Civilization and Its Discontents

SIGMUND FREUD
1856–1939

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Das Unbehagen in der Kultur

Translated from the German with AI (Claude) and edited



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INTRODUCTION

Civilization and Its Discontents (1930) is Freud's most widely read book about society. Written in the summer of 1929, when he was seventy-three and ill with cancer, it asks a simple question: if civilization was built to protect us from suffering, why does it make so many of us unhappy?

Freud begins with religion and the "oceanic feeling" a friend had described to him, then turns to the ways people seek happiness and why none of them fully works. His answer is that civilization rests on the renunciation of our drives, above all of sex and aggression. Aggression is not abolished but turned inward, where it becomes conscience, the super-ego, and a sense of guilt that grows as civilization advances. Along the way come some of his most famous formulas: man as "a kind of prosthetic god," the "narcissism of minor differences," and *Homo homini lupus*, man is a wolf to man.

The book ends not with a program but with a question: whether "eternal Eros" can hold its own against its equally immortal adversary, the drive to destruction. It appeared in the first edition given here in 1930; for the second edition of 1931 Freud added a final sentence, not included in this text.

Chapter I

I

The "oceanic feeling" a friend proposes as the source of religion, traced back to the infant's early sense of self; Rome as an image of how the mind preserves its past.

1.1 It is impossible to escape the impression that people commonly measure by false standards: they seek power, success and wealth for themselves and admire them in others, while underestimating the true values of life. And yet any general judgment of this kind puts us in danger of forgetting how varied the human world and its mental life are. There are certain men who are not denied the veneration of their contemporaries, although their greatness rests on qualities and achievements entirely foreign to the aims and ideals of the multitude. One will readily be inclined to assume that it is, after all, only a minority who recognize these great men, while the great majority want nothing to do with them. But things are probably not so simple, thanks to the discrepancies between people's thinking and their actions, and to the many voices of their wishful impulses.

1.2 One of these exceptional men calls himself my friend in his letters. I had sent him my little book that treats religion as an illusion, and he replied that he entirely agreed with my judgment of religion, but regretted that I had not properly appreciated the true source of religious feeling. This, he said, is a peculiar feeling which never leaves him, which he has found confirmed by many others, and which he may suppose to be present in millions of people. It is a feeling that he would like to call a sensation of "eternity," a feeling as of something limitless,

unbounded—as it were, "oceanic."[1] This feeling, he said, is a purely subjective fact, not an article of faith; it carries no assurance of personal survival, but it is the source of the religious energy that is taken up by the various churches and religious systems, directed into particular channels, and no doubt also used up. On the strength of this oceanic feeling alone, he said, one may call oneself religious, even if one rejects every belief and every illusion.

1.3 These remarks of my esteemed friend, who once himself paid poetic tribute to the magic of illusion, caused me no small difficulty. I cannot discover this "oceanic" feeling in myself. It is not easy to deal with feelings scientifically. One can try to describe their physiological signs. Where that is not possible—and I fear that the oceanic feeling, too, will elude any such characterization—there is nothing left but to keep to the ideational content most readily associated with the feeling.[2] If I have understood my friend rightly, he means the same thing that an original and rather eccentric poet gives his hero as consolation in the face of a death he has freely chosen: "We cannot fall out of this world."[3] A feeling, then, of an indissoluble bond, of belonging together with the external world as a whole. I would say that for me this has rather the character of an intellectual insight—certainly not without an accompanying feeling-tone, but such a tone will not be absent from other acts of thought of similar scope either. In my own person I could not convince myself of the primary nature of such a feeling. But that does not entitle me to deny that it actually occurs in others. The only question is whether it is being correctly interpreted, and whether it ought

1 The friend is the French writer Romain Rolland (1866–1944); the "little book" is *The Future of an Illusion* (1927).

2 Probably an allusion to Rolland's satirical play *Liluli* (1919), whose title figure is Illusion.

3 FREUD'S NOTE. D. Chr. Grabbe, *Hannibal*: "Yes, we shall not fall out of the world. We are in it, once and for all."

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Christian Dietrich Grabbe (1801–1836), German dramatist; in his *Hannibal* (1835) the defeated general speaks these words before taking poison.

to be acknowledged as the "*fons et origo*" [source and origin] of all religious needs.

[1.4] I have nothing to put forward that would decisively affect the solution of this problem. The idea that human beings should receive intimation of their connection with the world around them through an immediate feeling, directed to this end from the very beginning, sounds so strange and fits so badly into the fabric of our psychology that we may be allowed to attempt a psychoanalytic—that is, a genetic—derivation of such a feeling. The following line of thought then presents itself. Normally, nothing is more certain to us than the feeling of our self, of our own ego. This ego appears to us as autonomous and unitary, clearly set off from everything else. That this appearance is deceptive—that the ego, on the contrary, continues inward, without any sharp boundary, into an unconscious mental entity which we call the id and for which it serves, as it were, as a façade—is something we learned only from psychoanalytic research, which still owes us a great deal of information about the relation of the ego to the id. But outwardly, at least, the ego seems to maintain clear and sharp lines of demarcation. There is only one state in which it is otherwise—an unusual state, admittedly, but not one that can be condemned as pathological. At the height of being in love, the boundary between ego and object threatens to melt away. Against all the evidence of the senses, the lover declares that "I" and "you" are one, and is prepared to behave as if this were so.[4] What can be temporarily abolished by a physiological function must, of course, also be liable to disturbance by pathological processes. Pathology acquaints us with a great number of states in which the boundary between the ego and the external world becomes uncertain, or in which the boundaries are actually drawn incorrectly: cases in which parts of our own body, even pieces of our own mental life—perceptions, thoughts, feelings—appear alien to us, as if they did not belong to the ego; and others in which we ascribe to

4 "Ego" and "id" render Freud's plain German *das Ich* and *das Es*, literally "the I" and "the It"; the super-ego (7.2) is *das Über-Ich*, "the Over-I."

the external world what has plainly arisen in the ego and ought to be acknowledged by it. So the sense of self, too, is subject to disturbances, and the boundaries of the ego are not constant.[5]

1.5 A further consideration tells us that this sense of self in the adult cannot have been like this from the beginning. It must have undergone a development which, understandably, cannot be demonstrated, but which can be reconstructed with a fair degree of probability.[6] The infant at the breast does not yet distinguish his ego from an external world as the source of the sensations flowing in upon him. He learns to do so gradually, in response to various stimuli. He must be very strongly impressed by the fact that some of the sources of excitation, which he will later recognize as his own bodily organs, can send him sensations at any time, while others—among them the one he desires most, his mother's breast—elude him from time to time and can be brought back only by his screaming for help. In this way an "object" first confronts the ego, as something that is situated "outside" and can be made to appear only by a particular action. A further impetus to detaching the ego from the mass of sensations—that is, to recognizing an "outside," an external world—comes from the frequent, manifold and unavoidable sensations of pain and unpleasure, which the pleasure principle, in its unrestricted sway, bids us remove and avoid. There arises a tendency to separate from the ego everything that can become a source of such unpleasure, to throw it outside, and to form a pure pleasure-ego, confronted by an alien and threatening outside. The boundaries of this primitive pleasure-ego cannot escape correction by experience. Some things that one would not want to give up, because they give pleasure, are nonetheless not ego but object; and some torments that one wants to expel turn out after all to be inseparable from the ego, to be of internal

5 "Sense of self" renders *Ichgefühl*, literally "ego-feeling."

6 FREUD'S NOTE. See the numerous works on the development of the ego and the sense of self, from Ferenczi's "Stages in the Development of the Sense of Reality" (1913) to the contributions of P. Federn in 1926, 1927 and later.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Sándor Ferenczi (1873–1933) and Paul Federn (1871–1950) were among Freud's closest psychoanalytic collaborators.

origin. One learns a procedure by which, through deliberately directing one's sensory activity and through suitable muscular action, one can distinguish what is internal—belonging to the ego—from what is external—originating in an external world; and with this one takes the first step toward establishing the reality principle, which is to govern further development. This distinction naturally serves the practical purpose of defending oneself against sensations of unpleasure, both those actually felt and those that threaten. That the ego, in defending itself against certain unpleasurable excitations arising from within, uses no other methods than those it employs against unpleasure from without then becomes the starting point of significant pathological disturbances.

[1.6] In this way, then, the ego detaches itself from the external world. Or, to put it more correctly: originally the ego contains everything; later it separates off an external world from itself. Our present sense of self is thus only a shrunken remnant of a far more extensive—indeed, an all-embracing—feeling, which corresponded to a more intimate bond between the ego and the world about it. If we may assume that this primary sense of self has survived in the mental life of many people—to a greater or lesser extent—it would stand beside the narrower and more sharply bounded sense of self of maturity as a kind of counterpart, and the ideational contents appropriate to it would be precisely those of limitlessness and of a bond with the universe—the very ones with which my friend explains the "oceanic" feeling. But have we a right to assume that what was original survives alongside what later developed out of it?

[1.7] Undoubtedly. Such an occurrence is not strange either in the mental field or in others. In the animal kingdom we hold to the assumption that the most highly developed species have evolved from the lowest. Yet we still find all the simple forms of life among the living today. The race of the great saurians has died out and made way for the mammals, but a true representative of that race, the crocodile, still lives among us. The analogy may be too remote; it also suffers from the fact that the surviv-

ing lower species are for the most part not the true ancestors of today's more highly developed ones. As a rule the intermediate links have died out and are known only through reconstruction. In the mental realm, on the other hand, the preservation of what is primitive alongside the transformed version that has arisen from it is so common that there is no need to prove it by examples. Usually it is the result of a split in development. One quantitative portion of an attitude, of an impulse, has remained unchanged, while another has undergone further development.

ROME AND THE PRESERVATION OF THE PAST

Freud imagines Rome as a mind in which every earlier stage survives beside the latest.

1.8 We are touching here on the more general problem of preservation in the psyche, which has hardly yet been studied, but which is so attractive and so significant that we may give it our attention for a while, even though the occasion hardly warrants it. Ever since we overcame the error of supposing that the forgetting we are familiar with means the destruction of the memory trace—that is, its annihilation—we have inclined to the opposite assumption: that in mental life nothing that has once been formed can perish, that everything is somehow preserved and can be brought to light again under suitable circumstances, for instance through a regression reaching back far enough. Let us try to make clear what this assumption involves by means of a comparison from another field. Let us take as an example, say, the development of the Eternal City.[7] Historians tell us that the oldest Rome was the Roma quadrata, a fenced settlement on the Palatine. Then came the phase of the Septimontium, a union of the settlements on the individual hills; after that the city bounded by the Servian Wall; and later still, after all the transformations of the republican period and the early empire, the city that the emperor Aurelian enclosed within his walls. We

7 FREUD'S NOTE. After *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. VI, 1928: "The Founding of Rome" by Hugh Last.

will not follow the city's changes any further, but ask ourselves what a visitor—whom we imagine equipped with the most complete historical and topographical knowledge—may still find of these early stages in present-day Rome. He will see the Aurelian Wall almost unchanged, apart from a few breaches. In a few places he can find stretches of the Servian Wall brought to light by excavation. If he knows enough—more than present-day archaeology—he may perhaps be able to trace the whole course of this wall, and the outline of the Roma quadrata, on the map of the city. Of the buildings that once filled these ancient frames he will find nothing, or only scanty remains, for they no longer exist. The most that the best knowledge of republican Rome could do for him would be to enable him to point out the sites where the temples and public buildings of that period had stood. What occupies these sites now are ruins—not, however, ruins of the buildings themselves, but of their restorations in later times, after fires and destruction. It hardly needs special mention that all these remains of ancient Rome appear as fragments scattered through the tangle of a great city built over the last few centuries, since the Renaissance. Much that is old is no doubt still buried in the soil of the city or beneath its modern buildings. This is the kind of preservation of the past that we meet with in historical cities like Rome.

[1.9] Now let us make the fantastic assumption that Rome is not a human dwelling place but a psychical entity with a similarly long and rich past—an entity, that is, in which nothing that has once come into being has passed away, and in which all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest one. For Rome this would mean that on the Palatine the imperial palaces and the Septizonium of Septimius Severus still rose to their former height, that the Castel Sant'Angelo still bore on its battlements the beautiful statues that adorned it until the siege by the Goths, and so on.[8] But more than this: on the site of the Palazzo Caffarelli there would once again stand—without

8 During the Gothic siege of Rome in AD 537, the defenders of Hadrian's mausoleum (the Castel Sant'Angelo) hurled its statues down on the attackers.

this building having to be removed—the Temple of Capitoline Jupiter, and not only in its latest form, as the Romans of the imperial age saw it, but also in its earliest, when it still showed Etruscan forms and was adorned with terracotta antefixes. Where the Colosseum now stands we could also admire Nero's vanished Golden House; on the Piazza of the Pantheon we should find not only the present Pantheon, as Hadrian left it to us, but, on the same site, the original building of M. Agrippa as well; indeed, the same ground would bear the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva and the ancient temple over which it was built. And here, perhaps, the observer would need only to change the direction of his gaze or his position in order to call up the one view or the other.

1.10 There is clearly no point in spinning this fantasy out any further; it leads to the unimaginable, indeed to the absurd. If we want to represent historical sequence in spatial terms, we can do it only by juxtaposition in space: the same space cannot be filled twice over. Our attempt seems to be an idle game. It has only one justification: it shows us how far we are from mastering the peculiarities of mental life by means of pictorial representation.

1.11 There is one objection we ought still to address. It asks why we chose precisely the past of a city to compare with the past of the mind. Even for mental life, the assumption that everything past is preserved holds only on condition that the organ of the psyche has remained intact and that its tissue has not suffered from trauma or inflammation. But destructive influences comparable to these causes of illness are missing from the history of no city, even one with a less turbulent past than Rome—even one which, like London, has hardly ever been visited by an enemy. The most peaceful development of a city includes the demolition and replacement of buildings, and for that reason a city is from the outset unsuited to such a comparison with a mental organism.

1.12 We yield to this objection and, forgoing the effect of a striking contrast, turn to an object of comparison that is at any rate

more closely related: the body of an animal or a human being. But here, too, we find the same thing. The earlier phases of development are no longer preserved in any sense; they have been absorbed into the later ones, for which they supplied the material. The embryo cannot be detected in the adult. The thymus gland that the child possessed is replaced by connective tissue after puberty and is itself no longer there. In the long bones of the grown man I can, it is true, trace the outline of the child's bone, but that bone itself has vanished, lengthening and thickening until it reached its final form. The fact remains that such preservation of all the earlier stages alongside the final form is possible only in the mental realm, and that we are not in a position to form a picture of it.

1.13 Perhaps we are going too far with this assumption. Perhaps we ought to content ourselves with asserting that what is past in mental life *can* be preserved, and need not *necessarily* be destroyed. It is, after all, possible that in the psyche, too, much that is old—whether normally or by exception—is so far effaced or consumed that no process can ever restore and revive it, or that preservation in general depends on certain favorable conditions. It is possible, but we know nothing about it. We can only hold fast to the view that the preservation of the past in mental life is the rule rather than a strange exception.

IS THE OCEANIC FEELING THE SOURCE OF RELIGION?

Religious needs derive from infantile helplessness and longing for the father, not from the oceanic feeling.

1.14 If, then, we are quite prepared to acknowledge that many people have an "oceanic" feeling, and are inclined to trace it back to an early phase of the sense of self, the further question arises: what claim has this feeling to be regarded as the source of religious needs?

1.15 To me this claim does not seem compelling. After all, a feeling can be a source of energy only if it is itself the expression of a strong need. As for religious needs, their derivation from

the helplessness of infancy and the longing for the father that it arouses seems to me irrefutable—all the more so since this feeling is not simply carried over from childhood, but is kept alive permanently by anxiety in the face of the superior power of fate. I could not name any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection. With this, the role of the oceanic feeling, which might perhaps strive to restore unlimited narcissism, is pushed out of the foreground. The origin of the religious attitude can be traced in clear outline as far back as the feeling of infantile helplessness. There may be something more behind it, but for the time being it is veiled in fog.

1.16 I can imagine that the oceanic feeling became connected with religion only later. This oneness with the universe, which is its ideational content, strikes us as a first attempt at religious consolation, as another way of denying the danger that the ego recognizes as threatening it from the external world. I repeat my confession that I find it very hard to work with these almost intangible quantities. Another of my friends, whose insatiable thirst for knowledge has driven him to the most unusual experiments and has ended by making him omniscient, assured me that through the practices of yoga—by turning away from the external world, by binding the attention to bodily functions, by special methods of breathing—one can in fact awaken in oneself new sensations and general bodily feelings, which he takes to be regressions to primordial states of mental life that have long since been overlaid. He sees in them a physiological basis, so to speak, for much of the wisdom of mysticism. Connections with certain obscure modifications of mental life, such as trance and ecstasy, would readily suggest themselves here. But I feel moved to exclaim, for once, in the words of Schiller's diver: "Let him rejoice who breathes up here in the rosy light."[9]

9 The friend is probably the Viennese polymath Friedrich Eckstein (1861–1939). The line comes from Schiller's ballad "The Diver" (1797), spoken by the diver after his return from the terrors of the deep.

