

ESCAPE

-FROM-

FREEDOM

- ERICH H. FROMM -

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eral way but in the very detail and concreteness of their operation. This may appear to be a detour; but actually it is a necessary part of our whole discussion. Just as one cannot properly understand psychological problems without their social and cultural background, neither can one understand social phenomena without the knowledge of the underlying psychological mechanisms. The following chapter attempts to analyze these mechanisms, to reveal what is going on in the individual, and to show how, in our effort to escape from aloneness and powerlessness, we are ready to get rid of our individual self either by submission to new forms of authority or by a compulsive conforming to accepted patterns.

CHAPTER V

MECHANISMS OF ESCAPE

We have brought our discussion up to the present period and would now proceed to discuss the psychological significance of Fascism and the meaning of freedom in the authoritarian systems and in our own democracy. However, since the validity of our whole argument depends on the validity of our psychological premises, it seems desirable to interrupt the general trend of thought and devote a chapter to a more detailed and concrete discussion of those psychological mechanisms which we have already touched upon and which we are later going to discuss. These premises require a detailed discussion because they are based on concepts which deal with unconscious forces and the ways in which they find expression in rationalizations and character traits, concepts which for many readers will seem, if not foreign, at least to warrant elaboration.

In this chapter I intentionally refer to individual psychology and to observations that have been made in the minute

studies of individuals by the psychoanalytic procedure. Although psychoanalysis does not live up to the ideal which for many years was the ideal of academic psychology, that is, the approximation of the experimental methods of the natural sciences, it is nevertheless a thoroughly empirical method, based on the painstaking observation of an individual's uncensored thoughts, dreams, and phantasies. Only a psychology which utilizes the concept of unconscious forces can penetrate the confusing rationalizations we are confronted with in analyzing either an individual or a culture. A great number of apparently insoluble problems disappear at once if we decide to give up the notion that the motives by which people *believe* themselves to be motivated are necessarily the ones which actually drive them to act, feel, and think as they do.

Many a reader will raise the question whether findings won by the observation of individuals can be applied to the psychological understanding of groups. Our answer to this question is an emphatic affirmation. Any group consists of individuals and nothing but individuals, and psychological mechanisms which we find operating in a group can therefore only be mechanisms that operate in individuals. In studying individual psychology as a basis for the understanding of social psychology, we do something which might be compared with studying an object under the microscope. This enables us to discover the very details of psychological mechanisms which we find operating on a large scale in the social process. If our analysis of socio-psychological phenomena is not based on the detailed study of individual behavior, it lacks empirical character and, therefore, validity.

But even admitted that the study of individual behavior

has such significance, one might question whether the study of individuals who are commonly labeled as neurotics can be of any use in considering the problems of social psychology. Again, we believe that this question must be answered in the affirmative. The phenomena which we observe in the neurotic person are in principle not different from those we find in the normal. They are only more accentuated, clear-cut, and frequently more accessible to the awareness of the neurotic person than they are in the normal who is not aware of any problem which warrants study.

In order to make this clearer, a brief discussion of the terms *neurotic* and *normal*, or *healthy*, seems to be useful.

The term *normal* or *healthy* can be defined in two ways. Firstly, from the standpoint of a functioning society, one can call a person normal or healthy if he is able to fulfill the social role he is to take in that given society. More concretely, this means that he is able to work in the fashion which is required in that particular society, and furthermore that he is able to participate in the reproduction of society, that is, that he can raise a family. Secondly, from the standpoint of the individual, we look upon health or normalcy as the optimum of growth and happiness of the individual.

If the structure of a given society were such that it offered the optimum possibility for individual happiness, both viewpoints would coincide. However, this is not the case in most societies we know, including our own. Although they differ in the degree to which they promote the aims of individual growth, there is a discrepancy between the aims of the smooth functioning of society and of the full development of the individual. This fact makes it imperative to differentiate sharply

between the two concepts of health. The one is governed by social necessities, the other by values and norms concerning the aim of individual existence.

Unfortunately, this differentiation is often neglected. Most psychiatrists take the structure of their own society so much for granted that to them the person who is not well adapted assumes the stigma of being less valuable. On the other hand, the well-adapted person is supposed to be the more valuable person in terms of a scale of human values. If we differentiate the two concepts of normal and neurotic, we come to the following conclusion: the person who is normal in terms of being well adapted is often less healthy than the neurotic person in terms of human values. Often he is well adapted only at the expense of having given up his self in order to become more or less the person he believes he is expected to be. All genuine individuality and spontaneity may have been lost. On the other hand, the neurotic person can be characterized as somebody who was not ready to surrender completely in the battle for his self. To be sure, his attempt to save his individual self was not successful, and instead of expressing his self productively he sought salvation through neurotic symptoms and by withdrawing into a phantasy life. Nevertheless, from the standpoint of human values, he is less crippled than the kind of normal person who has lost his individuality altogether. Needless to say there are persons who are not neurotic and yet have not drowned their individuality in the process of adaptation. But the stigma attached to the neurotic person seems to us to be unfounded and justified only if we think of neurotic in terms of social efficiency. As for a whole society, the term *neurotic* cannot be applied in this latter sense, since a society could not exist if its members did not

function socially. From a standpoint of human values, however, a society could be called neurotic in the sense that its members are crippled in the growth of their personality. Since the term *neurotic* is so often used to denote lack of social functioning, we would prefer not to speak of a society in terms of its being neurotic, but rather in terms of its being adverse to human happiness and self-realization.

The mechanisms we shall discuss in this chapter are mechanisms of escape, which result from the insecurity of the isolated individual.

