A Walk on the Dark Side

1. Introduction

Here we explore some ways of accounting for those aspects of organisational life that may at first sight be hidden, in shadow, or dark; the events or behaviours that leave you wondering what on earth is happening. The idea that you can analyse a company by looking at overt behaviour or that you can understand an individual by accepting their expressed motivation is at best two- dimensional and more often just naïve. It may well be a comforting thought that through developing trust, collaboration, participation and consensus we increase the effectiveness of organisations, but is this really all it takes to improve organisations that are collectives of individuals with conflicting aims, inner turmoil and multiple power interests?

Fortunately, alongside the somewhat evangelical literature used in organisational development of people like Stephen Covey and volumes about rainbows and chicken soup, there are distinct and intriguing ways of making sense of organisations and individuals that to me smack of greater realism. It may be just my impression, but the chirpy volumes seem to outnumber the others. Contrast this with our experience of the everyday at work, where I believe most of us contend with hidden motives and agendas. In response to my request for personal examples on the dark side, one of my clients replied "I think most of my work is concerned with this". Interesting isn't it? Perhaps we consume books on the bright side because we want to think well of ourselves and of the world and need a rest from the grimmer reality of swipes from the unconscious or self-interested manoeuvres. Perhaps it is because of the influence of Christianity and its categorical separation between good and evil. Or, maybe, we are actually wise to leave the darker motivations or machinations hidden in case our curiosity, like Pandora's when she opened the forbidden box, lets out more than we bargain for.

In this article I look at four ways of approaching the dark side: politics at work, the defence mechanisms of the unconscious and some of its manifestations in groups and individuals, the work of Jung on the shadow, and complexity. Where I can, I have drawn out in separate panels some thoughts for OD practitioners/consultants as a stimulus for discussion

2. Darkness Visible: The political life of organisations

Two vignettes:

> 'I had developed a Balanced Business Scorecard for the company with the
> Financial Director. There was a huge struggle but eventually it was

implemented. After some time the Operational Directors reported at a meeting that it was just not meeting their needs, although they had not given any feedback to this effect before.

I realise now I was in the middle of a power struggle between the Operational Directors and the Financial Director and the result is I now don't trust either of them'.

'My manager is highly competitive with me and determined to keep me down. She seldom praises me for any work I do, but happily takes the credit for it as coming from her Department. She 'forgets' to invite me to crucial meetings with the Executive to work on key projects I am leading. I attended a particularly key meeting for which I had done the preparation after other members of the Executive Team had said 'you'll be there on Monday won't you'. She looked furious but was unable to do anything.'

Politics at work can be understood in a number of ways, and involves behaviours like taking opportunities to increase visibility, withholding information from rivals, scapegoating to avoid getting blamed and taking credit for the success of others.

Research at Roffey Park (Holbeche 2002) indicates that micro political behaviour at work has increased and can reduce productivity, create a lack of trust, reduce faith in management and lead to loss of valuable talent. Conflict in organisations appears to be on the increase and some blame politics for this. The two vignettes above, from members of a learning set, give some indication of the negative impact politics can have.

Politics was absent from the OD and even management literature for a long time. It had a negative connotation and association with goals and methods that weren't sanctioned at work and hence in shadow. The shadow nature of politics made it appear a less predictable and programmable aspect of organisational life and hence perhaps threatening to the two by two matrix approach to OD.

A useful typology for defining organisational politics, from Drory and Romm (1990) is shown below. Crucial to their notion of politics is the understanding that you have to abandon the purely rational approaches when analysing organisational life in favour of ones that embraces human emotions, motivation and meaning making. While political behaviour is not synonymous with power and conflict, these elements are also key to understanding political behaviour.

Drory and Romm understand organisational politics as operating at the level of individual, group and organisational actions, for example through political lobbying. They identify some key elements to a definition by considering the different outcomes that political behaviour achieves, the different means or behaviours that are used and the particular context within which political behaviour most often occurs.

