

Speaking of Evil

by Kristine Gazel

What happens to evil in liquid modernity
and how to respond to it
from a Jungian ethical position?

Jungian Psychotherapist and Senior Candidate
at the C.G. Jung Institute of Copenhagen

k@gazel.dk

In liquid modernity
we become fragmented, desensitized,
and less empathetic.

Evil is pervasive yet intangible.
Often disguised as righteousness, as goodness, or as good intentions.
Things happen to "somebody else" - indifferent to us.
We become morally blind, unable to see or speak of evil.

Jung's concept of evil is that it exists in itself.
Being able to see it in others and in society
depends on our ability and willingness
to see it in ourselves, in our own psyches
- knowing that seeing is not the same as projecting.

To Jung, evil is both an archetypal force and a deeply human experience,
one we must relate to from a conscious and conscientious position
- from the position of the ego.

We cannot allow ourselves to think that evil does not exist
just because it has liquefied.
It is a luxury we do not have. Not now, not ever.

A Jungian "new" ethic is about cultivating wholeness,
embracing an ability to hold opposites,
and developing a tolerance for uncertainty.
But most importantly: Creating an imagination for evil.

Sources:

C.G. Jung: Jung on Evil. 1995. Edt. by M. Stein.
Liquid Evil / Z. Baumann, L. Donskis. 2016.
Moral Blindness/ Z. Baumann, L. Donskis. 2013.
E. Neumann: Depth Psychology and a New Ethic. 1990.

Photo:
Just before the outbreak
of a tropical storm
on la Gomera, 2013.
Photo credit: Hanne Urhøj.