Once the primary bonds which gave security to the individual are severed, once the individual faces the world outside of himself as a completely separate entity, two courses are open to him since he has to overcome the unbearable state of powerlessness and aloneness. By one course he can progress to "positive freedom"; he can relate himself spontaneously to the world in love and work, in the genuine expression of his emotional, sensuous, and intellectual capacities; he can thus become one again with man, nature, and himself, without giving up the independence and integrity of his individual self. The other course open to him is to fall back, to give up his freedom, and to try to overcome his aloneness by eliminating the gap that has arisen between his individual self and the world. This second course never reunites him with the world in the way he was related to it before he merged as an "individual," for the fact of his separateness cannot be reversed; it is an escape from an unbearable situation which would make life impossible if it were prolonged. This course of escape, therefore, is characterized by its compulsive character, like every escape from threatening panic; it is also characterized by the more or less

complete surrender of individuality and the integrity of the self. Thus it is not a solution which leads to happiness and positive freedom; it is, in principle, a solution which is to be found in all neurotic phenomena. It assuages an unbearable anxiety and makes life possible by avoiding panic; yet it does not solve the underlying problem and is paid for by a kind of life that often consists only of automatic or compulsive activities.

Some of these mechanisms of escape are of relatively small social import; they are to be found in any marked degree only in individuals with severe mental and emotional disturbances. In this chapter I shall discuss only those mechanisms which are culturally significant and the understanding of which is a necessary premise for the psychological analysis of the social phenomena with which we shall deal in the following chapters: the Fascist system, on one hand, modern democracy, on the other.¹

I. Authoritarianism

The first mechanism of escape from freedom I am going to deal with is the tendency to give up the independence of one's own individual self and to fuse one's self with somebody or something outside of oneself in order to acquire the strength which the individual self is lacking. Or, to put it in different words, to

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1. From a different viewpoint K. Horney in her "neurotic trends" (*New Ways in Psychoanalysis*) has arrived at a concept which has certain similarities with my concept of the "mechanisms of escape." The main differences between the two concepts are these: the neurotic trends are the driving forces in individual neurosis while the mechanisms of escape are driving forces in normal man. Furthermore, Horney's main emphasis is on anxiety while mine is on the isolation of the individual.

seek for new, "secondary bonds" as a substitute for the primary bonds which have been lost.

The more distinct forms of this mechanism are to be found in the striving for submission and domination, or, as we would rather put it, in the masochistic and sadistic strivings as they exist in varying degrees in normal and neurotic persons respectively. We shall first describe these tendencies and then try to show that both of them are an escape from an unbearable aloneness.

The most frequent forms in which *masochistic* strivings appear are feelings of inferiority, powerlessness, individual insignificance. The analysis of persons who are obsessed by these feelings show that, while they consciously complain about these feelings and want to get rid of them, unconsciously some power within themselves drives them to feel inferior or insignificant. Their feelings are more than realizations of actual shortcomings and weaknesses (although they are usually rationalized as though they were); these persons show a tendency to belittle themselves, to make themselves weak, and not to master things. Quite regularly these people show a marked dependence on powers outside of themselves, on other people, or institutions, or nature. They tend not to assert themselves, not to do what they want, but to submit to the factual or alleged orders of these outside forces. Often they are quite incapable of experiencing the feeling "I want" or "I am." Life, as a whole, is felt by them as something overwhelmingly powerful, which they cannot master or control.

In the more extreme cases—and there are many—one finds besides these tendencies to belittle oneself and to submit to outside forces a tendency to hurt oneself and to make oneself suffer.

This tendency can assume various forms. We find that there are people who indulge in self-accusation and self-criticism which even their worst enemies would scarcely bring against them. There are others, such as certain compulsive neurotics, who tend to torture themselves with compulsory rites and thoughts. In a certain type of neurotic personality, we find a tendency to become physically ill, and to wait, consciously or unconsciously, for an illness as if it were a gift of the gods. Often they incur accidents which would not have happened had there not been at work an unconscious tendency to incur them. These tendencies directed against themselves are often revealed in still less overt or dramatic forms. For instance, there are persons who are incapable of answering questions in an examination when the answers are very well known to them at the time of the examination and even afterwards. There are others who say things which antagonize those whom they love or on whom they are dependent, although actually they feel friendly toward them and did not intend to say those things. With such people, it almost seems as if they were following advice given them by an enemy to behave in such a way as to be most detrimental to themselves.

The masochistic trends are often felt as plainly pathological or irrational. More frequently they are rationalized. Masochistic dependency is conceived as love or loyalty, inferiority feelings as an adequate expression of actual shortcomings, and one's suffering as being entirely due to unchangeable circumstances.

Besides these masochistic trends, the very opposite of them, namely, *sadistic* tendencies, are regularly to be found in the same kind of characters. They vary in strength, are more or

less conscious, yet they are never missing. We find three kinds of sadistic tendencies, more or less closely knit together. One is to make others dependent on oneself and to have absolute and unrestricted power over them, so as to make of them nothing but instruments, "clay in the potter's hand." Another consists of the impulse not only to rule over others in this absolute fashion, but to exploit them, to use them, to steal from them, to disembowel them, and, so to speak, to incorporate anything eatable in them. This desire can refer to material things as well as to immaterial ones, such as the emotional or intellectual qualities a person has to offer. A third kind of sadistic tendency is the wish to make others suffer or to see them suffer. This suffering can be physical, but more often it is mental suffering. Its aim is to hurt actively, to humiliate, embarrass others, or to see them in embarrassing and humiliating situations.

Sadistic tendencies for obvious reasons are usually less conscious and more rationalized than the socially more harmless masochistic trends. Often they are entirely covered up by reaction formations of overgoodness or overconcern for others. Some of the most frequent rationalizations are the following: "I rule over you because I know what is best for you, and in your own interest you should follow me without opposition." Or, "I am so wonderful and unique, that I have a right to expect that other people become dependent on me." Another rationalization which often covers the exploiting tendencies is: "I have done so much for you, and now I am entitled to take from you what I want." The more aggressive kind of sadistic impulse finds its most frequent rationalization in two forms: "I have been hurt by others and my wish to hurt them is nothing but retaliation,"

or, "By striking first I am defending myself or my friends against the danger of being hurt."

There is one factor in the relationship of the sadistic person to the object of his sadism which is often neglected and therefore deserves especial emphasis here: his dependence on the object of his sadism.