Chapter II

II

Religion as the common man's consolation, and the methods by which people pursue happiness: intoxication, mastering the drives, sublimation, illusion, love and beauty.

2.1 In my book *The Future of an Illusion* I was concerned much less with the deepest sources of religious feeling than with what the common man understands by his religion: the system of doctrines and promises which on the one hand explains the riddles of this world to him with enviable completeness, and on the other assures him that a careful Providence will watch over his life and make good any frustrations in an existence hereafter. The common man cannot imagine this Providence otherwise than in the person of a magnificently exalted father. Only such a being can know the needs of the child of man, be softened by his entreaties and appeased by the signs of his remorse. The whole thing is so patently infantile, so remote from reality, that anyone with a friendly disposition toward humanity finds it painful to think that the great majority of mortals will never be able to rise above this view of life. It is still more humiliating to discover how large a proportion of people living today, who cannot fail to see that this religion is untenable, nevertheless try to defend it piece by piece in a series of pitiful rearguard actions. One would like to join the ranks of the believers in order to confront the philosophers—who think they can rescue the God of religion by replacing him with an impersonal, shadowy, abstract principle—with the admonition: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain! If some of the greatest minds of past ages did the same,

one may not appeal to them in this matter. We know why they had to.

2.2 Let us return to the common man and his religion—the only religion that ought to bear that name. The first thing we come upon is the well-known saying of one of our great poets and sages, in which he speaks of the relation of religion to art and science. It runs: "He who possesses science and art
has religion too;
he who possesses neither of the two,
let him have religion!"[1] On the one hand this saying sets religion in opposition to the two highest achievements of man; on the other, it asserts that in their value for life they can stand in for or replace one another. If we wish to deny the common man his religion as well, we clearly do not have the poet's authority on our side.

We shall take a particular route in approaching an appreciation of his words. Life as it is imposed on us is too hard for us; it brings us too many pains, disappointments and insoluble tasks. In order to bear it we cannot do without palliatives. (There's no managing without auxiliary constructions, Theodor Fontane has told us.) There are perhaps three kinds of such measures: powerful diversions, which make us think little of our misery; substitute satisfactions, which lessen it; and intoxicating substances, which make us insensitive to it. Something of this kind is indispensable.[2] It is at diversions that Voltaire is aiming when he ends his *Candide* with the advice to cultivate one's garden; scientific activity, too, is a diversion of this sort.[3] The substitute sat-

1 FREUD'S NOTE. Goethe, in the "Zahme Xenien" ("Tame Epigrams") IX (poems from his posthumous papers).

2 FREUD'S NOTE. Wilhelm Busch says the same thing on a lower level in *Die fromme Helene* (*Pious Helen*): "Whoever has cares has liqueur as well."

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Wilhelm Busch (1832–1908), German humorous poet and cartoonist; *Pious Helen* appeared in 1872.

3 Theodor Fontane (1819–1898), German novelist; the remark comes from his *Effi Briest* (1895). Voltaire's *Candide* (1759) ends with the words "we must cultivate our garden."

isfactions offered by art are illusions when set against reality, but they are no less effective psychically for that, thanks to the role that fantasy has maintained in mental life. Intoxicants influence our bodies and alter their chemistry. It is not easy to say where religion belongs in this series. We shall have to go further afield.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

People want to be happy, but the pleasure principle's program is at odds with the whole world.

2.3 The question of the purpose of human life has been asked countless times; it has never yet found a satisfactory answer, and perhaps it does not admit of one at all. Some of those who have asked it have added that if it should turn out that life has no purpose, it would lose all value for them. But this threat changes nothing. It seems, rather, that we have a right to decline the question. Its presupposition seems to be that human presumption of which we already know so many other manifestations. Nobody speaks of a purpose in the life of animals—unless, perhaps, their destiny is taken to consist in serving man. But this, too, is untenable, for there are many animals with which man can do nothing—except describe, classify and study them—and countless species of animals have escaped even this use by living and dying out before man had ever set eyes on them. Once again, it is only religion that can answer the question of the purpose of life. We shall hardly be wrong in concluding that the idea of life having a purpose stands and falls with the religious system.

2.4 We turn, therefore, to the less ambitious question of what people themselves reveal by their behavior to be the purpose and intention of their lives—what they demand of life and wish to achieve in it. The answer can hardly be in doubt: they strive for happiness; they want to become happy and to remain so. This striving has two sides, a positive and a negative aim: on the one hand it seeks the absence of pain and unpleasure, on the

other the experience of strong feelings of pleasure. In the narrower sense of the word, "happiness" refers only to the latter. In keeping with this twofold division of aims, human activity develops in two directions, according to whether it seeks to realize one or the other of these aims—predominantly, or even exclusively.

2.5 As we see, it is simply the program of the pleasure principle that sets the purpose of life. This principle governs the operation of the mental apparatus from the very beginning; there can be no doubt about its usefulness, and yet its program is at odds with the whole world, with the macrocosm as much as with the microcosm. It simply cannot be carried out; all the arrangements of the universe run counter to it. One might say that the intention that man should be "happy" is not included in the plan of "Creation." What is called happiness in the strictest sense arises from the rather sudden satisfaction of needs that have been dammed up to a high degree, and by its nature it is possible only as an episodic phenomenon. Any continuation of a situation longed for by the pleasure principle produces only a feeling of mild contentment. We are so made that we can derive intense enjoyment only from a contrast, and only very little from a state of things.[4] Our possibilities of happiness are thus already limited by our constitution. Unhappiness is much less difficult to experience. Suffering threatens us from three directions: from our own body, which is doomed to decay and dissolution and cannot even do without pain and anxiety as warning signals; from the external world, which can rage against us with overwhelming, merciless, destructive forces; and finally from our relations with other people. The suffering that comes from this last source we perhaps feel more painfully than any other; we tend to regard it as a kind of gratuitous addition, although it may be no less fatefully inevitable than suffering of other origins.

4 FREUD'S NOTE. Goethe even warns: "Nothing is harder to bear than a succession of fair days." This may, however, be an exaggeration.

TECHNIQUES FOR AVOIDING SUFFERING

Isolation, intoxication, mastering the drives, sublimation, and fantasy each protect against suffering, but only partly.

2.6 No wonder, then, that under the pressure of these possibilities of suffering people usually moderate their claims to happiness—just as the pleasure principle itself, under the influence of the external world, changed into the more modest reality principle—and that they count themselves happy merely to have escaped misfortune and survived their suffering; no wonder that, quite generally, the task of avoiding suffering pushes that of gaining pleasure into the background. Reflection teaches that this task can be tackled along very different paths; all of them have been recommended by the various schools of worldly wisdom, and all have been taken by people. Unrestricted satisfaction of every need thrusts itself forward as the most tempting way of conducting one's life, but it means putting enjoyment before caution, and it brings its own punishment after a short run. The other methods, in which the avoidance of unpleasure is the chief purpose, differ according to the source of unpleasure to which they pay most attention. Some of these procedures are extreme and some moderate; some are one-sided, and some attack the problem at several points at once. Voluntary isolation, keeping oneself apart from others, is the most obvious protection against the suffering that can arise from human relationships. We understand: the happiness that can be attained by this path is the happiness of quietude. Against the dreaded external world one can defend oneself only by some kind of turning away, if one means to solve this task on one's own. There is, of course, another and better path: to go over to the attack against nature as a member of the human community, with the help of a technology guided by science, and to subject her to the human will. One then works with all for the happiness of all. The most interesting methods of preventing suffering, however, are those that try to influence one's own organism. For in the end all suffering is

nothing but sensation; it exists only insofar as we feel it, and we feel it only as a consequence of certain arrangements of our organism.

2.7 The crudest, but also the most effective, method of such influence is the chemical one: intoxication. I do not think anyone fully understands its mechanism, but it is a fact that there are substances foreign to the body whose presence in the blood and tissues gives us immediate sensations of pleasure, and also so alters the conditions of our sensibility that we become incapable of receiving unpleasurable impulses. The two effects not only occur at the same time; they also seem to be intimately linked. But there must also be substances in our own body chemistry that do something similar, for we know at least one pathological state, mania, in which this intoxication-like condition comes about without any intoxicating drug having been taken. Moreover, our normal mental life shows fluctuations between an easier and a more difficult release of pleasure, which run parallel with a diminished or increased receptivity to unpleasure. It is greatly to be regretted that this toxic side of mental processes has so far eluded scientific investigation. What intoxicants achieve in the struggle for happiness and in keeping misery at bay is so highly valued as a benefit that individuals and peoples alike have given them a fixed place in their economy of the libido. We owe to them not only an immediate yield of pleasure but also a much longed-for measure of independence from the external world. For people know that with the help of this "drowner of cares" they can at any moment withdraw from the pressure of reality and find refuge in a world of their own with better conditions of sensibility. It is well known that it is precisely this property of intoxicants that also makes them dangerous and harmful. In certain circumstances they are to blame when large quantities of energy that could have been used to improve the human lot are uselessly lost.

2.8 The intricate structure of our mental apparatus, however, also permits a whole series of other kinds of influence. Just as satisfaction of the drives is happiness, so it becomes the cause of

severe suffering when the external world lets us go hungry and refuses to sate our needs. One can therefore hope to free oneself from part of one's suffering by acting upon these impulses. This kind of defense against suffering no longer works on the sensory apparatus; it seeks to master the internal sources of our needs. In its extreme form this is done by killing off the drives, as Eastern worldly wisdom teaches and the practice of yoga carries out. If this succeeds, one has of course given up all other activity as well (one has sacrificed life), and has once again, by another route, attained only the happiness of quietude.[5] The same path is followed, with more moderate aims, when one strives only to control the life of the drives. What rules then are the higher psychical agencies, which have submitted to the reality principle. Here the aim of satisfaction is by no means given up; a certain protection against suffering is achieved because the lack of satisfaction of drives held in subjection is not felt as painfully as that of uninhibited ones. Against this, however, stands an undeniable reduction in the possibilities of enjoyment. The feeling of happiness in satisfying a wild impulse, untamed by the ego, is incomparably more intense than that in sating a tamed drive. The irresistibility of perverse impulses, and perhaps the lure of the forbidden in general, finds an economic explanation here.

2.9 Another technique for fending off suffering makes use of the displacements of libido that our mental apparatus permits, and through which its functioning gains so much in flexibility. The task to be solved is to shift the aims of the drives in such a way that they cannot be struck by frustration from the external world. Sublimation of the drives lends its help here. One achieves most if one knows how to raise sufficiently the yield of pleasure from the sources of psychical and intellectual work. Fate can then do little to harm one. Satisfactions of this kind, such as the artist's joy in creating, in giving body to the figures of his imagination, or the scientist's in solving problems and dis-

5 "Drive" renders Freud's *Trieb*; Strachey's standard English edition translates it as "instinct."

covering the truth, have a special quality which we shall certainly one day be able to characterize in metapsychological terms. For the present we can only say, figuratively, that they seem to us "finer and higher"; but their intensity is muted compared with that of sating crude, primary impulses; they do not convulse our physical being. The weakness of this method, however, is that it is not generally applicable and is accessible to only a few people. It presupposes special dispositions and gifts that are not exactly common in any effective degree. Even to these few it cannot give complete protection against suffering: it provides them with no armor impenetrable to the arrows of fate, and it usually fails when one's own body becomes the source of suffering.[6]

2.10 If with this procedure the intention of making oneself independent of the external world, by seeking one's satisfactions in internal, psychical processes, is already plain, the same features stand out still more strongly in the next one. Here the connection with reality is loosened even further; satisfaction is obtained from illusions that one recognizes as such, without letting their divergence from reality spoil one's enjoyment. The region from which these illusions come is that of the life of fantasy. At the time when the sense of reality was developing,

6 FREUD'S NOTE. Where no special disposition imperiously dictates the direction of a person's interests in life, ordinary professional work, open to everyone, can take the place assigned to it by Voltaire's wise advice. It is not possible, within the limits of a brief survey, to do adequate justice to the significance of work for the economy of the libido. No other technique for the conduct of life binds the individual so firmly to reality as an emphasis on work, which at least fits him securely into one portion of reality, the human community. The possibility of displacing a large quantity of libidinal components—narcissistic, aggressive and even erotic ones—onto professional work and the human relationships bound up with it lends it a value by no means inferior to its indispensability for maintaining and justifying one's existence in society. Professional activity brings particular satisfaction when it has been freely chosen—that is, when it makes it possible to put existing inclinations, and impulses that have persisted or been constitutionally reinforced, to use through sublimation. And yet people set little store by work as a path to happiness. They do not press toward it as they do toward other possibilities of satisfaction. The great majority of people work only under the pressure of necessity, and from this natural human aversion to work the most difficult social problems arise.

this region was expressly exempted from the demands of reality-testing, and it remained set aside for the fulfillment of wishes that were hard to carry through. Foremost among these fantasy satisfactions stands the enjoyment of works of art, which, through the mediation of the artist, is made accessible even to those who are not themselves creative.[7] Anyone who is receptive to the influence of art cannot value it highly enough as a source of pleasure and a consolation in life. Yet the mild narcosis into which art transports us can bring about no more than a fleeting escape from the hardships of life, and it is not strong enough to make us forget real misery.

2.11 Another procedure goes to work more energetically and more thoroughly. It sees the one enemy in reality, which is the source of all suffering, with which it is impossible to live, and with which one must therefore break off all relations if one is to be happy in any sense at all. The hermit turns his back on this world; he wants nothing to do with it. But one can do more: one can try to re-create the world, to build up in its place another one, in which its most intolerable features are wiped out and replaced by others in keeping with one's own wishes. Whoever sets out on this path to happiness in desperate revolt will as a rule achieve nothing; reality is too strong for him. He becomes a madman, who for the most part finds no one to help him carry through his delusion. It is asserted, however, that each of us behaves in some respect like the paranoiac, correcting some aspect of the world that he finds unbearable by constructing a wish, and inscribing this delusion into reality. A case of particular importance is that in which a considerable number of people together undertake the attempt to secure an assurance of happiness and a protection against suffering by a delusional remolding of reality. The religions of mankind, too, must be classed among such mass delusions. Needless to say, no one who still shares a delusion ever recognizes it as such.

7 FREUD'S NOTE. Cf. "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," 1911 (Collected Writings, vol. VI), and *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, XXIII (Collected Writings, vol. VII).

LOVE, BEAUTY, AND THE LIMITS OF EVERY METHOD

Love and beauty promise positive happiness; no single path suits everyone, and religion imposes one on all.

2.12 I do not believe that this list of the methods by which people try to gain happiness and keep suffering away is complete, and I know, too, that the material allows of other arrangements. One of these procedures I have not yet mentioned—not because I had forgotten it, but because it will occupy us in another connection. And how could one forget this technique of the art of living, of all things! It is distinguished by a most remarkable combination of characteristic features. It, too, naturally aims at independence from fate—as we had best call it—and to this end it shifts satisfaction into internal mental processes, making use in doing so of the displaceability of the libido mentioned earlier. Yet it does not turn away from the external world; on the contrary, it clings to its objects and obtains happiness from an emotional relationship with them. Nor is it content with the aim of avoiding unpleasure—an aim of weary resignation, as it were; rather, it passes this by heedlessly and holds fast to the original, passionate striving for a positive fulfillment of happiness. Perhaps it really does come closer to this goal than any other method. I mean, of course, that way of life which makes love its center and expects all satisfaction to come from loving and being loved. Such a psychical attitude is familiar enough to all of us; one of the forms in which love appears, sexual love, has given us our strongest experience of an overwhelming sensation of pleasure and has thus furnished the model for our pursuit of happiness. What could be more natural than that we should persist in seeking happiness along the same path on which we first encountered it? The weak side of this technique of living is plain to see; otherwise no one would ever have thought of abandoning this path to happiness for another. We are never so defenseless against suffering as when we love, never so helplessly unhappy as when we have lost the loved object or its love. But this does

not dispose of the technique of living based on the happiness-value of love; there is much more to be said about it.

