the devil; the *ego* is. The devil is called the father of lies, but the shadow does not lie. It is a collection of uncomfortable truths, and the mask of the perfect pious man is the falsehood. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

###

Marie-Louise Von Franz acknowledged the shadow’s relationship with our own internal omissions. It is, after all, where we hide the things we consider wrong, for the sake of considering ourselves to be good people. It is consequently why we might experience a sudden burst of rage at being called on our flaws by people in whom we see those same flaws, whether rightly or wrongly. It is the ego, rising to defend a sensitive spot, like a reflex. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

But as these bursts prove there is more to the shadow than mere omission. It can also be a source of impulsive, instinctive acts, the nature of which we might consider beneath ourselves. But what is done is done and our higher, rational, conscious self is left facing the consequences. Being so instinctual means the shadow is also quite prone to “infection” of ideas. People who might consider themselves civilised, independent and “good” can be drawn into the bad behaviour of a group. Once something normally socially unacceptable becomes more prominent in one’s environment, there is an instinct to go along with it for the sake of not standing out or seeming foolish. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

I feel this is where our nature as highly social animals bites us in the ass. The instinct to go along with the group, whether that group be a small circle of friends or a nation, is an undeniable part of us, and when the group is saying or doing bad things we can be drawn into the darkness along with it. This, I feel, is a major, if not the main, reason why normal people with normal lives can get drawn into a populist wave of anger at some social group or another.

###

William A. Miller champions interactions with others as a way to gain an insight into our own personal shadow. Social creatures that we are, our fellow human beings can make for excellent mirrors. Sadly, creatures of ego that we are, asking for an honest assessment about our character is a frightening prospect. It is so very comfortable to simply stick with our self-image and just take for granted that others see that very same image when they look at us. But we are all adept at spotting the flaws in those we interact with, and logically there is no ignoring the fact that others see us just as clearly. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

Miller also points out that our own strength of reaction to a criticism is a strong indicator of the shadow being at work. “What?? Why would you say that about me?!” This also applies in reverse, when we get unreasonably irritated with people who share our own flaws. This is our reflexive defense of our own ego, resisting having to face the traits that we have denied about ourselves. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

He acknowledges that of course one can be legitimately disgusted with someone’s behaviour without it being due to the shadow, and being unfairly accused of deeply negative traits is a sure way to upset anybody. But Miller still regards strength of reaction as a useful tool for feeling out our shadow, laying out a simple system of making a list of all the human

traits we dislike, then weeding them out one by one until we are left only with those we have an instinctive, visceral hatred for. In his view this will leave us with a pretty good outline for our own personal shadow, however hard it may be to accept. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

I must agree with his, perhaps somewhat tepid, acknowledgement that this system isn't perfect. I do not believe visceral disgust with, say, sex offenders, to be a hint of our own inner darkness. Still, I feel he has summed up a good, broad guideline here. When we have responses we later acknowledge as overreactions, it is indeed a strong hint that we have encountered the shadow.

###

John C. Pierrakos takes a crack at defining evil, which also necessitates defining good. He draws a comparison to health and unity. A person in a healthy state experiences a steady flow of creative, positive energies, a oneness with their fellow human beings. This healthy person understands that other people matter just as much as they themselves do, and wishes them well. This person moves in a generally positive direction in the various aspects of their life. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

On the other side of the coin, Pierrakos identifies a distortion of reality as the prime symptom of a diseased state. This person does not properly perceive themselves, other people, or the relationship between these two classifications. His conclusion therefore is that evil is a distortion of natural truths. Lacking a clear view of their own failings, the diseased person perceives them as being the fault of some outside force. And the deeper into this sickness the person is the more they will embrace this outlook, completely abandoning personal responsibility for their own life and behaviour. Everything is someone else's fault. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

