

The Pandemic & The Shadow: Reflections on the Shadow Archetype during Covid 19

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ABSTRACT

One of the major psychological implications of the recent pandemic has been a heavy surge in cases reported around the world of troubled mental health. The mental health clinics were flooded as the world grappled to come to terms with loss of life and loneliness. The pandemic in many ways thus was a call for humanity to stop and turn inward to address the concerns of the *psyche*. The present paper attempts to re-visit the archetypal interpretation of Magyar-Germanic version of the tale of 'the red shoes' by noted Jungian Analyst Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estés. The tale speaks about the psychological implications of being captured and starvation of the soul and brings forth a call for developing foresight for consequences of not paying enough attention to instinctual life. The tale has been interpreted by Dr. Estes to understand its implication for the feminine psyche. In the present paper, there is re-interpretation offered that extends beyond only the feminine psyche- it applies to humanity. The argument raised herein is that Covid 19 has hit us hard because during today's modern times, we do not pay enough attention to our inner development. In the run for materialism, there is little or no time offered for oneself- to look inward, face one's own reality and meet the individual demands of the *psyche*. Therefore, calamities like the pandemic bring us down to the ground and force us to face our inner shadow. Understanding of the Jungian notion of the archetype of the shadow, its manifestation during the pandemic and its implications for the *psyche* in today's time enables us to seek an answer to what must now be done to restore our psychological health and vitality post the pandemic.

Keywords: *Pandemic, Mental Health, Covid 19, Shadow Archetype, Red Shoes, Fairytales*

The pandemic of the 2019 was a sharp reminder to the modern man that years of scientific progress can come to a standstill at the blink of an eye. Of course, the pandemic never spread in a day or two, but the impact was magnanimous- from complete shutdown of air travel to sudden deserting of streets across the globe. The world grew far apart, one could not visit their next-door neighbors nor trust a family member to enter from without with no fear. Yet, the world drew closer together- people struggled to find ways to keep their sanity and fulfill the basic human need to connect with others. The Internet soared as a savior and brought people together. At the same time, the very same internet threw people into deepest misery- life became enslaved to online social presence.

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Millions of people around the world suddenly realized that they could not breathe peacefully in the air as their neighbor without fear. We scrunched back with disbelief.

It is not the first time in the history of humanity that we have seen a pandemic. The epidemic of the 20s is still a distant faint memory- we just did not know or anticipate that we, the modern men of today with all our tremendous scientific knowledge can be brought down to our knees, scared away into our homes, running helter-skelter for a cure that was far from being found. We craved for oxygen, ran out of hospital beds, lost people by the heap and never got a chance to say final goodbyes to so many who departed. All of this happening at a time when humanity boasts of the capacity to travel to the moon and back, literally.

Among the healthcare sector, the ones working in mental health, the renegades who never really get their due otherwise, suddenly became the superstars. While the medics strived to take care of people's physical health, desperately, the psychologists of the world awoke to a new reality of hordes of people seeking mental health intervention. Our community was called upon to help, and patients grew heaps. Online psychological services became a thing- online therapy was the most sought-after fashion fad.

In this madness and glory, a simple thought breaks free- is it possible for mental health to suddenly have deteriorated? While the answer is of course yes, it could happen in a moment's time- the concern herein is- it seems unfathomable that everyone just miraculously developed issues. It is more plausible to accept that we became more aware, we saw what we were not seeing before, we were forced into isolation, we had to abandon everything we were busy occupying ourselves with and when we did that- we had no choice but to face ourselves. This is where the mental health part makes more sense.

Imagine for instance, a young person who has never seen themselves in a mirror and does not know of the scar that blemishes across their face, oddly. One day, they happen to see the reflection of their face in water and all of a sudden, the despair took over. The scar was not made in this moment, it was only found, re-discovered, or perhaps discovered faintly for the first time. The natural human reaction would have been to try to understand what this scar is- where did it come from suddenly, make peace with the ugliness of their existence.

My contention in the present work is to reaffirm this very belief with the amplification of a folktale as supporting data to understand this claim. The argument is very simple- humanity was forced to abandon its usual ways and when we are locked with ourselves, we have no choice but to encounter our own- shadows.