2.13 Here we may add the interesting case in which happiness in life is sought predominantly in the enjoyment of beauty, wherever it presents itself to our senses and our judgment—the beauty of human forms and gestures, of natural objects and landscapes, of artistic and even scientific creations. This aesthetic attitude to the goal of life offers little protection against threatening suffering, but it can make up for a great deal. The enjoyment of beauty has a peculiar, mildly intoxicating quality of feeling. Beauty has no obvious use, nor can its cultural necessity be discerned; and yet civilization could not do without it. The science of aesthetics investigates the conditions under which things are felt to be beautiful; it has been unable to shed any light on the nature and origin of beauty, and, as usual, its lack of results is concealed beneath a profusion of resounding but empty words. Unfortunately psychoanalysis, too, has least of all to say about beauty. The only thing that seems certain is its derivation from the realm of sexual feeling; it would be a perfect example of an aim-inhibited impulse. "Beauty" and "charm" are originally attributes of the sexual object. It is worth noting that the genitals themselves, the sight of which is always exciting, are nevertheless hardly ever judged to be beautiful; the quality of beauty seems, instead, to attach to certain secondary sexual characteristics.[8]

2.14 Despite this incompleteness, I venture now to make a few remarks to conclude our inquiry. The program of becoming happy, which the pleasure principle imposes on us, cannot be fulfilled. Yet we must not—no, we cannot—give up our efforts to bring it somehow nearer to fulfillment. Very different paths may be taken toward it. We may give priority either to the positive content of the goal, the gain of pleasure, or to the negative one, the avoidance of unpleasure. On none of these paths can we attain everything we desire. Happiness, in the reduced sense in which it is recognized as possible, is a problem of the economics

8 The German *Reiz* means both "charm" and "stimulus."

of the individual's libido. There is no advice here that suits everyone; each of us must find out for himself in what particular fashion he can be saved.[9] The most varied factors will come into play in directing his choice. It depends on how much real satisfaction he can expect from the external world and how far he is led to make himself independent of it. Finally, it also depends on how much strength he believes he has to alter the world in accordance with his wishes. Even here, besides the external circumstances, the psychical constitution of the individual will be decisive. The predominantly erotic person will give first place to his emotional relationships with other people. The narcissistic person, who tends to be self-sufficient, will seek his essential satisfactions in his own inner mental processes. The man of action will not let go of the external world, on which he can test his strength. For the middle one of these types, the nature of his gifts and the amount of sublimation of the drives open to him will determine where he is to place his interests. Every extreme decision will be punished: it exposes the individual to the dangers that come with the inadequacy of any technique of living chosen to the exclusion of all others. Just as a cautious businessman avoids tying up all his capital in one place, so worldly wisdom will perhaps also advise us not to expect all our satisfaction from a single aspiration. Success is never certain. It depends on the coming together of many factors, and perhaps on none more than the capacity of the psychical constitution to adapt its function to the environment and to exploit that environment for a gain of pleasure. Anyone who has brought into the world a particularly unfavorable constitution of the drives, and has not properly gone through the transformation and rearrangement of the components of his libido that are indispensable for later achievement, will find it hard to obtain happiness from his external situation, especially if he is faced with rather difficult tasks. As a last technique of living, one that at least promises him substitute satisfactions, flight into neurotic

9 An echo of Frederick the Great's dictum (1740) that in his state everyone should be saved "nach seiner Fasson," after his own fashion.

illness offers itself to him. He usually makes this flight while still young. The person who sees his efforts at happiness thwarted later in life still finds consolation in the gain of pleasure from chronic intoxication. Or else he undertakes the desperate attempt at rebellion that is psychosis.

2.15 Religion interferes with this play of choice and adaptation, since it imposes its own path to acquiring happiness and protection from suffering on everyone alike. Its technique consists in depressing the value of life and distorting the picture of the real world in a delusional manner, which presupposes that the intelligence has been intimidated. At this price—by forcibly fixing people in a state of psychical infantilism and drawing them into a group delusion—religion succeeds in sparing many people an individual neurosis. But hardly anything more. There are, as we have said, many paths that may lead to such happiness as is attainable by man, but none that leads there with certainty. Religion, too, cannot keep its promise. When the believer finally finds himself obliged to speak of God's "inscrutable decree," he is admitting that the only thing left to him as a last possible consolation and source of pleasure in his suffering is unconditional submission. And if he is ready for that, he could probably have spared himself the detour.

Chapter III

III

Why people turn against civilization, and what it is: mastery of nature, beauty, cleanliness and order, the higher mental activities, and the regulation of social relations.

3.1 Our inquiry into happiness has so far not taught us much that is not common knowledge. Even if we continue it by asking why it is so hard for people to be happy, the prospect of learning anything new does not seem much greater. We have already given the answer by pointing to the three sources from which our suffering comes: the superior power of nature, the frailty of our own bodies, and the inadequacy of the institutions that regulate people's relations with one another in the family, the state and society. As regards the first two, our judgment cannot waver for long. It forces us to acknowledge these sources of suffering and to resign ourselves to the inevitable. We shall never completely master nature. Our organism, itself a part of that nature, will always remain a transient structure, limited in adaptability and performance. This recognition has no paralyzing effect. On the contrary, it shows our activity which direction to take. If we cannot abolish all suffering, we can abolish some of it and alleviate some more; thousands of years of experience have convinced us of that. Our attitude to the third source of suffering, the social one, is different. This one we refuse to accept at all. We cannot see why the institutions we ourselves have created should not rather be a protection and a benefit for us all. Admittedly, when we consider how badly we have succeeded in precisely this part of the prevention of suffering, the suspicion dawns that here,

too, a piece of unconquerable nature may lie behind it—this time, our own psychical make-up.

HOSTILITY TO CIVILIZATION

Many blame civilization for their misery, though technical progress has not made people feel happier.

3.2 As we set about considering this possibility, we come upon a contention so astonishing that we shall pause over it. It holds that a large part of the blame for our misery lies with our so-called civilization, and that we should be much happier if we gave it up and returned to primitive conditions. I call it astonishing because—however one may define the concept of civilization—it is certain that everything with which we try to protect ourselves against the threats that come from the sources of suffering belongs to that very civilization.

3.3 By what path, I wonder, have so many people come to this strange attitude of hostility to civilization? I believe that a deep and long-standing dissatisfaction with the prevailing state of civilization prepared the ground. On that ground, on certain historical occasions, this condemnation then arose. I think I can identify the last of these occasions and the one before it. I am not learned enough to trace the chain of them far enough back into the history of the human species. A factor of this kind, hostile to civilization, must already have been involved in the victory of Christianity over the pagan religions. It was, after all, very close to the devaluation of earthly life brought about by Christian doctrine. The next-to-last occasion arose when the progress of voyages of discovery brought people into contact with tribal peoples. Because their manners and customs were inadequately observed and misunderstood, these peoples seemed to the Europeans to lead a simple, happy life with few needs, a life beyond the reach of their culturally superior visitors. Later experience has corrected many judgments of this kind. In many cases people had mistakenly attributed to the absence of complicated cultural demands a degree of ease in life

that was really owed to the generosity of nature and to the ready satisfaction of the major needs. The last occasion is especially familiar to us. It came about when people became acquainted with the mechanism of the neuroses, which threaten to undermine the little bit of happiness that civilized man enjoys. It was found that a person becomes neurotic because he cannot tolerate the degree of frustration that society imposes on him in the service of its cultural ideals. And it was inferred that abolishing these demands, or greatly reducing them, would mean a return to possibilities of happiness.

3.4 There is an added element of disappointment. In the last few generations mankind has made extraordinary advances in the natural sciences and in their technical application, and has consolidated its control over nature in a way that was formerly unimaginable. The details of this progress are common knowledge; there is no need to list them. People are proud of these achievements, and they have a right to be. But they believe they have noticed something. This newly won command of space and time, this subjugation of the forces of nature, the fulfillment of a longing thousands of years old, has not increased the amount of pleasurable satisfaction they expect from life. It has not, as they feel it, made them happier. We ought to be content to conclude from this observation that power over nature is not the only condition of human happiness, just as it is not the only goal of the efforts of civilization. We ought not to infer from it that technical progress is worthless for the economics of our happiness. One would like to object: is it not a positive gain in pleasure, an unequivocal increase in my feeling of happiness, if I can hear, as often as I like, the voice of my child who lives hundreds of kilometers away? Or if I can learn, within the shortest time after my friend has landed, that he has come through his long and difficult journey safely? Does it mean nothing that medicine has succeeded in reducing so enormously the mortality of infants and the danger of infection for women in childbirth—indeed, in lengthening the average life of civilized man by a considerable number of years? And we could cite a long list of further bene-

fits of this kind that we owe to the much-reviled age of scientific and technical progress—but here the voice of pessimistic criticism makes itself heard. It reminds us that most of these satisfactions follow the pattern of the "cheap pleasure" recommended in a certain anecdote. One obtains this pleasure by sticking one bare leg out from under the bedclothes on a cold winter night and then drawing it back in. If there were no railway to conquer distances, my child would never have left his native town, and I should need no telephone to hear his voice. If there were no shipping across the ocean, my friend would not have undertaken his sea voyage, and I should not need the telegraph to relieve my worry about him. What use is the reduction of infant mortality to us if it is precisely this that forces us to exercise the utmost restraint in having children? On the whole we raise no more children than in the days before the reign of hygiene. Yet in the process we have placed our sexual life in marriage under difficult conditions and have probably worked against beneficial natural selection. And finally, what good is a long life to us if it is hard, poor in joys and so full of suffering that we can only welcome death as a deliverer?

3.5 It seems certain that we do not feel comfortable in our present-day civilization. But it is very difficult to form a judgment as to whether, and to what extent, people in earlier times felt happier, and what part their cultural conditions played in this. We shall always tend to grasp misery objectively. That is, we put ourselves, with our own claims and sensitivities, into those conditions, and then examine what occasions for feelings of happiness and unhappiness we should find in them. This way of looking at things seems objective because it disregards the variations in subjective sensitivity. It is, of course, the most subjective way possible, since it substitutes one's own mental state for all the other, unknown ones. But happiness is something thoroughly subjective. However much we may shrink from certain situations—that of the galley slave in antiquity, of the peasant in the Thirty Years' War, of the victim of the Holy Inquisition, of the Jew awaiting the pogrom—it is still impossible for us

to feel our way into these people. We cannot guess the changes that original dullness, gradual numbing, the abandonment of expectations, and cruder and subtler methods of narcotization have brought about in their receptivity to sensations of pleasure and unpleasure. In cases where suffering reaches its extreme, certain mental protective devices are also brought into operation. It seems to me unprofitable to pursue this aspect of the problem any further.

WHAT CIVILIZATION IS

Civilization protects against nature and regulates human relations; it also prizes beauty, cleanliness, order and ideas.

3.6 It is time for us to turn our attention to the nature of this civilization whose value for happiness is being called into question. We shall not demand a formula that expresses this nature in a few words before we have learned anything from our inquiry. So we shall be content to repeat[1] that the word "civilization" denotes the whole sum of the achievements and institutions by which our life differs from that of our animal ancestors. These serve two purposes: to protect human beings against nature and to regulate their relations with one another. In order to understand more, we shall gather together the features of civilization one by one, as they appear in human communities.[2] In doing so we shall let ourselves be guided without hesitation by linguistic usage, or, as it is also called, our feeling for language. We trust that in this way we shall do justice to inner insights that still resist expression in abstract terms.

3.7 The beginning is easy. We recognize as cultural all activities and values that are useful to man by making the earth serviceable to him, protecting him against the violence of the forces of nature, and so on. About this aspect of what is cultural there is, after all, the least doubt. To go far enough back: the first cultural

1 FREUD'S NOTE. See *The Future of an Illusion*, 1927.
2 "Civilization" renders Freud's *Kultur* throughout; he refused to distinguish between *Kultur* and *Zivilisation* (culture and civilization).

acts were the use of tools, the taming of fire and the building of dwellings. Among these the taming of fire stands out as an altogether extraordinary achievement without precedent.[3] With the others man set out on paths that he has followed ever further ever since, and it is easy to guess what prompted them. With all his tools man perfects his organs—the motor as well as the sensory—or removes the limits to their performance. Engines place gigantic forces at his disposal, which, like his muscles, he can send in any direction he pleases. Ships and aircraft ensure that neither water nor air can hinder his movement. With spectacles he corrects the defects of the lens in his eye; with the telescope he gazes into distant spaces; with the microscope he overcomes the limits of visibility set by the structure of his retina. In the camera he has created an instrument that fixes fleeting visual impressions, a service the gramophone record must perform for equally transient auditory ones. Both are, at bottom, materializations of the faculty of recollection he has been given, his memory. With the help of the telephone he hears across distances that even a fairy tale would respect as unattainable. Writing is in origin the language of the absent. The dwelling house is

3 FREUD'S NOTE. Psychoanalytic material, incomplete and not reliably interpretable, does at least allow a conjecture—a fantastic-sounding one—about the origin of this great human feat. It is as though primal man had been in the habit, whenever he came upon fire, of satisfying an infantile pleasure in it by putting it out with his stream of urine. According to the legends we possess, there can be no doubt that the darting flame, stretching upward, was originally conceived of as phallic. Putting out fire by urinating—a practice to which those late giant children, Gulliver in Lilliput and Rabelais's Gargantua, still resort—was thus like a sexual act with a man, an enjoyment of male potency in homosexual competition. Whoever first renounced this pleasure and spared the fire was able to carry it off with him and force it into his service. By damping down the fire of his own sexual excitement, he had tamed the natural force of fire. This great cultural conquest would thus be the reward for a renunciation of the drives. And further, it is as though woman had been appointed guardian of the fire held captive on the domestic hearth because her anatomy forbids her to yield to such a temptation to pleasure. It is also remarkable how regularly analytic experience attests to the connection between ambition, fire and urethral erotism.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. In Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) Gulliver puts out a palace fire in Lilliput by urinating on it; Rabelais's giant Gargantua drowns crowds of Parisians in the same way.

a substitute for the mother's womb, the first abode, probably still longed for, in which one was safe and felt so comfortable.

3.8 Man first appeared on this earth as a feeble animal, and each individual of his species must still enter it as a helpless infant—oh inch of nature! What he has achieved here through his science and technology does not merely sound like a fairy tale. It is the outright fulfillment of all—no, of most—fairy-tale wishes. All these possessions he may claim as cultural acquisitions. Long ago he had formed an ideal conception of omnipotence and omniscience, which he embodied in his gods. To them he attributed everything that seemed beyond the reach of his wishes—or was forbidden to him. We may say, then, that these gods were cultural ideals.[4] He has now come very close to attaining this ideal; he has almost become a god himself. To be sure, only in the way that ideals are usually attained, by general human reckoning: not completely, in some respects not at all, in others only halfway. Man has become, as it were, a kind of prosthetic god. He is truly magnificent when he puts on all his auxiliary organs, but they have not grown onto him, and they still give him a good deal of trouble at times. He is entitled, moreover, to console himself with the thought that this development will not come to an end precisely in the year AD 1930. Distant ages will bring new and probably unimaginably great advances in this field of civilization and will increase his likeness to God still further. But in the interests of our inquiry we must not forget, either, that present-day man does not feel happy in his likeness to God.

3.9 We recognize, then, that a country has reached a high level of civilization when we find that everything in it is cultivated and efficiently provided for that serves man's exploitation of the earth and his protection against the forces of nature—in short, everything that is useful to him. In such a country, let us say, rivers that threaten floods are regulated in their course, and their water is led through canals to places where it is lacking.

4 "Oh inch of nature!" is in English in Freud's text, echoing Shakespeare's *Pericles* (3.1), where a newborn is called "poor inch of nature."

The soil is carefully tilled and planted with the crops it is suited to bear. The mineral wealth of the depths is diligently brought to the surface and worked into the tools and implements that are required. The means of transport are plentiful, fast and reliable. Wild and dangerous animals have been exterminated, and the breeding of those tamed as domestic animals flourishes. But we have still other demands to make of civilization, and, remarkably enough, we hope to find them realized in the same countries. As if we wished to disavow the claim we first made, we also welcome it as cultural when we see people directing their care to things that are not useful at all, that seem rather useless. For instance, the green spaces in a town, which are necessary as playgrounds and reservoirs of fresh air, may also carry flower beds, or the windows of homes may be decorated with flowerpots. We soon realize that the useless thing we expect civilization to value is beauty. We demand that civilized man should revere beauty wherever he encounters it in nature, and create it in objects so far as the work of his hands allows. Our demands on civilization are far from exhausted by this. We also expect to see signs of cleanliness and order. We do not think highly of the civilization of an English country town in Shakespeare's day when we read that a tall dunghill lay in front of his father's house in Stratford. We are indignant and call it "barbarous," the opposite of cultural, when we find the paths of the Vienna Woods strewn with discarded paper. Uncleanliness of any kind seems to us incompatible with civilization. We extend the demand for cleanliness to the human body as well. We hear with astonishment of the foul smell that the person of the *Roi Soleil* [Sun King] used to give off, and we shake our heads when, on Isola Bella, we are shown the tiny washbasin that Napoleon used for his morning toilet. Indeed, we are not surprised if someone goes so far as to set up the use of soap as an outright measure of civilization. It is similar with order, which, like cleanliness, relates entirely to human handiwork.[5] But whereas we cannot

5 The Sun King is Louis XIV of France (1638–1715). Isola Bella is an island in Lake Maggiore whose Borromeo palace Napoleon visited in 1797.

expect cleanliness in nature, order, on the contrary, has been learned from nature. The observation of the great astronomical regularities gave man not only a model but the first points of reference for introducing order into his life. Order is a kind of compulsion to repeat. Once a rule has been laid down, it decides when, where and how something is to be done, so that in every similar case one is spared hesitation and indecision. The benefits of order are quite undeniable. It enables man to make the best use of space and time while conserving his psychical forces. One would be entitled to expect order to have established itself in human activity from the start and without constraint. One may be astonished that this is not the case—that man instead displays a natural tendency to carelessness, irregularity and unreliability in his work, and has to be laboriously trained to imitate the heavenly models.

