

DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY



AND A NEW ETHIC

ERICH NEUMANN
FOREWORD BY C.G. JUNG

NEUMANN

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AND A NEW ETHIC



SHAMBHALA

Psychology

"[Neumann] argues his case with a boldness and passion well matched by his penetrating insights and thoughtfulness. I welcome this book as the first notable attempt to formulate the ethical problems raised by the discovery of the unconscious and to make them a subject of discussion."
—from the Foreword by C. G. Jung

The modern world has witnessed a dramatic breakthrough of the dark, negative forces of human nature. The "old ethic," which pursued an illusory perfection by repressing the dark side, has lost its power to deal with contemporary problems. Erich Neumann was convinced that the deadliest peril now confronting humanity lay in the "scapegoat" psychology associated with the old ethic. We are in the grip of this psychology when we project our own dark shadow onto an individual or group identified as our "enemy," failing to see it in ourselves. The only effective alternative to this dangerous shadow projection is shadow recognition, acknowledgment, and integration into the totality of the self. Wholeness, not perfection, is the goal of the new ethic.

Erich Neumann was a psychoanalyst who studied with C. G. Jung in Zurich. Trained in philosophy and medicine, he was also a poet and novelist. Dr. Neumann practiced analytical psychology in Tet Aviv from 1934 until his death in 1960. Among his other books are *The Child, The Great Mother*, and *The Origins and History of Consciousness*.

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CHAPTER IV

THE NEW ETHIC

We now have to consider the problematic situation and the moral crisis of the individual, and to understand the processes which, in his case, mark the transition to the new ethic. We must return to the relationship between the collective and the individual which we emphasised at the beginning, and to the connection between the problems of the collective and the fate of the individuals in whom these problems are exemplified.

The conflict or disease which compels a modern man to embark upon a course of depth psychology is very seldom of such a kind that a simple correction of the conscious attitude, a mere rearrangement of the given material along the lines of a new structural pattern, is sufficient to bring about a solution. In most cases it proves necessary to open up, and make available to consciousness, levels of the personality which had previously been beyond the range and span of its experience and were for that very reason termed "unconscious".

In former times, a crisis of this nature was experienced as a threat to the soul's salvation. For example, the commission of a grave sin was a matter of such importance to a man's consciousness that it threatened his entire existence, his "soul" and the innermost citadel of his life. Modern man, on the other hand, experiences his situation in the first place as nothing more than a crisis affecting his conscious mind and his ego. The conflict is interpreted as a breakdown, a defeat, a failure to deal with a specific situation or vital problem; but man

scarcely ever feels himself imperilled or challenged in the totality of his being. In most cases, he only feels that the integrity of his ego has been called in question, and he defends himself energetically against the realisation of the scope and range of his real problem.

The journey of depth psychology, which retraces the path between this situation and its origins in the background and underground recesses of the personality, always and inevitably leads to a severe disturbance of the ego and the world of consciousness. The reason is simple: in the course of this journey, the world of consciousness is confronted with the totality of the personality and with the boundless realm of the unconscious.¹

Whether a man approaches the work of depth psychology in the light of an experience which has already taught him that his view of the world, his moral code and his manner of life are unequal to the impact of the problems which beset him, or whether the inadequacy of his previous orientation is only revealed in the course of the analysis, the fact remains that a severe disturbance in his world of values is almost always to be expected at the outset of the journey of depth psychology.

Almost without exception, the psychic development of modern man begins with the moral problem and with his own reorientation, which is brought about by means of the assimilation of the shadow and the transformation of the persona.² We are describing this process in the terminology of the analytical psychology of C. G. Jung, since this gives the most completely differentiated account. It can, however, quite easily be transposed into the terminology of Adler and Freud—at least in its initial stages.

¹ We are concerned here, as always when we speak of the psychological journey, only with those people for whom the process of individuation is a necessity—that is to say, mainly with people in the second half of life whose adaptation to the collective has already been made.

² C. G. Jung, *The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious*, C.W. 7.

The moral problem raised by the journey of depth psychology is most clearly formulated in the concept of the "shadow personality". As Jung recognised, the zone of the shadow and the confrontation with this figure is to be found at the beginning of the psychological journey. This then leads through the whole hierarchy of the zones of the psyche, all of which must be duly experienced in any true development in depth.

The disillusioning effect of the encounter with one's own shadow, the unconscious negative part of the personality, is always to be found in cases where the ego has lived in identification with the persona and the collective values of the period. That is why this encounter is, as a rule, particularly severe and difficult for the extravert, since by nature he has less insight into his subjectivity than the introvert. The native self-illusion of the ego, which has more or less identified itself with everything good and fine, receives a severe shock, and the undermining of this position forms the essential content of the first phase of the analysis.

It is extraordinary to observe in how many cases this illusory attitude of the ego has been by no means destroyed by the crisis or neurosis which has led to the analysis. The absence of a "sense of sin" (that is, of a moral reaction to the shattering experience which has disrupted one's life) appears to be a characteristic of our own time.

