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**ETHICS in the SHADOW of the FATHER****On the *Primal Scene* of the Ethical  
in Analytical Psychology****Abstract**

*Ethics in the Shadow of the Father* is a lecture given on the occasion of the Congress of German-Language Jung Societies 100 Years Erich Neumann – 130 Years C.G. Jung in Vienna in August 2005. It appeared in expanded form in the journal *Analytische Psychologie* (Frankfurt 3/2005a). In order to enable movement in the field of ethics and analytical psychology, new forms of concepts such as *archethyp*, *primal scene of the ethical subject* and *participation éthique* are proposed. The aim is to demonstrate that Jung's – and also Neumann's – writings on ethics remain in the shadow of the father, meaning that the father is not realised as an ethical potential. The reason given for this is in the unconsciousness of the hysterical shadow. Its effect is demonstrated in theory and political practice.

**Keywords:** *primal scene (Urszene)* of the ethical, *archethype*, father, hysteria, shadow, Self, *participation éthique*

**1. Introductory Remarks**

I would like to begin with two introductory remarks about the two prominent terms in the title: ethics and father. As far as ethics is concerned, today there is a proliferation of a colourful variety of partly contradictory ethical concepts. In this respect critical voices talk of inflation, a dread of principles, even of nihilism. However, ethics itself – this should not be forgotten – is already the expression of an awareness of crises and of partly irreparable splits. This has been demonstrated from ancient times, through the middle ages and the modern period and up to the present.

As far as the present is concerned, modern psychoanalysis particularly laments the decline of patriarchal power and thereby the proliferation of uninhibited excesses in a post-patriarchal era. To me this diagnosis does in fact appear to lead to the heart of the problem of the ethical – although not in the same way it would like to suggest to us. For it could turn out that talk of a post-patriarchal era does not refer to a new era at all but to a fantasy intrinsic in the father. This means another way of using the imaginary of the patriarchy in order to establish new structures of authority and thereby at the same time to veil a fundamental inconcludability. The *ethical depression* seen today could in fact also have something to do with this inconcludability. Seen like this, pluralism could be an expression of an inevitable continuing restructuring that has to do with the character of ethical law and its implicit power as well as with the inconcludability of desire.

In view of this situation it seems to me all the more important to work out (proto-)ethically relevant constants that could provide an initial orientation. One of them – and I have already indicated it with the word patriarchy – now comes up under the term father. Under this term we will primarily reflect upon the relationship to the father archetype, to the collective great father who in Jungian discourse – as befits a good father – mostly shines through his absence and nevertheless has a concealed effect.

I would therefore like to discuss the father archetype as an indispensable constant of the *primal scene of the ethical subject* and suggest a new interpretation of the word archetype: Jung emphasises again and again: the archetype has no moral attributes, for example the father is a type of non-antithetical consciousness ("*gegensatzloser Bewusstseinsstil*") and he is characterised as *amoral*, *inferior* and *inconsistent*. The father-son relationship is seen as an example of *participation mystique*.

If we now, as mentioned, cross the word archetype with ethos, we get the archethype written with *th*, firstly in order to underline that it is about an ethical potential, that the examination in itself demands an individuation effort – and for this it is necessary to understand the paradoxical structure of the archetype. Secondly, this word emphasises that it is a question of an ethical a priori that is there before the singular consciousness of a structure, that is *not* reducible to the empirical (see LACAN 1997, 254) but is ethical-transcendental, i.e. a proviso for the possibility that a human being can be an ethical being. Briefly: before there is a human subject, there has always been a (paternally connotated) ethical law and – we can also add straightaway – a (maternally connotated) ethical space that is structured by the law. Both law and space are essential aspects of the primal scene of the ethical subject and are of the same origins. (I could provide you with evidence for this in almost any ethics – from PLATO to KANT, but also in every religious system.)

Two important ethical constants are thereby taken as subjects and in the following I would like to argue the thesis that JUNG and NEUMANN misinterpret both the ethical law as well as the ethical space (we will

encounter this under the term *participation mystique*). The reason for this misinterpretation lies in the hysterical shadow and in a particular lack of understanding for the depressive side of the father relationship. And I would also like to offer the interpretation that behind JUNG's and NEUMANN's manifest attempt to transcend the father as law there is the latent tendency to enthrone him again. So while the father should be rejected on conscious level, he is reinstalled at unconscious level. JUNG's and NEUMANN's writings on ethics therefore have an unconscious *restorative* wish.