3.10 Beauty, cleanliness and order evidently occupy a special position among the demands of civilization. No one will maintain that they are as vital as control over the forces of nature and other factors we have yet to get to know. And yet no one will readily want to push them aside as trivialities. That civilization is not concerned solely with usefulness is already shown by the example of beauty, which we do not want to be without among the interests of civilization. The usefulness of order is quite obvious. As for cleanliness, we must bear in mind that hygiene demands it too, and we may suppose that this connection was not entirely unknown to people even before the age of scientific disease prevention. But usefulness does not entirely explain the striving; something else must be at play as well. Yet there is no feature, we believe, that characterizes civilization better than its esteem and cultivation of the higher psychical activities—intellectual, scientific and artistic achievements—and the leading role it grants to ideas in human life. Foremost among these ideas stand the religious systems, on whose intricate structure I have tried to shed light elsewhere. Next to them come philosophical speculations. And finally there is what may be called man's formation of ideals: his notions of a possible perfection of the

individual person, of the nation, of all humanity, and the demands he raises on the basis of such notions. These creations are not independent of one another but closely interwoven, and this makes it harder both to describe them and to derive them psychologically. Let us assume quite generally that the mainspring of all human activities is the striving toward the two converging goals of usefulness and gain of pleasure. Then we must accept that this holds for the cultural manifestations mentioned here as well, although it is readily apparent only for scientific and artistic activity. But there can be no doubt that the others, too, correspond to strong human needs—perhaps to needs that are developed only in a minority. Nor should we be misled by value judgments about particular religious and philosophical systems and particular ideals. Whether we look to them for the highest achievement of the human mind or deplore them as aberrations, we must acknowledge that their existence, and especially their dominance, signifies a high level of civilization.

REGULATING SOCIAL RELATIONS

Community power replaces individual force, restricting freedom in the name of justice.

3.11 As the last, and certainly not the least important, characteristic of a civilization, we must consider the way in which people's relations to one another—their social relations—are regulated. These are the relations that concern a person as a neighbor, as a helper, as another's sexual object, as a member of a family or of a state. Here it is particularly hard to keep free of particular ideal demands and to grasp what is cultural as such. Perhaps we may begin with the statement that the cultural element is present with the first attempt to regulate these social relations. If no such attempt were made, these relations would be subject to the arbitrary will of the individual. That is, the physically stronger would decide them in the sense of his own interests and impulses. Nothing would change if this stronger man, in turn, met a single individual who was stronger still.

Human life in common becomes possible only when a majority comes together that is stronger than any single individual and holds together against every single individual. The power of this community now sets itself, as "right," against the power of the individual, which is condemned as "brute force." This replacement of the power of the individual by the power of the community is the decisive step of civilization. Its essence lies in the fact that the members of the community restrict themselves in their possibilities of satisfaction, whereas the individual knew no such restriction. The next cultural demand, then, is that of justice—that is, the assurance that the legal order, once established, will not be broken again in favor of an individual. Nothing is thereby decided about the ethical value of such a law. The further course of cultural development seems to tend toward a law that is no longer the expression of the will of a small community—a caste, a stratum of the population, a tribe—which in its turn behaves like a violent individual toward other, perhaps larger groups of this kind. The end result should be a law to which all—at least all who are capable of living in a community—have contributed by sacrificing their drives, and which allows no one—again with the same exception—to become a victim of brute force.

3.12 Individual freedom is not a cultural asset. It was greatest before there was any civilization, though at that time it was mostly of no value, since the individual was scarcely in a position to defend it. The development of civilization imposes restrictions on it, and justice demands that no one be spared these restrictions. What stirs in a human community as an urge for freedom may be rebellion against some existing injustice. In that case it may favor the further development of civilization and remain compatible with it. But it may also spring from the remnant of the original personality, still untamed by civilization, and so become the basis of hostility to civilization. The urge for freedom, then, is directed either against particular forms and demands of civilization or against civilization altogether. It does not seem that any kind of influence could bring

man to transform his nature into that of a termite. He will probably always defend his claim to individual freedom against the will of the group. A good part of mankind's struggles centers on a single task: finding an expedient—that is, a happiness-bringing—balance between these individual claims and the cultural claims of the group. It is one of the problems on which mankind's fate hangs whether such a balance can be achieved through a particular form of civilization, or whether the conflict is irreconcilable.

CIVILIZATION AS A PROCESS

Civilization transforms the drives into character traits and sublimations, and is built on renouncing them.

3.13 By letting common feeling tell us which features of human life may be called cultural, we have gained a clear impression of the overall picture of civilization—though admittedly, so far, we have learned nothing that is not common knowledge. In doing so we have taken care not to endorse the prejudice that civilization is synonymous with perfecting, that it is the path to the perfection marked out for man. But now a view forces itself upon us that may lead somewhere else. The development of civilization appears to us as a peculiar process that runs its course over humanity, and in which a good deal strikes us as familiar. We can characterize this process by the changes it makes in the familiar human dispositions of the drives, whose satisfaction is, after all, the economic task of our lives. Some of these drives are used up in such a way that something appears in their place which, in the individual, we describe as a character trait. The most remarkable example of this process we have found in the anal erotism of the young human being. His original interest in the excretory function, its organs and its products, is transformed in the course of growing up into the group of traits we know as thrift, a sense of order and cleanliness. These traits, valuable and welcome in themselves, can intensify until they conspicuously predominate, and they then produce what is

called the anal character. How this comes about we do not know; there is no doubt about the correctness of this view.[6] Now, we have found that order and cleanliness are essential demands of civilization, although their necessity for life is not exactly evident, any more than their suitability as sources of enjoyment. It was at this point that the similarity between the process of civilization and the libidinal development of the individual was bound to strike us first. Other drives are induced to displace the conditions of their satisfaction and shift them onto other paths. In most cases this coincides with the familiar *sublimation* (of the aims of the drives); in others it can still be distinguished from it. Sublimation of the drives is an especially conspicuous feature of the development of civilization. It is what makes it possible for higher psychical activities—scientific, artistic, ideological—to play so significant a role in cultural life. If one yields to a first impression, one is tempted to say that sublimation is in general a fate forced upon the drives by civilization. But it is better to reflect on this for a while longer. Third and finally—and this seems the most important point—it is impossible to overlook the extent to which civilization is built on the renunciation of the drives. It presupposes precisely the non-satisfaction (suppression, repression or something else?) of powerful drives. This "cultural frustration" dominates the large domain of people's social relations. We already know that it is the cause of the hostility that all civilizations have to combat. It will also make heavy demands on our scientific work; we shall have a great deal of explaining to do there. It is not easy to understand how it can be made possible to withhold satisfaction from a drive. Nor is it by any means without danger. If one does not compensate for it economically, one can expect serious disturbances.

3.14 But suppose we want to know what value can be claimed for our view of the development of civilization as a special pro-

cess, comparable to the normal maturation of the individual. Then we must obviously tackle another problem. We must ask ourselves to what influences the development of civilization owes its origin, how it arose, and what determined its course.

6 FREUD'S NOTE. See "Character and Anal Erotism," 1908 (Collected Writings, vol. V), and numerous further contributions by E. Jones and others.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Ernest Jones (1879–1958), British psychoanalyst and later Freud's biographer.

Chapter IV

IV
The origins of civilization in work and love, Eros and Ananke, and the growing conflict between love, women and the restriction of sexual life.

4.1 This task seems too great, and one may confess one's discouragement. Here is the little I have been able to guess.

4.2 Primal man discovered that it lay in his hands—taken quite literally—to improve his lot on earth by work. After that, it could not be a matter of indifference to him whether someone else worked with him or against him. The other acquired for him the value of a fellow worker, with whom it was useful to live. Even earlier, in his ape-like prehistory, he had adopted the habit of forming families; the members of the family were probably his first helpers. Presumably the founding of the family was connected with a change in the need for genital satisfaction. It no longer appeared like a guest who suddenly turns up at one's door and, after leaving, is not heard from again for a long time. Instead it settled in with the individual as a permanent lodger. With this the male acquired a motive for keeping the woman—or, more generally, his sexual objects—near him. The females, who did not want to be separated from their helpless young, were obliged, in the young's interest too, to stay with the

stronger male.[1] In this primitive family one essential feature of civilization is still missing: the arbitrary will of the head of the

1 FREUD'S NOTE. The organic periodicity of the sexual process has indeed been preserved, but its influence on psychical sexual excitement has, if anything, been reversed. This change is most probably connected with the receding of the olfactory stimuli through which the menstrual process acted on the male psyche. Their role was taken over by visual excitations, which, unlike the intermittent olfactory stimuli, could maintain a permanent effect. The taboo on menstruation derives from this "organic repression," as a defense against a phase of development that has been surmounted; all other motivations are probably of a secondary nature. (Cf. C. D. Daly, "Hindu Mythology and the Castration Complex," *Imago* XII, 1927.) This process is repeated on another level when the gods of a superseded period of civilization become demons. But the receding of olfactory stimuli itself seems to be a consequence of man's turning away from the earth, of his decision to walk upright. Upright walking now makes the genitals, previously concealed, visible and in need of protection, and so gives rise to shame. At the beginning of the fateful process of civilization, then, would stand man's raising himself upright. From here the chain of events runs through the devaluation of olfactory stimuli and the isolation of the menstrual period to the predominance of visual stimuli and the visibility of the genitals. From there it runs on to the continuity of sexual excitement, the founding of the family, and thus to the threshold of human civilization. This is only a theoretical speculation, but it is important enough to deserve precise verification by study of the living conditions of the animals most closely related to man.

A social factor is also unmistakable in the cultural striving for cleanliness. This striving finds a subsequent justification in considerations of hygiene, but it had already manifested itself before this insight was gained. The incentive to cleanliness springs from the urge to get rid of the excrements, which have become disagreeable to sense perception. We know that things are different in the nursery. Excrements arouse no disgust in the child; they seem valuable to him as a detached part of his body. Upbringing presses with particular energy here to speed up the coming course of development, which is meant to make the excrements worthless, disgusting, abhorrent and objectionable. Such a revaluation would hardly be possible if these substances expelled from the body were not condemned by their strong smells to share the fate reserved for olfactory stimuli after man raised himself from the ground. Anal erotism, then, first succumbs to the "organic repression" that paved the way to civilization. The social factor that takes care of the further transformation of anal erotism is attested by the fact that, despite all developmental progress, the smell of his own excrements hardly offends a person—only the smell of other people's excretions. The unclean person, that is, one who does not hide his excrements, thus offends the other person and shows him no consideration. And that, after all, is also what the strongest and most common terms of abuse express. It would also be incomprehensible that man should use the name of his most faithful friend in the animal world as a term of abuse, if the dog did not draw human contempt upon itself through two characteristics: it is an animal that lives by smell and has no aversion to excrement, and it is not ashamed of its sexual functions.

family, the father, was unrestricted. In *Totem and Taboo* I have tried to show the path that led from this family to the next stage of communal life, in the form of the bands of brothers. In overpowering their father, the sons had discovered that a combination can be stronger than a single individual. The totemic civilization rests on the restrictions they had to impose on one another in order to maintain the new state of affairs. The taboo prohibitions were the first "law."[2] Communal life among human beings thus had a twofold foundation. One was the compulsion to work, created by external necessity. The other was the power of love: the man did not want to be without his sexual object, the woman, and the woman did not want to be without that part of herself which had been separated from her, the child. Eros and Ananke have become the parents of human civilization too. The first success of civilization was that now a larger number of people, too, could live together in a community. And since both these great powers worked together in this, one might expect further development to proceed smoothly, toward ever better control of the external world and a further extension of the number of people the community embraced. Nor is it easy to understand how this civilization could affect its participants in any way other than by making them happy.[3]

LOVE AS A FOUNDATION OF CIVILIZATION

Aim-inhibited love binds people together, yet love and civilization soon come into conflict.

4.3 Before we go on to investigate where a disturbance might come from, let us allow ourselves to be diverted by this recognition of love as one of the foundations of civilization, in order to fill a gap in an earlier discussion. We said that man has found that sexual (genital) love affords him his strongest experiences of satisfaction and in fact provides him with the model for all

2 *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13) is Freud's speculative account of how religion and morality began with the killing of a primal father by his sons.
3 Eros is the Greek god of love; Ananke is the Greek for Necessity.

happiness. This experience, we said, must have suggested that he should go on seeking happy satisfaction in life in the domain of sexual relations, and put genital erotism at the center of life. We went on to say that on this path one makes oneself dependent, in the most precarious way, on a part of the external world, namely the chosen love object. One exposes oneself to the most intense suffering if one is rejected by that object or loses it through unfaithfulness or death. For this reason the wise men of every age have most emphatically advised against this way of life. Yet it has not lost its attraction for a large number of the children of men.

4.4 A small minority are enabled by their constitution to find happiness on the path of love after all, though this requires far-reaching mental alterations in the function of love. These people make themselves independent of the object's consent by shifting the chief value from being loved to their own loving. They protect themselves against losing the object by directing their love not to individual objects but equally to all people. And they avoid the fluctuations and disappointments of genital love by turning it away from its sexual aim, transforming the drive into an *aim-inhibited* impulse. What they bring about in themselves in this way is a state of evenly suspended, steadfast, tender feeling. It no longer bears much outward resemblance to the stormily agitated genital love life from which it is nevertheless derived. Saint Francis of Assisi may have gone furthest in this use of love for an inner feeling of happiness. What we recognize as one of the techniques for fulfilling the pleasure principle has also often been linked with religion. It may be connected with religion in those remote regions where the distinction between the ego and objects, and between objects themselves, is neglected. An ethical view, whose deeper motivation will become clear to us later, would see in this readiness for a universal love of humanity and the world the highest attitude to which man can rise. We should like, even at this point, not to hold back our two main objections. A love that does not choose seems to

us to forfeit part of its own value, since it does its object an injustice. And further: not all people are worthy of love.

4.5 The love that founded the family continues to operate in civilization, both in its original form, in which it does not renounce direct sexual satisfaction, and in its modified form as aim-inhibited affection. In both forms it goes on performing its function of binding a considerable number of people to one another, and more intensely than the interest of working together can manage. Language's carelessness in using the word "love" has a justification in its origins. We call love the relationship between a man and a woman who have founded a family on the basis of their genital needs. But we also call love the positive feelings between parents and children, and between brothers and sisters in the family, although we have to describe this relationship as aim-inhibited love, as affection. Aim-inhibited love was, in fact, originally fully sensual love, and it still is so in the human unconscious. Both fully sensual and aim-inhibited love reach beyond the family and create new bonds with people who were previously strangers. Genital love leads to the formation of new families; aim-inhibited love leads to "friendships." These become important for civilization because they escape some of the restrictions of genital love, for instance its exclusiveness. But in the course of development the relation of love to civilization loses its unambiguous character. On the one hand love opposes the interests of civilization; on the other, civilization threatens love with painful restrictions.

4.6 This split seems unavoidable, though its cause is not immediately apparent. It first shows itself as a conflict between the family and the larger community to which the individual belongs. We have already guessed that one of civilization's chief endeavors is to mass human beings together into large units. But the family will not let the individual go. The more closely its members hold together, the more often they are inclined to shut themselves off from others, and the harder they find it to enter the wider circle of life. The mode of living together that is phylogenetically older, and the only one that exists in childhood, res-

ists being replaced by the cultural mode acquired later. Breaking away from the family becomes a task for every adolescent, and society often helps him to accomplish it through puberty and initiation rites. One gets the impression that these are difficulties inherent in all psychical development. Indeed, at bottom they are inherent in all organic development as well.

4.7 Next, women soon come into opposition to the current of civilization and exert their retarding and restraining influence. These are the very women who at the outset, through the claims of their love, had laid the foundations of civilization. Women represent the interests of the family and of sexual life. The work of civilization has increasingly become the business of men. It sets them ever harder tasks and compels them to sublimations of their drives that women are poorly equipped to achieve. Since a man does not have unlimited quantities of psychical energy at his disposal, he must accomplish his tasks by distributing his libido expediently. What he uses up for cultural aims he largely withdraws from women and from sexual life. His constant association with men, and his dependence on his relations with them, even estrange him from his duties as husband and father. Thus the woman finds herself pushed into the background by the claims of civilization, and she adopts a hostile attitude toward it.

THE RESTRICTION OF SEXUAL LIFE

Civilization narrows sexual life by taboo, law and custom, damaging it as a source of happiness.

4.8 On civilization's side, the tendency to restrict sexual life is no less evident than its other tendency, to enlarge the cultural circle. The very first phase of civilization, that of totemism, brings with it the prohibition of incestuous object-choice. This is perhaps the most drastic mutilation that human love life has undergone in the course of time. Taboo, law and custom establish further restrictions, which affect both men and women. Not all civilizations go equally far in this, and the economic struc-

ture of society also influences how much sexual freedom remains. We already know that in this civilization is obeying the compulsion of economic necessity. It must withdraw from sexuality a large amount of the psychical energy that it uses up itself. In this, civilization behaves toward sexuality like a people, or a stratum of the population, that has subjected another to its exploitation. Fear of an uprising by the oppressed drives it to stricter precautions. Our Western European civilization shows a high point of this development. It is psychologically quite justified that it begins by proscribing the manifestations of infantile sexual life. There is no prospect of curbing the sexual desires of adults unless the ground has been prepared in childhood. But there is no way of justifying the fact that civilized society has gone so far as to deny these easily demonstrable, indeed conspicuous, phenomena as well. The object-choice of the sexually mature individual is narrowed to the opposite sex, and most extragenital satisfactions are forbidden as perversions. These prohibitions proclaim the demand for a sexual life that is the same for everyone. That demand overrides the inequalities in people's innate and acquired sexual constitutions and cuts a fair number of them off from sexual enjoyment, and so it becomes the source of grave injustice. Now, the result of these restrictive measures might be that in those who are normal, who are not constitutionally prevented, all sexual interest flows without loss into the channels left open. But even what remains free of proscription, heterosexual genital love, is further impaired by the restrictions of legitimacy and monogamy. Present-day civilization makes it plain that it will permit sexual relations only on the basis of a single, indissoluble bond between one man and one woman. It does not like sexuality as a source of pleasure in its own right, and it is disposed to tolerate it only as the source, so far irreplaceable, for the propagation of the human race.