The summary table below shows that political behaviour may include activities that are aimed at promoting the interests of the individual more than the organisation, and may not align with formal aims of an organisation. The use of power is common in political behaviour, often to achieve some advantage. This may be material, like achieving promotion, but may be less obvious, like gaining access to a desired group. Underlying political behaviour, whether it is obvious or not, is likely to be conflict, between individuals, the individual and the company, between group or between espoused and real goals.

Elements of Organizational Politics at Individual, Group or Organizational Level		
Outcomes of Political Behaviour are likely to:	**Means by which outcomes are achieved may include:**	**Situational Characteristics where politics are most likely to occur include:**
…be self-serving Ψ working for what one believes to be in self-interest	**influence attempts** Ψ processes expected to produce intended effects	**conflict** Ψ necessary underlying element in all political behaviour – whether or not people are aware of it
… differ from formal organization goals Ψ attempts to influence aimed at non-sanctioned ends	**power tactics** Ψ influence attempts using resources of power	**uncertainty in decision making** Ψ rife when decisions made on basis of insufficient information – political behaviour more likely where there is uncertainty over choice
…involve the distribution of resources or advantages Ψ activities not required in one's formal role but which attempt to influence the distribution of advantages or disadvantages in the organization	**informal behaviour** Ψ using non-formal behaviour to attain a goal not strictly legitimate within ones' organisational role	
.. include power attainment Ψ using power and other resources to obtain a preferred outcome in a situation where there is uncertainty about choices	**concealment of motives** Ψ disguising one's motive is a useful means of avoiding potential resistance	

(Fig 1 Adapted from Drory and Romm 1990)

The focus groups that contributed to the research at Roffey identified similar ideas about organisational politics, considering that it related to influencing, to covert agendas, to positional power and manipulation. While the effect of politics can be detrimental to the organisation because of the element of non-sanctioned goals, many of the commentators see it as a natural component of organisational life. Holbeche suggests that organisational politics are only bad when individuals succeed at the expense of others in a way damaging to the organisation's interests – or to individuals themselves. Politicking for non-sanctioned goals may be a means by which organisational goals are – inadvertently – achieved.

For the OD practitioner who does not wish to appear to be away with the fairies, identifying organisational politics must be key to understanding motivations and behaviours especially in relation to resistance or support for change. In supporting individuals at work this can involve helping them see the motivations and goals of themselves and others and develop a healthy approach to political skills like networking and identifying win-win strategies with others:

Acceptable approaches to politicking for the OD Practitioner: using politics to achieve change, coaching political skills in others etc.

✔ Set the agenda by being clear about what you want, giving recognition to the concerns of key others and use 'attracting' rather than 'arm-twisting' influencing styles.

✔ Map the political terrain by determining the most effective routes of communication and the key agents of political influence, Analyse the possibilities for support and anticipate the strategies opponents are likely to use

✔ Build networks and coalition – formal power is seldom enough to get things done. Identify who can help and develop a relationship with them

✔ Build a power base… and power comes through many routes: how much can you reward or coerce, your reputation, your formal position, your expert power, your access to information, control of resources

✔ Use ethical bargaining and negotiation

    ✔ separate the people from the problem

    ✔ focus on interests not positions

    ✔ search together for creative options

    ✔ establish objective criteria for the solutions

(Adapted from Holbeche 2002)

And yet, what lies behind political behaviour?

3. The Black Hole: the unconscious

A group of consultants from different organisations and nationalities are engaged to work with a delegation of leaders from Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia. They accompany the delegates to a neutral venue in Sweden where they will meet for three days. The consultants are prepared for significant conflict between the delegates, reflecting strife in the old Yugoslavia and the profound religious and cultural divides.

Two days in and the delegates are apparently working collaboratively. Between the consultants however there is open warfare.

The vignette above comes from an independent consultant, who was one of the warring colleagues. He made sense of these events by reference to that part of the human psyche that is usually 'in the dark' from our conscious selves. The unconscious is like a black hole without physical substance that exerts a powerful influence on anything in its sphere. Based on Freud's original thinking, the unconscious of each individual is a repository of desires and impulses that the maturing child has learned to control. The process of learning to cope with these raw wishes is a dynamic one that gives shape to the individual's personality. To keep these hidden impulses in check, an individual may unknowingly use a range of defence mechanisms.