He cites the Austrian psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich and adds to all this by invoking the image of a person wearing armour between their outer and their inner. In a healthy person inner psychic energy flows freely between core and surface, but a person in this state of sickness is terrified of facing what lies within, unwilling to acknowledge the energies that affect them as their own. So they put up this inner armour, and the person is left stunted. Their energies have no healthy outlet, and when their emotions are stirred and make it out they do so in a highly negative fashion. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

Pierrakos is quite taken with something Jesus says in the Bible: “Do not resist evil”. He takes this to mean that the resistance itself is the source of evil. From blocking and suppressing do our darker impulses emerge. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

###

William Carl Eichman talks about our struggle with the dark side in the modern era. As he points out it has always been acknowledged by religious and mystical traditions, often personified as some being of ultimate evil that tempts people to be their worst selves. But today’s world has, in Eichman’s opinion, made this fight trickier than ever before. The information age has us constantly bombarded with news about the various terrible things humans do to each other the world over. Unless we make a deliberate and focused effort to simply cut ourselves off from the news cycle we are ceaselessly exposed to every imaginable kind of evil and suffering. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

Speaking from the outlook of a meditative mystic, Eichman insists that our repressed inner darkness must be faced, but not only with clarity and strength of spirit alone, but practical knowledge and understanding as well. He places emphasis on demystifying the inner dark, as some sort of evil twin or supernatural devil and feels that out of world’s major religions perhaps Buddhism has come the closest to the truth, with its doctrine that good and evil are both illusory. In Eichman’s view, clear-headed study of the dark side reveals it to be not an active enemy deliberately out to do harm, but rather imbalance and ignorance. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

One result he sees from this clinical examination is a defeat of shame. It is natural to be horrified when confronted with one’s own worst aspects, but Eichman insists this outlook is as useless as believing in demons. Much like Pierrakos, he identifies evil as more of an illness. The goal should not be to shrink away from these aspects in horror, but to work to heal them through honest examination and acceptance of them for what they are. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

###

W. Brugh Joy tells an interesting story of witnessing a community’s shadow bubble up to the surface, made doubly interesting by him being the target of it. The Findhorn Foundation

is a New Age spiritual community in Scotland. Joy was invited to give a speech there on two occasions, five years apart. The second time he took in what he noticed there and stated earnestly that he saw problems ahead for the community. They had enjoyed a period of growth and success, but the counterbalance to all that would inevitably be on its way. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

“I talked about the consequences of feeling ‘special’ and how doing battle against the ‘evils of the world’ not only creates the ‘enemy,’ but is actually a projection of the darker aspects of the community onto the world screen.” (p. 151)

This summation of his raised considerable hackles, and Joy sensed that he would quickly descend into the category of an unwelcome outsider, in a community that had previously welcomed him. Unconsciously, the Findhorn Foundation would transfer its unacknowledged shadow onto him. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

In his view the community was too occupied with seeking some sort of purity, and doing so requires denying fundamental forces that will not be denied. His reading of the New Age movement that all its focus on claiming innocence and specialness simply renders it infantile, reaching for something impossible while denying itself the means to confront its demons healthily. Near the end of his time with the Findhorn Foundation the community’s poet aimed his sights on Joy during an evening event. He stood before the community and launched into a rage-fuelled, expletive-filled, venomous rant at this intruder in particular and American values in general. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

Those watching this were shaken to various degrees. Some seemed relieved that the poet was finally giving voice to the community’s less positive aspects. Others were horrified. Some left, others pleaded with him to stop or simply looked embarrassed, but he kept on going in a lengthy, non-stop venting tantrum until one of the community leaders put a stop to it. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

Although Joy was ready for this release of pent-up darkness and even encouraged it he still found the sheer volume of it exhausting to face when it was all directed at him personally. He feels that overall the community was in need of a reckoning of denied inner energies, but that it would have been better if as a whole it had been more prepared to face its own shadow. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