4.9 This is, of course, an extreme. It is well known that it has proved impracticable, even for fairly short periods. Only the weaklings have submitted to so far-reaching an encroachment on their sexual freedom. Stronger natures have done so only on

a compensating condition, which may be discussed later. Civilized society has found itself obliged to tolerate in silence many transgressions that, by its own statutes, it ought to have prosecuted. But we must not go astray in the other direction and suppose that such a cultural attitude is altogether harmless because it does not achieve all its aims. The sexual life of civilized man is, for all that, severely damaged. At times it gives the impression of a function in the process of atrophy, as our teeth and the hair on our heads seem to be as organs. We are probably entitled to assume that its importance as a source of feelings of happiness, and so in fulfilling our purpose in life, has noticeably diminished.[4] Sometimes one thinks one can see that it is not only the pressure of civilization. Something in the nature of the

4 FREUD'S NOTE. Among the works of the subtle Englishman J. Galsworthy, who today enjoys general recognition, I early came to value a little story entitled "The Apple Tree." It shows in a penetrating way how, in the life of civilized man today, there is no longer any room for the simple, natural love of two human beings.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. John Galsworthy (1867–1933), English novelist and playwright, Nobel Prize in Literature 1932; "The Apple Tree" is a novella of 1916.

function itself denies us full satisfaction and pushes us along

other paths. This may be a mistake; it is hard to decide.[5]

5 FREUD'S NOTE. The following remarks are offered in support of the conjecture expressed above. Man, too, is an animal with an unmistakably bisexual disposition. The individual corresponds to a fusion of two symmetrical halves, of which, in the view of some researchers, one is purely male and the other female. It is equally possible that each half was originally hermaphroditic. Sex is a biological fact which, although of extraordinary importance for mental life, is hard to grasp psychologically. We are accustomed to saying that every human being displays both male and female impulses, needs and qualities. But while anatomy can point out what characterizes the male and the female, psychology cannot. For psychology the contrast between the sexes fades into that between activity and passivity. Here we far too readily equate activity with masculinity and passivity with femininity, which is by no means confirmed without exception in the animal kingdom. The theory of bisexuality is still very obscure. That it has not yet found any link with the theory of the drives is something we in psychoanalysis cannot help feeling as a serious disturbance. However that may be, suppose we take it as a fact that the individual seeks to satisfy both male and female wishes in his sexual life. Then we are prepared for the possibility that these demands are not fulfilled by the same object. We are also prepared for them to interfere with each other, unless they can be kept apart and each impulse guided into a particular channel suited to it. Another difficulty arises from the fact that the erotic relationship, besides its own sadistic component, is so often accompanied by an amount of direct inclination to aggression. The love object will not always meet these complications with as much understanding and tolerance as the peasant woman who complains that her husband no longer loves her, because he has not beaten her for a week.

The deepest-reaching conjecture, however, is the one that ties in with the discussion in the note on p. 62 [note 1 to 4.2 above]. When man raised himself upright and the sense of smell was devalued, it was not only anal erotism but the whole of sexuality that threatened to fall victim to organic repression. Ever since then, the sexual function has been accompanied by a reluctance for which no further reason can be given. This reluctance prevents complete satisfaction and pushes away from the sexual aim toward sublimations and displacements of libido. I know that Bleuler ("Der Sexualwiderstand" [Sexual Resistance], *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen*, vol. V, 1913) once pointed to the existence of such an original attitude of rejection toward sexual life. All neurotics, and many others besides, take offense at the fact that "*Inter urinas et faeces nascimur*" [We are born between urine and feces]. The genitals also produce strong olfactory sensations. Many people find these unbearable, and they spoil sexual intercourse for them. The deepest root of the sexual repression that advances with civilization would thus be the organic defense of the new form of life, gained with upright gait, against the earlier animal existence. This is a result of scientific inquiry that coincides remarkably with banal prejudices that have often been voiced. For the present, however, these are only unconfirmed possibilities, not substantiated by science. Nor should we forget that, despite the undeniable devaluation of olfactory stimuli, there are peoples even in Europe who prize the strong genital odors, so repugnant to us, as sexual stimulants and will not do without them. (See the folklore material gathered in response to Iwan Bloch's "questionnaire" "On the Sense of Smell in the vita sexualis" [sexual life], in various volumes of Friedrich S. Krauss's *Anthropophyteia*.)

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Eugen Bleuler (1857–1939), Swiss psychiatrist. The Latin saying is traditionally attributed to St. Augustine.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Iwan Bloch (1872–1922), Berlin physician and a pioneer of sexology. Friedrich Salomo Krauss (1859–1938) edited *Anthropophyteia* (1904–13), a yearbook of sexual folklore.

Chapter V

V

The commandment to love one's neighbor, the human inclination to aggression ("Homo homini lupus"), communism, and the narcissism of minor differences.

5.1 Psychoanalytic work has taught us that it is precisely these frustrations of sexual life that the so-called neurotics cannot tolerate. In their symptoms they create substitute satisfactions for themselves. These, however, either cause suffering in themselves or become sources of suffering by making difficulties for them with their surroundings and with society. The latter is easy to understand; the former sets us a new riddle. But civilization demands other sacrifices besides those of sexual satisfaction.

5.2 We have understood the difficulty of the development of civilization as a general difficulty of development by tracing it back to the inertia of the libido, its reluctance to abandon an old position for a new one. We are saying much the same thing when we derive the opposition between civilization and sexuality from the nature of sexual love. Sexual love is a relationship between two people, in which a third can only be superfluous or disruptive, whereas civilization rests on relationships among a larger number of people. At the height of a love affair no interest in the surrounding world remains. The pair of lovers are enough for themselves; they do not even need the child they have in common in order to be happy. In no other case does Eros so plainly betray the core of his nature, the intention of making one out of many. But once he has achieved this in two people's being in love with each other, as has become proverbial, he will go no further.

5.3 So far we can very well imagine a civilized community consisting of such double individuals. Libidinally sated in themselves, they would be linked to one another by the bond of common work and common interests. In that case civilization would

not need to withdraw any energy from sexuality. But this desirable state does not exist and has never existed. Reality shows us that civilization is not content with the ties it has been granted so far. It wants to bind the members of the community to one another libidinally as well. To this end it uses every means and favors every path to establishing strong identifications among them. It summons up aim-inhibited libido on the largest scale in order to strengthen the communal bonds through relationships of friendship. To fulfill these aims, the restriction of sexual life becomes unavoidable. But we have no insight into the necessity that drives civilization along this path and accounts for its antagonism to sexuality. There must be some disturbing factor that we have not yet discovered.

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR

Freud asks why anyone should love a stranger who shows him hostility, and finds the commandment unreasonable.

5.4 One of the so-called ideal demands of civilized society can put us on the track here. It runs: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. It is world-famous, certainly older than Christianity, which holds it up as its proudest claim, yet surely not very old; even in historical times it was still foreign to mankind. Let us take a naive attitude toward it, as though we were hearing it for the first time. Then we cannot suppress a feeling of surprise and bewilderment. Why should we do this? What good is it supposed to do us? But above all, how are we to manage it? How is it possible for us? My love is something valuable to me, which I may not throw away without giving an account of myself.[1] It imposes duties on me that I must be ready to fulfill at the cost of sacrifices. If I love someone else, he must deserve it in some way. (I leave aside the use he may be to me, as well as his possible significance for me as a sexual object. Neither of these kinds of relationship comes into question where the precept of love of one's

1 The commandment appears in Leviticus 19:18 and is quoted by Jesus in Matthew 22:39.

neighbor is concerned.) He deserves it if he is so like me in important respects that I can love myself in him. He deserves it if he is so much more perfect than I am that I can love in him my ideal of my own self. I must love him if he is my friend's son, for the pain my friend would feel if harm came to him would be my pain too—I should have to share it. But if he is a stranger to me, and cannot attract me by any worth of his own or by any significance he has already acquired for my emotional life, it will be hard for me to love him. Indeed, I shall even be doing wrong if I do, for my love is valued by all my own people as a sign of my preferring them. It is an injustice to them if I put the stranger on a par with them. But suppose I am to love him with that universal love, merely because he too is a creature of this earth, like the insect, the earthworm, the grass snake. Then I fear that only a small amount of love will fall to his share. It cannot possibly be as much as reason judges me entitled to keep back for myself. What is the point of a precept proclaimed with such solemnity if its fulfillment cannot commend itself as reasonable?

5.5 When I look more closely, I find still more difficulties. Not only is this stranger in general not lovable; I must honestly confess that he has more claim to my hostility, even to my hatred. He seems to have not the least love for me and shows me not the slightest consideration. If it brings him some advantage, he has no hesitation in harming me. Nor does he ask himself whether the size of his advantage corresponds to the extent of the harm he does me. Indeed, he need not even gain any advantage by it. If only he can satisfy some pleasure or other, he thinks nothing of mocking me, insulting me, slandering me, showing his power over me. And the safer he feels and the more helpless I am, the more surely I may expect him to behave this way toward me. If he behaves otherwise, if he shows me, a stranger, consideration and forbearance, I am ready in any case, without that precept, to repay him in like manner. Indeed, if that grand commandment ran: Love thy neighbor as thy neighbor loves thee, I should not object. There is a second commandment that seems to me even more incomprehensible and unleashes an even more violent

resistance in me. It runs: Love your enemies. On reflection, though, I am wrong to reject it as an even greater imposition. At bottom it is the same thing.[2]

5.6 Now I think I hear a dignified voice admonishing me: It is precisely because your neighbor is not lovable, and is rather your enemy, that you should love him as yourself. I then understand that this is a case like *Credo quia absurdum* [I believe because it is absurd]. Now it is very probable that my neighbor, when called upon to love me as himself, will answer exactly as I have done and reject me on the same grounds. I hope he will not have the same objective justification, but he will think so too. Still, there are differences in people's behavior, which ethics, disregarding their conditions, classifies as "good" and "evil."[3] As long as these undeniable differences have not been removed, obeying the lofty ethical demands means damaging the aims of civilization, for it sets up direct rewards for being bad. One cannot help recalling here an incident that took place in the French Chamber during a debate on capital punishment. A speaker had passionately championed its abolition and was reaping tumultuous applause, until a voice from the floor called out: "*Que messieurs les assassins commencent!*" [Let the gentlemen murderers go first!][4]

2 FREUD'S NOTE. A great poet may allow himself to express strongly proscribed psychological truths, at least in jest. Thus H. Heine confesses: "I have the most peaceable disposition. My wishes are: a modest hut, a thatched roof, but a good bed, good food, milk and butter, very fresh, flowers before the window, a few fine trees before the door. And if the good Lord wants to make me completely happy, he will grant me the joy of seeing some six or seven of my enemies hanged from those trees. With a heart full of emotion I shall forgive them, before their death, all the wrongs they did me in life—yes, one must forgive one's enemies, but not until they have been hanged." (Heine, *Gedanken und Einfälle* [Thoughts and Fancies].)

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), German poet; the passage comes from his posthumously published aphorisms.

3 The formula is loosely derived from the early Christian writer Tertullian (c. AD 160–220).

4 The retort is usually credited to the French writer Alphonse Karr (1808–1890).

THE INCLINATION TO AGGRESSION

Man is not gentle but aggressive; this hostility constantly threatens civilized society with disintegration.

5.7 The piece of reality behind all this, which people are so ready to deny, is that man is not a gentle creature in need of love, who at most can defend himself when attacked. On the contrary, he may count a powerful share of inclination to aggression among his endowment of drives. As a result, his neighbor is for him not only a possible helper and sexual object. He is also a temptation: to satisfy one's aggression on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him. *Homo homini lupus* [Man is a wolf to man]. Who, after all the experience of life and of history, has the courage to dispute this proposition?[5] As a rule this cruel aggression waits for some provocation, or places itself in the service of some other purpose whose aim could also be reached by milder means. In circumstances favorable to it, when the mental counterforces that ordinarily inhibit it have fallen away, it also manifests itself spontaneously. It then reveals man as a savage beast to whom consideration for his own kind is something alien. Anyone who calls to mind the atrocities of the Migration Period, the invasions of the Huns and of the so-called Mongols under Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, the conquest of Jerusalem by the pious Crusaders, and even the horrors of the last World War, will have to bow humbly before the truth of this view.

5.8 This inclination to aggression, which we can detect in ourselves and rightly presume in others, is the factor that disturbs our relations with our neighbor and forces civilization into its great expenditure. Because of this primary hostility of human beings toward one another, civilized society is perpetu-

5 The saying goes back to the Roman comic playwright Plautus and was made famous by Thomas Hobbes.

ally threatened with disintegration. The interest of common work would not hold it together, for passions rooted in the drives are stronger than reasonable interests. Civilization has to marshal everything it can to set limits to man's aggressive drives and to hold down their manifestations by psychical reaction-formations. Hence, then, the array of methods meant to spur people on to identifications and aim-inhibited relationships of love. Hence the restriction of sexual life. And hence, too, the ideal commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself, which is truly justified by the fact that nothing else runs so strongly counter to original human nature. For all its efforts, this endeavor of civilization has not so far achieved very much. It hopes to prevent the crudest excesses of brute violence by claiming for itself the right to use violence against criminals. But the law cannot lay hold of the more cautious and subtler manifestations of human aggression. Each of us eventually drops, as illusions, the expectations he placed in his fellow men in his youth, and may learn how much harder and more painful their ill will makes life for him. At the same time, it would be unfair to reproach civilization for trying to exclude strife and competition from human activities. These are certainly indispensable. But opposition is not necessarily enmity; it is merely misused as an occasion for it.

COMMUNISM AND THE NARCISSISM OF MINOR DIFFERENCES

Abolishing property would not abolish aggression, which groups also discharge on neighbors and outsiders.

5.9 The communists believe they have found the way to deliverance from evil. Man is wholly good and well disposed toward his neighbor, but the institution of private property has corrupted his nature. The ownership of private goods gives one person power, and with it the temptation to mistreat his neighbor. The one who is excluded from ownership is bound to rise up in hostility against his oppressor. If private property is abolished, all goods made common and everyone allowed to share in their

enjoyment, ill will and hostility among human beings will vanish. Since all needs will be satisfied, no one will have any reason to see an enemy in another, and all will willingly undertake the work that is necessary. I am not concerned with the economic critique of the communist system. I cannot examine whether the abolition of private property is expedient and advantageous.[6] But I can recognize its psychological premise as an untenable illusion. By abolishing private property one deprives the human appetite for aggression of one of its instruments—certainly a strong one, and certainly not the strongest. Nothing has been changed in the differences of power and influence that aggression misuses, nor in its nature. Aggression was not created by property. It reigned almost without restriction in primeval times, when property was still very meager. It shows itself already in the nursery, almost as soon as property has given up its primal anal form. It forms the sediment of all the tender and loving relationships among human beings, with the single exception, perhaps, of a mother's relationship to her male child. If one removes the personal right to material goods, there still remains the privilege that comes from sexual relationships. This must become the source of the strongest envy and the most violent hostility among people otherwise placed on an equal footing. Suppose this too is abolished through the complete liberation of sexual life, which means doing away with the family, the germ cell of civilization. Then, it is true, one cannot foresee what new paths the development of civilization may take. But one thing we may expect: that this indestructible feature of human nature will follow it there too.

5.10 It is clearly not easy for human beings to give up satisfying this inclination to aggression; they do not feel comfortable

doing so. The advantage of a smaller cultural circle, that it allows the drive an outlet in hostility toward outsiders, is not to be underrated. It is always possible to bind a fairly large number of people together in love, so long as others are left over to receive the manifestations of aggression. I once concerned myself with the phenomenon that it is precisely neighboring communities, closely related in other respects too, that feud with and mock one another: Spaniards and Portuguese, for instance, North and South Germans, English and Scots, and so on. I gave it the name "the narcissism of minor differences," which does not do much to explain it.[7] One can now recognize in it a convenient and relatively harmless satisfaction of the inclination to aggression, which makes cohesion easier for the members of the community. In this way the Jewish people, scattered far and wide, have rendered services deserving recognition to the civilizations of their host peoples. Unfortunately, all the massacres of Jews in the Middle Ages did not suffice to make that age more peaceful and secure for their Christian fellows. Once the Apostle Paul had made universal love of mankind the foundation of his Christian community, the extreme intolerance of Christianity toward those who remained outside became an inevitable consequence. To the Romans, who had not founded their commonwealth on love, religious intolerance had been foreign, even though among them religion was a matter of state and the state was steeped in religion. Nor was it an incomprehensible accident that the dream of Germanic world domination called up antisemitism as its complement. And one can see why the attempt to establish a new communist civilization in Russia

6 FREUD'S NOTE. Anyone who in his own youth tasted the misery of poverty, and experienced the indifference and arrogance of the propertied, should be safe from the suspicion that he lacks understanding and goodwill for the efforts to combat the inequality of wealth among people and all that follows from it. Of course, if this struggle seeks to appeal to the abstract demand of justice for the equality of all human beings, one objection lies all too close at hand. Nature, by endowing individuals so very unequally in physical attributes and mental gifts, has established injustices against which there is no remedy.