Building on Freud's work, Melanie Klein and her followers describe how the ego is formed as the infant develops defence mechanisms against anxiety about death or annihilation. These may then be reproduced in the adult as a defence against anxiety and help shape our relationships as individuals and in groups. Whether repressed sexuality as was central to Freud, or fear of annihilation lie at the heart of unconscious, the defence mechanisms associated with reducing anxiety or controlling unacceptable impulses are familiar to most of us.

In the example above, the consultant understood the conflict among the professional as an example of the defence mechanisms of projective identification. He believed that the delegates were mindful of their roles and responsibility to find solutions at home. This did not of course lessen the differences between them, nor the hatred and mistrust they probably felt. They – undoubtedly unconsciously – had split the professional duties and laudable aims of their meeting off from their hostile feelings and projected those feelings onto the group of consultants around them. When the consultants discussed this interpretation among themselves they were able to resolve the conflict they felt to each other, and address the delegates at a different level; exposing and acknowledging the dislike and suspicion between them and by this releasing energy for the real task they had met for.

The example shows how psychodynamic approaches to organisations centre on the idea that apparently rational behaviour hides feelings, concerns or forces of which the players are unaware.

Defence mechanisms in individuals may become patent in a variety of ways, such as resistance to change when on all logical counts the change would appear to be beneficial and interpersonal hostility that is disproportionate to any obvious difference. Defence mechanisms are manifest not only in relations between individuals or groups but at the wider level of the organisation.

Thoughts about the unconscious for OD practitioners.

With instinct and training; develop the ability to hear the music behind the words spoken.

Consider unconscious motives when behaviour doesn't match expectations.

Learn to listen to your feelings, which can be a mirror of what is happening to others or an indication that someone is projecting those feelings on to you.

Weigh up the consequences of surfacing something against the effects of not doing so

Identify the issues you find yourself reluctant to discuss

Identify the issues others seem reluctant to

During the OPEC crisis in the 1970's, imported cars from Asia that were smaller and used less fuel threatened the previously secure American automobile market. The Americans responded with an attempt to defend itself and 'fight' against the enemy through import quotas and legislation rather than tackle the real challenge cars from Asia were presenting in terms of their greater understanding and response to the market conditions of potential fuel shortages.

(Adapted from Morgan 1996)

Understanding the powerful effect of unconscious processes can unlock situations where dysfunctional behaviour is embedded in organisations, particularly during periods of uncertainty, instability or recession when teams or divisions react to anxiety by regression. Bion (1961) noted how at such times, groups turn their focus away from the task in hand, just when application may be most needed. and are characterised more by the quality of their relationships. He describes three types of basic assumption group (*dependency, pairing, fight-flight)* where the members appear to share some common belief from which their feelings stemmed. Each will have a 'leader', but this may be an idea or an object rather than an individual and in the pairing group will be non-existent and an expression of hope. When the group feels helpless it may seek support from outside (*'dependency'*), often by becoming dependent upon a designated leader or by focusing back on some symbol of a successful past. Other groups may manifest an air of hopefulness or anticipation ('*pairing'*). To sustain these feelings, the group will look towards an unborn leader, a Messiah who must never arrive but who represents the hope of saving the group from the feelings of destructiveness or despair that lie at the opposite pole from the expressed expectation in the group. When fearful or aggressive, a group may try to avoid something by *fight or flight,* as in the example of the US car industry given above. The leader of a fight-flight group will be an individual whose leadership offers the opportunity for either aggression or escape; if it does not, he will be ignored. In each of these basic assumption group responses, the group becomes deflected from taking action that may resolve the task.

than demonstrate a constructive approach to the work agenda it faces?

Working with them

Develop the detachment and ability to detect group dynamics beneath the content. Basic assumption processes themselves can be very hidden and hard to perceive amidst a lot of deflection such as jovial chitchat and apparent rather than real attention to the task.

In this model the practitioner strives to remain distant the group – in it but not part of it.