In earlier periods, sickness or failure was experienced in terms of the categories of sin, guilt and punishment; this moral reaction, however, is generally alien to the consciousness (not the unconscious) of modern man. Nowadays the situation is thought of largely in terms of exposure to outside influences – other people, circumstances, the environment or heredity – in relation to which the personality is a "victim".

The popular causalistic conception of psycho-analysis, according to which certain very early childhood experiences are regarded as the "cause" of a later failure, plays very much into the hands of this attitude, and is in fact an expression of it.

The result is that in a crisis the ego feels itself innocent since it cannot identify itself in a really responsible way with the ego of early childhood.

In the encounter with the shadow, however, the ego falls out of its persona-identification with the values of the collective. The reductive analytical work of Freud and Adler went to great lengths to expose the shadow side of the human psyche, in all the starkness of its contrast to the illusory self-evaluation of the ego. The encounter with the "other side", the negative component, is marked by an abundance of dreams in which this "other" confronts the ego in such guises as the beggar or cripple, the outcast or bad man, the fool or ne'er-do-well, the despised or the insulted, the robber, the sick man, etc. etc.

But what shakes the individual to his foundations is the incapable necessity of recognising that the other side, in spite of its undoubted character of hostility and alienness to the ego, is a part of his own personality. The great and terrible doctrine of "That art thou", which runs like a leitmotif throughout depth psychology, first appears, on a painful and most discordant note, in the discovery of the shadow.

The individual is driven by his personal crisis into deep waters which he would usually never have entered if left to his own free will. The old idealised image of the ego has to go, and its place is shaken by a perilous insight into the ambiguity and many-sidedness of one's own nature.

A process in which the ego is compelled to recognise that it is evil and sick in mind, antisocial and a prey to neurotic suffering, ugly and narrow-minded – an analytical technique which punctures the inflation of the ego and obliges it to experience exactly how and where it is limited and one-sided, conditioned by its type, prejudiced and unfair – all this represents such a bitter form of self-encounter that one can readily understand the resistance that it arouses.

To be obliged to admit that one is infantile and maladjusted, miserable and ugly, a human animal related to the monkeys, a

sexual beast and a creature of the herd is in itself a shattering experience for any ego that has identified itself with the collective values. But the roots of the shadow problem go deeper still, and it becomes a matter of deadly earnest when the probe reaches right down to the sources of evil itself, where the personality experiences its relationship with the enemy of mankind, the drive to aggression and destruction, in the structure of its own being.

In the end, the individual is brought face to face with the necessity for "accepting" his own evil. To begin with, this statement may appear unintelligible; it is certainly true that its full significance can by no means be realised at the first glance. The act of the acceptance of evil should not be minimised or disguised by any attempt at relativisation which may try to reassure us by pretending that this evil which has to be accepted is not so bad, after all; and the situation is not made any easier by the fact that evil no longer appears in the form of a collectively recognised phenomenon.

"My" evil may not be an evil at all in my neighbour's eyes, and vice versa; it is precisely this that constitutes the moral difficulty of the situation. Group valuation and group responsibility cease at the point where no approval by the generally accepted standard can take away the ego's insight that it has acted in an evil manner, and where, on the other hand, no condemnation by the collective has either the power or the right any more to replace the ego's own orientation.

The differentiation of "my" evil from the general evil is an essential item of self-knowledge from which no-one who undertakes the journey of individuation is allowed to escape. But as the process of individuation unfolds, the ego's former drive towards perfection simultaneously disintegrates. The inflationary exaltation of the ego has to be sacrificed, and it becomes necessary for the ego to enter into some kind of gentleman's agreement with the shadow — a development which is diametrically opposed to the old ethic's ideal of absolutism and perfection.

This process of coming to terms with the shadow leads in fact to an apparent moral levelling-down of the personality. The recognition and acceptance of the shadow presupposes more than a mere willingness to look at one's dark brother — and then to return him to a state of suppression where he languishes like a prisoner in a gaol. It involves granting him freedom and a share in one's life. But the process of allowing the shadow to take part in one's life is only possible on a "deeper" moral level. The ego is obliged to step down from its pedestal and realise the state of individual, constitutional and historical imperfection which is its appointed fate.

The acceptance of one's own imperfection is an exceedingly difficult task. Each one of us, irrespective of his psychological type and sex, has an inferior function and a shadow; that is why we all find the assimilation of this side of the personality equally difficult.

If, in a dream, a hunchback springs over the hedge and flings himself at the dreamer's throat with the cry, "I too want a share in your life!" the violence and robberlike character of the shadow seems overstressed. But wherever the ego shows itself unwilling, the shadow will be driven to use violence; this means that violent contents, which are at first alien and unknown to ego-consciousness, will break through in the reaction which the ego experiences from the unconscious. In this case, the problem of the shadow and the moral conflict confront the ego in the disguised but aggressive form of the activation of a complex. The reduction of neurotic sickness by Freud and Adler to the instincts of sex or power is based precisely on the fact that the shadow breaks through in a symptom or complex.