7 Freud first used the phrase in "The Taboo of Virginity" (1918) and returned to it in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921).

finds its psychological support in the persecution of the bourgeois. One only wonders, with some concern, what the Soviets will do once they have exterminated their bourgeois.

5.11 If civilization imposes such great sacrifices not only on man's sexuality but also on his inclination to aggression, we understand better why he finds it hard to be happy in it. Primal man was in fact better off in this respect, since he knew no restrictions on his drives. In return, his assurance of enjoying such happiness for long was very slight. Civilized man has traded a portion of his chances of happiness for a portion of security. But we should not forget that in the primal family only the head enjoyed such freedom of the drives; the others lived in slavish subjugation. So in that primeval period of civilization the contrast between a minority enjoying the advantages of civilization and a majority deprived of them was carried to the extreme. As for the tribal peoples living today, more careful investigation has taught us that their drive life is by no means to be envied for its freedom. It is subject to restrictions of a different kind, but perhaps of greater severity than those of modern civilized man.

5.12 We may rightly object to our present state of civilization that it fulfills our demands for an arrangement of life that would make us happy very inadequately, and that it permits a great deal of suffering that could probably be avoided. We may strive with unsparing criticism to lay bare the roots of its imperfection. In doing so we are certainly exercising our proper right, and we do not show ourselves to be enemies of civilization. We may expect gradually to carry through such changes in our civilization as will better satisfy our needs and escape that criticism. But perhaps we shall also grow familiar with the idea that there are difficulties inherent in the nature of civilization that will not yield to any attempt at reform. Besides the tasks of restricting the drives, for which we are prepared, we are faced with the danger of a condition that one might call "the psychological misery of the group." This danger is most threatening where the social bond is established chiefly through the members' identi-

fication with one another, while individuals with the qualities of leaders do not attain the importance that should fall to them in the formation of a group.[8] The present cultural state of America would offer a good opportunity for studying this feared damage to civilization. But I shall resist the temptation to embark on a critique of American civilization. I do not want to give the impression that I myself am resorting to American methods.

8 FREUD'S NOTE. See *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, 1921.

Chapter VI

VI

Freud's revised theory of the drives: Eros and the death drive, aggression as its offshoot, and civilization as their struggle.

6.1 In none of my works have I had so strong a feeling as this time that I am describing what is common knowledge. I am using up paper and ink, and in due course the compositor's labor and the printer's ink, to relate things that really go without saying. So I gladly seize on it when it appears that recognizing a special, independent aggressive drive means a modification of the psychoanalytic theory of the drives.

6.2 It will turn out that this is not so. It is merely a matter of formulating more sharply a turn that was taken long ago, and of following it through to its consequences. Of all the slowly developed parts of analytic theory, the theory of the drives is the one that has groped its way forward most laboriously. And yet it was so indispensable to the whole that something had to be put in its place. In the utter perplexity of the beginning, my first foothold was the saying of the poet-philosopher Schiller that "hunger and love" hold together the machinery of the world. Hunger could stand for those drives that seek to preserve the individual being. Love strives for objects; its chief function, favored by nature in every way, is the preservation of the species.[1] So at first ego drives and object drives confronted each other. For the energy of the latter, and exclusively for it, I intro-

1 From Schiller's poem "Die Weltweisen" (The Philosophers, 1795): until philosophy holds the world together, nature keeps its machinery going "through hunger and through love."

duced the name libido. The opposition thus ran between the ego drives and the "libidinal" drives, directed toward the object, of love in the widest sense. One of these object drives, the sadistic one, did stand out in that its aim was so very far from loving. It also evidently allied itself in some respects with the ego drives, and it could not conceal its close kinship with drives for mastery that have no libidinal purpose. But we got over this inconsistency. Sadism clearly belonged to sexual life after all, and cruel play could take the place of tender play. Neurosis appeared as the outcome of a struggle between the interest of self-preservation and the demands of the libido—a struggle in which the ego had been victorious, but at the price of severe suffering and renunciations.

6.3 Every analyst will admit that even today this does not sound like an error long since overcome. Yet a modification became unavoidable when our research advanced from the repressed to the repressing, from the object drives to the ego. The decisive step here was the introduction of the concept of narcissism. This was the insight that the ego itself is cathected with libido, that it is indeed the libido's original home and to some extent remains its headquarters. This narcissistic libido turns toward objects, thus becoming object libido, and can change back into narcissistic libido. The concept of narcissism made it possible to grasp analytically the traumatic neuroses, as well as many conditions close to the psychoses, and the psychoses themselves.[2] The interpretation of the transference neuroses as attempts by the ego to fend off sexuality did not have to be abandoned, but the concept of libido was put in danger. Since the ego drives too were libidinal, it seemed for a while unavoidable to make libido coincide with drive energy in general, as C. G. Jung had already wanted earlier. Yet something remained, like a certainty that could not yet be justified, that the drives cannot all be of the same kind. I took the next step in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), when the compulsion to repeat

2 "Cathected" renders *besetzt*, from Freud's *Besetzung* (cathexis): the investment of psychical energy in an idea, an object or the ego.

and the conservative character of drive life first struck me.[3] Starting from speculations about the beginning of life and from biological parallels, I drew a conclusion. Besides the drive to preserve living substance and to join it into ever larger units,[4] there must be another, opposed to it, that seeks to dissolve these units and lead them back to their primordial, inorganic state. That is, besides Eros, a death drive; the phenomena of life could be explained by the interplay and opposition of these two. Now, it was not easy to demonstrate the activity of this hypothetical death drive. The manifestations of Eros were conspicuous and noisy enough. One could suppose that the death drive worked silently within the living being toward its dissolution, but that, of course, was no proof. The idea that led further was that a portion of this drive turns against the external world and then comes to light as a drive to aggression and destruction. In this way the drive itself would be pressed into the service of Eros, in that the living being would destroy something else, animate or inanimate, instead of its own self. Conversely, any cessation of this outward-directed aggression would be bound to increase the self-destruction that is in any case always going on. At the same time, one could guess from this example that the two kinds of drive seldom—perhaps never—appear in isolation from each other. Rather, they alloy with each other in various, very changeable proportions, and thereby become unrecognizable to our judgment. In sadism, long known as a component drive of sexuality, we should have before us a particularly strong alloy of this kind, between the striving of love and the destructive drive. In its counterpart, masochism, we should likewise have a union of destructiveness directed inward with sexuality, a union through which the otherwise imperceptible striving becomes conspicuous and palpable.

3 Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), Swiss psychiatrist, who broke with Freud in 1913, partly over his broadened, desexualized concept of libido.

4 FREUD'S NOTE. The contrast that emerges here between the restless tendency of Eros to spread and the general conservative nature of the drives is striking, and it may become the starting point for posing further problems.

THE DEATH DRIVE

Freud defends his theory of a destructive drive against resistance, including his own at first.

6.4 The assumption of a death drive or destructive drive has met with resistance even in analytic circles. I know that there is a widespread tendency to prefer attributing whatever is found dangerous and hostile in love to an original bipolarity in its own nature. At first I put forward the views developed here only tentatively, but in the course of time they have gained such power over me that I can no longer think otherwise. I believe that theoretically they are incomparably more useful than any others possible. They achieve that simplification, without neglecting or doing violence to the facts, for which we strive in scientific work. I recognize that in sadism and masochism we have always had before us the manifestations, strongly alloyed with erotism, of the destructive drive directed outward and inward. But I can no longer understand how we could have overlooked the ubiquity of non-erotic aggression and destruction, and failed to give it its due place in the interpretation of life. (The craving for destruction that is turned inward mostly escapes perception, after all, when it is not erotically tinged.) I remember my own defensiveness when the idea of the destructive drive first appeared in psychoanalytic literature, and how long it took before I became receptive to it. That others showed, and still show, the same rejection surprises me less. For the little children, they do not like to hear it when mention is made of man's inborn inclination to "evil," to aggression, destruction and so to cruelty as well. God, after all, created them in the image of his own perfection. Nobody wants to be reminded how hard it is to reconcile the undeniable existence of evil—despite the protestations of Christian Science—with his omnipotence or his supreme goodness. The Devil would be the best way out as an excuse for God. He would then take on the same economically relieving role as the Jew in the world of the Aryan ideal. But

even then, one can surely call God to account for the existence of the Devil just as well as for the existence of the evil he embodies.[5] In view of these difficulties, it is advisable for everyone to make a deep bow, at the appropriate point, to the deeply moral nature of man. It helps one to become generally popular, and one is forgiven a good deal in return.[6]

6.5 The name libido can again be used for the manifestations of the power of Eros, to distinguish them from the energy of the death drive.[7] It must be admitted that we find the latter so much harder to grasp. We can only guess at it, as it were, as a residue behind Eros, and it eludes us wherever it is not betrayed by its alloy with Eros. In sadism, where it bends the erotic aim to its own ends while still fully satisfying the sexual striving, we gain the clearest insight into its nature and its relation to Eros. But even where it appears without any sexual purpose, even in the blindest fury of destruction, there is no mistaking that its satisfaction is linked with an extraordinarily high degree of narcissistic enjoyment. It shows the ego the fulfillment of its old wishes for omnipotence. Moderated and tamed, aim-inhibited as it were, the destructive drive, directed toward objects, must provide the ego with the satisfaction of its vital needs and with mastery over nature. Since the assumption of this drive rests essentially on theoretical grounds, it must be admitted that it is

5 Freud inverts the refrain of a Goethe ballad, "Die Kinder, sie hören es gerne" ("The children love to hear it"). Christian Science, founded by Mary Baker Eddy, teaches that evil has no real existence.

6 FREUD'S NOTE. The identification of the evil principle with the destructive drive is especially convincing in Goethe's Mephistopheles: "For all that comes into being deserves to perish. / So all that you call sin, / destruction, in short evil, is my true element." As his adversary, the Devil himself names not what is holy and good, but nature's power to beget and to multiply life—that is, Eros. "From air, from water, as from earth, a thousand seeds break free, / in dry, in wet, in warm, in cold! / Had I not kept the flame for myself, I would have nothing special of my own."

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Both passages are spoken by Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust*, Part One, in the first scene in Faust's study.

7 FREUD'S NOTE. Our present view can be roughly expressed in the proposition that libido is involved in every manifestation of a drive, but that not everything in it is libido.

not fully secure against theoretical objections either. But this is simply how things appear to us now, at the present state of our knowledge. Future research and reflection will surely bring decisive clarity.

CIVILIZATION AS THE STRUGGLE OF EROS AND DEATH

Civilization serves Eros in uniting humanity, while the aggressive drive, heir of the death drive, opposes it.

6.6 For all that follows, then, I take the standpoint that the inclination to aggression is an original, independent drive disposition in man. And I return to the point that civilization finds in it its most powerful obstacle. At some point in the course of this inquiry the insight forced itself on us that civilization is a special process which humanity undergoes, and we are still under the spell of this idea. We add that it is a process in the service of Eros, which seeks to combine single human individuals, then families, then tribes, peoples and nations, into one great unity, humanity. Why this has to happen we do not know; it is simply the work of Eros. These multitudes of people are to be bound to one another libidinally; necessity alone, the advantages of common work, will not hold them together. But this program of civilization is opposed by man's natural aggressive drive, the hostility of each against all and of all against each. This aggressive drive is the descendant and chief representative of the death drive, which we have found alongside Eros and which shares world dominion with him. And now, I think, the meaning of the development of civilization is no longer obscure to us. It must show us the struggle between Eros and death, between the life drive and the destructive drive, as it plays itself out in the human species. This struggle is what all life essentially consists of, and so the development of civilization may be described, quite simply, as the human species' struggle for life.[8] And it is

8 FREUD'S NOTE. Probably with the further qualification: as it was bound to take shape after a certain event, which still remains to be discovered.

this battle of the giants that our nursemaids try to soothe with their "lullaby about Heaven"![9]

9 An allusion to Heine's *Germany: A Winter's Tale* (1844), where the "Eiapopeia vom Himmel" is the lullaby used to hush the people.

Chapter VII

VII

How civilization disarms aggression by turning it inward: the super-ego, conscience, and the two origins of the sense of guilt.

7.1 Why do our relatives, the animals, show no such cultural struggle? Oh, we do not know. Very probably some of them, the bees, ants and termites, struggled for hundreds of thousands of years before they arrived at those state institutions, that division of functions, that restriction of individuals, which we admire in them today. It is characteristic of our present condition that our feelings tell us we would not think ourselves happy in any of these animal states, or in any of the roles they assign to the individual. In other animal species a temporary balance may have been reached between the influences of the environment and the mutually contending drives within them, and so development may have come to a standstill. In primal man a fresh advance of the libido may have kindled a renewed resistance on the part of the destructive drive. There is a great deal to ask here, to which there is as yet no answer.

7.2 Another question concerns us more nearly. What means does civilization use to inhibit the aggression that opposes it, to make it harmless, perhaps to get rid of it altogether? We have already come to know several such methods, but not yet what is apparently the most important one. We can study it in the developmental history of the individual. What happens in him to make his appetite for aggression harmless? Something very remarkable, which we should never have guessed and which is nevertheless so obvious. The aggression is introjected, internal-

ized—in fact, sent back to where it came from, that is, turned against the person's own ego. There it is taken over by a portion of the ego, which sets itself over against the rest as super-ego and now, as "conscience," turns against the ego the same harsh readiness for aggression that the ego would gladly have satisfied on other, outside individuals. The tension between the stern super-ego and the ego subject to it we call the consciousness of guilt; it expresses itself as a need for punishment. Civilization thus masters the individual's dangerous appetite for aggression by weakening and disarming him and by having him watched over by an agency within him, like a garrison in a conquered city.

7.3 The analyst thinks about the origin of the sense of guilt differently from other psychologists; but he, too, does not find it easy to give an account of it. To begin with, if we ask how a person comes to have a sense of guilt, we get an answer that cannot be disputed: people feel guilty (the pious say "sinful") when they have done something they recognize as "bad." Then we notice how little this answer tells us. Perhaps, after some hesitation, we shall add that even someone who has not done this bad thing, but merely recognizes in himself the intention to do it, may regard himself as guilty; and then we shall raise the question why in this case the intention is treated as equal to the deed. Both cases, however, presuppose that one has already recognized what is bad as reprehensible, as something that must not be carried out. How does one arrive at this judgment? We may reject the idea of an original, so to speak natural, capacity to distinguish good from bad. What is bad is often not at all what is harmful or dangerous to the ego; on the contrary, it may also be something the ego desires and takes pleasure in. Here, then, an outside influence is at work; it is this that decides what is to be called good and bad. Since a person's own feelings would not have led him along the same path, he must have a motive for submitting to this outside influence. That motive is easy to discover in his helplessness and his dependence on others; it can best be described as anxiety about the loss of love. If he loses

the love of the other person on whom he depends, he also forfeits protection against many kinds of danger; above all, he exposes himself to the danger that this more powerful person will demonstrate his superiority in the form of punishment. At first, then, what is bad is whatever one is threatened with the loss of love for; out of anxiety about this loss one must avoid it. That is why it makes little difference whether one has already done the bad thing or only intends to do it; in either case the danger only arises if the authority finds out, and in either case the authority would behave in much the same way.

7.4 This state of mind is called a "bad conscience," but it does not really deserve the name, for at this stage the consciousness of guilt is clearly only anxiety about the loss of love, "social" anxiety. In the small child it can never be anything else; but in many adults, too, the only change is that the larger human community takes the place of the father or of both parents. Consequently they regularly allow themselves to do the bad thing that promises them enjoyment, so long as they are sure that the authority will not find out or cannot touch them; their anxiety is solely about being discovered.[1] Present-day society generally has to reckon with this state of mind.

7.5 A great change comes only when the authority is internalized through the establishment of a super-ego. The phenomena of conscience are thereby raised to a new level; strictly speaking, only now should we speak of conscience and a sense of guilt.[2] Now, too, the fear of being found out drops away, and with it, entirely, the distinction between doing something bad and wanting to do it, since nothing can be hidden from the

1 FREUD'S NOTE. Think of Rousseau's famous mandarin!

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. The question—would you kill an unknown mandarin in China by a mere act of will if it made you rich and no one could ever know?—is attributed to Rousseau in Balzac's *Le Père Goriot*; it actually comes from Chateaubriand.

2 FREUD'S NOTE. Any sensible reader will understand and allow for the fact that this schematic account sharply separates what in reality happens through gradual transitions, and that what matters is not merely whether a super-ego exists but its relative strength and sphere of influence. All that has been said so far about conscience and guilt is, after all, common knowledge and almost undisputed.

super-ego, not even thoughts. The real gravity of the situation, it is true, has passed, for the new authority, the super-ego, has, so we believe, no motive for ill-treating the ego, with which it is intimately bound up. But the influence of its genesis, which keeps alive what is past and surmounted, shows itself in the fact that things remain fundamentally as they were at the beginning. The super-ego torments the sinful ego with the same feelings of anxiety and watches for opportunities to have it punished by the outside world.