This ethical-transcendental way of looking at the father archetype also has implications for ethics *in general*. Because: ethics can never be substantiated simply empirically (as for example purported by evolutionary, sociobiological, neurobiological and cerebrophysiological approaches), rather: ethics is transcendental, meaning it comes from noetic capacities and their corresponding noematic meaning content, which have their origin in human desires (*Begehren*) that cannot be narrowed down naturalistically or empiristically. This desire is no blind drive pushing for fulfilment but it is composed *intersubjectively* – and thereby dependent on thought, on language and on the communication of language. With desire we now have before us, after the ethical law and the ethical space, the third constant of the *primal scene* of the ethical – a triad of law, space and desire.

With the intersubjective composition of desire the fact that *anthropotechniques* are in play also comes up, techniques by means of which people form and rear people. The fact comes up that there is ethical violence and that ethics is itself rooted in the amoral (NIETZSCHE, FREUD) and should for this reason alone be questioned – which also means that ethics is process-like and inconcludable – and that ethical law must always be questioned as to its good, precisely because it is unavoidably allied with ethical violence, i.e. with the decision about life and death and with the decision about what a person is/should be and what not. In his *Stories of Mr Keuner* Bert BRECHT gives us a good example of what it is about in the heart of this ethical violence: What do you do when you love someone? Mr K. was asked. I make an image of that person, Mr K replied, and make sure they match. What? The image match? No, said Mr K., the person.

With this I conclude my introductory remarks and come to the actual topic: the ethical violence of JUNG's Self in connection with the father archetype. In this the father will be the central theme as carrier of the Self (*Träger des Selbst* – NEUMANN) and as representative of symbolic order (LACAN), in order to show that JUNG's – as well as NEUMANN's – writings on ethics ultimately remain in the shadow of the father. This does not mean that the father has a shadow but that the Self cannot – as demanded – be separated from the father precisely because one's *own* hysterical shadow remains unconscious.

## 2. The "New Ethic" and the Hysterical Discourse

I previously spoke about splits and crisis consciousness: Erich NEUMANN's *Depth Psychology and New Ethics* 1948/49 is an expression of one. The solutions that NEUMANN offers shortly after the horror of the second world war are: first: conscious acceptance of the shadow in order to escape unconscious identification with the mass and collective archetypal shadow potential. We will be asking which shadow it is about. Second: separation from the super ego as conventional and acquired ethical law (*patriarchales Überkommnis*). Thirdly it is a question of a new-old image of god: of a divinity that is light *and* darkness (see: 1990a, 134). Here we have touched on an ambiguity that also appears in other Jewish thinkers (such as FACKENHEIM and LEVINAS): the ambiguity of God as *creator AND murderer*.

Brought to the point: the absolute ethical commandment, the *Thou shalt not kill*, does not apply to the one who set up the commandment (God). This is where we already see the decisive paradox: in the last instance the law breaks down with its absolute opposite. JUNG's attitude in *Answer to Job* (1952/1992) also perhaps takes this as its starting point, when the being thinks he has "morally" (ibid. 408) surpassed his creator, whereby "consciousness" is the decisive "moral criterion" (ibid. 436). The *son* is more conscious than the "inferior" (ibid. 407), "amoral" (ibid. 371) father.

In view of this contradictory nature of the father god, the decisive question arises as to how the being will from now on ethically justify his actions when this moral authority no longer applies. JUNG's answer, e.g. in the essay *Das Gewissen in psychologischer Sicht* (1957/58/1995), is ambivalent: "The power of ethos ... flows empirically from two sources, from reason (*Vernunft*) and grace (*Gnade*)." (ibid.) The subjective ethical decision is thereby bound to a paradoxical dichotomy and unpredictability – namely: to the Self and its antinomies held in fief from the father: "As a totality the Self is all the more dark the more that consciousness makes a claim to moral authority." (JUNG 1952/1992, 445) This answer of JUNG leaves unanswered *who* is ultimately responsible and in my opinion springs from a typical basic characteristic of hysterical desire: not wanting to know and concealing what one perhaps (unconsciously) already knows. How is this to be understood? You may perhaps ask what the Self in JUNG has to do with hysteria.