It is a natural temptation to reject this kind of "acceptance of the negative" as a senseless, unnecessary or even dangerous process, and to maintain in the first place that the lowering of the ego's status brought about by the acknowledgement of the shadow is only permissible or necessary in exceptional "pathological" cases. Yet in fact, this lowering of the ego's status is

neither an arbitrary matter nor an isolated incident but an expression in individual terms of the collective situation of our culture. In contrast, say, to the Christian man of the Middle Ages or to ancient, Asian or primitive man, Western man is at present in a position where there is an actual collective lowering in the status of his ego which has to be accepted and assimilated. The breakthrough of the dark side into Western consciousness is, in fact, an irreversible process.

By the *breakthrough of the dark side* into Western consciousness we understand that whole complex of parallel developments which has led, in the course of the last hundred and fifty years, to the phenomenon of "darkness" becoming visible and problematic in widely different areas at the same time. This process is bound up with what we have described as the recollectivisation of Western culture, which has resulted in a reinforcement of collective phenomena and a clear precedence of collective over individual happenings.

The breakthrough of the dark side corresponds to a basic shift of the psychological centre of gravity in a downward direction, towards the earth, on such a scale as has never previously been experienced by the Christian world of the West. The discovery of the "ugliest man", of the unhappy, the evil and the primitive occupies a far larger part of the ground in the cultural life of our time than we normally realise.

This discovery of the primitive element in human nature is the decisive factor in the situation. The world of the primitives, of the dawn of mankind and the earliest stages of human history have now placed man in a new perspective against the background of the world and the cosmos; they have shown him the dark soil in which his roots are embedded and appear radically to have destroyed his godlike nature and to have unmasked his central position in the universe as an illusion.

Man's "conditioning by nature" – his heredity and constitution, the mass man and the instinctive substructure of the individual, the unconscious as a decisive determining factor –

all these elements, with their surprising unanimity and undeniably far-reaching repercussions on the status of the individual ego, seem to point in the same direction: the recognition of the dark side. Darwin's "proof" of man's kinship with the ape, Biblical criticism and the thesis which interprets spirit as an epiphenomenon of the economic process, Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, and Freud's *Future of an Illusion* – all these have contributed to the destruction of the old values. Secularisation, materialism, empiricism and relativism are the key concepts which exemplify this shift in the centre of gravity – particularly as contrasted with the Christian man of the Middle Ages and his orientation to the world.

In no previous epoch of human history has the dark side occupied the foreground of attention to such an extent as it does today. The sick, the psychopath and the psychotic, the degenerate and the cripple, those in need of care and attention, the abnormal and the criminal arouse the interest and sympathy of contemporary man as never before. Research workers and even State-run public institutions are beginning to concern themselves with such classes of people, often in a spirit of fascinated absorption which appears almost perverse when contrasted with the lack of interest shown in normal people and *their* misery.

In conformity with this general trend, ugliness, dissonance and evil are now forcing their way into art. The road which leads from Mozart via Beethoven to atonality in music and the corresponding processes of disintegration and transformation in literature and painting are expressions of the decline of the old order of life and values in the realm of aesthetics. This is by no means simply a question of the great revolutionaries such as Dostoevsky, in whose work man – sick, evil and abandoned – stands naked at the very heart of despair. The universal phenomenon of detective stories, crime films and thrillers belongs to the same uncanny context.

It would, of course, be an exaggeration to claim that no

previous ages have ever witnessed this side of human nature. The religions of redemption – Christianity among them – have always appealed to this element. But whereas previous ages regarded the depths of man's nature as evil and in need of redemption, and yet at the same rejected and banned them and sought to extrude them from the canon of values, today this side of life is the source of a deep, uncanny and perilous fascination. This fascination of modern man by the dark side "requires" something of him and should by no means be overlooked or explained away. Its darkness may be perilous, but it also contains the germs of any possible future development in the West – even though the manifestations of disaster and disintegration undoubtedly occupy the foreground in the initial stages.

Nowadays, Western man is aware that he is conditioned by biology, history, sociology and psychology; he realises his dependence on his own body, his dependence, too, on political and economic realities, and for this reason he is pervaded by a profound sense of the insecurity of his ideological and intellectual position. It is true that, at the level where he is an individual in possession of an ego, he is not always fully conscious of this dependency (in fact this is the real danger of the situation); yet this feeling pervades the whole atmosphere of his life and is the basis of his existential insecurity. The tyranny of the collective and the experience that his personal constitution is conditioned at every point undermines the position of the individual, and a mass psychology which denies the significance of individual personality in principle deprives the ego of its last vestige of support and self-confidence.