While the masochistic person's dependence is obvious, our expectation with regard to the sadistic person is just the reverse: he seems so strong and domineering, and the object of his sadism so weak and submissive, that it is difficult to think of the strong one as being dependent on the one over whom he rules. And yet close analysis shows that this is true. The sadist needs the person over whom he rules, he needs him very badly, since his own feeling of strength is rooted in the fact that he is the master over someone. This dependence may be entirely unconscious. Thus, for example, a man may treat his wife very sadistically and tell her repeatedly that she can leave the house any day and that he would be only too glad if she did. Often she will be so crushed that she will not dare to make an attempt to leave, and therefore they both will continue to believe that what he says is true. But if she musters up enough courage to declare that she will leave him, something quite unexpected to both of them may happen: he will become desperate, break down, and beg her not to leave him; he will say he cannot live without her, and will declare how much he loves her and so on. Usually, being afraid of asserting herself anyhow, she will be prone to believe him, change her decision and stay. At this point the play starts again. He resumes his old behavior, she finds it increasingly difficult to stay with him, explodes again, he breaks down again, she stays, and so on and on many times.

There are thousands upon thousands of marriages and other personal relationships in which this cycle is repeated again and again, and the magic circle is never broken through. Did he lie when he said he loved her so much that he could not live without her? As far as love is concerned, it all depends on what one means by love. As far as his assertion goes that he could not live without her, it is—of course not taking it literally—perfectly true. He cannot live without her—or at least without someone else whom he feels to be the helpless instrument in his hands. While in such a case feelings of love appear only when the relationship threatens to be dissolved, in other cases the sadistic person quite manifestly "loves" those over whom he feels power. Whether it is his wife, his child, an assistant, a waiter, or a beggar on the street, there is a feeling of "love" and even gratitude for those objects of his domination. He may think that he wishes to dominate their lives because he loves them so much. *He actually "loves" them because he dominates them.* He bribes them with material things, with praise, assurances of love, the display of wit and brilliance, or by showing concern. He may give them everything—everything except one thing: the right to be free and independent. This constellation is often to be found particularly in the relationship of parents and children. There, the attitude of domination—and ownership—is often covered by what seems to be the "natural" concern or feeling of protectiveness for a child. The child is put into a golden cage, it can have everything provided it does not want to leave the cage. The result of this is often a profound fear of love on the part of the child when he grows up, as "love" to him implies being caught and blocked in his own quest for freedom.

Sadism to many observers seemed less of a puzzle than masochism. That one wished to hurt others or to dominate them seemed, though not necessarily "good," quite natural. Hobbes assumed as a "general inclination of all mankind" the existence of "a perpetual and restless desire of power after power that ceaseth only in Death."² For him the wish for power has no diabolical quality but is a perfectly rational result of man's desire for pleasure and security. From Hobbes to Hitler, who explains the wish for domination as the logical result of the biologically conditioned struggle for survival of the fittest, the lust for power has been explained as a part of human nature which does not warrant any explanation beyond the obvious. Masochistic strivings, however, tendencies directed against one's own self, seem to be a riddle. How should one understand the fact that people not only want to belittle and weaken and hurt themselves, but even enjoy doing so? Does not the phenomenon of masochism contradict our whole picture of the human psyche as directed toward pleasure and self-preservation? How can one explain that some men are attracted by and tend to incur what we all seem to go to such length to avoid: pain and suffering?

There is a phenomenon, however, which proves that suffering and weakness *can* be the aim of human striving: the *masochistic perversion*. Here we find that people quite consciously want to suffer in one way or another and enjoy it. In the masochistic perversion, a person feels sexual excitement when experiencing pain inflicted upon him by another person. But

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2. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, London, 1951, p. 47.

this is not the only form of masochistic perversion. Frequently it is not the actual suffering of pain that is sought for, but the excitement and satisfaction aroused by being physically bound, made helpless and weak. Often all that is wanted in the masochistic perversion is to be made weak "morally," by being treated or spoken to like a little child, or by being scolded or humiliated in different ways. In the sadistic perversion, we find the satisfaction derived from corresponding devices, that is, from hurting other persons physically, from tying them with ropes or chains, or from humiliating them by actions or words.

The masochistic perversion with its conscious and intentional enjoyment of pain or humiliation caught the eye of psychologists and writers earlier than the masochistic character (or moral masochism). More and more, however, one recognized how closely the masochistic tendencies of the kind we described first are akin to the sexual perversion, and that both types of masochism are essentially one and the same phenomenon.

Certain psychologists assumed that since there are people who want to submit and to suffer, there must be an "instinct" which has this very aim. Sociologists, like Vierkand, came to the same conclusion. The first one to attempt a more thorough theoretical explanation was Freud. He originally thought that sado-masochism was essentially a sexual phenomenon. Observing sado-masochistic practices in little children, he assumed that sado-masochism was a "partial drive" which regularly appears in the development of the sexual instinct. He believed that sado-masochistic tendencies in adults are due to a fixation of a person's psychosexual development on an early level or to a later regression to it. Later on Freud became increasingly aware of the

importance of those phenomena which he called moral masochism, a tendency to suffer not physically, but mentally. He stressed also the fact that masochistic and sadistic tendencies were always to be found together in spite of their seeming contradiction. However, he changed his theoretical explanation of masochistic phenomena. Assuming that there is a biologically given tendency to destroy which can be directed either against others or against oneself, Freud suggested that masochism is essentially the product of this so-called death-instinct. He further suggested that this death-instinct, which we cannot observe directly, amalgamates itself with the sexual instinct and in the amalgamation appears as masochism if directed against one's own person, and as sadism if directed against others. He assumed that this very mixture with the sexual instinct protects man from the dangerous effect the unmixed death-instinct would have. In short, according to Freud man has only the choice of either destroying himself or destroying others, if he fails to amalgamate destructiveness with sex. This theory is basically different from Freud's original assumption about sado-masochism. There, sado-masochism was essentially a sexual phenomenon, but in the newer theory it is essentially a nonsexual phenomenon, the sexual factor in it being only due to the amalgamation of the death-instinct with the sexual instinct.

