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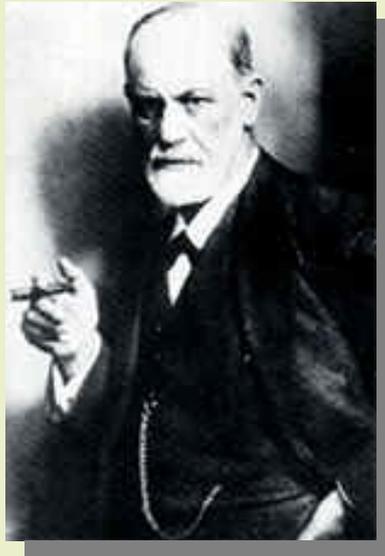
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# Civilization and Its Discontents

By

SIGMUND FREUD

1929



Product Code: GSF023

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Chrysona Associates Ltd,  
12 Gainsborough Place, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP19 8SF  
England

## Civilization and Its Discontents

THE impression forces itself upon one that men measure by false standards, that everyone seeks power, success, riches for himself and admires others who attain them, while undervaluing the truly precious things in life. And yet, in making any general judgment of this kind, one is in danger of forgetting the manifold variety of humanity and its mental life. There are certain men from whom their contemporaries do not withhold veneration, although their greatness rests on attributes and achievements which are completely foreign to the aims and ideals of the multitude. One might well be inclined to suppose that after all it is only a minority who appreciate these great men, while the majority cares nothing for them. But the discrepancy between men's opinions and their behaviour is so wide and their desires so many-sided that things are probably not so simple.

One of these exceptional men calls himself my friend in his letters to me. I had sent him my little book which treats of religion as an illusion and he answered that he agreed entirely with my views on religion, but that he was sorry I had not properly appreciated the ultimate source of religious sentiments. This consists in a peculiar feeling, which never leaves him personally, which he finds shared by many others, and which he may suppose millions more also experience. It is a feeling which he would like to call a sensation of *eternity*, a feeling as of something limitless, unbounded, something "oceanic." It is, he says, a purely subjective experience, not an article of belief; it implies no assurance of personal immortality, but it is the source of the religious spirit and is taken hold of by the various Churches and religious systems, directed by them into definite channels, and also, no doubt, used up in them. One may rightly call oneself religious on the ground of this oceanic feeling alone, even though one reject all beliefs and all illusions. These views, expressed by my friend whom I so greatly honour and who himself once in poetry described the magic of illusion, put me in a difficult position. I cannot discover this "oceanic" feeling in myself. It is not easy to deal scientifically with feelings. One may attempt to describe their physiological signs.

Where that is impossible – I am afraid the oceanic feeling, too, will defy this kind of classification – nothing remains but to turn to the ideational content which most readily associates itself with the feeling. If I have understood my friend aright, he means the same thing as that consolation offered by an original and somewhat unconventional writer to his hero, contemplating suicide: "Out of this world we cannot fall." **1** So it is a feeling of indissoluble connection, of belonging inseparably to the external world as a whole. To me, personally, I may remark, this seems something more in the nature of an intellectual judgment, not, it is true, without any accompanying feeling-tone, but with one of a kind which characterizes other equally far-reaching reflections as well. I could not in my own person convince myself of the primary nature of such a feeling. But I cannot on that account deny that it in fact occurs in other people. One can only wonder whether it has been correctly interpreted and whether it is entitled to be acknowledged as the *fans et origo* **2** of the whole need for religion.

**1** Christian Grabbe, *Hannibal*: "Ja, aus der Welt werden wir nicht fallen. Wir sind einmal darin. "

**2** Source and origin.

I have nothing to suggest which could effectively settle the solution of this problem. The idea that man should receive intimation of his connection with the surrounding world by a direct feeling which aims from the outset at serving this purpose sounds so strange and is so incongruous with the structure of our psychology that one is justified in attempting a psycho-analytic, that is, genetic explanation of such a feeling. Whereupon the following lines of thought present themselves. Normally there is nothing we are more certain of than the feeling of our self, our own ego. It seems to us an independent unitary thing, sharply outlined against everything else. That this is a deceptive appearance, and that on the contrary the ego extends inwards without any sharp delimitation, into an unconscious mental entity which we call the *id* and to which it forms a facade, was first discovered by psycho-analytic research, and the latter still has much to tell us about the relations of the ego to the *id*. But towards the outer world, at any rate, the ego seems to keep itself clearly and sharply outlined and delimited. There is only one state of mind in which it fails to do this – an unusual state, it is true, but not one that can be judged as pathological. At its height, the state of

being in love threatens to obliterate the boundaries between ego and object. Against all the evidence of his senses, the man in love declares that he and his beloved are one, and is prepared to behave as if it were a fact. A thing that can be temporarily effaced by a physiological function must also of course be liable to disturbance by morbid processes. From pathology we have come to know a large number of states in which the boundary line between ego and outer world become uncertain, or in which they are actually incorrectly perceived – cases in which parts of a man's own body, even component parts of his own mind, perceptions, thoughts, feelings, appear to him alien and not belonging to himself; other cases in which a man ascribes to the external world things that clearly originate in himself, and that ought to be acknowledged by him. So the ego's cognizance of itself is subject to disturbance, and the boundaries between it and the outer world are not immovable.

Further reflection shows that the adult's sense of his own ego cannot have been the same from the beginning. It must have undergone a development, which naturally cannot be demonstrated, but which admits of reconstruction with a fair degree of probability. <sup>3</sup> When the infant at the breast receives stimuli, he cannot as yet distinguish whether they come from his ego or from the outer world. He learns it gradually as the result of various exigencies. It must make the strongest impression on him that many sources of excitation, which later on he will recognize as his own bodily organs, can provide him at any time with sensations, whereas others become temporarily out of his reach – amongst these what he wants most of all, his mother's breast – and reappear only as a result of his cries for help. Thus an *object first* presents itself to the ego as something ex-isting *outside*, which is only induced to appear by a particular act. A further stimulus to the growth and formation of the ego, so that it becomes something more than a bundle of sensations, i. e., recognizes an *outside*, the external world. is afforded by the frequent, unavoidable and manifold pains and unpleasant sensations which the pleasure-principle, still in unrestricted domination, bids it abolish or avoid. The tendency arises to dissociate from the ego everything which can give rise to pain, to cast it out and create a pure pleasure-ego, in contrast to a threatening outside, not-self. The limits of this primitive pleasure-ego cannot escape readjustment through experience. Much that the individual wants to retain because it is pleasure-giving is nevertheless part not of the ego but of an object; and much that he wishes to eject because it torments him yet proves to be inseparable from the ego, arising from an inner source. He learns a method by which, through deliberate use of the sensory organs and suitable muscular movements, he can distinguish between internal and external – what is part of the ego and what originates in the outer world – and thus he makes the first step towards the introduction of the reality-principle which is to control his development further. This capacity for distinguishing which he learns of course serves a practical purpose, that of enabling him to defend himself against painful sensations felt by him or threatening him. Against certain painful excitations from within the ego has only the same means of defence as that employed against pain coming from without, and this is the starting-point of important morbid disturbances.