###

After centuries of spiritual erosion, Jung felt that the Twentieth Century left mankind facing true, unfettered evil at last, in the face of the utter moral collapse that was Nazi Germany and the general outbreak of brutal tyranny. This terrible evil emphasises, he said, how deeply Christian ethics have been undermined. Evil has become a reality, rather than an idea. A reorientation is called for, in order to learn to live with this new reality, and this involves taking care not to *succumb* to anything, as Jung put it. Addiction is always a problem, regardless of the substance, and he reminded us yet again that good and evil are not cut off from one another, and seeking to utterly embrace the former while shunning the latter does not make our dark side go away. (Zweig and Abrams, 1991)

He blamed much of mankind's oft-proven difficulty with morality and knowing itself on poor education. People are presented with an idealised standard of behaviour that is simply unachievable, and the presenting is done by leaders who know that they themselves do not reach these imaginary heights. (Zweig and Abrams, 1991)

To quote Jung directly:

“Therefore the individual who wishes to have an answer to the problem of evil, as it is posed today, has need, first and foremost, of self-knowledge, that is, the utmost possible knowledge of his own wholeness. He must know relentlessly how much good he can do, and what crimes he is capable of, and must beware of regarding the one as real and the other as illusion. Both are elements within his nature, and both are bound to come to light in him, should he wish - as he ought - to live without self-deception or self-delusion.” (Zweig and Abrams, 1991, p. 172)

Sadly, most people are poorly equipped to wage this struggle. We find the horrors of Nazism hard to comprehend precisely because our image of man is distorted and incomplete. To combat this we need a science; the science of psychology. (Zweig and Abrams, 1991)

###

M. Scott Peck examines the problem of evil in general, and how to define it. He starts this with the issue of definition, and drawing a distinction between genuine evil and ordinary sin. Since everyone “sins”, in the sense of failing to be perfect at all times, then defining evil

people as sinful is meaningless or else we would all be evil. Rather, he states that it is the subtlety and consistency of sinning that defines evil people. (Zweig and Abrams, 1991)

Peck has worked in prisons with just the kinds of people society unhesitantly classifies as evil. He, however, felt that almost none of the criminals he encountered truly fit the descriptions. They were *destructive*, certainly, but also possessed of a certain honesty. Habitual criminals commit evils that are undeniable and out in the open. He also points out that almost all of these people are possessed of a sickness of some kind, be it impulsiveness, mental illness, or a simple lack of a function like conscience. (Zweig and Abrams, 1991)

I feel there is a certain validity to his point, about drawing a distinction between evil deeds and evil people, and as loathsome as the offences of people designated as evil can be it is hard to contest that most of them are damaged in some way; not fully functioning individuals capable of doing better. (Zweig and Abrams, 1991)

“Designated” evil is an important concept to Peck. He points out that society is rife with cruelties and failures of character that aren’t overt enough to be fully recognised as crimes, in contrast with the “honest criminals” one will find in prison. Since he feels evil people cannot be defined by the magnitude of their offences or their illegality, that leaves us with consistency. The people he feels are “evil” are remarkably consistent in their outlook and their destructiveness. (Zweig and Abrams, 1991)

The core issue with such people, according to Peck, is an utter refusal to acknowledge their own sinfulness, and consequently they are masters of scapegoating. Since their view themselves to be faultless they reflexively lash out at anyone who dares point out their flaws of character. He uses as an example a father who flies into a rage when his young son repeats foul language used by the father himself, and punishes the boy rather than face his own wickedness. (Zweig and Abrams, 1991)

In Peck’s own words: **“Since the evil, deep down, feel themselves to be faultless, it is inevitable that when they are in conflict with the world they will invariably perceive the conflict as the world’s fault. Since they must deny their own badness, they must perceive others as bad.”** (Zweig and Abrams, 1991, p. 178)

An ironic consequence of all this is that evil people are often destructive and cruel in an effort to destroy evil. But they aim in the wrong direction, always perceiving their own evil as outside, in others. (Zweig and Abrams, 1991)