Although Freud has for many years paid little attention to the phenomenon of nonsexual aggression, Alfred Adler has put the tendencies we are discussing here in the center of his system. But he deals with them not as sado-masochism, but as "inferiority feelings" and the "wish for power." Adler sees only the rational side of these phenomena. While we are speaking of

an irrational tendency to belittle oneself and make oneself small, he thinks of inferiority feelings as adequate reaction to actual inferiorities, such as organic inferiorities or the general helplessness of a child. And while we think of the wish for power as an expression of an irrational impulse to rule over others, Adler looks at it entirely from the rational side and speaks of the wish for power as an adequate reaction which has the function of protecting a person against the dangers springing from his insecurity and inferiority. Adler, here, as always, cannot see beyond purposeful and rational determinations of human behavior; and though he has contributed valuable insights into the intricacies of motivation, he remains always on the surface and never descends into the abyss of irrational impulses as Freud has done.

In psychoanalytic literature a viewpoint different from Freud's has been presented by Wilhelm Reich,³ Karen Horney,⁴ and myself.⁵

Although Reich's views are based on the original concept of Freud's libido theory, he points out that the masochistic person ultimately seeks pleasure and that the pain incurred is a by-product, not an aim in itself. Horney was the first one to recognize the fundamental role of masochistic strivings in the neurotic personality, to give a full and detailed description of the masochistic character traits, and to account for them theo-

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3. *Charakteranalyse*, Wien, 1933.

4. *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 1936.

5. *Psychologie der Autorität in Autorität und Familie*, ed. Max Horkheimer, Alcan, Paris, 1936.

retically as the outcome of the whole character structure. In her writings, as well as in my own, instead of the masochistic character traits being thought of as rooted in the sexual perversion, the latter is understood to be the sexual expression of psychic tendencies that are anchored in a particular kind of character structure.

I come now to the main question: What is the root of both the masochistic perversion and masochistic character traits respectively? Furthermore, what is the common root of both the masochistic *and* the sadistic strivings?

The direction in which the answer lies has already been suggested in the beginning of this chapter. Both the masochistic and sadistic strivings tend to help the individual to escape his unbearable feeling of aloneness and powerlessness. Psychoanalytic and other empirical observations of masochistic persons give ample evidence (which I cannot quote here without transcending the scope of this book) that they are filled with a terror of aloneness and insignificance. Frequently this feeling is not conscious; often it is covered by compensatory feelings of eminence and perfection. However, if one ~~only~~ penetrates deeply enough into the unconscious dynamics of such a person, one finds these feelings without fail. The individual finds himself "free" in the negative sense, that is, alone with his self and confronting an alienated, hostile world. In this situation, to quote a telling description of Dostoevski, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, he has "no more pressing need than the one to find somebody to whom he can surrender, as quickly as possible, that gift of freedom which he, the unfortunate creature, was born with." The frightened individual seeks for somebody or something to tie his self to; he cannot bear to be his own

individual self any longer, and he tries frantically to get rid of it and to feel security again by the elimination of this burden: the self.

Masochism is one way toward this goal. The different forms which the masochistic strivings assume have one aim: *to get rid of the individual self, to lose oneself*; in other words, *to get rid of the burden of freedom*. This aim is obvious in those masochistic strivings in which the individual seeks to submit to a person or power which he feels as being overwhelmingly strong. (Incidentally, the conviction of superior strength of another person is always to be understood in relative terms. It can be based either upon the actual strength of the other person, or upon a conviction of one's own utter insignificance and powerlessness. In the latter event a mouse or a leaf can assume threatening features.) In other forms of masochistic strivings the essential aim is the same. In the masochistic feeling of smallness we find a tendency which serves to increase the original feeling of insignificance. How is this to be understood? Can we assume that by making a fear worse one is trying to remedy it? Indeed, this is what the masochistic person does. As long as I struggle between my desire to be independent and strong and my feeling of insignificance or powerlessness I am caught in a tormenting conflict. If I succeed in reducing my individual self to nothing, if I can overcome the awareness of my separateness as an individual, I may save myself from this conflict. To feel utterly small and helpless is one way toward this aim; to be overwhelmed by pain and agony another; to be overcome by the effects of intoxication still another. The phantasy of suicide is the last hope if all other means have not succeeded in bringing relief from the burden of aloneness.

Under certain conditions these masochistic strivings are relatively successful. If the individual finds cultural patterns that satisfy these masochistic strivings (like the submission under the "leader" in Fascist ideology), he gains some security by finding himself united with millions of others who share these feelings. Yet even in these cases, the masochistic "solution" is no more of a solution than neurotic manifestations ever are: the individual succeeds in eliminating the conspicuous suffering but not in removing the underlying conflict and the silent unhappiness. When the masochistic striving does not find a cultural pattern or when it quantitatively exceeds the average amount of masochism in the individual's social group, the masochistic solution does not even solve anything in relative terms. It springs from an unbearable situation, tends to overcome it, and leaves the individual caught in new suffering. If human behavior were always rational and purposeful, masochism would be as inexplicable as neurotic manifestations in general are. This, however, is what the study of emotional and mental disturbances has taught us: that human behavior can be motivated by strivings which are caused by anxiety or some other unbearable state of mind, that these strivings tend to overcome this emotional state and yet merely cover up its most visible manifestations, or not even these. Neurotic manifestations resemble the irrational behavior in a panic. Thus a man, trapped in a fire, stands at the window of his room and shouts for help, forgetting entirely that no one can hear him and that he could still escape by the staircase which will also be aflame in a few minutes. He shouts because he wants to be saved, and for the moment this behavior appears to be a step on the way to being saved—and yet it will end in complete catastrophe. In the same

way the masochistic strivings are caused by the desire to get rid of the individual self with all its shortcomings, conflicts, risks, doubts, and unbearable aloneness, but they only succeed in removing the most noticeable pain or they even lead to greater suffering. The irrationality of masochism, as of all other neurotic manifestations, consists in the ultimate futility of the means adopted to solve an untenable emotional situation.

These considerations refer to an important difference between neurotic and rational activity. In the latter the *result* corresponds to the *motivation* of an activity—one acts in order to attain a certain result. In neurotic strivings one acts from a compulsion which has essentially a negative character: to escape an unbearable situation. The strivings tend in a direction which only fictitiously is a solution. Actually the result is contradictory to what the person wants to attain; the compulsion to get rid of an unbearable feeling was so strong that the person was unable to choose a line of action that could be a solution in any other but a fictitious sense.