This is particularly liable to happen when the structure of the ego and the conscious mind is also experienced as dependent on a psychological unconscious which at every point and in every case proves its overwhelming superiority to the ego. With a few heroic exceptions, however, individual man in the West never became personally conscious of this breakthrough of the dark side until the advent of depth psychology. On the contrary,

the Western inflation of the ego – that trend which has been so vehemently pursued by European civilisation since the time of the Renaissance – still colours the individual's philosophy of life. This means that the feeling or obscure intuition of an existential peril and insecurity coexists with the "certainty" of an ego which believes that it can do, know and organise everything and which rejoices in the motto, "Where there's a will there's a way". The polarisation of these opposite positions – the self-assurance of the ego on the one hand and the ever-increasing pressure of the dark side on the other – leads finally to a split in the personality of both the individual and his group.

This collective disorientation of modern man, especially when it remains unconscious and unassimilated – that is to say when it does not become a personal experience of the individual – gives rise to a series of dangerous reactions which have decisively moulded the general ethos of our age and the personal lives of our contemporaries.

Two main types of reaction can be distinguished, and, by a typical quirk of the psyche, both may occur jointly in the same individual.

The first reaction is deflationary and collectivist, and devalues both the individual and the ego. The second is inflationary and individualistic. Unlike the first, the second reaction overestimates and overvalues the individual and the ego. Both represent unconscious attempts to escape from the real problem. Common to both is the desire to conceal the fact that a new ethical attitude is called for to deal with the conflicts by which modern man is oppressed.

The first response to the disintegration of the old value-system is nihilistic and negativistic; it includes a variety of different ways in which human self-respect can be defeated. The ideal of the blond beast, the principle that "consciousness is a disaster"¹, and the ideology of blood and soil are variants of this fatal reaction. Common to them all is the "knowledge"

¹ Seidel, *Beunruhigung als Verhängnis*.

that the value-system of consciousness is bogus and the hostility to consciousness which is the reaction to this "insight". If the value-system of consciousness is an illusion, it follows that renewal through consciousness is impossible and that the attempt to achieve it must be abandoned. The result is an identification of the ego with collective anti-values which contrasts with the ego-identification with collective values that was typical of the old ethic.

Consciousness and knowledge then become pseudo-values; and whereas only recently (for example, in the psychology of Alfred Adler) the unconscious was regarded as a trick (that is an appendage) of consciousness, the nihilistic reaction reduces consciousness in its turn to a trick of the unconscious. Consciousness is now seen simply as a means for the realisation of unconscious instinctive forces, and spirit and knowledge are regarded as no more than instruments in the hands of various instinctive constellations belonging to the group or to individuals within it.

This nihilistic reaction is a radical form of the tendency to materialism, which is yet another symptom of the breakthrough of the dark side in the Western world. The various forms of materialism in philosophy also result in a reduction and deflation of human self-respect, since consciousness and spirit and the realm of values are construed as epiphenomena of a substructure belonging to a different order. Just as, in sociology, values are regarded as mere ideologies and superstructures of "real" basic conditions, so, in psycho-analysis, cultural phenomena are interpreted as mere "unreal" compromise products of a psychic structure which is basically unconscious.

In either case, a pessimistic and deflationary philosophy of this kind is an expression of the deep disturbance of consciousness brought about by the experience of the shadow side of life. But whereas the Judaeo-Christian ethic experienced the opposites in a dualistic manner, by suffering, or by combating the "other" side, the nihilistic reaction is negatively monistic — that

is to say, it reduces the principle of the opposites to a single (e.g. materialistic) basic structure and explains the spiritual side as an epiphenomenon.

The other, inflationary mode of reaction is also monistic — but in this case the value-sign is reversed. It could be described as pleromatic mysticism. It is a view of the world which has attracted a great deal of attention in our own time. It involves an attempt to disregard reality in its character of existent givenness. It is "pleromatic" in the sense that the pleroma, the fullness of the divine nature as it was before the world began, when the Godhead had not yet entered into the world, is regarded as the "real" state of the world. It is mystical because relationship or relatedness with the pleroma can only be achieved in a mystical or illusory manner.

The pleromatic mystical reaction is generally to be found in conjunction with eschatological elements — that is to say, with tendencies towards a Utopian anticipation of a state of redemption which in the history of religion has normally been looked forward to as coming at the end of time. It contains remnants of the old ethic, but the driving force is provided by an eschatological psychology of achieved redemption which believes that it has already attained a state of being beyond the opposites. The ego attempts to evade the problem of the darkness and the shadow side of the world and of man in an illusory way by means of a mystical, inflationary expansion of the individual, who equates himself with the pleroma, the primal spirit, the Godhead, etc., soars into the realm of the infinite and the absolute and loses his identity in the process. A classic contemporary example of this attitude is provided by Christian Science, which simply denies the existence of the negative — but something very similar is to be found in many mystical, sectarian and political movements.