Now, shadow, for the Jungian reader, is an archetypal presence. In Carl Jung's conception of the human psyche- everything one is aware of becomes one's outer reality, the persona, the mask they identify with. While everything that one does not know or accept or acknowledge about oneself is relegated back into the hinterlands of the unconscious to form our shadow. The shadow aspect is the unconscious background- the darkness cast by ignorance of some parts of our own psychic reality. Jung posits that when we do not pay enough attention to our psychological reality, it takes shape outside of us and makes us aware through confrontation.

The shadow develops for every individual through their life experiences. Anthony Stevens suggests that moral tropism or the human propensity to inherently categorize the world as good and bad is one of the sources of shadow formation. The more we divide, the more we

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are pushed to accept one in favor of the other, the more one-sided our outer reality is and the other solidifies into the shadow. When the Freudian superego forms, when parents are busy teaching their children about the ways of the world, they indulge in a similar process of promoting one in favor of other aspects of personality. Humans are born whole- every element good and bad is contained in each one of us and when we are told to or made to live out one aspect while suppressing the other- shadow is formed. By extension, shadow is only dark- not necessarily the bad part of us. Whatever is in the background, devoid of life is the shadow- it is that which sees so night, gets no share of nourishment. Thus, the most devilish individual reserves space for the unlived aspect, the shadow which might be pure gold and the most pious individual retains the unlived sin within making a dark but bad shadow.

Author Robert Johnson has explained the issues one has while coming to terms with one's shadow, especially if one's shadow is 'good'. It is like saying that a saint will be able to see his sins easier than it will be for a sinner to believe anything good exists in him at all.

The shadow, Jung says exists both at individual as well as collective level. Everything that a person disallows in personal life is relegated back to the unconscious to take the shadow existence. The same works on a collective level- the shadow of culture for example. Everything that the culture thinks of as bad, worthy of being thrown out of acceptance, sin- it all goes back to form the shadow of the culture. In the same line, we can speak about shadows of institutions, families, groups and nations. Even, shadow of humanity as a whole.

Structure of the Paper

The present reflective paper aims to delve into the possible mental health implications of the Covid-19 pandemic primarily for the general population and specifically for mental health professionals working in the field. When unconscious forces emerge during special times like the pandemic, what are the ways in which the mental health community can expect to respond?

The data for the present paper is a tale taken from a Jungian textbook and the interpretations are offered using the archetypal lens. In Jungian work, interpretations are offered classically using the method of comparative morphological psychology. In this work, we take the broad framework of Jungian-Archetypal psychology and offer qualitative reflections derived from the same. We shall begin by revisiting the classic interpretations on our data- the tale of Red shoes as offered in the text- "Wild Woman Archetype: Myths and stories of the wild woman archetype" (Estes, 1992) and then present new reflections on the tale in the present day context of the post-pandemic world. The objective is to highlight the instructions offered by the tale toward the need for depth psychological work with one's shadow.

In the next few sections of the paper, we follow two lines of thought. One, we explore the idea of the pandemic itself as the shadow experience of humanity. Not one or two people, not one or two nations or cultures or groups, but the entire world, entire humankind. Two, we explore the premise of individual shadow work as the emergent need through the pandemic experience. COVID 19, among other experiences, was also a time when individuals were forced to realize and reckon their shadow experience- and this is what provides a viable explanation for the large-scale mental health impact we faced. We move from the individual first and then navigate to the collective.

Data for Reflection: The tale of the Red Shoes

Archetypal reflections offered by Estes

Noted Jungian analyst and author, Clarissa Pinkola Estes has worked extensively on exploring the feminine archetypes and without doubt one of her pioneering contributions has been the discussion of the Wild Woman Archetype. In her view, women contain an essentially wildish aspect within their psyche, the one that makes them live in accordance with their natural rhythms and one that brings them closer to their instinctual inner life. In her dissertation on this archetypal presence, Clarissa has provided detailed commentary on several folktales and fairytales from the Nordic regions. While most of her work is extensive as it is, in the Jungian world, it is always plausible to uncover several parallel layers of meaning and interpretation of the data.

Using the Jungian methodology of archetypal amplification that stems from comparative morphological psychology, the present section of the work goes back to the analysis provided by Clarissa of the Magyar-Germanic version of the tale of 'The red shoes'. The amplification of the tale will be summarized here to give the author an orientation of the arguments raised in the next section.