The implication of this for masochism is that the individual is driven by an unbearable feeling of aloneness and insignificance. He then attempts to overcome it by getting rid of his self (as a psychological, not as a physiological entity); his way to achieve this is to belittle himself, to suffer, to make himself utterly insignificant. But pain and suffering are not what he wants; pain and suffering are the price he pays for an aim which he compulsively tries to attain. The price is dear. He has to pay more and more and, like a peon, he only gets into greater debt without ever getting what he has paid for: inner peace and tranquillity.

I have spoken of the masochistic perversion because it

proves beyond doubt that suffering can be something sought for. However, in the masochistic perversion as little as in moral masochism suffering is not the real aim; in both cases it is the means to an aim: forgetting one's self. The difference between the perversion and masochistic character traits lies essentially in the following: In the perversion the trend to get rid of one's self is expressed through the medium of the body and linked up with sexual feelings. While in moral masochism, the masochistic trends get hold of the whole person and tend to destroy all the aims which the ego consciously tries to achieve, in the perversion the masochistic strivings are more or less restricted to the physical realm; moreover by their amalgamation with sex they participate in the release of tension occurring in the sexual sphere and thus find some direct release.

The annihilation of the individual self and the attempt to overcome thereby the unbearable feeling of powerlessness are only one side of the masochistic strivings. The other side is the attempt to become a part of a bigger and more powerful whole outside of oneself, to submerge and participate in it. This power can be a person, an institution, God, the nation, conscience, or a psychic compulsion. By becoming part of a power which is felt as unshakably strong, eternal, and glamorous, one participates in its strength and glory. One surrenders one's own self and renounces all strength and pride connected with it, one loses one's integrity as an individual and surrenders freedom; but one gains a new security and a new pride in the participation in the power in which one submerges. One gains also security against the torture of doubt. The masochistic person, whether his master is an authority outside of himself or whether he has internalized the master as conscience or a psychic compulsion, is

saved from making decisions, saved from the final responsibility for the fate of his self, and thereby saved from the doubt of what decision to make. He is also saved from the doubt of what the meaning of his life is or who "he" is. These questions are answered by the relationship to the power to which he has attached himself. The meaning of his life and the identity of his self are determined by the greater whole into which the self has submerged.

The masochistic bonds are fundamentally different from the primary bonds. The latter are those that exist before the process of individuation has reached its completion. The individual is still part of "his" natural and social world, he has not yet completely emerged from his surroundings. The primary bonds give him genuine security and the knowledge of where he belongs. The masochistic bonds are escape. The individual self has emerged, but it is unable to realize its freedom; it is overwhelmed by anxiety, doubt, and a feeling of powerlessness. The self attempts to find security in "secondary bonds," as we might call the masochistic bonds, but this attempt can never be successful. The emergence of the individual self cannot be reversed; consciously the individual can feel secure and as if he "belonged," but basically he remains a powerless atom who suffers under the submergence of his self. He and the power to which he clings never become one, a basic antagonism remains and with it an impulse, even if it is not conscious at all, to overcome the masochistic dependence and to become free.

What is the essence of the sadistic drives? Again, the wish to inflict pain on others is not the essence. All the different forms of sadism which we can observe go back to one essential impulse, namely, to have complete mastery over another person, to

make of him a helpless object of our will, to become the absolute ruler over him, to become his God, to do with him as one pleases. To humiliate him, to enslave him, are means to this end and the most radical aim is to make him suffer, since there is no greater power over another person than that of inflicting pain on him, to force him to undergo suffering without his being able to defend himself. The pleasure in the complete domination over another person (or other animate objects) is the very essence of the sadistic drive.⁶

It seems that this tendency to make oneself the absolute master over another person is the opposite of the masochistic tendency, and it is puzzling that these two tendencies should be so closely knitted together. No doubt with regard to its practical consequences the wish to be dependent or to suffer is the opposite of the wish to dominate and to make others suffer. Psychologically, however, both tendencies are the outcomes of one basic need, springing from the inability to bear the isolation and weakness of one's own self. I suggest calling the aim which

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6. Marquis de Sade held the view that the quality of domination is the essence of sadism in this passage from *Juliette II* (quoted from *Marquis de Sade*, by G. Gorer, Liveright Publishing Corporation, New York, 1934): "It is not pleasure which you want to make your partner feel but impression you want to produce; that of pain is far stronger than that of pleasure . . . one realizes that; one uses it and is satisfied." Gorer in his analysis of de Sade's work defines sadism "as the pleasure felt from the observed modifications on the external world produced by the observer." This definition comes nearer to my own view of sadism than that of other psychologists. I think, however, that Gorer is wrong in identifying sadism with the pleasure in mastery or productivity. The sadistic mastery is characterized by the fact that it wants to make the object a will-less instrument in the sadist's hands, while the nonsadistic joy in influencing others respects the integrity of the other person and is based on a feeling of equality. In Gorer's definition sadism loses its specific quality and becomes identical with any kind of productivity.

is at the basis of both sadism and masochism: *symbiosis*. Symbiosis, in this psychological sense, means the union of one individual self with another self (or any other power outside of the own self) in such a way as to make each lose the integrity of its own self and to make them completely dependent on each other. The sadistic person needs his object just as much as the masochistic needs his. Only instead of seeking security by being swallowed, he gains it by swallowing somebody else. In both cases the integrity of the individual self is lost. In one case I dissolve myself in an outside power; I lose myself. In the other case I enlarge myself by making another being part of myself and thereby I gain the strength I lack as an independent self. It is always the inability to stand the aloneness of one's individual self that leads to the drive to enter into a symbiotic relationship with someone else. It is evident from this why masochistic and sadistic trends are always blended with each other. Although on the surface they seem contradictions, they are essentially rooted in the same basic need. People are not sadistic or masochistic, but there is a constant oscillation between the active and the passive side of the symbiotic complex, so that it is often difficult to determine which side of it is operating at a given moment. In both cases individuality and freedom are lost.

