

## **As the Source of Creation: Light and Shadow —Why CONNECTEDkind Needs Shadow—**

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Every CONNECTEDkind (hereafter, “CK”) droplet contains a shadow. Why must a dark shadow always dwell beside fallen leaves and petals that are beautiful enough on their own?

What if shadows vanished from the world? Or what if shadows separated and became independent? Authors like Chamisso, Andersen, and Fujiko F. Fujio have woven tales worldwide using this very question as their motif. Gradually, the protagonist's shadow overtakes the protagonist themselves, threatening to take control. A perilous moment arrives where the world itself could be turned upside down. Such tales reveal that shadows have long been feared, yet simultaneously possess an irresistible power and source of transformation. Stories where shadows, thought banished, inevitably return to exact revenge, motifs of the conflict between light and shadow, are repeatedly depicted and told. They still seem to pulse strongly in works like “Attack on Titan”.

A world where everything is uniformly brightly lit, devoid of ambiguity or shadow, might seem ideal at first glance. Yet, such a world would simultaneously lose its depth, its three-dimensionality, its richness. A world of light alone would become suffocatingly flat and fragile. Light stripped of shadow ceases to be light.

Psychologist Hayao Kawai, Japan's first Jungian analyst, emphasized the importance of “shadow awareness” through encounters with different cultures. He stated that engaging with one's shadow carries risks, yet it is precisely there that the depth of human existence resides. I believe the CK activity is precisely a space to experience this “encounter between light and shadow” not through words, but through color and form. The shadow floating within the droplet reveals to the viewer the unconscious fluctuations, the self buried deep within the heart that one avoided seeing, the self one turned away from, the roughness, the bitterness, even the ugly things. These too are, fundamentally, an important part of us.

Haruki Murakami, a close friend of Hayao Kawai, after reading Andersen's “The Shadow,” stated that confronting one's shadow is not just an individual task, but applies equally to society and nations.

“Just as all people have shadows, every society and nation, too, has shadows. [...] At times we tend to avert our eyes from the shadow, those negative parts. Or else try to forcibly eliminate those aspects. Because people want to avoid, as much as possible, looking at their own dark sides, their negative qualities. But in order for a statue to appear solid and three-dimensional, you need to have shadows. Do away with shadows and all you end up with is a flat illusion.” (Murakami:2017)

Animals often appear in the shadow world. CK's works frequently feature birds, snakes, witches, clowns, and fairies—entities that freely traverse the space between light and darkness as tricksters. Within humanity's darker aspects lie instinctual, animalistic impulses. I believe CK's motifs summon these beings to help us reconnect with the “wildness” slumbering within our unconscious. There, truths beyond the grasp of order and reason breathe life. Tricksters symbolize free movement, transformation, the extraordinary, and fluidity. Kawai states that when one seeks to live life creatively, it is vital not to lose touch with the trickster within one's heart; losing this clownish quality leads to a lack of resilience and becomes fraught with danger. Perhaps, without realizing it, taming and suppressing the trickster might become commonplace within school life or family life. Modern people living disconnected from nature likely face this issue to some degree. However, through CK, it might be possible to reunite with the trickster dwelling within oneself, thanks to the shadow.

Jungian analyst James Hollis also offers an intriguing perspective on the shadow. According to him, the shadow itself is not inherently evil. He states that within the shadow lie positive aspects such as creativity, healing, expanded consciousness, and the restoration of the world. Nevertheless, the shadow is an accumulation of what we have ignored within ourselves. And the more we ignore it, the more it manifests from the outside. When an individual's shadow connects with the collective shadow, it can even manifest as social violence, discrimination, and exclusion. That is precisely why confronting the shadow is the beginning of healing and creation, the first step toward repairing the world. Hollis states, “You cannot experience healing until you can love the places you cannot love,” and that “a life that does not engage with the shadow is even more troublesome.” Considering this, CK's work—engaging with the shadow to address wound healing and transformation—can also be seen as a preventive activity from a well-being perspective. It helps avert situations where life and society become even more troublesome through this challenging confrontation with the shadow.

The expressions created within CK are a rare practice that works with the “shadows” we tend to forget in daily life. There, we encounter the things that inevitably accompany light—the things that don't fit our intentions, that we cannot control, that our consciousness cannot fully

grasp. At times, they may feel unpleasant or intrusive. When we perceive these shadows as “annoying” or “troublesome,” we are unconsciously touching upon the pain and wounds within ourselves. And that feeling becomes the beginning of “being oneself.”

If we could gently care for those shadows we hated, didn't want to see—inefficient, unbeautiful, not the right answer—it might allow us to forgive and accept a little of the self we don't want to see, and take us somewhere different. Some might realize that by caring for the shadows, it is actually ourselves who are being cared for. Here, putting it into words isn't important.

In today's educational settings, where “verbalization” and the ‘visualization’ of effort's results are demanded, actions like “entrusting,” “letting go,” and “giving up” become less visible. Moreover, the emphasis on the quantity of verbalizable knowledge, response speed, and accuracy isn't limited to education; it's equally prevalent in workplaces. In a world converging toward a single correct answer, the more one achieves, the more self-esteem may decline, while the desire for recognition grows disproportionately. Yet in CK, there are no right or wrong answers. That activity time is a time where verbalization isn't necessary, where hesitation and uncertainty are permitted—it is not time that can be measured, but time that has been lived.(Kairos). Surrendering to sensations that defy form, opening oneself to the flow of the unconscious—at that moment, a tiny death occurs deep within the heart, and rebirth begins.

During CK time, perhaps that sense of “surrender” and ‘openness’ quietly breathes. Living while embracing shadows. Living in a way that can only be done while embracing shadows. Savoring creations that could never have been reached without shadows. Enjoying that through sensation. The process we undergo toward “healing wounds” may be condensed within CK.

CK's droplets must contain shadows. Both light and shadow are equally valuable and indispensable to creation. And shadow is not a flaw. It is the root supporting the depth of existence, and depending on how the light falls, it can become far larger or smaller than the object itself. Rather than eliminating, separating, and finding comfort in the elusive, even troublesome shadow, by connecting, accepting, integrating, and confronting its elusiveness, the world recovers just a little bit of its wholeness and begins to breathe.

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[https://www.aozora.gr.jp/cards/000019/files/58861\\_72476.html](https://www.aozora.gr.jp/cards/000019/files/58861_72476.html) (2025/12/27)

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