The tale of the red shoes, also existent in the popular version by Hans Christian Anderson, narrates the story of a young motherless girl who is left alone in the world to fend for herself. She is barefoot and over years with patience gathers scraps of cloth to fashion handmade red shoes for herself. Though not very pretty, the shoes make her happy because they are her own. One day, an old woman comes in a beautiful gilded carriage and takes her away to a nice cottage, gives her nice clean underwear and a new set of clothes, promising a life of luxury. The old woman gets the ugly handmade pair of shoes burnt and takes the little girl to shop for a new pair of shoes. The little girl still secretly misses her old pair and ends up buying a bright red pair of shoes instead. The old woman whose vision is hampered doesn't notice the odd pair of shoes and lets the girl buy and wear those shoes to church. On the gate of the church, the little girl meets an old soldier with red beard who remarks that the dancing shoes were beautiful and once the whole church informs the old woman of the odd pair, she snatches the red shoes away from the girl. The girl sneaks the shoes once again and is led to a dance on the tap of the old soldier. She is scared as the shoes make her dance out of control. The old woman and her wagon man come to her aid and rip off the shoes with difficulty, warning the little girl to stay away from the shoes. When the old woman falls very sick, the little girl sneaks in to take the red shoes off the high shelf and wears them with adoration, once again goes to the church mesmerized with the shoes and unable to attend to the church prayers. When the old soldier taps on the shoes again, the little girl begins to dance enjoying at first but very soon dances out of control. The shoes take her right when she wants to go left, straight when she wants to go back, just making her dance and dance till she is frail and ghostly. At the end, the little girl dances to the executioner in the forest and begs her to remove the shoes, and because this is not possible, pleads with him to cut off her feet. He does so and the feet with the shoes still on dance into the dense forest, never stopping.

This is where the tale ends. Life, however, is a different thing. Stories end, life continues. Therefore, one is left to now ponder- what comes after? What should the crippled young girl now do? Without her feet, she will become poor, and have to beg for alms. Will she ever find her feet again? We will ask more personal questions, but first, what does the story mean? What do the symbols tell us about the meaning of the tale?

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Clarissa suggests that the handmade red shoes symbolize the instinctual life of the little girl. These are a poorly made pair of shoes but are her very own. They are built by hand, therefore are very personal, and represent the creative spirit of the little girl.

In Nordic regions to be without shoes is a worrisome fate because shoes not only provide warmth on cold days but also stand for one's status in general. We can judge people by their shoes, know their professions, their caste, community, wealth status- all from their shoes. Feet are what give individuals grounding. Clarissa suggests that "In archetypal symbolism, feet represent mobility and freedom...to have shoes to cover the feet is to have conviction of our beliefs" (Estes, 1992).

The Old woman in the story is the old order of things, the social order that attempts to make things right but ends of creating an artificial structure around things. The Old discards the instinctual and natural life and in the aim of bringing order to chaos, ends of burning the inner and instinctual. Clarissa remarks that since this aged woman is one-sided it also indicates that "one's psychic process is also developing in a one-sided manner...we are forewarned that aspects of the psyche that should remain warm are about to be frozen in time" (Estes, 1992).

The little girl who is stripped off the handmade shoes cannot shake off the feeling of longing for that which she has lost and ends up making a poor bargain again of choosing the odd red shoes. Red is the color of blood and blood symbolizes both life and death, sacrifice and honor, victory and loss. To live a life, one has to sacrifice- whenever one choice is upheld, another is lost in the exchange. For Clarissa, "One sort of vibrant and beloved red is lost when the child's handmade red shoes are burned. This sets up a yearning, an obsession, and finally an addiction to another kind of red: the one of fast-breaking, cheap thrills; sex without soul; the one that leads to a life without meaning" (Estes, 1992).

The red shoes are therefore her substitute for a natural instinctual life but are of course never the same. This choice comes with an unforeseen burden. The new red shoes will make her dance and dance until eternity, out of control away from life as she knew it. The result of making this poor bargain in life is often crippling. Cripples are effectively the outcastes in mythology, the dark shady figures who are scary and need to loom in the background. They are relegated to the background where they are supposed to live a life in the shadows. When the little girl becomes crippled, she is experiencing a loss of footing, she has no ground to stand on and therefore must beg to survive. Psychologically, this experience of crippling is an experience of loss, lack of inner resources and capacity to function independently or be autonomous in one's survival. When one is crippled, one is pushed back into the liminal zone- neither fully present, nor totally absent. They say if one has had the capacity to walk, being crippled may be a fate worse than death- not because being cripple is an issue in itself but because this crippling is punitive, it's a reminder of having done something one shouldn't have done, made poor choices and brought upon misfortune on oneself.