If we think of sadism, we usually think of the destructiveness and hostility which is so blatantly connected with it. To be sure, a greater or lesser amount of destructiveness is always to be found linked up with sadistic tendencies. But this is also true of masochism. Every analysis of masochistic traits shows this hostility. The main difference seems to be that in sadism the hostility is usually more conscious and directly expressed in action, while in masochism the hostility is mostly unconscious

and finds an indirect expression. I shall try to show later on that destructiveness is the result of the thwarting of the individual's sensuous, emotional, and intellectual expansiveness; it is therefore to be expected as an outcome of the same conditions that make for the symbiotic need. The point I wish to emphasize here is that sadism is not identical with destructiveness, although it is to a great extent blended with it. The destructive person wants to destroy the object, that is, to do away with it and to get rid of it. The sadist wants to dominate his object and therefore suffers a loss if his object disappears.

Sadism, as we have used the word, can also be relatively free from destructiveness and blended with a friendly attitude towards its object. This kind of "loving" sadism has found classical expression in Balzac's *Lost Illusions*, a description which also conveys the particular quality of what we mean by the need for symbiosis. In this passage Balzac describes the relationship between young Lucien and the Bagno prisoner who poses as an Abbé. Shortly after he makes the acquaintance of the young man who has just tried to commit suicide the Abbé says: ". . . This young man has nothing in common with the poet who died just now. I have picked you up, I have given life to you, and you belong to me as the creature belongs to the creator, as—in the Orient's fairy tales—the Ifrit belongs to the spirit, as the body belongs to the soul. With powerful hands I will keep you straight on the road to power; I promise you, nevertheless, a life of pleasures, of honors, of everlasting feasts. You will never lack money, you will sparkle, you will be brilliant; whereas I, stooped down in the filth of promoting, shall secure the brilliant edifice of your success. I love power for the sake of power! I shall always enjoy your pleasures although I shall have to re-

nounce them. Shortly: I shall be one and the same person with you. . . . I will love my creature, I will mold him, will shape him to my services, in order to love him as a father loves his child. I shall drive at your side in your Tilbury, my dear boy, I shall delight in your successes with women. I shall say: I am this handsome young man. I have created this Marquis de Rubempré and have placed him among the aristocracy; his success is my product. He is silent and he talks with my voice, he follows my advice in everything."

Frequently, and not only in the popular usage, sado-masochism is confounded with love. Masochistic phenomena, especially, are looked upon as expressions of love. An attitude of complete self-denial for the sake of another person and the surrender of one's own rights and claims to another person have been praised as examples of "great love." It seems that there is no better proof for "love" than sacrifice and the readiness to give oneself up for the sake of the beloved person. Actually, in these cases, "love" is essentially a masochistic yearning and rooted in the symbiotic need of the person involved. If we mean by love the passionate affirmation and active relatedness to the essence of a particular person, if we mean by it the union with another person on the basis of the independence and integrity of the two persons involved, then masochism and love are opposites. Love is based on equality and freedom. If it is based on subordination and loss of integrity of one partner, it is masochistic dependence, regardless of how the relationship is rationalized. Sadism also appears frequently under the disguise of love. To rule over another person, if one can claim that to rule him is for that person's own sake, frequently appears as an expression of love, but the essential factor is the enjoyment of domination.

At this point a question will have arisen in the mind of many a reader: Is not sadism, as we have described it here, identical with the craving for power? The answer to this question is that although the more destructive forms of sadism, in which the aim is to hurt and torture another person, are not identical with the wish for power, the latter is the most significant expression of sadism. The problem has gained added significance in the present day. Since Hobbes, one has seen in power the basic motive of human behavior; the following centuries, however, gave increased weight to legal and moral factors which tended to curb power. With the rise of Fascism, the lust for power and the conviction of its right has reached new heights. Millions are impressed by the victories of power and take it for the sign of strength. To be sure, power over people is an expression of superior strength in a purely material sense. If I have the power over another person to kill him, I am "stronger" than he is. But in a psychological sense, *the lust for power is not rooted in strength but in weakness*. It is the expression of the inability of the individual self to stand alone and live. It is the desperate attempt to gain secondary strength where genuine strength is lacking.

The word *power* has a twofold meaning. One is the possession of power over somebody, the ability to dominate him; the other meaning is the possession of power to do something, to be able, to be potent. The latter meaning has nothing to do with domination; it expresses mastery in the sense of ability. If we speak of powerlessness we have this meaning in mind; we do not think of a person who is not able to dominate others, but of a person who is not able to do what he wants. Thus power can mean one of two things, *domination* or *potency*. Far from being

identical, these two qualities are mutually exclusive. Impotence, using the term not only with regard to the sexual sphere but to all spheres of human potentialities, results in the sadistic striving for domination; to the extent to which an individual is potent, that is, able to realize his potentialities on the basis of freedom and integrity of his self, he does not need to dominate and is lacking the lust for power. Power, in the sense of domination, is the perversion of potency, just as sexual sadism is the perversion of sexual love.

Sadistic and masochistic traits are probably to be found in everybody. At one extreme there are individuals whose whole personality is dominated by these traits, and at the other there are those for whom these sado-masochistic traits are not characteristic. Only in discussing the former can we speak of a sado-masochistic character. The term *character* is used here in the dynamic sense in which Freud speaks of character. In this sense it refers not to the sum total of behavior patterns characteristic for one person, but to the dominant drives that motivate behavior. Since Freud assumed that the basic motivating forces are sexual ones, he arrived at concepts like "oral," "anal," or "genital" characters. If one does not share this assumption, one is forced to devise different character types. But the dynamic concept remains the same. The driving forces are not necessarily conscious as such to a person whose character is dominated by them. A person can be entirely dominated by his sadistic strivings and consciously believe that he is motivated only by his sense of duty. He may not even commit any overt sadistic acts but suppress his sadistic drives sufficiently to make him appear on the surface as a person who is not sadistic. Nevertheless, any close analysis of his behavior, his phantasies, dreams, and

gestures, would show the sadistic impulses operating in deeper layers of his personality.