The pleromatic and the nihilistic attitudes to the shadow problem of modern man are often found in conjunction with each other, a liaison which we find prefigured in many Gnostic

sects. The pleromatic mystical tendency is most clearly exemplified in those collectivistic movements which claim to provide redemption, and which actually do so in a certain sense, since they regard the individual as pleromatically fulfilled and in so doing raise him to a state of achieved redemption. In this way the individual is recollectivised – that is to say, reduced once again to a collective component of the mass; at the same time, however, he is redeemed from his isolation, since his individual responsibility is taken away from him. The liberation of the individual from his moral problems and the assumption of responsibility by the collective is the real basis for the redemptive character of all collectivistic movements. Nowadays, this redemptive character generally takes a political form, but it is not difficult to see how, in this case, politics is the ‘opium of the people’, and, in fact, a substitute for religion.

Faith in the dogma, the leader and the redeemer contains such a strong component of pleromatic fulfilment that the moral problem appears to be solved – and this leads, by way of the recollectivisation and disintegration of individual consciousness, to the moral insanity of the collective as the ultimate result of the pleromatic mystical reaction.

This phenomenon is most clearly exemplified in National Socialism, but political fanaticism and collectivisation produce similar phenomena wherever they appear. The leader-figure is identified with the redeemer-figure, the mana-personality of the collective unconscious,¹ and his teaching is imposed as a doctrine of salvation. Once this doctrine is accepted, the function of individual consciousness as the authority for the decision of moral questions is replaced by the mana-personality, and the substitute redeemer-figure is identified with the primal spirit which transcends all moral values. As a result, human personality disintegrates, the shadow is forgotten, and the individual is reduced to a phantasm and driven into the arms of mental illness. This phenomenon is known to us from the psychology of

¹ C. G. Jung, *The Relations between the Ego and the Unconscious*, C.W.7.

religious mania, and in our own period a whole host of similar collective phenomena can only be understood along the same lines.

Both the nihilistic and the pleromatic reactions tend towards a monism in which the attempt is made to abolish the principle of the opposites that constellates the moral problem and to exalt one of the two poles to the status of an absolute. In the nihilistic reaction, the spiritual side is reduced to an epiphenomenon of matter; the pleromatic outlook, on the other hand, considers spirit to be the sole real existent and the material world to be its epiphenomenon, which can in fact be disregarded at will. From this view, the world becomes something very much like an error in perspective.

Finally, there is one more form of reaction to the insistent demands of the shadow problem which should perhaps be mentioned. This is the attempt to remain free of all moral values and to conceive of life in terms of behaviourism or libertinism or utilitarianism. It is an attempt to shut out the world of darkness once again, and, by so doing, to evade the inescapable crisis of consciousness which is involved in any real effort to take the problem of evil seriously.

This type of non-reaction usually appears in a mixed form – that is, compounded with the other attitudes. It tries to eliminate the moral problem by adopting a kind of ostrich policy towards evil, partly by reducing it to material terms and partly by projecting it on to other conditions. It is typical of this attitude, too, that man does not take evil upon himself as a problem – and yet in practice he still allows it the fullest freedom of operation.

The two flight-reactions to the shadow problem – the collectivistic and the individualistic-pleromatic-mystical – represent extreme attempts at identification with one member of the pair of opposites which make up the conflict – the mass and the elite. In collectivism, it is ego-consciousness and the world of values which are sacrificed; in the pleromatic mystical trend, it is mass man and the shadow.

Neither reaction is in fact able to abolish or resolve the reality of the shadow problem which modern man is required to deal with. Owing, however, to the instability of their protagonists, both the collectivist movement, with its tendency to nihilism, and its pleromatic counterpart, which is coloured, very often, by the illusions of pseudo-liberalism, can have extremely dangerous effects in the realm of politics and social life.

The analysis of individuals and of collective movements shows over and over again that both of these are contaminated with their polar opposites—that the collectivist may be a secret pleromatic mystic and the pleromatic a secret nihilist. This contamination, which may be understood in terms of the unconscious tendency to compensation, reinforces the instability of its victims and makes them, despite their apparent dogmatic certainty, an easy prey to counter-infection of any kind.

Owing to their condition of inner splitness, dogmatically one-sided individuals form an exceedingly insecure intermediate class, which breaks down, and always must break down, in any situation which involves genuine conflict and decision. The textbook example of such a breakdown is provided by the bourgeois class, which is numbered among the representatives of the old ethic, and (in Germany, for example) has a marked strain of pleromatic idealism in its outlook. The breakdown of this class—a phenomenon by no means confined to Germany, as the future will show—has always been an enigma. Their strong ethical will at the conscious level seemed to qualify the representatives of this class to be independent moral individuals and protagonists of the old ethic; unconsciously, however, they were in fact to a large extent in the grip of the opposite side, which they had repressed. One-sided individuals and groups of this type are by nature members of the fifth column, without being aware of the fact; actually they belong to the enemy camp of their own conscious ideology, because in them the shadow is more dynamically alive than the moral ego of the conscious system. In the hour of decision, people of this kind make a

complete volte-face and go over to the enemy camp. The pacts which they so often conclude with the enemy forces have their deepest motivation in their own real condition of inner splitness.