**3 Cf. the considerable volume of work on this topic dating from that of Ferenczi (*Stages in the Development of the Sense of Reality*, 1913) up to Federn's contributions. 1926, 1927 and later.**

In this way the ego detaches itself from the external world. It is more correct to say: Originally the ego includes everything, later it detaches from itself the external world. The ego-feeling we are aware of now is thus only a shrunken vestige of a far more extensive feeling – a feeling which embraced the universe and expressed an inseparable connection of the ego with the external world. If we may suppose that this primary ego-feeling has been preserved in the minds of many people – to a greater or lesser extent – it would co-exist like a sort of counterpart with the narrower and more sharply outlined ego-feeling of maturity, and the ideational content belonging to it would be precisely the notion of limitless extension and oneness with the universe – the same feeling as that described by my friend as “oceanic.” But have we any right to assume that the original type of feeling survives alongside the later one which has developed from it?

Undoubtedly we have: there is nothing unusual in such a phenomenon, whether in the psychological or in other spheres. Where animals are concerned, we hold the view that the most highly developed have arisen from the lowest. Yet we still find all the simple forms alive today. The great saurians are extinct and have made way for the mammals, but a typical representative of them, the crocodile, is still living among

us. The analogy may be too remote, and it is also weakened by the fact that the surviving lower species are not as a rule the true ancestors of the present-day more highly developed types. The intermediate members have mostly died out and are known to us only through reconstruction. In the realm of mind, on the other hand, the primitive type is so commonly preserved alongside the transformations which have developed out of it that it is superfluous to give instances in proof of it. When this happens, it is usually the result of a bifurcation in development. One quantitative part of an attitude or an impulse has survived unchanged while another has undergone further development.

This brings us very close to the more general problem of conservation in the mind, which has so far hardly been discussed, but is so interesting and important that we may take the opportunity to pay it some attention, even though its relevance is not immediate. Since the time when we recognized the error of supposing that ordinary forgetting signified destruction or annihilation of the memory-trace, we have been inclined to the opposite view that nothing once formed in the mind could ever perish, that everything survives in some way or other, and is capable under certain conditions of being brought to light again, as, for instance, when regression extends back far enough. One might try to picture to oneself what this assumption signifies by a comparison taken from another field. Let us choose the history of the Eternal City as an example. <sup>4</sup>Historians tell us that the oldest Rome of all was the *Roma quadrata*, a fenced settlement on the Palatine. Then followed the phase of the Septimontium, when the colonies on the different hills united together; then the town which was bounded by the Servian wall; and later still, after all the transformations in the periods of the republic and the early Caesars, the city which the Emperor Aurelian enclosed by his walls. We will not follow the changes the city went through any further, but will ask ourselves what traces of these early stages in its history a visitor to Rome may still find today, if he goes equipped with the most complete historical and topographical knowledge.

<sup>4</sup> According to *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. VII. (1928) "The Founding of Rome," by Hugh Last.

Except for a few gaps, he will see the wall of Aurelian almost unchanged. He can find sections of the Servian rampart at certain points where it has been excavated and brought to light. If he knows enough – more than present-day archaeology – he may perhaps trace out in the structure of the town the whole course of this wall and the outline of *Roma quadrata*. Of the buildings which once occupied this ancient ground-plan he will find nothing, or but meagre fragments, for they exist no longer. With the best information about Rome of the republican era, the utmost he could achieve would be to indicate the sites where the temples and public buildings of that period stood. These places are now occupied by ruins, but the ruins are not those of the early buildings themselves but of restorations of them in later times after fires and demolitions. It is hardly necessary to mention that all these remains of ancient Rome are found woven into the fabric of a great metropolis which has arisen in the last few centuries since the Renaissance. There is assuredly much that is ancient still buried in the soil or under the modern buildings of the town. This is the way in which we find antiquities surviving in historic cities like Rome.

Now let us make the fantastic supposition that Rome were not a human dwelling-place, but a mental entity with just as long and varied a past history: that is, in which nothing once constructed had perished, and all the earlier stages of development had survived alongside the latest. This would mean that in Rome the palaces of the Caesars were still standing on the Palatine and the Septizonium of Septimius Severus was still towering to its old height; that the beautiful statues were still standing in the colonnade of the Castle of St. Angelo, as they were up to its siege by the Goths, and so on. But more still: where the Palazzo Caffarelli stands there would also be, without this being removed, the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, not merely in its latest form, moreover, as the Romans of the Caesars saw it, but also in its earliest shape, when it still wore an Etruscan design and was adorned with terra-cotta antifixae. Where the Coliseum stands now, we could at the same time admire Nero's Golden House; on the Piazza of the Pantheon we should find out only the Pantheon of today as bequeathed to us by Hadrian, but on the same site also Agrippa's original edifice; indeed, the same ground would support the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva and the old temple over which it was built. And the observer would need merely to shift the focus of his eyes, perhaps, or change his position, in order to call up a view of either the one or the other.

There is clearly no object in spinning this fantasy further; it leads to the inconceivable, or even to absurdities. If we try to represent historical sequence in spatial terms, it can only be done by juxtaposition in space; the same space will not hold two contents. Our attempt seems like an idle game; it has only one justification; it shows us how far away from mastering the idiosyncrasies of mental life we are by treating them in terms of visual representation.

There is one objection, though, to which we must pay attention. It questions our choosing in particular the past history of a *city* to liken to the past of the mind. Even for mental life, our assumption that everything past is preserved holds good only on condition that the organ of the mind remains intact and its structure has not been injured by traumas or inflammation. Destructive influences comparable to these morbid agencies are never lacking in the history of any town, even if it has had a less chequered past than Rome, even if, like London, it has hardly ever been pillaged by an enemy. Demolitions and the erection of new buildings in the place of old occur in cities which have had the most peaceful existence; therefore a town is from the outset unsuited for the comparison I have made of it with a mental organism.

We admit this objection; we will abandon our search for a striking effect of contrast and turn to what is after all a closer object of comparison, the body of an animal or human being. But here, too, we find the same thing. The early stages of development are in no sense still extant; they have been absorbed into the later features for which they supplied the material. The embryo cannot be demonstrated in the adult; the thymus gland of childhood is replaced after puberty by connective tissue but no longer exists itself; in the marrow-bone of a grown man I can, it is true, trace the outline of the childish bone-structure, but this latter no longer survives in itself – it lengthened and thickened until it reached its final form. The fact is that a survival of all the early stages alongside the final form is only possible in the mind, and that it is impossible for us to represent a phenomenon of this kind in visual terms. Perhaps we are going too far with this conclusion. Perhaps we ought to be content with the assertion that what is past in the mind *can* survive and need not necessarily perish. It is always possible that even in the mind much that is old may be so far obliterated or absorbed – whether normally or by way of exception – that it cannot be restored or reanimated by any means, or that survival of it is always connected with certain favourable conditions. It is possible, but we know nothing about it. We can only be sure that it is more the rule than the exception for the past to survive in the mind.