Here he draws a sharp contrast between these “true” evil people and people whom psychology finds to be mentally abnormal; psychopaths and sociopaths. Such people do not

engage in scapegoating and there is little pattern to be found in their crimes; lacking a conscience they lack an understanding of evil sufficient to want to destroy that of their own or others. In a way they can be compared to young children, thoughtlessly acting on their whims without the ability to reflect on their consequences. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

Meanwhile, Peck's true evil people are intensely conscious of their status, their appearance of perfection. They take great care to fit in and follow the rules for the sake of their image of perfection. And "image" is the operative word here. These people are indifferent to actually *being* good, but are utterly consumed by *seeming* to be good. This is why he refers to them as "the people of the lie". Unable to bear the pain of honest self-examination, evil people wrap themselves up in a display of righteousness and look down their noses at anyone who reminds them of their own inner darkness. In the end, one of Peck's conclusions is that evil may be recognised by its very disguise. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

###

Ernest Becker takes his own crack at analysing the source of evil and, looking into several other writers, he traces it back to our fear of dying. Our most fundamental instinct is surely survival itself. First and foremost, in the very depths of our core, we want to live and endure. But being intelligent creatures we are unfortunately saddled with the knowledge that we will die someday. We desperately want to deny our mortality, to not have to face it. Consequently, since death is natural we respond by denying the natural world. We deny our own primal, animal side and shove it down into the darkness, telling ourselves that we are higher beings, despite the gnawing knowledge that we are temporary. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

It is through this denial that we are able to function, and indeed why we see so much self-destructive behaviour among the ranks of mankind, in direct defiance of our basic urge to survive. Our fundamental fears are buried deep and seldom acknowledged, mostly breaking through only in subtler ways. Becker goes so far as to quote Wilhelm Reich, in saying that all human misery can be traced back to our attempts to deny our basic animal nature. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

Continuing with Reich, Becker goes into why humans are so eager to give control over to a state and a leader that projects authority. It is because those entities make impossible

promises of structure and safety, those things are buried fears desperately call for. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

Reich summed politicians in general up as “political plague-mongers”, due to how their lies and manipulations bring about disasters the human race once contended with only rarely. All one has to do is make reassurances that the listener belongs to an exalted group, a superior group gifted with life and meaning (which, incidentally, would also mean a certain immortality as the group outlives you), while creating an enemy out of another group. It is that OTHER group that brings destruction and sickness. THEY are the lesser, and closer to the animal and the natural. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

###

Writing in 1986, Sam Keen does a summary of the relationship between the USA and the USSR. He described politicians on the left and right as both operating on essentially optimistic, logic-based assumptions: Conservatives believe the enemy can be frightened off by weapons, liberals believe the enemy can be befriended. Both positions assume a logical, clear-headed reaction from the enemy, based on observable facts and their own best interest. Despite their differences both sides expect humans to be *Homo Sapiens*, but Keen sums up the human race as *Homo Hostilis*, the enemy-making animal, driven to create foes. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

He does acknowledge that not all enemy groups are political manufactures, and names Adolf Hitler, Josef Stalin and Pol Pot as very real villains about whom nothing needed to be made up. What he hopes for is an acknowledgement that war is a problem with many causes, and of the role our shadow plays in their creation; according to him we have no chance of lessening warfare without looking at the issues of projection and propaganda. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

As Keen puts it, military psychology is faced with the issue of turning the act of murder into an act of patriotism. The dehumanisation of the enemy stems from that he calls “consensual paranoia”. It involves splitting apart the “good” self and the “evil” self, and then attributing the evil self to the enemy. The paranoid mindset gets one out of having to face guilt and responsibility by transferring all of it onto someone else, and there is no better example of this than the age-old conspiracy theories levelled at the Jewish people. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

Essentially, people on opposite sides of a divide of some sort, be it geographical, political or ideological, NEED each other as a dumping ground for their own toxic waste, forming a system where every gets out of having to face their shadow. Keen sees the condemnations the USSR and the USA aimed at one another as essentially hypocritical; a refusal to acknowledge the flaws in their own system. (Zweig and Abrams, 1991)