If we are talking about the hysterical here it is because in hysteria – and here I am following a thought of the French psychoanalyst Jacques LACAN (1991; 2004) – a basic characteristic feature of human desire *in general* is expressed. I would now like to go into this in somewhat more detail: in LACAN desire is symbolic-linguistic desire. As a linguistic being the person is initiated into language and thereby into a social and simultaneously ethical structure by the collective *symbolic father*. The symbolic father (the "name-of-the-father",

the "*Herrensifikant*" from whom everything acquires its meaning) however, has a cleft foot, a *failing*: he is an "impostor". The symbolic, thus language, is forcibly constructed – through naming things it creates a reality that can never completely describe and encompass

the reality behind it. If a person grows into a cultural context, he never basically knows WHY everything is as it is. However, it is exactly this question that hysteria poses: it turns to the other with the question: *What do you want from me?* or more precisely: *What do you want me to be (for you)?*

The other is thereby made into a master to whom a knowledge is imputed that he does not in fact have. It is not precisely about this knowledge because hysteria itself knows about the cleft foot, about the *deficiency of the other*, it knows that the other fundamentally cannot know. Nevertheless it makes him into a master. Why? Answer: in order to control him and to keep the process going through continual frustration. Enticed by a rich repertoire, the other thinks that it is a question of a knowledge that he continually attempts to answer (FREUD's first patients) without of course being able to do so. However, exactly because of this, the process becomes inconcludable because for hysteria it is not about the knowledge of the other but about the other's *desire*. It is a question of the desire of the other, to which the hysterical subject makes itself the object through these masquerades: it is the carrot in front of the master-donkey, who will never reach it and will consequently continue moving forwards – perhaps somewhat grumpily but still well-behaved. Thus the unconsciously sought for dependency relationship remains intact.

Hysteria wants to fill the deficiency of *the other* in its imagination – its motto is: *I am what is missing in you* (e.g. Christ, love, in God). And in that the deficiency of the other is supposedly compensated for in the imaginary, one's own deficiency is also compensated for. This is exactly what the hysterical subject conceals from itself: that it also has a deficiency that can never be fulfilled.

### 3. The Father: Symbolic, Imaginary and the "Carrier of the Self"

So – to come back to JUNG and NEUMANN – what does this hysterical desire have to do with the Self and a new ethic? To answer this question we must again turn to the father. We have already encountered the father as the *symbolic* father at the centre of culture who, through his law, combines forbidden and protective aspects. Emotive images are entwined around this symbolic father – the imaginary father, who is idealised or demonised in a wide panoply (e.g. FREUD's *Urvater*, JUNG's *Vatergott*). I will now focus on the father as *carrier of the Self*. According to NEUMANN the Self is, "depending on its stage of development, incarnated in an archetype without being identical to it" (1990b, 200). The "transformation of the Self" also always requires the killing of the hitherto highest value, thus on patriarchal level a *deicide*. Let us perhaps also mention JUNG's sentence from the essay *The Transformation Symbol in the Mass*: "As long as the Self is unconscious, it corresponds to the super ego." (1941/42/1992, 276)

Thus on the one hand there is a sense that the separation of the Self from the father is necessary. On the other hand this separation of the Self from the father is approached by both on the level of *father as law*. The "rejection" of FREUD's super ego as a "patriarchal obsolescence" in favour of the "voice with the character of the son" (*Stimme mit Sohncharakter*) is paradigmatic for this. I think that the background to this rejection lies in a mixing of the symbolic father function and the imaginary father. What is not realised in this mixing (of imaginary father and symbolic law) is that the required "patricide" (1990a, 123) *cannot* overcome the symbolic father, i.e. the ethical law, but more than ever establishes the law. Here we think of FREUD and his myth of the murdered *Urvater*. If these paradoxes of paternal basic constants, the grey zone of law and violence and one's *own* desire that battles against this grey zone are unconscious, one remains *in the shadow* of the father and the required separation of the Self from the father must fail. The decisive insight that each transgression of the law *must* at the same time be a redefinition of the law is missing.

In order not to leave this on theoretical level I would like to illustrate it with two examples. The first is NEUMANN's imperative: "Whatever leads to wholeness is good, whatever leads to splitting is evil." (1990a, 128) The second is taken from JUNG's life.