The instability of attitude which is caused by the presence of the counter-position in the unconscious is not confined to the average man, who, as a constituent member of the mass, makes up the following of all "movements"; it is also found—and this is even more dangerous—among so-called leading personalities such as educationists, teachers and politicians.

The incompetence of the politicians, which has become so cruelly and sanguinarily obvious to modern man, is essentially due to their human inadequacy—that is, to a moral undermining of their psychic structure which culminates in their total breakdown when faced with any real decision. To future ages, the fact that the leading politicians of our period were not required to pass a test of any kind to determine their human and moral qualifications will appear exactly as grotesque as it would seem to us today if a diphtheria-carrier were to be placed in charge of the children's ward in a hospital.

From the point of view of the new ethic, the moral inadequacy of a politician does not reside in the fact that on the conscious level he is not a morally acceptable personality—though there is no guarantee that he will be that, either! It is his total unconsciousness of the shadow and the illusory orientation of consciousness that accompanies this kind of unawareness which is the decisive—and, often enough, the fatally decisive—factor.

The only person who is morally acceptable in the eyes of the new ethic is the person who has accepted his shadow problem—the person, that is to say, who has become conscious of his own negative side. The danger which constantly threatens the human race and which has dominated history up to the present time arises out of the "untestedness" of leaders who may actually be men of integrity as understood by the old ethic, but whose unconscious and unheeded counter-reactions have generally

made more "history" than their conscious attitudes. It is precisely because we realise today that the unconscious is often, if not always, a more powerful determinant in the life of a man than his conscious attitude, his will and his intentions, that we can no longer pretend to be satisfied with a so-called "positive outlook" which is no more than a symptom of the conscious mind. Naturally, this process must not be reversed — and in fact it may well seem axiomatic that acceptance of the shadow cannot be brought about by identification with it. And yet, as the history of the breakthrough of the dark side in the West has taught us, reversals of the old ethic such as those exemplified by the devil-worshipping cults of the Middle Ages can occur and have actually made world history.

The new ethic rejects the hegemony of a partial structure of the personality, and postulates the total personality as the basis of ethical conduct. An ethic which is based on the shadow is just as one-sided as one that is guided solely by ego-values. It tends to suppression, blockage and the breakthrough of compensatory positive forces; but the instability of man's psychic structure is just as marked in an ethic of this kind as it was in the case of the old ethic. A negative, terroristic ethic of dictatorship, force and an opportunism which denies the dignity of the human individual is just as much a partial ethic as was its Judeo-Christian predecessor. The result is the same in either case, the only difference being that the part of the scapegoat has now to be played by what the old ethic regarded as positive values.

The new ethic is "total" in the sense that it is orientated towards wholeness — and towards two aspects of wholeness in particular. In the first place, it is no longer individualistic; it does not merely take into account the ethical situation of the individual, but also considers the effect which the individual's attitude will have upon the collective. In the second place, it is no longer a partial ethic of consciousness, but also includes within its reckoning the effect of the conscious attitude upon

the unconscious. In fact, responsibility now has to be carried by the totality of the personality, not simply by the ego as the centre of consciousness.

These two widenings of our ethical horizon are intimately connected. From the point of view of the external collective, the attention which now has to be paid to the shadow includes the primitive mass man in the scope of ethical responsibility; at the same time, from the point of view of the individual as seen from within, this corresponds to a responsible relationship with the primitive mass man who exists as an inner component in every personality.

The external collective with its archaic tendencies has its internal representative in the collective unconscious of each individual. The archaic tendencies and images of the collective unconscious which symbolise the world of instinct are the precipitate of the collective ancestral experience of man; they show us, in fact, the typical way in which he has always reacted and experienced life. But this same collective unconscious also rules the masses and finds its precipitate and expression in the mass phenomena of the external collective.

The new ethic was born under the ruling star of the fuller insight, deeper truth and clearer-sighted awareness of human nature as a whole which is the real achievement of depth psychology. From this point of view, the moral problem of the individual is constellated in the first place by the coexistence of ego and shadow, and the responsibility of the personality is extended so as to include the unconscious or at any rate the personal component of the unconscious, that part of it which contains the figure of the shadow.

Responsibility for the group presupposes a personality which has become conscious of its shadow problem, and which has come to grips with this problem with all the forces at its disposal. The individual must work through his own basic moral problem before he is in a position to play a responsible part in the collective. The realisation of one's own imperfection which is involved

in the acceptance of the shadow is a hard task in which the individual is required to free himself from the absolutism of his pleomorphic fixation as well as from his identification with collective values.

The "reduction" of the personality which is brought about by the acceptance of the shadow is only apparent. What is actually reduced is an illusory identification of the ego with the absolute — that is to say, an unreal and partial idealisation of the personality which is in any case torpedoed by its polar opposite — the reality and influence of the unconscious. The sacrifice of the absolute ideal of perfection which was taught by the old partial ethic most certainly does not lead to any kind of diminution in the value of humanity. The elimination of the negative effects of the splitting processes would in itself represent such an enormous gain in terms of actual human living that the new ethical demand for the acceptance of the negative would be justified by this alone.