To quote him directly:

“The most terrible of all the moral paradoxes, the Gordian knot that must be unraveled if history is to continue, is that we create evil out of our highest ideals and most noble aspirations. We so need to be heroic, to be on the side of God, to eliminate evil, to clean up the world, to be victorious over death, that we visit destruction and death on all who stand in the way of our heroic historical destiny. We scapegoat and create absolute enemies, not because we are intrinsically cruel, but because focusing our anger on an outside target, striking at strangers, brings our tribe or nation together and allows us to be a part of a close and loving in-group. We create surplus evil because we need to belong.” (Zweig and Abrams, 1991, p. 201)

###

Susan Griffin takes a look at the shadow’s relationship with prejudice, and the place women, blacks and Jews hold in what she calls the “chauvinist mind”. She makes significant use of pornography as an example. It frequently shows women being abused, mastered, controlled; in short it is a symbolic domination. (Zweig and Abrams, 1991)

Different though they are, Griffin feels pornography and the church do have something in common: Their treatment of women. Both reduce women to a blank screen and make her represent all that a man wants to deny about himself. The church father and the pornographer both dread their own basic urges. They hate their own materiality but cannot forget it entirely; it acts through the body and its instincts, after all. And so rather than admit that they are struggling with themselves, they imagine they are struggling with *women* (a notion of hers I take to refer to issues the church has at times had with female sexuality). (Zweig and Abrams, 1991)

Though she acknowledges that the pains suffered by black people in a racist environment and Jews in an antisemitic environment are different from those of women specifically, she still feels that their issues are ultimately related. They are born from the same kind of mind: The mind that projects all its fears outwards and defines itself by hatred.

(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)

The stupid, animalistic African, the greedy, money-grabbing Jew, the shallow, materialistic, lustful woman... all these ugly stereotypes are quite familiar from the lips of bigots of various stripes, and all relate in some way to the earthly and the base, things the bigot wants to deny in himself. And wherever one finds a skewed, bigotry-driven image of a social group one finds its opposite image, which the bigot wants to have as his own. In the American South there was the aristocratic slave owner, against the Jews of Europe there was the Aryan superman. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

The chauvinist draws a clear line between himself and whatever other he chooses to project onto, and passionately insists upon it because he cannot face the fact that the “other” he hates, the “other” he wants to keep at bay, is in fact himself. **(Zweig and Abrams, 1991)**

6: ADOLF HITLER

Since Jung rejected the idea of humans existing entirely as individuals, what with us all sharing the same collective unconscious aspects, this also means, in his eyes, that a crime is never an isolated, personal matter. Aside from being caused at least in part by our fundamental functions, an outrage of some sort is also reacted to quite strongly by the wider community. (Jung, 1970)

“It is a fact that cannot be denied: the wickedness of others becomes our own wickedness because it kindles something evil in our own hearts. The murder has been suffered by everyone, and everyone has committed it; lured by the irresistible fascination of evil, we have all made this collective psychic murder possible; and the closer we were to it and the better we could see, the greater our guilt. In this way we are unavoidably drawn into the uncleanness of evil, no matter what our conscious attitude may be. No one can escape this, for we are all so much a part of the human community that every crime calls forth a secret satisfaction in some corner of the fickle human heart.” (Jung, 1970, para 408)

Jung goes on to draw a parallel between human evil and an infectious disease. For example, it is almost impossible to not be negatively affected by the actions of Hitler, Himmler, and the SS. The sight of darkness causes it to pierce our defenses and leave its mark. There is a certain shadow of evil in moral indignation; the anger and desire to see punishment that we feel upon witnessing terrible deeds. But although he doesn't use that specific phrase, “an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind” applies to a certain degree here. Leaving justice up to personal rage and impassioned initiative just leaves the avenger tainted by anger and evil, which is why we need a rigid, structured system of law to handle our justice. We need it to pass through lawyers, judges and a punisher of some sort for the sake of our collective well-being, even setting aside the chaos that the alternative would leave modern society in. (Jung, 1970)