### 4. The Shadow in Theory and Political Practice

This imperative of NEUMANN sets up a law in which precisely what should have been excluded from the *new ethic* returns: the formation of ideals and splits. Just this point – as a result of this imperative – should therefore be regarded as mistaken in NEUMANN. His *new ethic* is based also based on a splitting and is also a partial ethic. Thereby he comes upon the paradox of the law, of the law that emerges through the inclusion of what should have been excluded.

In the law-giving *sovereign*, law and violence are ultimately indistinguishable – think of the Ten Commandments: consequently each new position is a repetition of this violence (see DERRIDA 1991, 83); there can be no *pure*, non-violent positing.

In view of this violence one could ask why we need the law at all. Because – and this is its positive side – with its prohibitions and precepts, it provides something that is necessary for life: protection. And, with the

rejection of the symbolic father, this protection ceases to exist in LACAN – and thereby comes the threat of incest with the unconscious and the loss of the difference I/others, in brief: psychosis.

It is therefore necessary – remembering the ethical a priori – to recognise the indispensability of law. The insight that the ethical subject *must* be split by a law is also connected to this recognition. In this regard NIETZSCHE speaks of *dividuum* and in KANT the moral law splits the ethical subject into sensuous inclination and rational will. In JUNG the ego is ultimately also split: in the Self it more than ever encounters the super ego supposedly rejected with the paternal extremes. The demonstration of this leads us into history – firstly to NIETZSCHE and FREUD and then to HITLER and the hysterical Germans and finally to their ultimate enemy image – the Jew.

Here I come to the second example to make this theory a little more colourful. It is about JUNG's documented relationship to NIETZSCHE, who had already hammered paternal values to pieces some decades previously. An extremely contradictory picture is noticeable in this relationship: shy admiration and a notion of affinity are juxtaposed to damnation and pathologisation: in his essay *After the Catastrophe* JUNG diagnoses HITLER as "Pseudologia phantastica", as "hysterical dissociation", which believes its own lies and is incapable of recognising its *own* guilt. The shepherd has become the wolf and the people the herd of sheep.

In this essay JUNG cites Faust and NIETZSCHE's *Übermensch* as witnesses of the coming catastrophe, from whose example rescuing conclusions should have been drawn. At the end is the torn apart Dionysus who, in his essay Wotan (1935/1995, 213), JUNG describes as the "spontaneous emotional" and at the same time "intuitive inspiring side of the unconscious". This god attacked Christianity on a wide front – the "ordering, justly administering, even loving Mediterranean father". While in Switzerland it was only "simmering", in Germany, the "land of spiritual catastrophe" first the obsessed NIETZSCHE and then HITLER played with the blond beast. Europe became a "bloody swamp".

But Wotan is not only explosive ecstasy. He, the *double*, also has another side. He agonises about the secret of the world (see SCHMITZ 1995, 52). Some years later in his *Memories* this other side emerges clearly. In the attempt to bridge his own inner conflict (No. 1 and No. 2) the adolescent JUNG read, of all things, NIETZSCHE's *Zarathustra* and describes his "secret fear" of being similar to him, which also turned out to be justified. JUNG realised that he was driven "by the same spirit" as NIETZSCHE. His dangerously tempting shibboleth "Dionysus against the Crucified" was of course only half the truth. NIETZSCHE was just as much fascinated by the other side, the Crucified. By the one who had given himself up to the father and fulfilled the law.

JUNG then sought and found this law in no less a figure than FREUD. In the famous letter from 1910 JUNG reveals, with FREUD's help, "to transform Christ back into the wise god of the grape and so make everything into a drunken celebration, where man can be an animal in ethos and holiness" (JUNG, 1990, vol. I, 38). So what was it JUNG was looking for? Brought to the point: he wanted to renew Christianity dionysically. Body-hating Christianity with its one-sided idealised image of God should be compensated for by the libidinous creative Dionysus and he (Dionysus) should be compensated for by a father who, although law-giving, is just as libidinous (FREUD). In FREUD the libidinous condenses with what curbs this drive, the paternal law with patricide, protection against psychosis with illusion that the law does not exist.

