

## II

### MASS MAN AND THE PHENOMENA OF RECOLLECTIVIZATION

IN THE COURSE of Western development, the essentially positive process of emancipating the ego and consciousness from the tyranny of the unconscious has become negative. It has gone far beyond the division of conscious and unconscious into two systems and has brought about a schism between them; and, just as differentiation and specialization have degenerated into overspecialization, so this development has gone beyond the formation of individual personality and given rise to an atomized individualism. Whereas on the one hand we see ever larger groups of overindividualized persons, there are on the other hand ever larger masses of humanity who have detached themselves from the original situation of the primary group and entered into the historical process. Both these developments tend to lower the significance of the group as a unit composed of persons consciously or unconsciously bound together, and to exalt the mass as a conglomeration of unrelated individuals.

Now, while the clan, tribe, or village is as a rule a homogeneous group descended from a common origin, the city, office, or factory is a mass unit. The growth of these mass units at the cost of the group unit only intensifies the process of alienation from the unconscious. All emotional participations are broken down and personalized; that is, they exist only in a narrowly restricted personal sphere. As has long been observed, in the place of a group or a people there now appears a mass unit like the State, a purely nominal structure which, in the manner of a concept, comprises a variety of different things, but does not represent an idea that springs as a central image from a homogeneous

group. Romantic attempts to revalue or to reverse this development necessarily result in regressions, because they take no account of its forward tendency and misunderstand its connection with the historically positive evolution of the ego and consciousness.

Owing to the process of mass aggregation, the original group continues to exist only in the form of the family; but here too we can already discern a disintegrative tendency which increasingly restricts the effectiveness of the family group and assigns it a place only in childhood, or rather, only in infancy. The existence of the family, however, is of paramount importance for the preconscious and transpersonal psychology of the child.

In our culture there has been a steady disintegration of small groups and small nations, and hence an undermining of the psychological foundations of the group which expresses itself in mass-mindedness, in the atomization and conscious internationalization of the individual. One result of this expansion of consciousness is that, regardless of conflicting national ideologies, every modern consciousness is confronted with that of other nations and races and with other cultures, other economic patterns, religions, and systems of value. In this way the original group psychology and the cultural canon determining it, once taken for granted, become relativized and profoundly disturbed. Modern man's view of the world has changed to a degree that is still very far from having been digested psychologically. The long perspective of human history stretching back beyond prehistoric times into the animal kingdom, the rise of ethnology and comparative religion, social revolutions advancing all over the world towards the same goal, the recognition of primitive psychology and its connection with modern psychology<sup>1</sup>—behind all this we perceive the same fundamental driving force. The common human background and substratum whose scientific discovery as the collective unconscious we owe to Jung is beginning to manifest its universal workings in humanity itself. The picture that now emerges of a starry heaven of archetypal

<sup>1</sup> Aldrich, *The Primitive Mind and Modern Civilization*, pp. 48 f.

## APPENDICES

forces arching over humanity is, however, accompanied by the disappearance of those fragmentary constellations which in the canon of individual groups were regarded as the whole of heaven. Knowledge of other religions may lead to the experience of a common religious tendency at work in humanity, but it also relativizes every individual form of religion, for at root this is always conditioned by the psychological, historical, social, and racial soil of the group from which it sprang.

The global revolution which has seized upon modern man and in whose storm center we find ourselves today has, with its transvaluation of all values, led to a loss of orientation in the part and in the whole, and daily we have new and painful experience of its repercussions in the political life of the collective, as well as in the psychological life of the individual.

The cultural process leads to a schism between conscious and unconscious in a form which we described above as characteristic of development during the first half of life. The building up of the persona, and the adaptation to reality under the guidance of the superego as the court of conscience representing collective values, together with the help of suppression and repression, constellate the shadow and the anima and animus components in the unconscious.

This shadow side of the personality, however, owing to its contamination with the inferior, undeveloped archaic side, bears all the marks of the primitive psyche and thus stands in significant contrast to the original group man.

On this account we prefer to call the sub-man who dwells in us moderns the "mass man" rather than the "group man," because his psychology differs in essential respects from that of the latter. Although the genuine group man is for the most part unconscious, he nevertheless lives under the rule of controversion; he is a psychic whole in which powerful tendencies are at work, making for consciousness, individualization, and spiritual growth. We have followed these tendencies, and it will therefore be understandable if we now say that in spite of his unconsciousness, in spite of projections, emotionality, and so forth,

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the group man possesses enormously constructive, synthetic, and creative powers which manifest themselves in his culture, his society, his religion, art, customs, and even in what we call his superstitions.

The mass man lurking in the unconscious of the modern, on the other hand, is psychically a fragment, a part-personality which, when integrated, brings with it a considerable expansion of the personality, but is bound to have disastrous consequences if it acts autonomously.