THE SEVERITY OF CONSCIENCE

Conscience is harshest in the most virtuous and grows stronger in misfortune.

7.6 At this second stage of development conscience displays a peculiarity that was foreign to the first and is no longer easy to explain. It behaves the more severely and suspiciously the more virtuous a person is, so that in the end it is precisely those who have gone furthest in saintliness who accuse themselves of the worst sinfulness. Virtue thereby forfeits part of its promised reward; the docile and abstinent ego does not enjoy the trust of its mentor and strives, it seems in vain, to earn it. Here someone will be ready to object that these are artificially contrived difficulties. A stricter and more vigilant conscience, the objection runs, is precisely the distinguishing mark of the moral person; and if saints call themselves sinners, they are not wrong to do so, pointing to the temptations to satisfy their drives to which they are exposed in an especially high degree—since temptations, as everyone knows, only grow under constant frustration, whereas occasional satisfaction makes them abate, at least for a while. Another fact in the field of ethics, so rich in problems, is that misfortune—that is, external frustration—so greatly promotes the power of conscience in the super-ego. As long as things go well for a person, his conscience, too, is lenient and lets the ego get away with all sorts of things; when misfortune has struck him, he searches his soul, recognizes his sinfulness,

raises the demands of his conscience, imposes abstinences on himself and punishes himself with penances.[3] Whole peoples have behaved in the same way and still do. But this is readily explained by the original, infantile stage of conscience, which, as we see, is not abandoned after the introjection into the super-ego but persists alongside and behind it. Fate is regarded as a substitute for the parental agency; if one suffers misfortune, it means that one is no longer loved by this highest power, and, threatened with this loss of love, one bows once more to the representative of the parents in the super-ego, which one had been inclined to neglect while things were going well. This becomes especially clear when, in a strictly religious sense, one sees in fate nothing but the expression of the divine will. The people of Israel had believed themselves to be God's favored child, and when the great Father let misfortune after misfortune break over this his people, it did not lose faith in the relationship or doubt God's power and justice; instead it produced the prophets, who held its sinfulness up before it, and out of its consciousness of guilt it created the excessively strict precepts of its priestly religion. It is remarkable how differently a member of a tribal society behaves! If he has had bad luck, he does not lay the blame on himself but on the fetish, which has obviously failed in its duty, and he gives it a beating instead of punishing himself.

TWO ORIGINS OF THE SENSE OF GUILT

Guilt arises first from fear of authority, then from fear of the super-ego, which renunciation cannot satisfy.

7.7 We know, then, of two origins of the sense of guilt: one arising from anxiety in the face of authority, and a later one arising from anxiety in the face of the super-ego. The first compels us to

3 FREUD'S NOTE. Mark Twain deals with this promotion of morality by misfortune in a delightful little story, *The First Melon I Ever Stole*. This first melon happens to be unripe. I heard Mark Twain read this little story himself. After he had pronounced its title, he paused and asked himself, as if in doubt: "Was it the first?" With that he had said everything.

renounce satisfactions of the drives; the second, since the persistence of forbidden wishes cannot be concealed from the super-ego, presses for punishment as well. We have also heard how the severity of the super-ego—the demands of conscience—can be understood. It simply continues the severity of the external authority, which it has succeeded and in part replaced. We now see how the renunciation of the drives is related to the consciousness of guilt. Originally, renunciation of the drives is the consequence of anxiety in the face of external authority; one renounces satisfactions in order not to lose its love. Once this renunciation has been made, one is, so to speak, quits with the authority, and no sense of guilt should remain. It is different in the case of anxiety in the face of the super-ego. Here renunciation of the drives does not help enough, for the wish persists and cannot be hidden from the super-ego. Despite the renunciation, then, a sense of guilt will arise, and this is a great economic disadvantage of setting up a super-ego—or, as one may put it, of forming a conscience. Renunciation of the drives no longer has a fully liberating effect; virtuous abstinence is no longer rewarded by the assurance of love; a threatened external unhappiness—loss of love and punishment at the hands of the external authority—has been exchanged for a lasting internal unhappiness, the tension of the consciousness of guilt.

7.8 These relations are so intricate and at the same time so important that, despite the risk of repeating myself, I should like to approach them from another side. The chronological sequence, then, would be this: first, renunciation of the drives out of anxiety in the face of the aggression of the external authority—for that is what anxiety about the loss of love comes down to, love being a protection against this aggression in the form of punishment—then the establishment of an internal authority, and renunciation of the drives out of anxiety in the face of it: anxiety of conscience. In the second case, bad deed and bad intention are treated as equal; hence the consciousness of guilt, the need for punishment. The aggression of conscience preserves the aggression of the authority. So far, no doubt,

things have become clear; but where does this leave room for the influence of misfortune (of renunciation imposed from outside) in reinforcing conscience, and for the extraordinary severity of conscience in the best and most docile people? We have already explained both these peculiarities of conscience, but we are probably left with the impression that these explanations do not go to the bottom of the matter and leave something unexplained. And here at last an idea comes in that is entirely peculiar to psychoanalysis and foreign to people's ordinary way of thinking. It is of such a kind that it lets us understand why the subject was bound to appear so confused and opaque to us. It says, namely, that although at first conscience (more correctly: the anxiety that later becomes conscience) is the cause of renunciation of the drives, later the relation is reversed. Every renunciation of the drives now becomes a dynamic source of conscience; every fresh renunciation increases its severity and intolerance; and if only we could bring this better into line with what we know of the history of conscience's origin, we should be tempted to embrace the paradoxical proposition: Conscience is the result of renunciation of the drives; or: Renunciation of the drives (imposed on us from outside) creates conscience, which then demands further renunciation of the drives.

7.9 Actually the contradiction between this proposition and the genesis of conscience we described earlier is not so great, and we can see a way of reducing it still further. For ease of exposition, let us take the aggressive drive as our example and assume that in these matters it is always a question of renouncing aggression. This, of course, is meant only as a provisional assumption. The effect of renunciation of the drives on conscience then works like this: every piece of aggression whose satisfaction we forgo is taken over by the super-ego and increases its aggression (against the ego). This does not quite fit with the view that the original aggression of conscience is the continued severity of the external authority, and so has nothing to do with renunciation. But we can make this discrepancy disappear if we assume a different derivation for this first endow-

ment of the super-ego with aggression. Against the authority that prevents the child from obtaining its first, but also its most significant, satisfactions, a considerable amount of inclination to aggression must have developed in the child, no matter what kind of renunciation of the drives was demanded of it. Of necessity the child had to forgo satisfying this vengeful aggression. It finds its way out of this difficult economic situation by means of familiar mechanisms: through identification it takes this unassailable authority into itself; the authority now becomes the super-ego and comes into possession of all the aggression that as a child one would gladly have exercised against it. The child's ego has to content itself with the sorry role of the authority—the father—thus degraded. It is a reversal of the situation, as so often happens. "If I were the father and you were the child, I would treat you badly." The relation between super-ego and ego is the return, distorted by the wish, of real relations between the still undivided ego and an external object. That, too, is typical. The essential difference, however, is that the original severity of the super-ego is not—or not so much—the severity one has experienced from the object or attributes to it, but represents one's own aggression against it. If this is correct, one may really maintain that conscience arose in the first place through the suppression of an aggression, and that it is subsequently reinforced by fresh suppressions of the same kind.

7.10 Which of the two views is right, then? The earlier one, which seemed so unassailable genetically, or the newer one, which rounds off the theory in so welcome a way? Clearly—and the evidence of direct observation bears this out—both are justified. They do not conflict; they even coincide at one point, for the child's vengeful aggression will be determined in part by the amount of punitive aggression it expects from the father. Experience teaches, however, that the severity of the super-ego a child develops by no means reflects the severity of the treatment it

has itself received.[4] It appears to be independent of it; a child brought up very leniently can acquire a very strict conscience. Yet it would also be wrong to exaggerate this independence; it is not hard to convince oneself that severity in upbringing also has a strong influence on the formation of the child's super-ego. What it comes to is that in the formation of the super-ego and the emergence of conscience, innate constitutional factors and influences from the actual environment work together; and that is by no means strange, but is the general etiological condition of all such processes.[5]

THE KILLING OF THE PRIMAL FATHER

Remorse for the primal murder, born of ambivalence, set up the super-ego and made guilt inevitable.

7.11 One may also say that when the child reacts to the first great frustrations of its drives with excessively strong aggression and a correspondingly severe super-ego, it is following a phylogenetic model and going beyond the response that would be justified in the present situation; for the father of prehistoric times was surely terrible, and one could credit him with the utmost

4 FREUD'S NOTE. As Melanie Klein and other English writers have rightly emphasized.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Melanie Klein (1882–1960), Austrian-born psychoanalyst and pioneer of child analysis, who settled in London in 1926.

5 FREUD'S NOTE. In "The Psychoanalysis of the Total Personality" (1927), Franz Alexander, following Aichhorn's study of delinquency, gave a sound appraisal of the two main types of pathogenic method in upbringing: excessive severity and spoiling. The "unduly soft and indulgent" father will cause the child to form an overly severe super-ego, because, under the impression of the love it receives, this child has no other outlet for its aggression than turning it inward. In the neglected delinquent, who was brought up without love, the tension between ego and super-ego is absent, and all his aggression can be directed outward. Leaving aside a constitutional factor that must be assumed, then, we may say that a severe conscience arises from the joint action of two influences in life: frustration of the drives, which unleashes aggression, and the experience of love, which turns this aggression inward and hands it over to the super-ego.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Franz Alexander (1891–1964), Hungarian-born psychoanalyst; August Aichhorn (1878–1949), Viennese educator and analyst, author of *Wayward Youth* (1925).

degree of aggression. The differences between the two views of the genesis of conscience thus diminish still further when we pass from the individual history of development to the phylogenetic one. On the other hand, a new and significant difference appears between these two processes. We cannot get beyond the assumption that humanity's sense of guilt stems from the Oedipus complex and was acquired when the father was killed by the band of brothers. On that occasion an aggression was not suppressed but carried out—the same aggression whose suppression in the child is supposed to be the source of the sense of guilt. Now I should not be surprised if a reader were to exclaim angrily: "So it makes no difference whether you kill your father or not—you get a sense of guilt either way! One may be permitted a few doubts here. Either it is false that the sense of guilt comes from suppressed aggressions, or the whole story of the killing of the father is a novel, and the children of primeval man did not kill their fathers any more often than children do today. Besides, if it is not a novel but plausible history, then we would have a case in which what everyone expects actually happens—namely, that one feels guilty because one really has done something that cannot be justified. And for this case, which after all happens every day, psychoanalysis still owes us an explanation."

7.12 That is true, and the omission shall be made good. Nor is there any great secret about it. When one has a sense of guilt after and because one has committed an offense, the feeling should rather be called *remorse*. It relates only to a deed, and of course presupposes that a *conscience*—the readiness to feel guilty—already existed before the deed. Such remorse can therefore never help us to discover the origin of conscience and of the sense of guilt in general. What usually happens in these everyday cases is that a need of the drives has acquired the strength to push through its satisfaction against a conscience whose strength, too, is only limited, and that with the natural weakening of the need through its satisfaction the former balance of forces is restored. Psychoanalysis is therefore right to exclude from these discussions the case of a sense of guilt arising from

remorse, however frequently it occurs and however great its practical importance.

7.13 But if the human sense of guilt goes back to the killing of the primal father, that was surely a case of "remorse"—and yet, on our assumption, conscience and the sense of guilt are not supposed to have existed before the deed? Where did the remorse come from in this case? Certainly this case must clear up for us the secret of the sense of guilt and put an end to our difficulties. And I believe it does. This remorse was the result of the primordial ambivalence of feeling toward the father: the sons hated him, but they loved him too. Once the hatred had been satisfied by the aggression, the love came to the fore in remorse for the deed; through identification with the father it set up the super-ego and gave it the father's power, as if in punishment for the deed of aggression committed against him, and it created the restrictions that were meant to prevent a repetition of the deed. And since the inclination to aggression against the father was repeated in the generations that followed, the sense of guilt, too, persisted, and was reinforced afresh by every aggression that was suppressed and transferred to the super-ego. Now, I think, we at last grasp two things in full clarity: the part played by love in the origin of conscience, and the fateful inevitability of the sense of guilt. It really is not decisive whether one has killed one's father or refrained from the deed; in either case one is bound to feel guilty, for the sense of guilt is the expression of the conflict of ambivalence, of the eternal struggle between Eros and the destructive drive, or death drive. This conflict is kindled as soon as human beings are faced with the task of living together; so long as this community knows only the form of the family, the conflict must express itself in the Oedipus complex, install conscience, and create the first sense of guilt. When an extension of this community is attempted, the same conflict is continued in forms that depend on the past, is intensified, and results in a further increase in the sense of guilt. Since civilization obeys an internal erotic impulse that bids it unite human beings into a closely knit group, it can

achieve this aim only by way of an ever-growing reinforcement of the sense of guilt. What began with the father is completed in the group. If civilization is the necessary course of development from the family to humanity, then there is inextricably bound up with it—as a consequence of the inborn conflict of ambivalence, as a consequence of the eternal strife between love and the striving for death—an increase in the sense of guilt, perhaps to heights that the individual finds hard to bear.

> One recalls the great poet's moving indictment of the "heavenly powers": "You lead us into life,
> You let the poor wretch fall into guilt,
> Then leave him to his torment,
> For all guilt is avenged on earth."[6] And one may well sigh at the realization that it is given to a few individuals to bring up the deepest insights, virtually without effort, from the whirl of their own feelings, while the rest of us have to find our way to them through agonizing uncertainty and restless groping.

6 FREUD'S NOTE. Goethe, the Harper's songs in *Wilhelm Meister*.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. From Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795–96), in the Harper's song "Who never ate his bread with tears."

Chapter VIII

VIII
The sense of guilt as the central problem of civilization, the super-ego of a culture, and the fateful question of whether Eros will prevail.

8.1 Having reached the end of such a journey, the author must ask his readers' forgiveness for not having been a skillful guide, for not having spared them stretches of dreary country and laborious detours. There is no doubt that it could be done better. I will try to make some amends after the fact.

8.2 To begin with, I suspect readers have the impression that the discussion of the sense of guilt bursts the bounds of this essay, taking up too much space and pushing the rest of its content, with which it is not always closely connected, to the margins. That may have spoiled the structure of the work, but it fully corresponds to my intention of presenting the sense of guilt as the most important problem in the development of civilization, and of showing that the price we pay for the advance of civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the

sense of guilt.[1] Whatever still sounds strange in this proposition, the final result of our inquiry, can probably be traced to the quite peculiar and still wholly uncomprehended relation of the sense of guilt to our consciousness. In the ordinary cases of remorse, which we regard as normal, it makes itself clearly enough perceptible to consciousness; after all, we are accustomed to speak of a "consciousness of guilt" instead of a sense of guilt. The study of the neuroses, to which we owe the most valuable hints for understanding the normal, yields contradictory findings. In one of these affections, obsessional neurosis, the sense of guilt forces itself all too loudly on consciousness; it dominates the clinical picture as well as the patient's life, and scarcely lets anything else arise beside it. But in most other cases and forms of neurosis it remains completely unconscious, without on that account having any slighter effects. Patients do not believe us when we attribute an "unconscious sense of guilt" to them; in order to be understood by them even halfway, we tell them of an unconscious need for punishment, in which the sense of guilt finds expression. But the connection with the form of neurosis must not be overestimated; in obsessional neurosis, too, there are types of patient who are not aware of their sense of guilt, or who feel it as a tormenting malaise, a kind of anxiety, only when they are prevented from carrying out certain actions. These things ought at last to be understood; they cannot be yet. Perhaps it will be welcome to remark here that the sense of guilt

1 FREUD'S NOTE. "Thus conscience does make cowards of us all..." That it conceals from the young person the part sexuality will play in his life is not the only reproach that must be made against present-day education. It sins, besides, in not preparing him for the aggression of which he is destined to become the object. In sending the young out into life with such a false psychological orientation, education behaves as though one were to equip people setting off on a polar expedition with summer clothes and maps of the northern Italian lakes. Here a certain misuse of ethical demands becomes evident. Their severity would do little harm if education said: This is how people ought to be in order to be happy and to make others happy; but one must reckon with the fact that they are not like this. Instead, the young person is led to believe that everyone else fulfills the ethical precepts, and is therefore virtuous. On this is based the demand that he, too, should become so.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. *Hamlet*, act 3, scene 1, which Freud quotes in the standard German translation.

is at bottom nothing but a topographical variety of anxiety; in its later phases it coincides completely with *anxiety in the face of the super-ego*. And anxiety displays the same extraordinary variations in its relation to consciousness. Anxiety lies somehow behind every symptom; but at one moment it noisily claims the whole of consciousness for itself, at another it hides so completely that we are compelled to speak of unconscious anxiety—or, if we want a cleaner psychological conscience, since anxiety is in the first instance only a feeling, of possibilities of anxiety. And so it is quite conceivable that the consciousness of guilt produced by civilization is likewise not recognized as such, remains largely unconscious, or comes to light as discontent, as dissatisfaction, for which other motives are sought. The religions, at any rate, have never failed to recognize the part played by the sense of guilt in civilization.[2] For they also come forward —something I had failed to appreciate elsewhere[3]—with the claim to redeem humanity from this sense of guilt, which they call sin. From the way this redemption is won in Christianity—through the sacrificial death of one individual, who thereby takes upon himself a guilt common to all—we have, after all, drawn a conclusion as to what may have been the first occasion for acquiring this primal guilt, with which civilization, too, began.[4]

SUPER-EGO, CONSCIENCE, GUILT, REMORSE

Freud defines the terms he has used and reviews the contradictions in his account of guilt.