Thus we are entirely willing to acknowledge that the “oceanic” feeling exists in many people, and we are disposed to relate it to an early stage in ego-feeling; the further question then arises: what claim has this feeling to be regarded as the source of the need for religion. To me this claim does not seem very forcible. Surely a feeling can only be a source of energy when it is itself the expression of a strong need. The derivation of a need for religion from the child’s feeling of helplessness and the longing it evokes for a father seems to me incontrovertible, especially since this feeling is not simply carried on from childhood days but is kept alive perpetually by the fear of what the superior power of fate will bring. I could not point to any need in childhood so strong as that for a father’s protection. Thus the part played by the “oceanic” feeling, which I suppose seeks to reinstate limitless narcissism, cannot possibly take the first place. The derivation of the religious attitude can be followed back in clear outline as far as the child’s feeling of helplessness. There may be something else behind this, but for the present it is wrapped in obscurity.

I can imagine that the “oceanic” feeling could become connected with religion later on. That feeling of oneness with the universe which is its ideational content sounds very like a first attempt at the consolations of religion, like another way taken by the ego of denying the dangers it sees threatening it in the external world. I must again confess that I find it very difficult to work with these intangible quantities. Another friend of mine, whose insatiable scientific curiosity has impelled him to the most out-of-the-way researches and to the acquisition of encyclopaedic knowledge, has assured me that the Yogi by their practices of withdrawal from the world, concentrating attention on bodily functions, peculiar methods of breathing, actually are able to produce new sensations and diffused feelings in themselves which he regards as regressions to primordial, deeply buried mental states. He sees in them a physiological foundation, so to speak, of much of the wisdom of mysticism. There would be connections to be made here with many

obscure modifications of mental life, such as trance and ecstasy. But I am moved to exclaim, in the words of Schiller's diver:

*Who breathes overhead in the rose-tinted light may be glad!*

## II

IN my *Future of an Illusion* <sup>5</sup> I was concerned much less with the deepest sources of religious feeling than with what the ordinary man understands by his religion, that system of doctrines and pledges that on the one hand explains the riddle of this world to him with an enviable completeness, and on the other assures him that a solicitous Providence is watching over him and will make up to him in a future existence for any shortcomings in this life. The ordinary man cannot imagine this Providence in any other form but that of a greatly exalted father, for only such a one could understand the needs of the sons of men, or be softened by their prayers and placated by the signs of their remorse. The whole thing is so patently infantile, so incongruous with reality, that to one whose attitude to humanity is friendly it is painful to think that the great majority of mortals will never be able to rise above this view of life. It is even more humiliating to discover what a large number of those alive today, who must see that this religion is not tenable, yet try to defend it inch by inch, as if with a series of pitiable rearguard actions. One would like to count oneself among the believers, so as to admonish the philosophers who try to preserve the God of religion by substituting for him an impersonal, shadowy, abstract principle, and say, "Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain!" Some of the great men of the past did the same, but that is no justification for us; we know why they had to do so.

<sup>5</sup> 1927 (London: Hogarth Press, 1928).

We will now go back to the ordinary man and his religion – the only religion that ought to bear the name. The well-known words of one of our great and wise poets come to mind in which he expresses his view of the relation of religion to art and science. They run:

*He who has Science and has Art,  
Religion, too, has he;  
Who has not Science, has not Art,  
Let him religious be! <sup>6</sup>*

On the one hand, these words contrast religion with the two highest achievements of man, and on the other, they declare that in respect of their value in life they can represent or replace each other. If we wish to deprive even the ordinary man, too, of his religion, we shall clearly not have the authority of the poet on our side. We will seek to get in touch with the meaning of his utterance by a special way. Life as we find it is too hard for us; it entails too much pain, too many disappointments, impossible tasks. We cannot do without palliative remedies. We cannot dispense with auxiliary constructions, as Theodor Fontane said. There are perhaps three of these means: powerful diversions of interest, which lead us to care little about our misery; substitutive gratification, which lessen it; and intoxicating substances, which make us insensitive to it. Something of this kind is indispensable. <sup>7</sup> Voltaire is aiming at a diversion of interest when he brings his *Candide* to a close with the advice that people should cultivate their gardens; scientific work is another deflection of the same kind. The substitute gratifications, such as art offers, are illusions in contrast to reality, but none the less satisfying to the mind on that account, thanks to the place which phantasy has reserved for herself in mental life. The intoxicating substances affect our body, alter its chemical processes. It is not so simple to find the place where religion belongs in this series. We must look further afield.

<sup>6</sup> Goethe, *Zahmen Xenien IX (Gedichte aus dem Nachlass)*.

<sup>7</sup> Wilhelm Busch, in *Die fromme Helene*, says the same thing on a lower level: "The man who has cares has brandy too."

The question, "What is the purpose of human life?" has been asked times without number; it has never received a satisfactory answer; perhaps it does not admit of such an answer. Many a questioner has added that if it should appear that life has no purpose, then it would lose all value for him. But these threats alter nothing. It looks, on the contrary, as though one had a right to dismiss this question, for it seems to presuppose that belief in the superiority of the human race with which we are already so familiar in its other

expressions. Nobody asks what is the purpose of the lives of animals, unless peradventure they are designed to be of service to man. But this, too, will not hold, for with many animals man can do nothing – except describe, classify, and study them; and countless species have declined to be put even to this use, by living and dying and becoming extinct before men had set eyes upon them. So again, only religion is able to answer the question of the purpose of life. One can hardly go wrong in concluding that the idea of a purpose in life stands and falls with the religious system.

We will turn, therefore, to the less ambitious problem: what the behaviour of men themselves reveals as the purpose and object of their lives, what they demand of life and wish to attain in it. The answer to this can hardly be in doubt: they seek happiness, they want to become happy and to remain so. There are two sides to this striving, a positive and a negative; it aims on the one hand at eliminating pain and discomfort, on the other at the experience of intense pleasures. In its narrower sense, the word *happiness* relates only to the last. Thus human activities branch off in two directions – corresponding to this double goal – according to which of the two they aim at realizing, either predominantly or even exclusively.