The Red shoes in contemporary world- Mayhem of the Pandemic

The little girl from the previous section is a rather intriguing figure- a motherless child who is helpless, begins to find comfort in something she made herself but soon is lured away by the Older who promises more comfort and protection. The price to pay is the handmade shoes but what she gets in return, the bright new red shoes has her mesmerized. The red shoes are pretty but end up making her dance out of control. There is a price to pay for poor choice.

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One is now left to look within and ask the next set of questions. The tale of red shoes is not just the tale of the little girl, but each and every one of us. We are all the little girl. The little girl is all of us- modern men and women of the modern world who are making a poor bargain and will soon be left crippled because of our choices. Oh, rather! We have already been left crippled and we have already seen the executioner up close and personal- the deadly virus that made us all dance out of control and look for cover.

When this level of amplification of the tale is done, let us re-envision the story of the modern men (and women!).

Modernity and modern life come with a heavy price to pay- the price of addiction. The bright red shoes of modern life are the red of bloodshed and blood loss, not the red of creation and birth. Inevitably, man's scientific progress has been incredible- we live in a fast-paced world forever connected to everyone across the globe at the click of a button. But this is also a time of gluttony of humans- enough is never enough. We want more of everything- more power, more money, more pace.

Life in modern times is also very demanding, one is expected to be at the top of their game always- never stop, always hustle. The hustle culture also means we are forbidden to stop. The lure of the bright red shoes for modern men is the endless dance. We are forever on the outside, on the go with very less time for ourselves. We need to stay connected, but the price to pay is the time we give to ourselves, our mental health. We have given up on our time to create, be generative in the truest sense of the term. We even prefer meals pre-cooked for us. We do not do things by hand any longer, or at least not as much as we used to at one time. Technology has made life so simple- everything is at the click of a button- everyone is only a button press away.

Anthony Stevens warned us in advance, "Through its evolution of the human psyche, nature has produced something of a Trojan horse. The psyche has created physics, chemistry and astronomy, and has enabled us to begin unravelling the fabric of the universe. Not only can we understand the basic principles on which the cosmos operates, but we can intervene and bend them to our will. As a result, we can, among other things, create chemical and nuclear weapons of such devastating power as to eliminate all life on earth many times over" (Stevens, 1992). Humanity has achieved the power to wreak havoc through its actions and years of glorious progress contain the dark loom of the shadows. When one has been in the light for far too long, the shadow appears out of nowhere, almost paralyzing with its force- it is too sudden and therefore too engulfing!

This is the shadow we experienced during the recent pandemic of 2019. Like the little girl in the tale, we were left crippled by (possibly) one of our own inventions- the virus. It is a crippling experience because the pandemic brought everything and everyone to a sudden standstill. It was unprecedented- everything came to a lockdown- the world just stopped.

The technology that ensured we could fly in the air like birds, also flew the virus along the way. The whole world has been brought together by modern technology, but the dark unveiled during 2019. The ease of travel created the ease of spread of the undesirous. The inventions of modern culture are tremendous. However,... "we suffer from our cultural Inventions. We live in the most creative century in history, with miracles of technology, ease of travel, and a new freedom from the drudgery of life... What a wonderful age! But its shadow appears, Inevitably, as boredom and loneliness—the exact opposites of the efficient

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society we have made” (Johnson, 1991). How very bored and lonely were people during the pandemic years is something we may recount with horror.

Each and every one of us experienced crippling at several levels- **physically** by not being able to move, we all were just stuck in the beautiful homes we have created; **medically** because all of a sudden we realized that the most resourceful hospitals in the world ran out of resources; **socially** because we could not move out, talk freely to our neighbors or gather together, we were all distanced; **culturally** because we could not for the love of God visit the movies or seek any form of entertainment and cultural exchange that required us to step out; **emotionally** because we did not know what to feel, we were all numbed by the sudden influx of horror; **morally** because we did not know what was right or wrong anymore, we fought for the smallest of resources with our neighbors and people hoarded not just food but even oxygen trying to look out for themselves even if that meant many others would die because of their actions; **personally** because we could not save our loved ones with the mightiest of efforts or for that matter even save ourselves sometimes and **collectively** because we were all crippled at the same time. Professions, gender, races, caste, religion, ethnicity, nationality- nothing mattered and nothing saved anyone from the experience of the crippling.