Psychoanalytic concepts identifying different styles of neurotic behaviour, that is behaviour that is designed to reduce anxiety, have been applied to whole organisations. Kets de Vries and Miller (1984) distinguished the characteristics, motives, fantasies and dangers of five major neurotic behaviour styles: the paranoid, compulsive, dramatic, depressive and schizoid and related these to common types of organization function and dysfunction. For example, the compulsive style would mark an organization that had control as its major fantasy. This would be the company obsessed with perfectionism, ritual and rigid, extensive control mechanisms for internal monitoring. Relationships too are understood in terms of dominance and submission. Control is more important than human relationships so there would be hierarchical, centralized and formalised systems. The structure and strategy will be aimed at reducing uncertainty and avoiding the unfamiliar. The organization is unlikely to be able to adapt and will hold firmly to familiar strategies that become outdated in changing environments.

4. Where the Wild Things Are: the Jungian shadow.

Despite predictions that it would thrive in the 1980's, General Motors (GM) showed few signs of renewed life. It appeared to sacrifice quality and manufacturing excellence in favour of focus on financial control.

In a joint venture with Toyota, GM placed sixteen of its high potential managers in the Toyota plant at Fremont to learn how the Japanese manufacture cars. Under Japanese management the plant that had once ranked the worse in GM for quality achieved productivity three times the best GM work even though this was a low-tech plant.

Despite the obvious lessons from a former GM plant with former GM employees, GM acted to suppress the information and learning Fremont could provide. The sixteen GM managers could see that the secret was the way Toyota worked with people, but they were dispersed within the Company to plants where there would be little opportunity for reform or allowed to work as consultants to other plants, which in GM would reduce their likely impact.

Adaptation of the Toyota low tech, people focused formula was a threat to the collective identify and deeply etched social rules of the hierarchical General Motors.

(Adapted from Pascale, 1990)

The work of another psychoanalyst, Jung, has become particularly influential in organisational development through the type indicator work of Myers and Briggs. Jung described humans as relating to the world through a persona such as the caring doctor or the efficient businessman. This is the civilized mask we wear and through which we largely interact with the world and which to some degree is required of us. The persona is collective in that the sense that it can equally be worn by others fulfilling the same role. People who do not develop a persona are likely to find it difficult to establish themselves in the world; overly rigid adherence to a persona may lead to inflexibility or appearing cold, impersonal, and unreal. In shadow are the behaviours, feelings and impulses the persona does not express, the Mr. Hyde, the Soames man-of-affairs who despises Jolyon Forsythe for the creativity and originality that his own persona of materialist pillar of the establishment will not permit him to express.

For General Motors with its corporate persona of an elitist and finance driven company, the values and approach of Toyota represented very elements that contradicted its traditional values and would want to suppress.

> A dominant electronics company who had seen their cost advantage eroded appointed a new regional manager with energy, the ability to delegate and people skills. They viewed him as capable of managing the strategic priorities of the organization while retaining the loyalty and dedication of staff.
>
> He was a man very in touch with his core values of respect for the individual, whatever their status and wanted to be a role model for those who, like him, came from underprivileged backgrounds. Among his drivers, which he found harder to describe, he wanted to be seen as competent, be well respected, he wanted to succeed as failure would increase a sense of vulnerability and success for himself, his family and community was important.
>
> He acknowledged that he could be dogmatic and was conflict averse. Though he strove for collaborative relationships he was uncomfortable with negative emotional display. As months went by, he worked with the tension between how he wanted things to be and reality. He wanted the pace of change to speed up, for staff to respond quickly to initiatives because they understood the risk to the organization, and believed they would despite the fact their colleagues were being laid off. He seemed to separate strategic thinking from operational realities   His personal issue of being conflict averse and yet dogmatic were mirrored by the organisational culture that portrayed itself as collaborative, but prohibited discussion of how power and decisions were really negotiated. In the shadow of his overt values of empowerment and collaboration lay control and a dampening of individual difference.
>
> (Adapted from Briskin 1996)

The part we play in society is to some degree influenced by our personality. Jung's idea was that people use different processes for taking in information about the world and making judgements. Both perceiving and judging are each done in one of two different ways. Jung, and later Myers and Briggs believe that type is inborn, like right or left-handedness. People tend to find some ways of taking in information about the world and acting upon it easier and more effective than others, so they use them more become more adept at them. In this understanding of personality type, the shadow side is the *product* of the least developed or inferior functions. People do not intentionally use their shadow side to achieve their conscious goals as through choice they will use those they are best at. However, when someone is perhaps for reasons of stress, tiredness, or drunkenness not at their best or most controlled the inferior functions may emerge. The effect of the shadow can be negative, in that the usual work is not up to standard, or differs unexpectedly from what is

expected and may be terrifying to the individual who has repressed these aspects with great severity.