Adolf's father, Alois Hitler, was a hard-drinking man who ruled his home with an iron fist and was prone to terrible rages. He would frequently beat his wife and children, but since Adolf developed quite a stubborn, defiant streak he got the worst of it, with his sister Paula going so far as to call Adolf's thrashings “daily”. One day he read that the brave should not show pain and took the idea to heart. He started weathering his father's beatings without

crying out and took pride in this. All of this physical violence was coupled with disapproval from a father who expected his son to follow in his footsteps in civil service, which Adolf resentfully wanted nothing to do with. **(Simkin, 2020-b)**

Obviously this is the kind of upbringing that will scar a child, and going by Jung's theories this will have been the source of Adolf Hitler's suppression of any "weakness" in himself, and the resulting hysteria that gripped the man. The intense powerlessness he experienced as an abused child led to feelings of inferiority, which led to pathological narcissism as a method of self-defence, and a lust for power. This treatment will also have filled him with intense anger and hatred towards his father, and after Alois's death these feelings were left without a target. The result of all of this was an angry, anxious man with a great need to dominate and puff himself up. **(Diamond, 2014)**

It was while living in Vienna as a homeless failure with no prospects in life that Adolf, by his own account, was first drawn into anti-semitism. Anti-semitic pamphlets were being sold in the streets, and there he found a target for all his buried neuroses. As he described it in his own writings, Hitler began noticing Jews more and more in the streets, and taking note of their differences from "proper" people. Everything about the Jew was somehow inferior and evil, and so Adolf Hitler's course was set. **(Simkin, 2020-a)**

Hysterical neurosis is the mentally abnormal condition of being caught between two sides of oneself: One of whom is continually busy judging and criticising the other for wrongdoing. The person whom Friedrich Nietzsche called the "pale criminal" is one who cannot accept their own guilt and will engage in monumental self-deception to avoid facing the shadow. Still, a feeling of inferiority remains, hidden from conscious awareness by this troublesome psychological process. In a state of hysterical disassociation, a person thus afflicted looks for inferiority in others, to have somewhere to deposit their own feelings without hurting themselves. Instead, the hysteric must hurt others. This is why they must find groups of people to regard as lesser, people to burden with all of the hysteric's own inferiority and failings, and to be the target of the anger the hysteric cannot bear to direct at themselves. **(Jung, 1970)**

"All these pathological features—complete lack of insight into one's own character, auto-erotic self-admiration and self-extenuation, denigration and terrorization of one's fellow men (how contemptuously Hitler spoke of his own people!), projection of the shadow, lying, falsification of reality, determination to

impress by fair means or foul, bluffing and double-crossing—all these were united in the man who was diagnosed clinically as an hysteric, and whom a strange fate chose to be the political, moral, and religious spokesman of Germany for twelve years. Is this pure chance?” (Jung, 1970, para. 418)

Back when he was still in power Jung was interviewed about his analysis of Adolf Hitler. Jung identified two types of overwhelming leaders in a society running on primitive emotions; one who rules by raw power (for example, war chief or emperor) and one who rules by mysticism (a medicine man or the pope). He put Hitler in the mystic category, even though he set up a brutally militaristic state. **(Dickey, 2016)**

Hitler was not handsome or robust; he did not give the image of a legendary hero or a mighty warrior. What swept the German people up in his aura was not the mere application of brutish power, like how Stalin subjugated the Soviet Union, but something more subtle and sinister. Jung drew special attention to the fact that Hitler held Germany enthralled but this effect did not extend to non-Germans. **(Dickey, 2016)**