This unconscious mass component is opposed to consciousness and the world of culture. It resists conscious development, is irrational and emotional, anti-individual and destructive. It corresponds mythologically to the negative aspect of the Great Mother—it is her murderous accomplice, the adversary and man-slaying boar. This negative, unconscious part of the personality is archaic in the most negative sense, for it is the beast-man at bay. He becomes the shadow and dark brother of the ego only if, through a process of integration, the ego consciously descends into the depths of the unconscious, there to seek him out and bind him to the conscious mind. But when the reverse happens, when, that is to say, consciousness is overpowered and wholly possessed by him, we get the frightful phenomenon of regression to the mass man as manifested in the mass epidemics of recollectivization.

In these circumstances the disoriented, rationalistic consciousness of modern man, having become atomized and split off from the unconscious, gives up the fight because, understandably enough, his isolation in a mass which no longer offers him any psychic support becomes unendurable. For him the hero's task is too difficult, the task he ought to perform by following in the footsteps of humanity before him. The fabric of the archetypal canon which used to support the average man has given way, and real heroes capable of taking up the struggle for new values are naturally few and far between.

The renegade ego of modern man therefore succumbs to a reactionary mass-mindedness and falls victim to the collective

shadow, to the mass man within. Whereas in a homogeneous psyche the negative element has a meaningful place as decomposition and death, as chaos and *prima materia*, or as the leaden counterweight which roots growing things to the earth, in a fragmented psyche with a defeatist, regressing ego it becomes a cancer and a nihilistic danger. With the disintegration of ego consciousness all the positions built up in the course of human development are regressively destroyed, as in psychosis.

As a result, the ego-sphere of the human and personal is lost. Personality values no longer count, and the supreme achievement of the individual—his behavior as an individual human being—is broken down and replaced by collective modes of behavior. The daemons and archetypes become autonomous again, the individual soul is swallowed back by the Terrible Mother, and along with it the experience of the voice and the individual's responsibility before man and God is invalidated.

That the mass phenomenon is statistically a regression to the lowest level is self-evident, since the position of consciousness itself then begins to decay. Simultaneously with this, however, there is a reactivation of the medullary man and of his overwhelming emotionality. With the collapse of a consciousness oriented by the cultural canon the effective power of conscience, of the superego, is also destroyed, and consciousness loses its virility. "Effeminacy" then makes its appearance as an invasion from the unconscious side, manifesting itself in the breakthrough of complexes, of the inferior function and the shadow, and finally in a semipsychotic eruption of archetypes. The whole defense position of the conscious mind crumples up and the spiritual world of values with it. The personal ego-sphere as well as the autarchy of the personality drop away, and all the essential marks of centroversion.

Every single one of these phenomena is discoverable today in the mass situation and in the phenomena of recollectivization.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Alfred Kubin's visionary book, *Die andere Seite*, written in 1908, not only anticipates the events that were to burst upon Germany many years later, but with remarkable intuition realizes their connection with the collective unconscious.

The unique and frightful thing about this recollectivization is that it does not and cannot possibly mean a genuine regeneration. Regression does not reproduce the original group situation, but only a mass such as has never existed before and is, psychologically, a novel phenomenon.

When masses of city-dwellers regress to the unconscious state, it does not create a psychological unit that is in any way comparable to the original group and its psychology. In the original group, as we must emphasize yet again, consciousness, individuality, and spirit existed in the germ and strove to express themselves through the collective unconscious of the group, whereas the unconsciousness to which people are resignedly regressing today is, as it were, an unconscious with no tendencies in this direction. The autonomy of the unconscious reigns supreme in the mass psyche with the collusion of the mass shadow-man who lurks in the unconscious personality, and for the time being at least there is no sign of the regulating intervention of centroversion or of the regulation of the group by the cultural canon. The mass, therefore, is the decay of a more complex unit not into a more primitive unit but into a centerless agglomeration. Regression to the mass-man is only possible given the extreme process of cleavage between ego consciousness and the unconscious, and the consequent loss of centroversion. This absence of regulation by the whole leads to chaos.

Using the analogy of psychic illness one might, even in these circumstances, speak of the action of centroversion. In the individual, too, a rigid exclusion of the unconscious and a systematic disregard of its efforts at compensation cause it to turn destructive. We then find that compensation ceases and that, as Jung says, the unconscious directs its destructive tendency against consciousness and the ego. This "if you won't, then I'll force you" attitude can sometimes bring about a conversion, just as punishment may bring the sinner to repentance. The destructive decay of the individual in the mass harbors this possibility in itself, but only if it is made conscious, understood, assimilated, and in this way integrated.