The appearance of the shadow can provide valuable insight into personality, throwing light on aspects of ourselves that form just as much a part of us as our more familiar strengths. With practice, we can learn to flex these functions and increase our overall repertoire. How we act in a crisis or at times of stress can tell us a lot about our strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes we are at our best when our way is blocked and we have to draw on unfamiliar characteristics. Listening to the shadow voice that irreverently mocks our ideals and values allows us to test our conscious viewpoint and find its flaws, allowing for a more solid and real basis to emerge.

Key to this is the willingness not to split good from bad, but to see the good within the bad and bad within the good. The effects of an unacknowledged shadow can show up as loss of meaning, dispirited morale, even sabotage and can reveal the gap between the espoused values of a person or organisation and those they in fact enact. Only when we can accept our shadow can we enter a full relationship with ourselves and only with that deep awareness can we understand rather than dismiss or push away that which we might fear or dislike.

Thoughts on the shadow

Spotting the Shadow

Is someone behaving like a caricature of himself or herself, showing exaggerated behaviour. Do they appear childish and touchy? Are they seeing things and making judgements in a way that is very categorical and black and white? Look at their psychological type using Myers-Briggs: the contents of the shadow, those aspects someone doesn't want to acknowledge about themselves is likely to be expressed through the form of their least developed or inferior function.

6. Heart of Darkness: Complexity

Both the psychological and political approaches to understanding organisations see the dark side as not all bad. In fact, it is seen as part of the whole, a source of insight and balance. But, for those whose practice is based on complexity, working with the shadow side in organisations is not just advisable or astute, it is essential as it is the very source of change and dynamism within a system.

For authors like Stacey (1996), it is through the shadow side that self-organizing processes that lead to unpredictable change occur. He describes the shadow system as "the complex web of interactions in which social, covert political and psychodynamic systems co-exist *in tension* with the legitimate system" (my emphasis)

Organisations existing in a state of bounded instability (bounded because over time there are patterns and unstable because they change) can go through spontaneous change. An organization is a set of intentionally designed network of interactions, which would include its mission statement, structure, strategy, policy and process. At the same time, through the interaction of people in the legitimate system, self-organizing or shadow processes are simultaneously and spontaneously created. The way we relate is organised by a series of

themes that give meaning to what we do and say. Legitimate themes in organisational life relate to the organisational ideology that sustains the current power roles. Ideology determines what is spoken about by making it acceptable to discuss some themes, e.g. the forecasted outturn. Organisational ideology also determines what cannot be spoken about, for example, whether the Finance Director's head is on the line. The interactions between different themes are described in the diagram below.
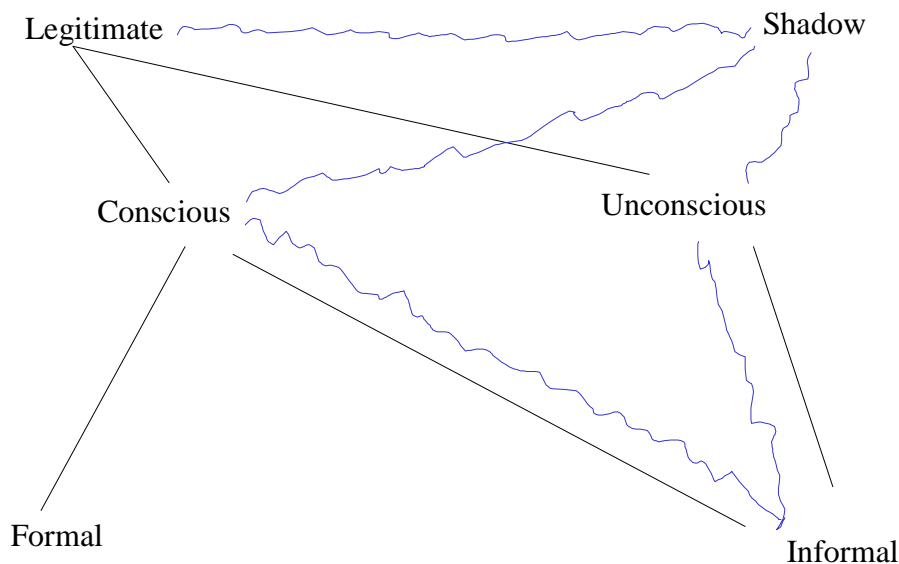