It is for this reason that the accusation that the new ethic is derived from "the urge to make one's own life easier"¹ falls to the ground; equally false is the charge of opportunism and love of comfort, as contrasted with the radicalism and rigour of the old ethic. This ethical rigorism was never in fact extended beyond a partial ethic of consciousness; the very idea of an attempt to apply it to the total personality was unheard of. The dangers of rigorism, on the other hand, are enormous. Again and again in the course of history we find that the disastrous influence of criminal personalities is matched by that of only one other class of people — the radical idealists, dogmatists and absolutists. Nero and Cesare Borgia are in fact only rivalled by Torquemada and Robespierre.

The new ethic is based on an attempt to become conscious of both the positive and the negative forces in the human organism and to relate these forces consciously to the life of the individual and the community. The shadow who demands

¹ Karl Jaspers, *Man in the Modern Age*.

acceptance is the outcast of life. He is the individual form which the dark side of humanity takes on in me and for me, as a component of my own personality.

My own shadow side is a part and a representative of the shadow side of the whole human race; and if my shadow is anti-social and greedy, cruel and malicious, poor and miserable — if he approaches me in the form of a beggar, a negro or a wild beast — then my reconciliation with him will involve at the same time my reconciliation with the dark brother of the whole human race. This means that when I accept him and, in him, myself, I am also accepting, in his person, that whole component of the human race which — as my shadow — is "my neighbour".

Here the love of one's neighbour preached by Jesus of Nazareth becomes love of one's neighbour in the form of the thief¹ and the shadow. When restricted to a figure within the personality, this appears to be a paradoxical form of "self-love"; in contrast to the unselfish love preached by the Nazarene. Psychologically, however, love and acceptance of the shadow is the essential basis for the actual achievement of an ethical attitude towards the "Thou" who is outside me.

In the psychology of the scapegoat, the denial of the negative (and with it, that self-justification which is such a characteristic feature) leads directly to a denial of the love of one's neighbour. In contrast to the primitive Christian ethic of Jesus of Nazareth himself, the Christian ethic as we know it has never been successful in transcending this dichotomy; on principle, it has always held fast to a Gnostic dualistic conception of an upper and a lower man, a duality between this and the other world, both in man himself and in the universe.

It is only when I have experienced myself as dark (not as a sinner) that I shall be successful in accepting the dark ego in my neighbour; I realise my solidarity with him precisely because "I too am dark", not simply because "I too am light".

¹ There is a reference here to the penitent "thief" on the Cross — (Luke).

The self-experience involved in the journey of depth psychology (the first stage of which is the encounter with the shadow) makes man poorer in illusions but richer in insight and understanding; the enlargement of the personality brought about by contact with the shadow opens up a new channel of communication, not only with one's own inner depths but also with the dark side of the human race as a whole. The acceptance of the shadow involves a growth in depth into the ground of one's own being, and with the loss of the airy illusion of an ego-ideal, a new depth and rootedness and stability is born.

This living relationship with the shadow brings home to the ego its solidarity with the whole human species and its history as known in subjective experience, since it discovers within itself a host of prehistoric psychic structures in the form of drives, instincts, primeval images, symbols, archetypal ideas and primitive behaviour patterns.

This encounter makes us conscious of man's group psychology, and at the same time of the fundamental fact that the realm of the ego and of the conscious mind which differentiates people from each other only occupies a very small part of the whole vast universe of the psyche. That which is specifically human and individual only constitutes the topmost layer of the collective unconscious, which extends right down to the animal level. The efforts made by the conscious ego to cut itself adrift from this common foundation and to identify itself with so-called absolute values which are independent of earthly restrictions are therefore foolish and illusory.

The emergence of pagan elements and symbols in association with the shadow side (but by no means only in that context) is clear evidence of the historical connection which unites us with an earlier human psychic stratum underlying the Judeo-Christian ethical and religious culture of modern man.

When the ego realises its solidarity with the evil "ugliest man", the predatory man and the ape man in terror in the

jungle,¹ its stature is increased by the accession of a most vital factor, the lack of which has precipitated modern man into his present disastrous state of splinness and ego-isolation – and that is, a living relationship with nature and the earth.

But it is not our purpose here to discuss the positive and constructive elements in this deep layer of the unconscious, the elements which assist the growth of consciousness – though these are certainly of crucial importance for the future of the human race. Our sole concern is the encounter with that reality which – from the ego's point of view – is known as Evil.

Surprisingly enough, the analysis of individuals also reveals that the encounter and reconciliation with the shadow is in very many cases a *sine qua non* for the birth of a genuinely tolerant attitude towards other people, other groups and other forms and levels of culture.

We have in fact first to assimilate the primitive side of our own nature before we can arrive at a stable feeling of human solidarity and co-responsibility with the collective. Since the total ethic includes the shadow within the sphere of moral responsibility, it follows that the projection of this component will cease, and together with it the psychology of the scapegoat and the campaign of annihilation waged under the pretext of morality against evil in the person of one's neighbour; its place will be taken by a new approach no longer conditioned by the dubious penal and expiatory attitude of the old ethic.