The great danger that evidently prevents a conscious realization of this situation lies in the illusory phenomena which appear with recollectivization and blind the ego. The toxic effect of the mass situation lies precisely in its intoxicating character, which is always a concomitant of the dissolution of consciousness and its powers of discrimination. As we saw earlier, the libido-link between the ego system and the unconscious is "pleasurable." So it is when the link snaps and the ego system sinks into regression. The old bait with which that wily ratcatcher, the "hypnotized hypnotist" of mass epidemics, seduces us is uroboric incest.

In recollectivization the image of the original group and its wholeness is projected by the renegade ego upon the mass. The ego surrenders and, re-emotionalized, pouring itself out in an orgy of mass participations, experiences with pleasure a mass self akin to the uroboros, which sucks it in, embraces, and engulfs it. But a nihilistic, regressive perversion of the motto "Be embraced, ye millions!" is truly of the devil. The mass shadowman, the herd of atomized individuals, and the mass self combine to form a pseudo-unity which is sheer illusion. That it is purely a matter of mass unification and a travesty of unity is evident from the swift disillusionment which ensues, and from the fact that mass illusion is incapable of producing any genuine and durable participation, much less anything constructive. The illusion of unity at a mass meeting does not even lead to genuine *participation mystique* with the spirit of the mass, let alone to a relationship of the participants with one another. In the real group, the group phenomenon of participation brings a synthetic development, taking the form of mutual responsibility, increased readiness for self-sacrifice, etc., which appears not merely as a momentary intoxication but embodies itself in institutions and communal undertakings. For instance the orgiastic feasts among primitives and in the older cultures promote the growth of groups and communities, and establish religious forms and other phenomena whose importance for the development of consciousness we have already stressed.

But in mass phenomena the illusory elation is as transient as

that induced by hypnosis; it does not impress itself upon the conscious mind by bringing it to a creative synthesis, but leaks away like any other momentary intoxication. Yet even this delusive frenzy of mass possession is zealously desired by an ego emptied of all meaning, and is one of the chief allurements with which the mass hypnotist successfully operates.

Modern mass propaganda seeks—in part quite consciously—to restore the old group unity and the mutual projections of the participants, together with all the symptoms of emotional possession that pertain thereto. This it does—as was particularly to be observed in National Socialism—by enlisting the aid of symbols and archetypes. We have already pointed out the basic error and also the dangers of these recollectivizing tendencies. The intended victims of this possession are—above all in the big cities—atomized individuals split off from the unconscious, and although they may be able to regress to this unconscious state for a little while by surrendering their egos, the subjective delirium which accompanies it harbors in itself the most dangerous and destructive consequences.

The modern worker and citizen, with his scientific education and proneness to “reduce” everything transpersonal, himself becomes a reduced individual when recollectivized by the mass. The primitive or archaic man, on the other hand, with his relatively undeveloped consciousness and ego system, experiences in a collective group event, such as an initiation ceremony or mystery cult, a progression and expansion of himself through his own experience of the symbols and archetypes. He is illuminated and not reduced by them. These group phenomena tend to constellate the higher man and a “higher brotherhood,” and not, on the contrary, to weld the mass particles into a mere conglomeration of which Jung could say, “The masses are blind brutes.”<sup>8</sup> Note that the accent lies on the blind, not on the brute. Group possession, therefore, is never destructive in the same sense that mass action is destructive, where the mass consists of psychologically unrelated, or only momentarily related,

<sup>8</sup> *Psychology and Alchemy*, p. 461.



atomized individuals. The group contains its own regulator not only in the form of the ruling canon, but in the mutual knowledge all members have of one another. The very anonymity of the individual in the mass intensifies the action of the shadow side. It is a significant fact that, in order to carry out their sadistic executions, the Nazis were obliged to remove the assassin from his own group. It is very much harder, if not actually impossible, for a village community to liquidate its own Jews. Not so much because of the group's greater humanity—we have learnt not to regard this as one of the fundamental decencies—but because the individual must do his deeds under the eyes of the group. Removed from his group and subjected to terrorism, however, he becomes capable of anything.

But even in the mass situation the quality of the individual is important, for the composition of the mass determines its deeds. Sighele<sup>4</sup> could still believe that the violence or peaceableness of a mass is determined by its criminals or by those of its members whose profession it is to "see blood"; but depth psychology takes a different view. The "mass man within," the shadow, is the determining factor, not just consciousness and its orientation. The quality of the individual is indeed decisive, yet this is formed not so much by the quality of consciousness as by the quality of the whole personality, which for that very reason must be the psychological basis of the new ethos.

The growth of conscience, the formation of the superego by adaptation to the values of the collective, of the old men, stops at the point where the collapse of the cultural canon deprives this collective tribunal of its transpersonal bases. Conscience then becomes a Jewish, capitalist, or Socialist "invention." But the "voice," that inward orientation which makes known the utterances of the self, will never speak in a disintegrated personality, in a bankrupt consciousness, and in a fragmented psychic system.

<sup>4</sup> Reiwald, *Vom Geist der Massen*, p. 123.