Fig. 2 Interconnections between different organising themes (from Stacey 2002)

The straight black lines identify interconnections between legitimate organising themes and the blue scribbled lines between shadow themes. All formal themes are also conscious and legitimate and might include the aspects we see at first glance at an organisation – the mission statement, budget plan, and performance systems. But, see how this diagram shows that they are not interacting in isolation from the shadow themes. Stacey illustrates the diagram with the example of a budget meeting. It may appear to be about a formal, conscious and legitimate theme: reducing the budget estimate, but will also include issues of interpersonal rivalries between managers of different departments and unconscious anxiety. The formal nature of the meeting: the reduction of the budget estimate will co-exist with the informal agenda of each manager wishing to maintain their own share of the budget as far as possible.

The shadow is not the opposite of the legitimate - it is not about the illegitimate or illegal. It is that area between these two where conversation occurs, usually in the form of chat, gossip, rumour, and private debate that does not conform to official ideology. It is here that you have conversations with the trusted work-colleague or the small group in whom you have confidence and freely say the sorts of things you would never raise in front of the CEO, where you gripe about how badly the meeting is chaired, what a mistake the latest board appointee was etc. Conversations in the shadow are deviant in that they are not about the main, official, legitimate business of the company, e.g. how we are going to hit next month's target. They can be destructive or heroic, negative or positive. Even though the legitimate themes determine what will be spoken about openly, and this will of course vary between organisations, they cannot determine what actually gets done. While the model locates unconscious process as exerting a huge influence, the difference between this and

psychoanalytic approaches is that in complexity, relationships, not the individual psyche, take centre stage. You do not therefore seek to surface an individual's unconscious motives because, in this relational model it would expose the individual to a risk of retaliation.

Complexity overturns the traditional OD idea that change can be programmed and organisations helped to shift from one position to a preferred new one because dynamic systems are neither rational nor predictable. The effect of this on OD consulting practice is radical. The role of the consultant becomes that of holding open a space for spontaneous conversation to occur, resisting efforts to systematise ideas or projects, encouraging conflict rather than resolving it and accepting that the impact of this may not be what the employing company originally sought. Through questioning and interacting with all levels of the organisation, more often informally than formally, you encourage the subversion of the existing legitimate systems to promote change and therefore survival. The way the company evolves depends on interactions between all the networks, but what is key is that, like systems in nature, an organisation can only produce emergent and unpredictable novelty when it is in 'edge of chaos' conditions.

Shaw (1997) describes consulting from this perspective. The approach of leaving things open, taking the risk and going with the flow appealed to the CEO of a local authority who could see that his organisation had become too stale and bureaucratic to respond to the existing challenges that existed for it. Interestingly, Shaw and her colleagues were contracted not through the formal tendering process but through the shadow process of pulling on networks when the CEO was disappointed with the results of the official process.

The consultants worked mainly in the shadow side of the organisation, participating in the development of new connections between people around the theme of change, but also interacting with the formal groups set up for the same purpose. Gradually, people in the organisation took on the role of holding open the space for meeting about change. Out of the organisation emerged a play which illustrated through drama how the constraints and paradoxes of communication within the organization.

Two years on, the organisation was still in the middle of change and perception of whether the organisation had moved on depended on the perspective of different individuals. So what? Was it worth it? It would depend on who you spoke to and your expectation of change, but is this any different from the results of traditional programmed approaches?