When the extroverted modern humans are crippled, they have no choice but to sit with themselves and contemplate- see what is going on. This is where the experience of the shadow happens. The shadow, as shared in the introductory remarks, is the unseen, unexpressed part of ourselves. When the outside light is shut, all the ways and means of keeping oneself externally preoccupied are taken away, there is no choice but to finally see the mirror and face one's truth.

The widespread and sudden emergence of mental health concerns during the pandemic therefore were an expression of the human shadow experience. This is not to deny that the time was troublesome for one and all, and many mental health reactions were responses to the concerns of the time. The argument however is that this large-scale despair was also, at least, in a fair part, a response to the emergence of shadow. A lot of old scars emerged, re-emerged, past traumas were lived up again, everything that was pushed away out of sight into the unconscious re-surfaced for humans to face and come to terms with.

Johnson (1991) suggests that the shadow is dark- not always negative or bad. Therefore, the other side also appeared- the light, the emergence of the good within. When people got time to spend with themselves, finally, they learnt that they harbored skills that they simply were never aware of. People discovered new talents and spent time pursuing those talents. Men and women came together in ways we never knew- people aided with utmost selflessness. Often those who helped were the ones who never had any history of being helpful or even useful. Help and aid came from unlikely scenarios- there are tales of 'bad' people in the prison coming forward to help the community, often as a way of redeeming themselves of their own guilt and sin. The bright side of the shadow emergence was the collective spirit of humanity, the cross-national aid that flew in, the wonderful medical professionals who gave it their all and emerged as heroes. Some narratives from that time come from doctors who came into the profession only for the money who realized during the pandemic that service is what they aim to also give. The Hippocratic oath came alive in the present world-spontaneously and miraculously.

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A similar shadow experience also can be traced to the most popular profession during the pandemic- the doctors. In the modern scientifically advanced world, medicine has grown leaps and bounds in knowledge and scope. Doctors today have become giants, gods who have the capacity to reverse death. Modern medicine can keep a (brain) dead person alive artificially and we have found cure to some of the most notorious diseases like cancer. We have been successful in stopping and eradicating epidemics like HIV and Polio and small pox. We have wiped them from the face of the earth. Yet, COVID-19 was a humbling experience for the scientific world- we realized, again, that we do not have all the answers. The medical professionals who have learnt that they are next only to gods in their power to stop and prevent death- lived with and among death. The experience of seeing death up close and personal in scales that were never imagined is also a kind of unfortunate but essential shadow work for the medical community. To be blown down to one's knees, stopped in one's tracks also brings one closer to the ground on which one stands. It is a rude but essential reminder to re-touch the roots, examine the grounds on which one stands and understand that essentially everyone and everything is fallible.

The shadow emergence during the pandemic was both personal and collective. Jung suggests that while the personal shadow gathers up in one's very personal life through experiences and social upbringing, there is also a larger collective shadow that comes into being at the level of the whole society/nation/group. The collective shadow is far more darker than the individual shadow since it is an amalgamation of the group- many shadows coming together. The emergence of the personal shadow was experienced during the pandemic through the personal mental health concerns people faced, through their own discovery of personal truths that were simply relegated to the background earlier. People discovered within themselves a gamut of unexperienced emotions- ones that they simply never took to be their own. There were reports of individuals who have always been very calm and loving suddenly experiencing rage issues. People who have been kind otherwise became very selfish and had rude arguments with their partners or peers. Some very docile people began to speak and take their stand while some very argumentative people suddenly grew very quiet, supportive and encouraging. One of the clients I saw during this time, a very gentle young boy coming from a middle-class family, never raising a voice, always calm and never speaking out or able to put forward his opinions even with friends, suddenly started experiencing bouts of rage and took to brash music and hardcore workout to vent out anger that he simply could not make any sense of! Another very usually quiet female in middle age suddenly revolted against the family constraints and moved out, against advise to come in support of her community- she prepared and delivered meals to the needy. I suggest these shadow experiences here to highlight how the personal shadow was experienced and uncovered.