As we see, it is simply the pleasure-principle which draws up the programme of life's purpose. This principle dominates the operation of the mental apparatus from the very beginning; there can be no doubt about its efficiency, and yet its programme is in conflict with the whole world, with the macrocosm as much as with the microcosm. It simply cannot be put into execution, the whole constitution of things runs counter to it; one might say the intention that man should be *happy* is not included in the scheme of *Creation*. What is called *happiness* in its narrowest sense comes from the satisfaction – most often instantaneous – of pent-up needs which have reached great intensity, and by its very nature can only be a transitory experience. When any condition desired by the pleasure-principle is protracted, it results in a feeling only of mild comfort; we are so constituted that we can only intensely enjoy contrasts, much less intensely states in themselves. <sup>8</sup> Our possibilities of happiness are thus limited from the start by our very constitution. It is much less difficult to be unhappy. Suffering comes from three quarters: from our own body, which is destined to decay and dissolution, and cannot even dispense with anxiety and pain as danger-signals; from the outer world, which can rage against us with the most powerful and pitiless forces of destruction; and finally from our relations with other men. The unhappiness which has this last origin we find perhaps more painful than any other; we tend to regard it more or less as a gratuitous addition, although it cannot be any less an inevitable fate than the suffering that proceeds from other sources.

**8 Goethe even warns us that “nothing is so hard to bear as a train of happy days.” This may be an exaggeration all the same.**

It is no wonder if, under the pressure of these possibilities of suffering, humanity is wont to reduce its demands for happiness, just as even the pleasure-principle itself changes into the more accommodating reality-principle under the influence of external environment; if a man thinks himself happy if he has merely escaped unhappiness or weathered trouble; if in general the task of avoiding pain forces that of obtaining pleasure into the background. Reflection shows that there are very different ways of attempting to perform this task; and all these ways have been recommended by the various schools of wisdom in the art of life and put into practice by men. Unbridled gratification of all desires forces itself into the foreground as the most alluring guiding principle in life, but it entails preferring enjoyment to caution and penalizes itself after short indulgence. The other methods, in which avoidance of pain is the main motive, are differentiated according to the source of the suffering against which they are mainly directed. Some of these measures are extreme and some moderate, some are one-sided and some deal with several aspects of the matter at once. Voluntary loneliness, isolation from others, is the readiest safeguard against the unhappiness that may arise out of human relations. We know what this means: the happiness found along this path is that of peace. Against the dreaded outer world one can defend oneself only by turning away in some other direction, if the difficulty is to be solved single-handed. There is indeed another and better way: that of combining with the rest of the human community and taking up the attack on nature, thus forcing it to obey human will, under the guidance of science. One is working, then, with all for the good of all. But the most interesting methods for averting pain are those which aim in influencing the organism itself. In the last analysis, all pain is but

sensation; it only exists in so far as we feel it, and we feel it only in consequence of certain characteristics of our organism.

The crudest of these methods of influencing the body, but, also the most effective, is the chemical one: that of intoxication. I do not think anyone entirely understands their operation, but it is a fact that there are certain substances foreign to the body which, when present in the blood or tissues, directly cause us pleasurable sensations, but also so change the conditions of our perceptivity that we become insensible of disagreeable sensations. The two effects not only take place simultaneously, they seem to be closely bound up with each other. But there must be substances in the chemical composition of our bodies which can do the same, for we know of at least one morbid state, that of mania, in which a condition similar to this intoxication arises without any drug being absorbed. Besides this, our normal mental life shows variations, according to which pleasure is experienced with more or less ease, and along with this goes a diminished or increased sensitivity to pain. It is greatly to be regretted that this toxic aspect of mental processes has so far eluded scientific research. The services rendered by intoxicating substances in the struggle for happiness and in warding off misery rank so highly as a benefit that both individuals and races have given them an established position within their libido-economy. It is not merely the immediate gain in pleasure which one owes to them, but also a measure of that independence of the outer world which is so sorely craved. Men know that with the help they can get from "drowning their cares" they can at any time slip away from the oppression of reality and find a refuge in a world of their own where painful feelings do not enter. We are aware that it is just this property which constitutes the danger and injuriousness of intoxicating substances. In certain circumstances they are to blame when valuable energies which could have been used to improve the lot of humanity are uselessly wasted.

The complicated structure of our mental apparatus admits, however, of a whole series of other kinds of influence. The gratification of instincts is happiness, but when the outer world lets us starve, refuses us satisfaction of our needs, they become the cause of very great suffering. So the hope is born that by influencing these impulses one may escape some measure of suffering. This type of defence against pain no longer relates to the sensory apparatus; it seeks to control the internal sources of our needs themselves. An extreme form of it consists in annihilation of the instincts, as taught by the wisdom of the East and practised by the Yogi. When it succeeds, it is true, it involves giving up all other activities as well (sacrificing the whole of life), and again, by another path, the only happiness it brings is that of peace. The same way is taken when the aim is less extreme and only control of the instincts is sought. When this is so, the higher mental systems which recognize the reality-principle have the upper hand. The aim of gratification is by no means abandoned in this case; a certain degree of protection against suffering is secured, in that lack of satisfaction causes less pain when the instincts are kept in check than when they are unbridled. On the other hand, this brings with it an undeniable reduction in the degree of enjoyment obtainable. The feeling of happiness produced by indulgence of a wild, untamed craving is incomparably more intense than is the satisfying of a curbed desire. The irresistibility of perverted impulses, perhaps the charm of forbidden things generally, may in this way be explained economically.

Another method of guarding against pain is by using the libido-displacements that our mental equipment allows of, by which it gains so greatly in flexibility. The task is then one of transferring the instinctual aims into such directions that they cannot be frustrated by the outer world. Sublimation of the instincts lends an aid in this. Its success is greatest when a man knows how to heighten sufficiently his capacity for obtaining pleasure from mental and intellectual work. Fate has little power against him then. This kind of satisfaction, such as the artist's joy in creation, in embodying his phantasies, or the scientist's in solving problems or discovering truth, has a special quality which we shall certainly one day be able to define metapsychologically. Until then we can only say metaphorically it seems to us *higher* and *finer*, but, compared with that of gratifying gross primitive instincts, its intensity is tempered and diffused; it does not overwhelm us physically. The weak point of this method, however, is that it is not generally applicable; it is only available to the few. It presupposes special gifts and dispositions which are not very commonly found in a sufficient degree. And even to these few it does not secure complete protection against suffering; it gives no invulnerable armour against the arrows of fate, and it usually fails when a man's own body becomes a source of suffering to him. 9

**9** When there is no special disposition in a man imperatively prescribing the direction of his life-interest, the ordinary work all can do for a livelihood can play the part which Voltaire wisely advocated it should do in our lives. It is not possible to discuss the significance of work for the economics of the libido adequately within the limits of a short survey. Laying stress upon importance of work has a greater effect than any other technique of living in the direction of binding the individual more closely to reality; in his work he is at least securely attached to a part of reality, the human community. Work is no less valuable for the opportunity it and the human relations connected with it provide for a very considerable discharge of libidinal component impulses, narcissistic, aggressive, and even erotic, than because it is indispensable for subsistence and justifies existence in a society. The daily work of earning a livelihood affords particular satisfaction when it has been selected by free choice, i.e., when through sublimation it enables use to be made of existing inclinations, of instinctual impulses that have retained their strength or are more intense than usual for constitutional reasons. And yet as a path to happiness work is not valued very highly by men. They do not run after it as they do after other opportunities for gratification. The great majority work only when forced by necessity, and this natural human aversion to work gives rise to the most difficult social problems.