The man ranted and raved about Germany’s glorious fate, Germany’s special place in history, Germany’s specially gifted people and so on and so forth; exactly the kinds of things people with feelings of inferiority want to hear. Germany had been humiliated by the loss of World War One and the subsequent Treaty of Versailles. In Jung’s summations Adolf Hitler was less of a political leader who succeeded through any merits or efforts of his own, than he was an embodiment of the German people’s deep-seated complexes. **(Dickey, 2016)**

He was, put simply, a man utterly dominated by his shadow. It is not only that his darkest impulses had clear and ready access to his surface, but that he acted on them with no restraint whatsoever. Rather than being a leader he himself was simply led. The collective shadow of the German people projected itself onto the man because his shadow was essentially on the surface, and so he dragged his country down into Hell. **(Dickey, 2016)**

In keeping with his general use of mystical language, Jung declared that Hitler had become Germany’s Messiah; the longed-for saviour of those who feel themselves downtrodden. The collective culture of the German people did not only carry the weight of World War One and Versailles on its back, but also simply the fact that as a unified nation Germany was very young, with power comparable to the giants of the time but none of the influence of prestige on the world stage. So Versailles was humiliation on top of a cultural feeling of inferiority. **(Dickey, 2016)**

Jung in fact stood in close physical proximity to Hitler one time, during a meeting between the Nazi leader and Benito Mussolini in Berlin. He described his impression of Hitler as him showing no sign of being a human; just a mechanism working towards a purpose. **(Jung, 1942)**

As he was quoted in an interview:

“With Hitler you are scared. You know you would never be able to talk to that man; because there is nobody there. He is not a man, but a collective. He is not an individual, but a whole nation. I take it to be literally true that he has no personal friend. How can you talk intimately with a whole nation?” (Jung, 1942)

Jung feels Hitler’s particular hysterical condition could be summed up as believing his own lies. And the ability to create one’s own reality and express it can facilitate great short-term success, as such a person, utterly convinced they are in the right, projects far more confidence than a healthy, good person. Viewed objectively, and with the eyes of one not caught up in Germany’s collective hysteria, Hitler’s speeches were a ridiculous spectacle of high-pitched shrieking and wild gesticulating. But it was precisely this connection with Germany’s wider problems that gave Hitler his power over them. **(Jung, 1970)**

“The essence of hysteria is a systematic disassociation, a loosening of the opposites which normally are held firmly together,” Jung said **(Jung, 1970, para. 424)**, by which he means an ignorance of the shadow, which can reach such catastrophic levels that the subject is purely and only aware of their own good motives, or what they regard as such. This forceful ignorance of who they are leaves the subject in a state of great insecurity, which they do not dare acknowledge and so seek to flaunt and boast and seek adulation; symptoms we are all familiar with seeing in both public figures and ones we encounter in our lives. In Jung’s eyes this explains the “stabbed in the back” myth that floated around Germany as a justification for the loss of World War One, and just how many were taken in by it. In a state of insecurity and hysteria, the German people didn’t want to face a defeat as having been “real”. **(Jung, 1970)**

In 1945, when the crimes of the Nazi regime were made known the wider world, Jung analysed the wider implications. He argued that such a thing as the concentration camps could only have happened under specific circumstances. He pointed his finger specifically at the psychological effects of urbanisation. His view of the process of urbanisation is that it results

in a certain dehumanisation on not just a wider level but a personal one as well. A modern man is cut off from all self-sufficiency and is utterly dependent on a vast and impersonal society to survive. **(Jung, 1970)**

Jung blamed the Holocaust to a certain degree on modern society and its effect on our psyche. Modern industrialised, depersonalised, urbanised society turns us into tiny parts in vast machinery, far removed from the small, tribal existence that is our instinct. Rather than depend on ourselves and our immediate group we are dependent on the faceless giant that is the state. In Jung's view this pushes us into simply becoming a herd, driven along by other forces rather than facing responsibility for ourselves. **(Jung, 1970)**