What you <u>don't</u> do when consulting from one complexity perspective

✗ work towards a planned goal
✗ guide conversation towards an aspired future
✗ try to orchestrate the experience of participant's into a collective journey or create any kind of global whole system
✗ try to transcend or resolve conflict or paradox
✗ stand outside or beyond those you are working with
✗ have political allegiance to those who employed you, or any group within the workplace
✗ try to improve things or work 'for the good'
✗ draw on either the past or a desired future

- ✗ have awaydays or other forms of engineered conversation
- ✗ assume any benign universal motifs of human behaviour
- ✗ assume any identifiable patterns that may be used to predict the future
- ✗ imagine that rational, self-conscious reflection undertaken co-operatively can always improve organisations
- ✗ aim to close the gap or reconcile the legitimate and shadow side of an organisation.

Adapted from Shaw 1997 and Shaw 2002

7. Conclusion: Black Magic.

Through these different takes on the shadow some key themes emerge.

First is the essential nature of the shadow. Without the dark there cannot be light. The existence of our ego is dependent upon our unconscious. This is beautifully evoked in Phillip Pullman's *Dark Materials trilogy*. In one of many worlds the soul, essence or daemon of each individual exists as a visible, interacting animal whose form reflects the nature of the individual. Daemons of children change their form according to the mood of the child, until around puberty when they settle into their final shape. The daemon of Lyra, the courageous and street-wise heroine becomes a wildcat when she feels threatened, and an ermine when she needs comfort. When irritated by her, he threatens to settle as a flea in his final form! A horrific part of the narrative describes how some adults experiment with severing daemons from children, extinguishing the daemons and condemning the child to a zombie-like half-life.

Organisations without any form of politics are unreal, unimaginable and would if they could exist be very stale, like a play with no villain or a soap with no occasional disaster. In complexity, the continued existence of the legitimate system requires the shadow system to help it evolve. Organisations that settle into a state of stable equilibrium will stagnate and fail as they will continue to repeat the mistakes of the past. The conversations within them become repetitive and predictable.

Second is the striking creative force of the shadow. We would not develop our sense of self without the effort of learning to control our raw impulses. The emergence of our shadows can propel us to a greater breadth of character or possibility and point to areas where with fuller development more could be achieved. Through developing political nous our performance and potential at work can be enormously enhanced and dynamism injected into an organisation. The effort of surfacing the as yet unknown through interaction and conversation creates and propels an organisation within the terms of complexity.

Thirdly, all the approaches argue against taking organisational reality for granted and encourage us to deconstruct the apparent reality to understand it and, complexity excluded, to bring about change. Importantly, deconstructing the apparent reality allows the suppressed voices of organisations through, rather in the way that deconstructing the apparent objectivity of science has allowed the flourishing of alternative ways of thinking.

If we don't acknowledge and work with the shadow we risk magnifying and empowering the negative. Darkness unexplained is far more terrifying than the enemy we know. In the film *Assault on Precinct 13*, a father seeing his child shot for no motive as he buys an ice cream himself fires on the assassin and takes refuge in a run-down police station. Forces gather outside and lay siege to the station, making multiple attacks throughout the night. They are not identified. No individual is visible. Like the Indians in the cowboy films of the fifties and sixties, we have no insight into their culture, affiliation, or their minds. The handful of people remaining at daybreak comes through not because of heroic policeman, but through the leadership of a convict. The film plays on the theme of darkness and the unseen, unknowable enemy to build extraordinary tension.

Just as organisations that acknowledge and allow expression of the negative are likely to survive and grow, development approaches that work with the shadow rather than ignore or seek to repress it are likely to flourish. The apparent irrationality of the dark side should not dissuade us from examining it.

Approaches to organisational development that do not acknowledge what individuals experience as the reality of organisational life, back-stabbing, neurosis, personal conflict and all, will be seen as peripheral and disconnected. It may not be neat, predictable, but in the

shadow lies life and energy. If we can't explore our personal shadow we are likely to become highly threatened by the organisational shadow. Paraphrasing Jung, the question is not how we ignore or repress the dark side. Rather, as Luke Skywalker eventually manages, it is how we recognise it and learn to live with and learn from it without enduring a succession of disasters.

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