The acceptance of the shadow is a part of that process of development in which – as we have said – a personality structure is created that unites the systems of the conscious mind and the unconscious. This enlargement of the personality is brought about in the first place by the assimilation and relating to consciousness of certain germinal unconscious contents which direct the conscious mind into new paths, and, secondly, by the

¹ To avoid misunderstanding, it should be noted that what we have here is a psychic image which appears in this form and is projected. The image corresponds to a psychological, not a zoological or anthropological fact.

incorporation and transformation of "negative" unconscious contents—that is to say, contents which appear to be hostile to the ego and the conscious mind.

We have learned from the experience of depth psychology that these contents are autonomous. The unconscious is made up of an abundance of unintegrated partial contents with separate tendencies of their own (the complexes discovered by Jung). These lead a split-off but exceedingly real and effective life of their own in the unconscious, beyond the control of ego-consciousness.

The life of both pathological and normal individuals and (to an even greater extent) the life of social groups is conditioned by the hidden effect of these autonomous unconscious contents. Apart from negative contents such as the shadow, a positive unconscious content such as, for example, an instinct or archetype can work its will in the life of an individual with a power all its own, while the ego remains completely unaware of the influence to which it is exposed.

The instability of a group or individual varies directly with the extent of the area occupied by unconscious contents and inversely with the scope of consciousness. This law is as valid in normal psychology as it is in the psychopathology of the individual or group. An example is the exceptionally high level of instability among primitives or in masses of people, where the influence of affect is notoriously strong.

Since, however, as we have repeatedly stressed, primitive and mass psychology are to be found deep-rooted in each individual, this law can be verified everywhere and in everyone. The instability, unpredictability and unaccountability of a given person increase in inverse ratio to the level of his consciousness and directly with the degree of activation of the zone of the autonomous unconscious contents. Apart from certain basic constitutional crises of development such as childhood or puberty, an activation of this kind can also occur (without conscious intention) in sickness, sleep or certain states of poison-

ing or intoxication; it can be consciously induced for religious or cultic purposes; or, alternatively, it can be brought about by some mass influence which recollectivises the individual and reduces him to the level of a primitive man.

In all these and similar situations the result is a disintegration of the personality. This means that the unity of the personality, which is normally represented by the ego, is dissolved, and a partial content of the unconscious, a complex—an activated instinctual constellation, for example—takes command and works its will independently of those trends in the conscious mind which had been recognised by the ego as guide-lines in the previous situation.

As an illustration of this kind of reduction of the personality, we have cited the case of inundation by the shadow, in which the rejected and repressed contents once more simply have their way.

To fulfil its function, the new ethic will have to make use of quite different methods, tendencies and attitudes than the old. The tension between the opposites which, in the form of dualism, was the distinguishing mark of the old ethic, can by no means be simply abolished and denied.

If, instead of suppressing and repressing the contents of the unconscious, the new ethic is to "accept" them and articulate them with the conscious mind, it will inevitably be faced with the task of their assimilation.

The incorporation of these contents into a greater totality, which is not the given totality of consciousness as it used to be, is the work of the process of individuation. In this process, contents which were previously split-off and autonomous are joined up to form parts of a comprehensive psychic structure which is connected with the ego and the conscious mind, and so receive a different meaning and value in the hierarchy.

Our purpose in this study is only to describe the basic principles and contents of the new ethic, not to illustrate these by means of case material. A detailed account of the transformation

of a negative unconscious content into a content of the conscious mind and of the way in which this alteration is brought about has been given elsewhere.¹

¹ Cf. C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, C.W.11; C. G. Jung, *The Integration of the Personality*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul) London, 1952; C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, C.W.12.

CHAPTER V

THE AIMS AND VALUES OF THE NEW ETHIC

The main function of the new ethic is to bring about a process of integration, and its first aim is to make the dissociated components, which are hostile to the individual's programme for living, capable of integration. The juxtaposition of opposites which makes up the totality of the world of experience can no longer be resolved by the victory of one side and the repression of the other, but only a synthesis of these opposites.

The ultimate aspiration of the old ethic was partition, differentiation and dichotomy, as formulated in the mythological projection of the Last Judgement under the image of the separation of the sheep from the goats, the good from the evil; the ideal of the new ethic, on the other hand, is the combination of the opposites in a unitary structure. Out of the multitude of conflicting forces, the plurality of the opposites, a structure has to be built which will combine these opposing forces, and in which the manifold diversity of the pairs of the opposites will be held together in the firm embrace of a supra-ordinated unity. The value of the structure which is finally achieved will be proportionate to the strength of the tension between the combined opposites and the number of the polar forces which enter into the new combination.¹

¹ The structure of wholeness which is achieved by the integration of the psychic components is the fulfilment of a basic tendency in the personality—centroversion—the development of which we have described