This behaviour reveals clearly enough its aim – that of making oneself independent of the external world, by looking for happiness in the inner things of the mind; in the next method the same features are even more marked. The connection with reality is looser still; satisfaction is obtained through illusions, which are recognized as such, without the discrepancy between them and reality being allowed to interfere with the pleasure they give. These illusions are derived from the life of phantasy which, at the time when the sense of reality developed, was expressly exempted from the demands of the reality-test and set apart for the purpose of fulfilling wishes which would be very hard to realize. At the head of these phantasy-pleasures stands the enjoyment of works of art which through the agency of the artist is opened to those who cannot themselves create. **10** Those who are sensitive to the influence of art do not know how to rate it high enough as a source of happiness and consolation in life. Yet art affects us but as a mild narcotic and can provide no more than a temporary refuge for us from the hardships of life; its influence is not strong enough to make us forget real misery.

**10** Cf. "Formulations regarding the Two Principles in Mental Functioning" (1911), *Collected Papers, IV*; and *General Introduction to Psycho-Analysis* (1915-17). Lecture XXIII.

Another method operates more energetically and thoroughly; it regards reality as the source of all suffering, as the one and only enemy, with whom life is intolerable and with whom, therefore, all relations must be broken off if one is to be happy in any way at all. The hermit turns his back on this world; he will have nothing to do with it. But one can do more than that; one can try to re-create it. try to build up another instead, from which the most unbearable features are eliminated and replaced by others corresponding to one's own wishes. He who in his despair and defiance sets out on this path will not as a rule get very far; reality will be too strong for him. He becomes a madman and usually finds no one to help him in carrying through his delusion. It is said, however, that each one of us behaves in some respect like the paranoiac, substituting a wish-fulfilment for some aspect of the world which is unbearable to him, and carrying this delusion through into reality. When a large number of people make this attempt together and try to obtain assurance of happiness and protection from suffering by a delusional transformation of reality, it acquires special significance. The religions of humanity, too, must be classified as mass-delusions of this kind. Needless to say, no one who shares a delusion recognizes it as such.

I do not suppose that I have enumerated all the methods by which men strive to win happiness and keep suffering at bay, and I know, too, that the material might have been arranged differently. One of these methods I have not yet mentioned at all – not because I had forgotten it, but because it will interest us in another connection. How would it be possible to forget this way of all others of practising the art of life! It is conspicuous for its remarkable capacity to combine characteristic features. Needless to say, it, too, strives to bring about independence of fate – as we may best call it – and with this object it looks for satisfaction within the mind, and uses the capacity for displacing libido which we mentioned before, but it does not turn away from the outer world; on the contrary, it takes a firm hold of its objects and obtains happiness from an emotional relation to them. Nor is it content to strive for avoidance of pain – that goal of weary resignation; rather it passes that by heedlessly and holds fast to the deep-rooted, passionate striving for a positive fulfilment of happiness. Perhaps it really comes nearer to this goal than any other method. I am

speaking, of course, of that way of life which makes love the centre of all things and anticipates all happiness from loving and being loved. This attitude is familiar enough to all of us; one of the forms in which love manifests itself, sexual love, gives us our most intense experience of an overwhelming pleasurable sensation and so furnishes a prototype for our strivings after happiness. What is more natural than that we should persist in seeking happiness along the path by which we first encountered it? The weak side of this way of living is clearly evident; and were it not for this, no human being would ever have thought of abandoning this path to happiness in favour of any other. We are never so defenceless against suffering as when we love, never so forlornly unhappy as when we have lost our love-object or its love. But this does not complete the story of that way of life which bases happiness on love; there is much more to be said about it.

We may here go on to consider the interesting case in which happiness in life is sought first and foremost in the enjoyment of beauty, wherever it is to be found by our senses and our judgment, the beauty of human forms and movements, of natural objects, of landscapes, of artistic and even scientific creations. As a goal in life, this aesthetic attitude offers little protection against the menace of suffering, but it is able to compensate for a great deal. The enjoyment of beauty produces a particular, mildly intoxicating kind of sensation. There is no very evident use in beauty; the necessity of it for cultural purposes is not apparent, and yet civilization could not do without it. The science of aesthetics investigates the conditions in which things are regarded as beautiful; it can give no explanation of the nature or origin of beauty: as usual, its lack of results is concealed under a flood of resounding and meaningless words. Unfortunately, psycho-analysis, too, has less to say about beauty than about most things. Its derivation from the realms of sexual sensation is all that seems certain; the love of beauty is a perfect example of a feeling with an inhibited aim. *Beauty* and *attraction* are first of all the attributes of a sexual object. It is remarkable that the genitals themselves, the sight of which is always exciting, are hardly ever regarded as beautiful; the quality of beauty seems, on the other hand, to attach to certain secondary sexual characters.

In spite of the incompleteness of these considerations, I will venture on a few remarks in conclusion of this discussion. The goal towards which the pleasure-principle impels us – of becoming happy – is not attainable; yet we may not – nay, cannot – give up the effort to come nearer to realization of it by some means or other. Very different paths may be taken towards it: some pursue the positive aspect of the aim, attainment of pleasure; others the negative, avoidance of pain. By none of these ways can we achieve all that we desire. In that modified sense in which we have seen it to be attainable, happiness is a problem of the economics of the libido in each individual. There is no sovereign recipe in this matter which suits all; each one must find out for himself by which particular means he may achieve felicity. All kinds of different factors will operate to influence his choice. It depends on how much real gratification he is likely to obtain in the external world, and how far he will find it necessary to make himself independent of it; finally, too, on the belief he has in himself of his power to alter it in accordance with his wishes. Even at this stage the mental constitution of the individual will play a decisive part, aside from any external considerations. The man who is predominantly erotic will choose emotional relationships with others before all else; the narcissistic type, who is more self-sufficient, will seek his essential satisfactions in the inner workings of his own soul; the man of action will never abandon the external world in which he can essay his power. The interests of narcissistic types will be determined by their particular gifts and the degree of instinctual sublimation of which they are capable. When any choice is pursued to an extreme, it penalizes itself, in that it exposes the individual to the dangers accompanying any one exclusive life-interest which may always prove inadequate. Just as a cautious businessman avoids investing all his capital in one concern, so wisdom would probably admonish us also not to anticipate all our happiness from one quarter alone. Success is never certain; it depends on the co-operation of many factors, perhaps on none more than the capacity of the mental constitution to adapt itself to the outer world and then utilize this last for obtaining pleasure. Any one who is born with a specially unfavourable instinctual constitution and whose libido-components do not go through the transformation and modification necessary for successful achievement in later life, will find it hard to obtain happiness from his external environment, especially if he is faced with the more difficult tasks. One last possibility of dealing with life remains to such people and it offers them at least substitute-gratifications; it takes the form of the flight into neurotic illness, and they mostly adopt it while they are still young. Those whose efforts to obtain happiness come to nought in later years still find

consolation in the pleasure of chronic intoxication, or else they embark upon that despairing attempt at revolt – psychosis.