8.3 It cannot be of great importance, but it may not be superfluous, for us to explain the meaning of a few words—super-ego, conscience, sense of guilt, need for punishment, remorse—which we have perhaps often used too loosely and interchange-

2 "Discontent" renders *Unbehagen*, the word in the book's German title (*Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*): unease, discomfort, a vague malaise.
3 FREUD'S NOTE. I mean: *The Future of an Illusion* (1927).
4 FREUD'S NOTE. *Totem and Taboo* (1912).

ably. They all refer to the same relationship, but name different aspects of it. The super-ego is an agency we have inferred; conscience is a function we ascribe to it, among others, whose task is to watch over and judge the actions and intentions of the ego, and which exercises a censoring activity. The sense of guilt, the harshness of the super-ego, is thus the same as the severity of conscience; it is the perception, allotted to the ego, that it is being watched over in this way, the ego's assessment of the tension between its own strivings and the demands of the super-ego. And the anxiety in the face of this critical agency that underlies the whole relationship—the need for punishment—is a manifestation of drive on the part of the ego, which has become masochistic under the influence of the sadistic super-ego; that is, it uses a portion of the drive to internal destruction present in it for an erotic attachment to the super-ego. One should not speak of conscience until a super-ego can be shown to exist; as for the consciousness of guilt, we must admit that it exists earlier than the super-ego, and therefore earlier than conscience too. It is then the immediate expression of anxiety in the face of the external authority, the recognition of the tension between the ego and that authority, the direct offshoot of the conflict between the need for its love and the urge toward satisfaction of the drives, whose inhibition produces the inclination to aggression. The superimposition of these two layers of the sense of guilt—arising from anxiety in the face of the external and of the internal authority—has made it harder for us to see into many of the relations of conscience. Remorse is a general term for the ego's reaction in a case of the sense of guilt; it contains, little transformed, the emotional material of the anxiety at work behind it; it is itself a punishment and may include the need for punishment. It, too, then, can be older than conscience.

8.4 Nor can it do any harm to review once more the contradictions that confused us for a while in our inquiry. At one point the sense of guilt was supposed to be the consequence of aggressions that were held back; at another—and precisely at its historical beginning, the killing of the father—the consequence of an

aggression that was carried out. We also found the way out of this difficulty. The establishment of the internal authority, the super-ego, changed the situation fundamentally. Before that, the sense of guilt coincided with remorse; we note, incidentally, that the term remorse should be reserved for the reaction after aggression has actually been carried out. Afterward, owing to the omniscience of the super-ego, the distinction between intended and accomplished aggression lost its force; now a sense of guilt could be produced both by an act of violence actually carried out—as all the world knows—and by one merely intended—as psychoanalysis has discovered. Irrespective of this change in the psychological situation, the conflict of ambivalence between the two primal drives leaves the same effect behind. It is tempting to look here for the solution to the riddle of the changeable relation between the sense of guilt and consciousness. A sense of guilt arising from remorse over an evil deed would always have to be conscious; one arising from awareness of an evil impulse could remain unconscious. But it is not so simple; obsessional neurosis emphatically contradicts it. The second contradiction was that the aggressive energy with which we imagine the super-ego to be endowed, on one view, merely continues the punitive energy of the external authority and preserves it in mental life, while another view holds that it is rather one's own aggression, which has found no use, directed against this inhibiting authority. The first theory seemed to fit the history of the sense of guilt better, the second its theory. More thorough reflection has blurred the apparently irreconcilable opposition almost too much; what remained, as essential and common to both, was that we are dealing with an aggression that has been displaced inward. Clinical observation, for its part, really does allow us to distinguish two sources of the aggression attributed to the super-ego; in a particular case one or the other may have the stronger effect, but in general they work together.

8.5 This, I think, is the place to put forward in earnest a view that I earlier recommended as a provisional assumption. In the most recent analytic literature there is a preference for the the-

ory that every kind of frustration, every thwarted satisfaction of the drives, results, or may result, in an increase in the sense of guilt.[5] I believe we make things much easier for ourselves theoretically if we let this hold only for the *aggressive* drives, and we shall not find much that contradicts this assumption. For how is one to explain, dynamically and economically, that an increase in the sense of guilt appears in place of an unfulfilled erotic demand? That seems possible only by a detour: the thwarting of erotic satisfaction provokes some inclination to aggression against the person who interferes with the satisfaction, and this aggression must itself in turn be suppressed. But then it is, after all, only the aggression that is transformed into a sense of guilt, by being suppressed and shifted onto the super-ego. I am convinced that we shall be able to present many processes more simply and clearly if we restrict the finding of psychoanalysis about the origin of the sense of guilt to the aggressive drives. Consulting the clinical material gives no unequivocal answer here, because, on our assumption, the two kinds of drive hardly ever appear in pure form, isolated from each other; but a consideration of extreme cases will probably point in the direction I expect. I am tempted to draw a first benefit from this stricter view by applying it to the process of repression. The symptoms of the neuroses, as we have learned, are essentially substitute satisfactions for unfulfilled sexual wishes. In the course of analytic work we have found, to our surprise, that perhaps every neurosis conceals a quantity of unconscious sense of guilt, which in turn reinforces the symptoms by using them as punishment. It is now tempting to formulate the proposition: when a drive-striving undergoes repression, its libidinal elements are converted into symptoms, its aggressive components into a sense of guilt. Even if this proposition is correct only as an average approximation, it deserves our interest.

5 FREUD'S NOTE. Especially in E. Jones, Susan Isaacs and Melanie Klein; but also, as I understand it, in Reik and Alexander.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE. Susan Isaacs (1885–1948), British educator and analyst; Theodor Reik (1888–1969), one of Freud's Viennese pupils.

INDIVIDUAL AND CIVILIZATION

Individual development aims at happiness, civilization at unity; the two processes contend in every person.

8.6 Some readers of this essay may also feel that they have heard the formula of the struggle between Eros and the death drive too often. It was meant to characterize the process of civilization that runs its course over humanity, but it was also applied to the development of the individual, and was supposed, besides, to have revealed the secret of organic life in general. It seems unavoidable to examine how these three processes are related to one another. Now the recurrence of the same formula is justified by the consideration that the process of civilization in humanity, like the development of the individual, is also a life process, and must therefore share in the most general character of life. On the other hand, precisely for that reason, demonstrating this general feature contributes nothing to distinguishing them, so long as it is not narrowed down by special conditions. We can rest content, then, only with the statement that the process of civilization is that modification of the life process which it undergoes under the influence of a task set by Eros and prompted by Ananke, real necessity—and that this task is the uniting of isolated human beings into a community bound together libidinally. If, however, we consider the relation between the process of civilization in humanity and the process of development or education in the individual human being, we shall decide without much hesitation that the two are of a very similar nature, if not actually the same process applied to different kinds of objects. The process of civilization in the human species is, of course, an abstraction of a higher order than the development of the individual, and therefore harder to grasp concretely, and the search for analogies should not be pushed to obsessive lengths; but given the similarity of the aims—in the one case the incorporation of an individual into a human group, in the other the creation of a unified group out of many indi-

viduals—the similarity of the means employed and of the resulting phenomena cannot be surprising. One feature that distinguishes the two processes must, because of its extraordinary importance, not go unmentioned for long. In the developmental process of the individual, the program of the pleasure principle —to find satisfaction in happiness—is held to as the chief aim; incorporation into, or adaptation to, a human community appears as a scarcely avoidable condition that has to be fulfilled on the way to attaining this aim of happiness. If it could be done without this condition, it would perhaps be better. To put it another way: individual development appears to us as the product of the interference of two strivings—the striving for happiness, which we usually call "egoistic," and the striving for union with others in the community, which we call "altruistic." Neither term goes much below the surface. In individual development, as we have said, the main emphasis mostly falls on the egoistic striving, the striving for happiness; the other, which may be called "cultural," is as a rule content with the role of a restriction. It is different in the process of civilization; here the aim of creating a unity out of individual human beings is by far the main thing. The aim of happiness still exists, it is true, but it is pushed into the background; it almost seems as if the creation of a great human community would succeed best if one did not have to bother about the happiness of the individual. The developmental process of the individual may thus have its own special features, which are not found again in the process of civilization in humanity; only insofar as the former process aims at joining the community must it coincide with the latter.

8.7 Just as a planet revolves around its central body as well as rotating on its own axis, so the individual human being takes part in the course of humanity's development while going his own way through life. But to our dull eyes the play of forces in the heavens seems frozen into an order that is eternally the same; in organic events we can still see how the forces contend with one another and how the results of the conflict constantly change. In the same way the two strivings, the one for individual

happiness and the one for union with other people, must contend with each other in every individual; in the same way the two processes, of individual development and of the development of civilization, must meet each other as enemies and dispute the ground with each other. But this struggle between the individual and society is not an offshoot of the probably irreconcilable opposition between the primal drives, Eros and death; it signifies a dispute within the economy of the libido, comparable to the contest over the distribution of libido between the ego and its objects, and it admits of an eventual settlement in the individual—as, one hopes, it will also in the future of civilization—however heavily it may burden the life of the individual at present.

THE SUPER-EGO OF A CIVILIZATION

Communities form super-egos whose ethical demands, like love thy neighbor, ignore human nature.

8.8 The analogy between the process of civilization and the individual's path of development can be extended in one significant respect. It can be maintained, namely, that the community, too, develops a super-ego, under whose influence the development of civilization proceeds. It might be a tempting task for an expert on human civilizations to pursue this parallel in detail. I will confine myself to pointing out a few striking points. The super-ego of an epoch of civilization has an origin similar to that of the individual human being; it rests on the impression left behind by great leading personalities—people of overwhelming intellectual power, or people in whom one of the human strivings has found its strongest and purest, and therefore often its most one-sided, development. In many cases the analogy goes further still, in that these figures—often enough, though not always—were mocked, ill-treated or even cruelly done away with by others during their lifetime, just as the primal father, too, rose to divinity only long after his violent death. The most moving example of this linked fate is the person of Jesus Christ

—if indeed that person does not belong to myth, which called it into being in obscure memory of that primal event. Another point of agreement is that the cultural super-ego, just like that of the individual, sets up strict ideal demands, failure to comply with which is punished by "anxiety of conscience." Indeed, here we meet the remarkable case in which the mental processes concerned are more familiar to us, more accessible to consciousness, when seen from the side of the group than they can ever become in the individual. In the individual, only the aggressions of the super-ego make themselves heard, all too loudly, as reproaches when there is tension, while the demands themselves often remain unconscious in the background. If one brings them to conscious recognition, it turns out that they coincide with the precepts of the prevailing cultural super-ego. At this point, so to speak, the two processes—the cultural development of the multitude and the individual's own development—are regularly glued together. For this reason some of the manifestations and properties of the super-ego can be recognized more easily in its behavior within the cultural community than in the individual.

8.9 The cultural super-ego has developed its ideals and raises its demands. Among the latter, those that concern the relations of human beings to one another are grouped together as ethics. In every age the greatest value has been placed on these ethics, as if it were precisely from them that especially important achievements were expected. And ethics does indeed turn toward the point that is easily recognized as the sorest spot in every civilization. Ethics must therefore be regarded as a therapeutic attempt—as an effort to achieve, by a command of the super-ego, what could not so far be achieved by other cultural work. We already know that the question here is how to remove the greatest obstacle to civilization—the constitutional inclination of human beings to aggression against one another—and precisely for that reason we find especially interesting what is probably the most recent of the cultural commands of the super-ego, the command: Love thy neighbor as thyself. In the investig-

ation and therapy of the neuroses we come to make two reproaches against the super-ego of the individual. In the severity of its commands and prohibitions it concerns itself too little with the happiness of the ego, in that it does not take sufficient account of the resistances to obeying them—the strength of the drives in the id and the difficulties of the real environment. For therapeutic purposes, therefore, we are very often obliged to fight the super-ego, and we try to lower its demands. We can raise very similar objections against the ethical demands of the cultural super-ego. It, too, does not concern itself enough with the facts of the mental constitution of human beings; it issues a command and does not ask whether it is possible for people to obey it. Rather, it assumes that everything asked of a person's ego is psychologically possible for it, that the ego has unlimited mastery over its id. That is a mistake, and even in so-called normal people control over the id cannot be increased beyond certain limits. If more is demanded, one produces rebellion or neurosis in the individual, or makes him unhappy. The command "Love thy neighbor as thyself" is the strongest defense against human aggression and an excellent example of the unpsychological procedure of the cultural super-ego. The command cannot be carried out; such a grandiose inflation of love can only lower its value, not remove the distress. Civilization neglects all this; it merely admonishes that the harder it is to obey the precept, the more meritorious it is to do so. But anyone who keeps such a precept in present-day civilization only puts himself at a disadvantage against the person who disregards it. How powerful an obstacle to civilization aggression must be, if the defense against it can cause as much unhappiness as aggression itself! So-called natural ethics has nothing to offer here except the narcissistic satisfaction of being entitled to think oneself better than others. Ethics that leans on religion brings in here its promises of a better life hereafter. I think that as long as virtue is not rewarded here on earth, ethics will preach in vain. It seems to me, too, beyond doubt that a real change in people's relation to property will bring more relief here than any ethical

command; but among the socialists this insight is clouded, and made worthless in practice, by a fresh idealistic misconception of human nature.

NEUROTIC CIVILIZATIONS?

Freud asks whether whole civilizations may be neurotic, and declines to judge civilization's value or offer consolation.

8.10 The approach that seeks to trace the role of a super-ego in the phenomena of the development of civilization seems to me to promise still further discoveries. I hasten to conclude. There is one question, though, that I can hardly evade. If the development of civilization bears so far-reaching a resemblance to that of the individual, and works with the same means, are we not entitled to diagnose that some civilizations—or epochs of civilization—possibly the whole of humanity—have become "neurotic" under the influence of cultural strivings? The analytic dissection of these neuroses could be followed by therapeutic recommendations that might claim great practical interest. I could not say that such an attempt to carry psychoanalysis over to the cultural community would be absurd or doomed to be fruitless. But one would have to be very careful, and not forget that it is, after all, only a matter of analogies, and that it is dangerous, not only with people but also with concepts, to tear them out of the sphere in which they originated and developed. The diagnosis of communal neuroses also runs into a special difficulty. In an individual neurosis our first point of reference is the contrast that sets the patient off from his environment, which is assumed to be "normal." No such background is available in a group that is uniformly affected; it would have to be found elsewhere. And as for the therapeutic application of our insight, what use would the most accurate analysis of a social neurosis be, since no one possesses the authority to impose the therapy on the group? Despite all these difficulties, we may expect that one day someone will venture to undertake such a pathology of cultural communities.

8.11 For the most diverse reasons, nothing is further from my mind than to offer an assessment of the value of human civilization. I have tried to keep myself free of the enthusiastic prejudice that our civilization is the most precious thing we possess or could acquire, and that its path must necessarily lead us to heights of undreamed-of perfection. I can at least listen without indignation to the critic who thinks that, if one considers the aims of cultural striving and the means it employs, one is bound to conclude that the whole effort is not worth the trouble, and that the outcome can only be a state of affairs the individual must find unbearable. My impartiality is made easier by the fact that I know very little about all these things. Only one thing do I know for certain: that people's judgments of value are unconditionally governed by their wishes for happiness, and are thus an attempt to support their illusions with arguments. I should understand it very well if someone were to stress the compulsory character of human civilization and say, for example, that the tendency to restrict sexual life, or to carry through the humanitarian ideal at the expense of natural selection, are developmental trends that cannot be averted or deflected, and to which it is best to submit as though they were necessities of nature. I also know the objection to this: that such strivings, which were held to be insurmountable, have often in the course of human history been cast aside and replaced by others. So my courage fails me to stand up before my fellow men as a prophet, and I bow to their reproach that I can offer them no consolation —for that is what they all demand at bottom, the wildest revolutionaries no less passionately than the most dutiful of the pious.

8.12 The fateful question for the human species seems to me to be whether, and to what extent, the development of its civilization will succeed in mastering the disturbance of communal life by the human drive of aggression and self-destruction. In this respect, perhaps, the present time deserves special interest. Human beings have now gained such control over the forces of nature that with their help they could easily exterminate one another to the last man. They know this—hence a good part of

their present unrest, their unhappiness, their mood of anxiety. And now it is to be expected that the other of the two "heavenly powers," eternal Eros, will make an effort to assert himself in the struggle with his equally immortal adversary.[6]

6 The "heavenly powers" echo Goethe's Harper's song quoted at 7.13. In the 1931 edition Freud added a final sentence: "But who can foresee with what success and with what outcome?"