Not "FREUD versus NIETZSCHE" (JAFFÉ, 1982, 157), but FREUD *with* NIETZSCHE: the *Übermensch* after the death of God and at the same time the one who had survived the rejection of the father and incest with the unconscious. Unfortunately FREUD did not understand incest as symbolic and was quickly stigmatised as a neurotic.

A dream of JUNG's from 1911 indicates the changed situation: FREUD appears as a churlish Hapsburg customs officer protecting an endangered border against a threatened flood of slime – and JUNG as a crusader from the 12th century in an Italian town looking for the Holy Grail. A Christianised German with a Jewish father. An ideal in shining armour. It is midday and the sun is at its highest point, the shadows correspondingly small and difficult to grasp.

In another dream, this time from 1913, this dark side answers and JUNG's dream ego, accompanied by a brown-skinned savage, shoots the resplendent Siegfried. The German is no longer Christianised and has rejected his Jewish father and the hope of resurrection and redemption placed in him. However, the symbolic paternal law, the law that *must* necessarily split the moral subject, answers in a pressing impulse. The awakened JUNG feels shame and guilt and, just about to shoot himself, struggles for understanding. He realises that the enforcement of his own heroic will no longer applies to him (JAFFÉ, 1982, 184): "there is something higher to which one must subject oneself": thereby the way is paved to the Self – to the Self and of course also to its fundamental lack of that moral indifference which we have already encountered in the father. However, what remains after the murder of Siegfried is primarily the brown-skinned savage, the primitive brown shadow, the carrier of the will to power and an enormous destructive potential – but also the carrier of an unconscious guilt.

The political repercussions of this failed father-son relationship appear in 1933/34 in his remarks on *Verschiedenheit der germanischen und der jüdischen Psychologie* and *Zur gegenwärtigen Lage der Psychotherapie*. Dionysus-Wotan, the dark side of No. 2 has asserted itself and creates a precarious situation. Shortly afterwards JUNG therefore deals with it in the way appropriate for the shadow. It is ousted, separated

and rejected as a diagnosed *hysterical German shadow* whose prophets were GOETHE and NIETZSCHE – and a renounced Jewish father who is rejected along with the hysteria and at the same time once again enthroned.

This leads to the question of what role is played in JUNG's discourse by the German diagnosed by JUNG as hysterical, the hysterical shadow. On the exoteric stage it certainly serves to provide justification for a "slip-up". The motto for this is typically hysterical: *everything depends on me but I can do nothing about any of it*. In view of the threatened ban on psychotherapy by the Nazis he invokes scientific interest, collegiality and the "lively connection of German-language intellectual culture" and purports selflessly to sacrifice his "egotistical well-being" and his "different political disposition".

On the esoteric level the hysterical shadow serves to complete the building of Jungian theory, since hysterical desire plays an important but repressed role in this. However, in the Self and on the "ego-Self axis" (NEUMANN 1990b, 18) this aspiration appears unveiled. In order to understand this we must take a closer look at the hysterical German shadow. We have before us its declared enemy image in the figure of the *Jew*. In him we can recognise both sides of the rejected father: the paternal law and its dark opposite. Already in 1937 the Marxist psychoanalyst FENICHEL had said that the Jew appears so sinister because archaic religious roots are associated with him – especially the killing of God. And this brought unpleasantly to mind NIETZSCHE's "God is dead – we have killed him." The Jew was therefore accused of what should not be – his own excessive enjoyment after the demise of God, which however with the help of this phantasm is kept in check and at the same time perpetuated: the Jew oversteps the law and simultaneously re-establishes it. He becomes a reservoir of envy, jealousy, rivalry, guilt and hate – and the target of an absolutely destructive violence.

In view of this phantasm, that we have already encountered in FREUD, we can now ask once again: what is the Jungian subject looking for? The answer: it is looking for connection to the Self, and this is a compromise: because on the ego-Self axis are condensed desire, the incestuous *Thing* and the paternal law which forbids incest and provides protection from slipping into psychosis.

This now also means that the connection to Self, which actually should have overridden the dissociation of the ego, must now more than ever inflict the split on the ego again. However, this is hardly noticed because in the imaginary identification with the "creative fullness of one's own psychic abyss (*seelischer Urgrund*)" (NEUMANN 1990a, 138) impotence and omnipotence coincide and reverse restriction and trauma in the strength of one's own constitution.