Religion circumscribes these measures of choice and adaptation by urging upon everyone alike its single way of achieving happiness and guarding against pain. Its method consists in decrying the value of life and promulgating a view of the real world that is distorted like a delusion, and both of these imply a preliminary intimidating influence upon intelligence. At such a cost – by the forcible imposition of mental infantilism and inducing a mass-delusion – religion succeeds in saving many people from individual neuroses. But little more. There are, as we have said, many paths by which the happiness attainable for man can be reached, but none which is certain to take him to it. Nor can religion keep her promises either. When the faithful find themselves reduced in the end to speaking of God's *inscrutable decree*, they thereby avow that all that is left to them in their sufferings is unconditional submission as a last-remaining consolation and source of happiness. And if a man is willing to come to this, he could probably have arrived there by a shorter road.

### III

**OUR** discussion of happiness has so far not taught us much that is not already common knowledge. Nor does the prospect of discovering anything new seem much greater if we go on with the problem of why it is so hard for mankind to be happy. We gave the answer before, when we cited the three sources of human sufferings, namely, the superior force of nature, the disposition to decay of our bodies, and the inadequacy of our methods of regulating human relations in the family, the community, and the state. In regard to the first two, our judgment cannot hesitate: it forces us to recognize these sources of suffering and to submit to the inevitable. We shall never completely subdue nature; our body, too, is an organism, itself a part of nature, and will always contain the seeds of dissolution, with its limited power of adaptation and achievement. The effect of this recognition is in no way disheartening; on the contrary, it points out the direction for our efforts. If we cannot abolish all suffering, yet a great deal of it we can, and can mitigate more; the experience of several thousand years has convinced us of this. To the third, the social source of our distresses, we take up a different attitude. We prefer not to regard it as one at all; we cannot see why the systems we have ourselves created should not rather ensure protection and well-being for us all. To be sure, when we consider how unsuccessful our efforts to safeguard against suffering in this particular have proved, the suspicion dawns upon us that a bit of unconquerable nature lurks concealed behind this difficulty as well – in the shape of our own mental constitution.

When we start to consider this possibility, we come across a point of view which is *so* amazing that we will pause over it. According to it, our so-called civilization itself is to blame for a great part of our misery, and we should be much happier if we were to give it up and go back to primitive conditions. I call this amazing because – however one may define culture – it is undeniable that every means by which we try to guard ourselves against menaces from the several sources of human distress is a part of this same culture.

How has it come about that so many people have adopted this strange attitude of hostility to civilization? In my opinion, it arose from a background of profound long-standing discontent with the existing state of civilization, which finally crystallized into this judgment as a result of certain historical happenings. I believe I can identify the last two of these; I am not learned enough to trace the links in the chain back into the history of the human species. At the time when Christianity conquered the pagan religions, some such antagonism to culture must already have been actively at work. It is closely related to the low estimation put upon earthly life by Christian doctrine. The earlier of the last two historical developments was when, as a result of voyages of discovery, men came into contact with primitive peoples and races. To the Europeans, who failed to observe them carefully and misunderstood what they saw, these people seemed to lead simple, happy lives – wanting for nothing – such as the travellers who visited them, with all their superior culture, were unable to achieve. Later experience has corrected this opinion on many points; in several instances the ease of life was due to the bounty of nature and the possibilities of ready satisfaction for the great human needs, but it was erroneously attributed to the absence of the complicated conditions of civilization. The last of the two historical events is especially familiar to us; it was when people began to understand the nature of the neuroses which threaten to undermine the modicum of happiness open to civilized man. It was found that men become neurotic because they cannot tolerate the degree of privation that society imposes on them in virtue of its cultural ideals, and it was supposed that a return to greater possibilities of happiness would ensue if these standards were abolished or greatly relaxed.

And there exists an element of disappointment, in addition. In the last generations, man has made extraordinary strides in knowledge of the natural sciences and technical application of them, and has established his dominion over nature in a way never before imagined. The details of this forward progress are universally known: it is unnecessary to enumerate them. Mankind is proud of its exploits and has a right to be. But men are beginning to perceive that all this newly-won power over space and time, this conquest of the forces of nature, this fulfilment of age-old longings, has not increased the amount of pleasure they can obtain in life, has not made them feel any happier. The valid conclusion from this is merely that power over nature is not the only condition of human happiness, just as it is not the only goal of civilization's efforts, and there is no ground for inferring that its technical progress is worthless from the standpoint of happiness. It prompts one to exclaim: Is it not then a positive pleasure, an unequivocal gain in happiness, to be able to

hear, whenever I like, the voice of a child living hundreds of miles away, or to know directly a friend of mine arrives at his destination that he has come well and safely through the long and troublesome voyage? And is it nothing that medical science has succeeded in enormously reducing the mortality of young children, the dangers of infection for women in childbirth, indeed, in very considerably prolonging the average length of human life? And there is still a long list one could add to these benefits that we owe to the much-despised era of scientific and practical progress – but a critical, pessimistic voice makes itself heard, saying that most of these advantages follow the model of those “cheap pleasures” in the anecdote. One gets this enjoyment by sticking one’s bare leg outside the bedclothes on a cold winter’s night and then drawing it in again. If there were no railway to make light of distances, my child would never have left home, and I should not need the telephone to hear his voice. If there were no vessels crossing the ocean, my friend would never have embarked on his voyage, and I should not need the telegraph to relieve my anxiety about him. What is the use of reducing the mortality of children, when it is precisely this reduction which imposes the greatest moderation on us in begetting them, so that taken all round we do not rear more children than in the days before the reign of hygiene, while at the same time we have created difficult conditions for sexual life in marriage and probably counteracted the beneficial effects of natural selection? And what do we gain by a long life when it is full of hardship and starved of joys and so wretched that we can only welcome death as our deliverer?