Although the character of persons in whom sadomasochistic drives are dominant can be characterized as sado-masochistic, such persons are not necessarily neurotic. It depends to a large extent on the particular tasks people have to fulfill in their social situation and what patterns of feelings and behavior are present in their culture whether or not a particular kind of character structure is "neurotic" or "normal." As a matter of fact, for great parts of the lower middle class in Germany and other European countries, the sado-masochistic character is typical, and, as will be shown later, it is this kind of character structure to which Nazi ideology had its strongest appeal. Since the term *sado-masochistic* is associated with ideas of perversion and neurosis, I prefer to speak instead of the sado-masochistic character, especially when not the neurotic but the normal person is meant, of the "*authoritarian character*." This terminology is justifiable because the sado-masochistic person is always characterized by his attitude toward authority. He admires authority and tends to submit to it, but at the same time he wants to be an authority himself and have others submit to him. There is an additional reason for choosing this term. The Fascist systems call themselves authoritarian because of the dominant role of authority in their social and political structure. By the term *authoritarian character*, we imply that it represents the personality structure which is the human basis of Fascism.

Before going on with the discussion of the authoritarian character, the term *authority* needs some clarification. Authority is not a quality one person "has," in the sense that he has

property or physical qualities. Authority refers to an interpersonal relation in which one person looks upon another as somebody superior to him. But there is a fundamental difference between a kind of superiority-inferiority relation which can be called rational authority and one which may be described as inhibiting authority.

An example will show what I have in mind. The relationship between teacher and student and that between slave owner and slave are both based on the superiority of the one over the other. The interests of teacher and pupil lie in the same direction. The teacher is satisfied if he succeeds in furthering the pupil; if he has failed to do so, the failure is his and the pupil's. The slave owner, on the other hand, wants to exploit the slave as much as possible; the more he gets out of him, the more he is satisfied. At the same time, the slave seeks to defend as best he can his claims for a minimum of happiness. These interests are definitely antagonistic, as what is of advantage to the one is detrimental to the other. The superiority has a different function in both cases: in the first, it is the condition for the helping of the person subjected to the authority; in the second, it is the condition for his exploitation.

The dynamics of authority in these two types are different too: the more the student learns, the less wide is the gap between him and the teacher. He becomes more and more like the teacher himself. In other words, the authority relationship tends to dissolve itself. But when the superiority serves as a basis for exploitation, the distance becomes intensified through its long duration.

The psychological situation is different in each of these authority situations. In the first, elements of love, admiration, or

gratitude are prevalent. The authority is at the same time an example with which one wants to identify one's self partially or totally. In the second situation, resentment or hostility will arise against the exploiter, subordination to whom is against one's own interests. But often, as in the case of a slave, this hatred would only lead to conflicts which would subject the slave to suffering without a chance of winning. Therefore, the tendency will usually be to repress the feeling of hatred and sometimes even to replace it by a feeling of blind admiration. This has two functions: (1) to remove the painful and dangerous feeling of hatred, and (2) to soften the feeling of humiliation. If the person who rules over me is so wonderful or perfect, then I should not be ashamed of obeying him. I cannot be his equal because he is so much stronger, wiser, better, and so on, than I am. As a result, in the inhibiting kind of authority, the element either of hatred or of irrational overestimation and admiration of the authority will tend to increase. In the rational kind of authority, it will tend to decrease in direct proportion to the degree in which the person subjected to the authority becomes stronger and thereby more similar to the authority.

The difference between rational and inhibiting authority is only a relative one. Even in the relationship between slave and master there are elements of advantage for the slave. He gets a minimum of food and protection which at least enables him to work for his master. On the other hand, it is only in an ideal relationship between teacher and student that we find a complete lack of antagonism of interests. There are many gradations between these two extreme cases, as in the relationship of a factory worker with his boss, or a farmer's son with his father, or a hausfrau with her husband. Nevertheless, although in reality

two types of authority are blended, they are essentially different, and an analysis of a concrete authority situation must always determine the specific weight of each kind of authority.

Authority does not have to be a person or institution which says: you have to do this, or you are not allowed to do that. While this kind of authority may be called external authority, authority can appear as internal authority, under the name of duty, conscience, or superego. As a matter of fact, the development of modern thinking from Protestantism to Kant's philosophy, can be characterized as the substitution of internalized authority for an external one. With the political victories of the rising middle class, external authority lost prestige and man's own conscience assumed the place which external authority once had held. This change appeared to many as the victory of freedom. To submit to orders from the outside (at least in spiritual matters) appeared to be unworthy of a free man; but the conquest of his natural inclinations, and the establishment of the domination of one part of the individual, his nature, by another, his reason, will or conscience, seemed to be the very essence of freedom. Analysis shows that conscience rules with a harshness as great as external authorities, and furthermore that frequently the contents of the orders issued by man's conscience are ultimately not governed by demands which have assumed the dignity of ethical norms. The rulership of conscience can be even harsher than that of external authorities, since the individual feels its orders to be his own; how can he rebel against himself?

In recent decades "conscience" has lost much of its significance. It seems as though neither external nor internal authorities play any prominent role in the individual's life. Everybody is

completely "free," if only he does not interfere with other people's legitimate claims. But what we find is rather that instead of disappearing, authority has made itself invisible. Instead of overt authority, "*anonymous*" authority reigns. It is disguised as common sense, science, psychic health, normality, public opinion. It does not demand anything except the self-evident. It seems to use no pressure but only mild persuasion. Whether a mother says to her daughter, "I know you will not like to go out with that boy," or an advertisement suggests, "Smoke this brand of cigarettes—you will like their coolness," it is the same atmosphere of subtle suggestion which actually pervades our whole social life. Anonymous authority is more effective than overt authority, since one never suspects that there is any order which one is expected to follow. In external authority it is clear that there is an order and who gives it; one can fight against the authority, and in this fight personal independence and moral courage can develop. But whereas in internalized authority the command, though an internal one, remains visible, in anonymous authority both command and commander have become invisible. It is like being fired at by an invisible enemy. There is nobody and nothing to fight back against.