Desire can remain so vital *without* becoming excessive or psychotic. The erosion of symbolic authority is re-established through a symbolic belief. Autonomy develops and at the same time limitation, since a kind of mandate is created which makes it possible to take up a place in the symbolic universe. This means the role of the Self, idealised as far as its creative-destructive shadow sides, can be re-enacted. The individuum becomes a microscopic-microcosmic "monad" (JAFFÉ 1982, 199 f), that contains everything it needs.

This now has consequences in relation to the *ethical content* of the Self, because this Self as "monad", as *my* Self, moves critically close to narcissistic structures in which it is a question of self preservation, of concern for oneself and of a deceptive wholeness from which every other person and stranger remains excluded. In the hysterical dramatisation, the other is only the audience who should recognise what one would like to believe about oneself or a modification of my Self and a projection screen for an inner "non-acquaintance with myself" ("*Unbekanntheit mit mir selber*") (ibid. 361). A non-acquaintance that significantly cannot know itself and does not want to. For it is precisely this non-acquaintance that the ego actually encounters again in the Self.

So is it true that the experience of Self, as JUNG writes (ibid. 341), bridges the "antithesis in the image of God"? Should we not rather suppose that the image of God should help to bridge the irreconcilable antithesis *in man*? Thus: it is not the *son* who bridges the antithesis in the father but the father *image* that bridges the antithesis *in the son*. It is not JUNG who plays for God but the *image* of God that perhaps plays a role for him. And precisely in this image of God we once again encounter the rejected father. The father is thereby the paradigm of a desertion that shocks us just as much in this particular excluded element in order to make possible a tragic illusionary closure: the Jew, in whose name solidarity should be demanded since in truth he is *our* problem, as SARTRE had already professed. He is that excluded (singular general) symptom with whom we must identify in order to recognise the deceptive hysterical closure as illusionary.

## 5. The Self – Archetypical

The aim of my argument is gradually coming into view: it is – what else? – the desiring ego that is ethically responsible. Thus it is firstly a question of recognising that we are creatures of desire who need a law so as not to fall into a deceptive and dangerous closure. We must therefore go back to where JUNG and NEUMANN began their considerations of ethics, to *participation mystique*, the matrix in which according to JUNG all people are equal – to our "unconscious humanity". What is unconscious in this is perhaps only the circumstance that we are human – and that means that we have always been incorporated in a social context and made into people – in an *ethical space* that generates law and desire and of an *ethical law* that structures this space and our desire. This basic ethical dimension, the *primal ethical scene*, cannot be escaped by referring to an inner *voice*. Because if "the moral problem of the whole of humanity, which at the same time is also that of the godhead, appears as a last stage 'after' the personal and collective shadow," as NEUMANN (1990a, 134) writes, the question arises as

to where the source of the sworn solidarity and the "shift in focus towards the fraternal and human" (ibid. 137) actually can still be found. Because of their negative omens neither *participation mystique*, which is basically a latent mass psychosis, nor the father can be the source of this solidarity.

However, we find this source if we follow the line of projection of the hysterical shadow to NIETZSCHE, JUNG, HITLER, the hysterical Germans and finally to the Jews, a line of projection along which what is universally human is shifted to an excluded element in order once again finally to land with the father and *participation mystique*: now however under changed auspices. We must therefore first understand the antinomic structure of what relates to the law, i.e. the symbolic father as ethical potential, so that the split in the father image in the imaginary can be overridden – which leaves the symbolic father his rights. To do this it is also necessary to examine the dark abyss of melancholy (see BURDA 2005b) from which hysteria turns away in horror, in order to address the desire of others. Secondly we must understand the *participation mystique* that has been devalued in its ethical content as a *participation éthique* – meaning as a fundamental and indispensable being-in-relation, as the expression of an a priori ethical constant: the *ethical space*.

What is now with the Self, whose carrier can no longer be the father and also not the monad which one is oneself? In other words: what would the Self be in the ethical dimension as an expression of a complete potential? I would like to suggest a brief answer to this question: perhaps an *archetypical* field of responsibility (BURDA 1998), that brings to mind the original meaning of the Greek word *ethos*: i.e. abode or accustomed dwelling place – *participation éthique*, responsible being-in-soul, of a desiring being split by the ethical law who takes responsibility for the continued writing of the law and the continued shaping of the space which it has always shared with others, shares now and will always share.

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