There is another side to the story- the collective shadow that was perceived even by the most ignorant people around. Suddenly and without warning, men became barbarians- they were fighting with one another for the most basic of things! Toilet paper? Toilet paper!! Men fought in the supermarkets for toilet paper, women pulled at each other's hair for it. There was total mayhem, chaos, a cultural disintegration of sorts as people almost abandoned their civilized virtuous behavior and disregarded their neighbor. Anthony Stevens suggests that "The barbarism which succeeds cultural disintegration is not necessarily imposed from without: it arises from within, since the abandonment of civilized values exposes us collectively to possession by the worst elements of the Shadow. Liberated of all the cultural constraints which have evolved historically to contain him, the barbarian bursts out of his 'underground prison' like Jung's Teutonic 'blond beast' (p. 152) and, ripping apart what

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remains of the ethical social fabric, ‘takes over’ in order to gratify his own ego-centered lusts and greed” (Stevens, 1992).

The way the whole world suddenly grew very very angry with one nation, holding it single handedly accountable for spread of the pandemic is yet another example of expression of the collective shadow. It was as if the whole world came together to denounce only one as the primal evil, questioning eating habits etcetera that by no means belong to one nation alone. There was widespread hatred levied in enormous promotions to people from that nationality-holding someone accountable for our present problems made sense. One nation on the globe became the container of the shadow projections that spontaneously emerged for a lot of individuals, almost the entire humanity suddenly. Johnson remarks, “Apparently, the collective need for shadow expression supersedes the individual determination to contain the dark. And so it happens that an era of disciplined creativity is always followed by an astounding display of annihilation” (Johnson, 1991). The world broke down into chaos and projecting demons outside of themselves.

Jung warns us that when collective projection of shadow does occur, it is actually a call for us to turn within. To project the shadow onto something external is easy but it is very difficult yet absolutely critical to understand that this projection is only a defense. This experience is tremendous. Jung suggests that “Such an experience brings about an inner transformation, and this is infinitely more important than political and social reforms which are all valueless in the hands of people who are not at one with themselves. This is a truth which we are forever forgetting because our eyes are fascinated by the conditions around us and rivetted on them instead of examining our own heart and conscience. Every demagogue exploits this human weakness when he points with the greatest possible outcry to all the things that are wrong in the outside world. But the principle and indeed the only thing that is wrong with the world is man” (CW 10, para. 441).

Lastly, it is important to also examine the COVID-19 pandemic itself as the shadow- of the modern scientific progress. We live in a world where we exalt our scientific capacities, we are very proud of all the progress we have made. This cannot be contended that modern science and technology has made life so much better, given us life expectancy like never before, brought so much comfort and ease- we would never want to live without the modern luxuries. Who would want to, in their right mind, do away with the marvels of the modern world? No one. But when so much light shines, the shadow is sure to follow. The argument therefore is, that the recent pandemic was also a shadow that emerged from all our possible scientific advances. The emergence of this dark shadow cast a huge dark cloud on entire humanity- the dark cloud of death, despair, loneliness, feelings of inadequacy, survivors guilt, mental health traumas and possible PTSD’s and so much more. Medically and chemically we can define and try to explain the virus in many ways, do a proper sequencing and try to comprehend what the virus actually is and how it operates, but the psychological part of the story is equally essential. We must not turn our heads and hearts away from all that the pandemic has left exposed.

The way forward: Lessons for Mental Health Professionals post COVID-19

The real concern is not what was uncovered but what one must do with everything one has dug out or what has sprung up spontaneously from the collective depths. As mental health professionals, we are experiencing a two fold concern moving forward- one, more obvious one is the sudden influx of patients with numerous problems and two, more latent but more deadly is the foresight that all these individuals who are coming in huge numbers are going

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to go away sooner than they turn up. The obsession with mental health that happened while the pandemic was at its peak, is bound to quickly die down as soon as the world re-opens and modernity takes back its previous proportions in our daily life. This is what is already happening, sadly. Public memory is very fleeting. Out of sight, sooner out of mind.