It seems to be certain that our present-day civilization does not inspire in us a feeling of well-being, but it is very difficult to form an opinion whether in earlier times people felt any happier and what part their cultural conditions played in the question. We always tend to regard trouble objectively, i. e., to place ourselves with our own wants and our own sensibilities in the same conditions, so as to discover what opportunities for happiness or unhappiness we should find in them. This method of considering the problem, which appears to be objective because it ignores the varieties of subjective sensitivity, is of course the most subjective possible, for by applying it one substitutes one’s own mental attitude for the unknown attitude of other men. Happiness, on the contrary, is something essentially subjective. However we may shrink in horror at the thought of certain situations, that of the galley-slaves in antiquity, of the peasants in the Thirty Years’ War, of the victims of the Inquisition, of the Jews awaiting a pogrom, it is still impossible for us to feel ourselves into the position of these people, to imagine the differences which would be brought about by constitutional obtuseness of feeling, gradual stupefaction, the cessation of all anticipation, and by all the grosser and more subtle ways in which insensibility to both pleasurable and painful sensations can be induced. Moreover, on occasions when the most extreme forms of suffering have to be endured, special mental protective devices come into operation. It seems to me unprofitable to follow up this aspect of the problem further.

It is time that we should turn our attention to the nature of this culture, the value of which is so much disputed from the point of view of happiness. Until we have learnt something by examining it for ourselves, we will not look round for formulas which express its essence in a few words. We will be content to repeat <sup>11</sup> that the word *culture* describes the sum of the achievements and institutions which differentiate our lives from those of our animal forebears and serve two purposes, namely, that of protecting humanity against nature and of regulating the relations of human beings among themselves. In order to learn more than this, we must bring together the individual features of culture as they are manifested in human communities. We shall have no hesitation in allowing ourselves to be guided by the common usages of language, or, as one might say, the *feeling* of language, confident that we shall thus take into account inner attitudes which still resist expression in abstract terms.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *The Future of an Illusion*.

The beginning is easy. We recognize as belonging to culture all the activities and possessions which men use to make the earth serviceable to them, to protect them against the tyranny of natural forces, and so on. There is less doubt about this aspect of civilization than any other. If we go back far enough, we find that the first acts of civilization were the use of tools, the gaining of power over fire, and the construction of dwellings. Among these the acquisition of power over fire stands out as a quite exceptional achievement, without a prototype; <sup>12</sup> while the other two opened up paths which have ever since been pursued by man,

the stimulus towards which is easily imagined. By means of all his tools, man makes his own organs more perfect—both the motor and the sensory—or else removes the obstacles in the way of their activity. Machinery places gigantic power at his disposal which, like his muscles, he can employ in any direction; ships and aircraft have the effect that neither air nor water can prevent his traversing them. With spectacles he corrects the defects of the lens in his own eyes; with telescopes he looks at far distances; with the microscope he overcomes the limitations in visibility due to the structure of his retina. With the photographic camera he has created an instrument which registers transitory visual impressions, just as the gramophone does with equally transient auditory ones; both are at bottom materializations of his own power of memory. With the help of the telephone he can hear at distances which even fairy-tales would treat as insuperable; writing to begin with was the voice of the absent; dwellings were a substitute for the mother's womb, that first abode, in which he was safe and felt so content, for which he probably yearns ever after.

**12 Psycho-analytic material, as yet incomplete and not capable of unequivocal interpretation, nevertheless admits of a surmise—which sounds fantastic enough— about the origin of this human feat. It is as if primitive man had had the impulse, when he came in contact with fire, to gratify an infantile pleasure in respect of it and put it out with a stream of urine. The legends that we possess leave no doubt that flames shooting upwards like tongues were originally felt to have a phallic sense. Putting out fire by urinating—which is also introduced in the later fables of Gulliver in Lilliput and Rabelais's Gargantua—therefore represented a sexual act with a man, an enjoyment of masculine potency in homosexual rivalry. Whoever was the first to deny himself this pleasure and spare the fire was able to take it with him and break it in to his own service. By curbing the fire of his own sexual passion, he was able to tame fire as a force of nature. This great cultural victory was thus a reward for re framing from gratification of an instinct. Further, it is as if man had placed woman by the hearth as the guardian of the fire he had taken captive, because her anatomy makes it impossible for her to yield to such a temptation. It is remarkable how regularly analytic findings testify to the close connection between the ideas of ambition, fire, and urethral erotism.**

It sounds like a fairy-tale, but not only that; this story of what man by his science and practical inventions has achieved on this earth, where he first appeared as a weakly member of the animal kingdom, and on which each individual of his species must ever again appear as a helpless infant—0 inch of nature!— is a direct fulfilment of all, or of most, of the dearest wishes in his fairy-tales. All these possessions he has acquired through culture. Long ago he formed an ideal conception of omnipotence and omniscience which he embodied in his gods. Whatever seemed unattainable to his desires—or forbidden to him—he attributed to these gods. One may say, therefore, that these gods were the ideals of his culture. Now he has himself approached very near to realizing this ideal, he has nearly become a god himself. But only, it is true, in the way that ideals are usually realized in the general experience of humanity. Not completely; in some respects not at all, in others only by halves. Man has become a god by means of artificial limbs, so to speak, quite magnificent when equipped with all his accessory organs; but they do not grow on him and they still give him trouble at times. However, he is entitled to console himself with the thought that this evolution will not come to an end in A. D. 1930. Future ages will produce further great advances in this realm of culture, probably inconceivable now, and will increase man's likeness to a god still more. But with the aim of our study in mind, we will not forget, all the same, that the human being of today is not happy with all his likeness to a god.

Thus we recognize that a country has attained a high level of civilization when we find that everything in it that can be helpful in exploiting the earth for man's benefit and in protecting him against nature—everything, in short, that is useful to him—is cultivated and effectively protected. In such a country, the course of rivers which threaten to overflow their banks is regulated, their waters guided through canals to places where they are needed. The soil is industriously cultivated and planted with the vegetation suited to it; the mineral wealth is brought up assiduously from the depths and wrought into the implements and utensils that are required. The means of communications are frequent, rapid, and reliable; wild and dangerous animals have been exterminated, the breeding of tamed and domesticated ones prospers. But we demand other things besides these of civilization, and curiously enough, we expect to find them existing in the same countries. As if we wished to repudiate the first requisition we made, we count it also as proof of a high level of civilization when we see that the industry of the inhabitants is applied as well to things which are not in the least useful and, on the contrary seem to be useless, e. g., when the parks and gardens