The clothes we wear, the food we eat, the transportation that we make use of, all of these are made by others through a process we barely understand. In this unnatural state, man develops neuroses. Jung described a collective German hysteria, a condition he summed up as "a systematic dissociation", characterized by a total blindness to the shadow. Hysterics are compelled to lash out at others, to see their own flaws in someone else in a desperate effort to avoid confronting them. The hysteric cannot stand being wounded and acknowledging one's own cruelty and madness is indeed very painful. And of course while caught up in this behavior it is impossible to look inwards and fight one's own demons. **(Jung, 1970)**

7: CONCLUSIONS

Considering all that I have covered in this text, I feel it is an undeniable assertion that Carl Jung has had a great influence on the way we think about the human psyche. Even people not directly familiar with his work will find themselves using his terminology or referencing the basics of his ideas. Projection is a well-known phenomenon by now, and we are all familiar with witnessing someone call others out for his/her own flaws. “Complex” is another concept that modern culture is quite familiar with; that idea of an unacknowledged disturbance in a person’s psyche. And, of course, the collective unconscious in its essence simply means that all humans share a certain core. That, too, is a commonly accepted idea today.

I must admit I have some doubts about the highly detailed map Jung draws of the human psyche. The human mind, with its immensely elaborate web of interacting factors, layers of personality and emotions that range from subtle to overwhelming, may be the most complex and frustrating thing in existence. That its deepest, most complex personality functions can be broken down into clear layers and parts is something I’m not entirely willing to accept as gospel; especially in light of the flaws that have been pointed out in Jung’s conclusions, such as his neglect of environmental factors, abundant references to mysticism. Still, what I have covered in this paper ought to make it clear that he and his adherents are at the very least *close* to the immensely complex issue that is the truth of the human soul.

Certain themes do indeed come up again and again in the mythologies and legends of cultures separated by vast stretches of time and distance, and all humans grapple with the same core problem-making instincts. “Human nature” is a very real, albeit inevitably vague, phenomenon, and Carl Jung made a valiant and interesting effort to explore and explain it.

Above all his other theories I find the shadow the most intriguing, and the one that rings the most true to what I observe not only of the human race, but of myself as well when I take a particularly honest look.

We cannot escape the fact that we are social creatures. It is at the core of our being, and the pain of social rejection and condemnation is very, very real. Our aversion to this pain teaches us to keep our more unacceptable aspects hidden away. And since our social instincts cut so deep that even the mere thought of socially unacceptable behaviour can cause an aversion in us, we may come to shove those down away from conscious thought.

This all seems like an entirely logical train of reasoning and is consistent with what I myself observe of human nature. There is indeed something to the shadow archetype, and

while I am hesitant to attribute all of human evil to it, I can only agree with Jung and those who follow in his footsteps that learning to face the shadow is a critical mission for mankind.

I believe John A. Sanford made a very good point about sins of the mind. As painful as it might be, we need to accept the fact that none of us are as good as we would like to be. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that goodness does not mean purity. Humans simply do not seem to be designed for purity and pretending otherwise traps us in a harmful state of make-belief.

Building a better humanity may be a hopeless pipedream, but we certainly will not progress at all until we collectively learn to shake off this instinct to bury aspects of ourselves out of sight. However one might try, no one can escape themselves.

Though it was all a spectacularly extreme example, Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany were a symptom of very familiar forces; forces that are built into us all by our nature as human beings. Though people look back on the Holocaust with horrified bewilderment, there is no reason why such a tragedy cannot take place again. The components are within us, and all it takes is the right set of circumstances.

If bigotry and irrational hatred are ever to be conquered, if mankind ever improves at all, it will be done by spreading awareness of the shadow. It will be done by admitting that evil comes from within ourselves, and that only acceptance can defeat the Devil. This defeat will not be one of destruction, since, again, purity is unattainable. Rather, it will consist of exposure. When he is forced to stand out in broad daylight the Devil cannot whisper into our ear in the dark. Our way forward as a species must be about learning to look within and accept what we find there without succumbing to it.

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