The way of coping with the aftermath of course is going to be close our eyes and pretend it's gone forever and will never return, not in our lifetime at least. Pretending that nothing came up, we never lived with the shadows, never saw those horrible times is an easy escape. Many people who rushed for therapy rushed out fast as soon as the world re-opened. The concern however is that once psychic material has been pushed to the surface, it cannot just lie around scattered. Jung suggests that the collective unconscious is a living entity. It is dynamic and moves and has a life and so are all contents of the psyche. One cannot pretend that every element that was washed ashore will simply die down on its own. It is rather improbable. What seems more plausible is a massive repression of this material that might be expected. People will be motivated to suppress, repress and deny the presence of any of the shadow material that they have encountered during the pandemic. Once we start going out, we will busy ourselves with the daily chores and again be left with no time to sit with ourselves and face our demons. We will resume our need to re-create a perfect world for us again. But Jung warns, "The fact is that if one tries beyond one's capacity to be perfect, the shadow descends into hell and becomes the devil. For it is just as sinful from the standpoint of nature and of truth to be above oneself as to be below oneself. It is surely not the divine will in man that he should be something which he is not, for when one looks into nature, one sees that it is most definitely the divine will that everything should be what it is" (Harris & Woolfson, 2016)

As mental health professionals, the bait comes down to us. What do we wish to do about this? What can we do in our little individual capacities to ensure that we deal and help others deal with the situation more effectively. We may have to shout from rooftops, be the advocates of the Devil by reminding people of the horrible times, by keeping the memory of the pandemic alive, by still advocating the re-living and processing of the horrors of the past. Or, we may join the force and move ahead, pretend that our time in the spotlight is over and wait, patiently for the next call to wake up. It is, I contend, an individual decision as well as a collective decision for the community. What has happened we know, what will happen, we soon shall figure out.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The pandemic of 2019 will be written down as a horrible modern world calamity of unprecedented nature. It was two whole years of absolute mayhem and distress. Failure after failure, piles of dead bodies, inability to say final goodbyes to loved ones, lack of basic necessities, sometimes even questioning what basic necessities actually are- possibly every unheard-of horror was experienced by modern men who thought and took false pride in the belief that their world is infallible. They are infallible. What happened in the 20s would never, could never happen again. Scientific progress has been so sharp and extraordinary that we shall never face questions to which we will struggle for answers.

None of thought it was plausible. Such terror could never be modern man's destiny. Yet, it happened. It overtook the whole world like a giant Tsunami wave that left an aftermath. The sad truth is that the heaps of dead bodies left behind was only one part of the aftermath. We found out a way to put away all the dead and may they rest in peace! But the psychological aftermath is also tremendous.

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Jung warns that “the gigantic catastrophes that threaten us today are not elemental happenings of a physical or biological order, but psychic events. To a quite terrifying degree we are threatened by wars and revolutions which are nothing other than psychic epidemics. At any moment several million human beings may be smitten with a new madness, and then we shall have another world war or devastating revolution. Instead of being at the mercy of wild beasts, earthquakes, landslides, and inundations, modern man is battered by the elemental forces of his own psyche. This is the World Power that vastly exceeds all other powers on earth. The Age of Enlightenment, which stripped nature and human institutions of gods, overlooked the God of Terror who dwells in the human soul” (Jacobi, 1953). We are the terror we are looking away from- the dark shadows that have unveiled from within our psyches are the terror we wish to flee away from.

The shadows that have been uncovered are going to seek satiation. The mental health concerns that have arisen during the pandemic cannot possibly be explained as associated with the pandemic alone. It is what caused the stir- not created dust from nowhere out of thin air. The pandemic has given a very sharp call for doing our shadow work at individual and collective levels. Failing to address the shadow that has now been put in the open is only going to make matters worse for humanity. Sooner or later the shadows will catch up on us again, if we try to push them away to the unseen and pretend that this never happened or that this will go away on its own miraculously. The aftermath needs patience and work- bit by bit. What has been uncovered needs to be worked with us and possibly that is our only way for closure. Pretending that this never happened or moving away without learning the lessons could be a horrible fate for humanity!

Concluding in Steven’s words, “...since science and technology have put the destiny of our planet in our own hands, we are left with little choice: *sine afflictione nulla salus*—without suffering there is no salvation. We are responsible for the state of the world and its future—not the previous generation, not the political left or right, but us—you and me” (Stevens, 1992).

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Conflict of Interest

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