in a town, which are necessary as playgrounds and air-reservoirs, also bear flowering plants, or when the windows of dwellings are adorned with flowers. We soon become aware that the useless thing which we require of civilization is beauty; we expect a cultured people to revere beauty where it is found in nature and to create it in their handiwork so far as they are able. But this is far from exhausting what we require of civilization. Besides, we expect to see the signs of cleanliness and order. We do not think highly of the cultural level of an English country town in the time of Shakespeare when we read that there was a tall dung-heap in front of his father's house in Stratford; we are indignant and call it "barbarous," which is the opposite of civilized, when we find the paths in the Wiener Wald littered with paper. Dirt of any kind seems to us incompatible with civilization; we extend our demands for cleanliness to the human body also, and are amazed to hear what an objectionable odour emanated from the person of the Roi Soleil; we shake our heads when we are shown the tiny washbasin on the Isola Bella which Napoleon used for his daily ablutions. Indeed, we are not surprised if anyone employs the use of soap as a direct measure of civilization. It is the same with order, which, like cleanliness, relates entirely to man's handiwork. But whereas we cannot expect cleanliness in nature, order has, on the contrary, been imitated from nature; man's observations of the great astronomical periodicities not only furnished him with a model, but formed the ground-plan of his first attempts to introduce order into his own life. Order is a kind of repetition-compulsion by which it is ordained once for all when, where and how a thing shall be done so that on every similar occasion doubt and hesitation shall be avoided. The benefits of order are incontestable: it enables us to use space and time to the best advantage, while saving expenditure of mental energy. One would be justified in expecting that it would have ingrained itself from the start and without opposition into all human activities; and one may well wonder that this has not happened, and that, on the contrary, human beings manifest an inborn tendency to negligence, irregularity, and untrustworthiness in their work, and have to be laboriously trained to imitate the example of their celestial models.

Beauty, cleanliness, and order clearly occupy a peculiar position among the requirements of civilization. No one will maintain that they are as essential to life as the activities aimed at controlling the forces of nature and as other factors which we have yet to mention; and yet no one would willingly relegate them to the background as trivial matters. Beauty is an instance which plainly shows that culture is not simply utilitarian in its aims, for the lack of beauty is a thing we cannot tolerate in civilization. The utilitarian advantages of order are quite apparent; with regard to cleanliness, we have to remember that it is required of us by hygiene, and we may surmise that even before the days of scientific prophylaxis the connection between the two was not altogether unsuspected by mankind. But these aims and endeavours of culture are not entirely to be explained on utilitarian lines; there must be something else at work besides.

According to general opinion, however, there is one feature of culture which characterizes it better than any other, and that is the value it sets upon the higher mental activities – intellectual, scientific, and aesthetic achievement – the leading part it concedes to ideas in human life. First and foremost among these ideas come the religious systems with their complicated evolution, on which I have elsewhere endeavoured to throw a light; next to them come philosophical speculations; and last, the ideals man has formed, his conceptions of the perfection possible in an individual, in a people, in humanity as a whole, and the demands he makes on the basis of these conceptions. These creations of his mind are not independent of each other; on the contrary, they are closely interwoven, and this complicates the attempt to describe them, as well as that to trace their psychological derivation. If we assume as a general hypothesis that the force behind all human activities is a striving towards the two convergent aims of profit and pleasure, we must then acknowledge this as valid also for these other manifestations of culture, although it can be plainly recognized as true only in respect of science and art. It cannot be doubted, however, that the remainder, too, correspond to some powerful need in human beings – perhaps to one which develops fully only in a minority of people. Nor may we allow ourselves to be misled by our own judgments concerning the value of any of these religious or philosophical systems or of these ideals; whether we look upon them as the highest achievement of the human mind, or whether we deplore them as fallacies, one must acknowledge that where they exist, and especially where they are in the ascendant, they testify to a high level of civilization.

We now have to consider the last, and certainly by no means the least important, of the components of culture, namely, the ways in which social relations, the relations of one man to another, are regulated, all that has to do with him as a neighbour, a source of help, a sexual object to others, a member of a family or of a state. It is especially difficult in this matter to remain unbiased by any ideal standards and to ascertain exactly what is specifically cultural here. Perhaps one might begin with the statement that the first attempt ever made to regulate these social relations already contained the essential element of civilization. Had no such attempt been made, these relations would be subject to the wills of individuals: that is to say, the man who was physically strongest would decide things in accordance with his own interests and desires. The situation would remain the same, even though this strong man should in his turn meet with another who was stronger than he. Human life in communities only becomes possible when a number of men unite together in strength superior to any single individual and remain united against all single individuals. The strength of this united body is then opposed as *right* against the strength of any individual, which is condemned as *brute force*. This substitution of the power of a united number for the power of a single man is the decisive step towards civilization. The essence of it lies in the circumstance that the members of the community have restricted their possibilities of gratification, whereas the individual recognized no such restrictions. The first requisite of culture, therefore, is justice – that is, the assurance that a law once made will not be broken in favour of any individual. This implies nothing about the ethical value of any such law. The further course of cultural development seems to tend towards ensuring that the law shall no longer represent the will of any small body – caste, tribe, section of the population – which may behave like a predatory individual towards other such groups perhaps containing larger numbers. The end-result would be a state of law to which all – that is, all who are capable of uniting – have contributed by making some sacrifice of their own desires, and which leaves none – again with the same exception – at the mercy of brute force.

The liberty of the individual is not a benefit of culture. It was greatest before any culture, though indeed it had little value at that time, because the individual was hardly in a position to defend it. Liberty has undergone restrictions through the evolution of civilization, and justice demands that these restrictions shall apply to all. The desire for freedom that makes itself felt in a human community may be a revolt against some existing injustice and so may prove favourable to a further development of civilization and remain compatible with it. But it may also have its origin in the primitive roots of the personality, still unfettered by civilizing influences, and so become a source of antagonism to culture. Thus the cry for freedom is directed either against particular forms or demands of culture or else against culture itself. It does not seem as if man could be brought by any sort of influence to change his nature into that of the ants; he will always, one imagines, defend his claim to individual freedom against the will of the multitude. A great part of the struggles of mankind centres round the single task of finding some expedient (i.e., satisfying) solution between these individual claims and those of the civilized community; it is one of the problems of man's fate whether this solution can be arrived at in some particular form of culture or whether the conflict will prove irreconcilable.

We have obtained a clear impression of the general picture presented by culture through adopting the common view as to which aspects of human life are to be called cultural; but it is true that so far we have discovered nothing that is not common knowledge. We have, however, at the same time guarded ourselves against accepting the misconception that civilization is synonymous with becoming perfect, is the path by which man is ordained to reach perfection. But now a certain point of view presses for consideration; it will lead perhaps in another direction. The evolution of culture seems to us a peculiar kind of process passing over humanity, of which several aspects strike us as familiar. We can describe this process in terms of the modifications it effects on the known human instinctual dispositions, which it is the economic task of our lives to satisfy. Some of these instincts become absorbed, as it were, so that something appears in place of them which in an individual we call a *character-trait*. The most remarkable example of this process is found in respect of the anal erotism of young human beings. Their primary interest in the excretory function, its organs and products, is changed in the course of their growth into a group of traits that we know well – thriftiness, orderliness, and cleanliness – valuable and welcome qualities in themselves, which, however, may be intensified till they visibly dominate the personality and produce what we call the anal character. How this happens we do not know; but there is no doubt about the accuracy of this conclusion.

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