Returning now to the discussion of the authoritarian character, the most important feature to be mentioned is its attitude towards power. For the authoritarian character there exist, so to speak, two sexes: the powerful ones and the powerless ones. His love, admiration and readiness for submission are automatically aroused by power, whether of a person or of an institution. Power fascinates him not for any values for which a specific power may stand, but just because it is power. Just as his "love" is automatically aroused by power, so powerless people or

institutions automatically arouse his contempt. The very sight of a powerless person makes him want to attack, dominate, humiliate him. Whereas a different kind of character is appalled by the idea of attacking one who is helpless, the authoritarian character feels the more aroused the more helpless his object has become.

There is one feature of the authoritarian character which has misled many observers: a tendency to defy authority and to resent any kind of influence from "above." Sometimes this defiance overshadows the whole picture and the submissive tendencies are in the background. This type of person will constantly rebel against any kind of authority, even one that actually furthers his interests and has no elements of suppression. Sometimes the attitude toward authority is divided. Such persons might fight against one set of authorities, especially if they are disappointed by its lack of power, and at the same time or later on submit to another set of authorities which through greater power or greater promises seems to fulfill their masochistic longings. Finally, there is a type in which the rebellious tendencies are completely repressed and come to the surface only when conscious control is weakened; or they can be recognized *ex posteriori*, in the hatred that arises against an authority when its power is weakened and when it begins to totter. In persons of the first type in whom the rebellious attitude is in the center of the picture, one is easily led to believe that their character structure is just the opposite to that of the submissive masochistic type. It appears as if they are persons who oppose every authority on the basis of an extreme degree of independence. They look like persons who, on the basis of their inner strength and integrity, fight those forces that block their

freedom and independence. However, the authoritarian character's fight against authority is essentially defiance. It is an attempt to assert himself and to overcome his own feeling of powerlessness by fighting authority, although the longing for submission remains present, whether consciously or unconsciously. The authoritarian character is never a "revolutionary"; I should like to call him a "rebel." There are many individuals and political movements that are puzzling to the superficial observer because of what seems to be an inexplicable change from "radicalism" to extreme authoritarianism. Psychologically, these people are the typical "rebels."

The attitude of the authoritarian character toward life, his whole philosophy, is determined by his emotional strivings. The authoritarian character loves those conditions that limit human freedom, he loves being submitted to fate. It depends on his social position what "fate" means to him. For a soldier it may mean the will or whim of his superior, to which he gladly submits. For the small businessman the economic laws are his fate. Crisis and prosperity to him are not social phenomena which might be changed by human activity, but the expression of a higher power to which one has to submit. For those on the top of the pyramid it is basically not different. The difference lies only in the size and generality of the power to which one submits, not in the feeling of dependence as such.

Not only the forces that determine one's own life directly but also those that seem to determine life in general are felt as unchangeable fate. It is fate that there are wars and that one part of mankind has to be ruled by another. It is fate that the amount of suffering can never be less than it always has been. Fate may be rationalized philosophically as "natural law" or as "destiny of

man," religiously as the "will of the Lord," ethically as "duty"—for the authoritarian character it is always a higher power outside of the individual, toward which the individual can do nothing but submit. The authoritarian character worships the past. What has been, will eternally be. To wish or to work for something that has not yet been before is crime or madness. The miracle of creation—and creation is always a miracle—is outside of his range of emotional experience.

Schleiermacher's definition of religious experience as experience of absolute dependence is the definition of the masochistic experience in general; a special role in this feeling of dependence is played by sin. The concept of original sin, which weighs upon all future generations, is characteristic of the authoritarian experience. Moral like any other kind of human failure becomes a fate which man can never escape. Whoever has once sinned is chained eternally to his sin with iron shackles. Man's own doing becomes the power that rules over him and never lets him free. The consequences of guilt can be softened by atonement, but atonement can never do away with the guilt.⁷ Isaiah's words, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow," express the very opposite of authoritarian philosophy.

The feature common to all authoritarian thinking is the conviction that life is determined by forces outside of man's own self, his interest, his wishes. The only possible happiness lies in the submission to these forces. The powerlessness of man is the

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7. Victor Hugo gave a most telling expression to the idea of the inescapability of guilt in the character of Javert in *Les Misérables*.

leitmotif of masochistic philosophy. One of the ideological fathers of Nazism, Moeller van der Bruck, expressed this feeling very clearly. He writes: "The conservative believes rather in catastrophe, in the powerlessness of man to avoid it, in its necessity, and in the terrible disappointment of the seduced optimist."⁸ In Hitler's writing we shall see more illustrations of the same spirit.

The authoritarian character does not lack activity, courage, or belief. But these qualities for him mean something entirely different from what they mean for the person who does not long for submission. For the authoritarian character activity is rooted in a basic feeling of powerlessness which it tends to overcome. Activity in this sense means to act in the name of something higher than one's own self. It is possible in the name of God, the past, nature, or duty, but never in the name of the future, of the unborn, of what has no power, or of life as such. The authoritarian character wins his strength to act through his leaning on superior power. This power is never assailable or changeable. For him lack of power is always an unmistakable sign of guilt and inferiority, and if the authority in which he believes shows signs of weakness, his love and respect change into contempt and hatred. He lacks an "offensive potency" which can attack established power without first feeling subservient to another and stronger power.

The courage of the authoritarian character is essentially a courage to suffer what fate or its personal representative or

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8. Moeller van der Bruck, *Das Dritte Reich*, Hanseatische Verlag-anstralt, Hamburg, 1931, pp. 223, 224.

"leader" may have destined him for. To suffer without complaining is his highest virtue—not the courage of trying to end suffering or at least to diminish it. Not to change fate, but to submit to it, is the heroism of the authoritarian character.

He has belief in authority as long as it is strong and commanding. His belief is rooted ultimately in his doubts and constitutes an attempt to compensate them. But he has no faith, if we mean by faith the secure confidence in the realization of what now exists only as a potentiality. Authoritarian philosophy is essentially relativistic and nihilistic, in spite of the fact that it often claims so violently to have conquered relativism and in spite of its show of activity. It is rooted in extreme desperation, in the complete lack of faith, and it leads to nihilism, to the denial of life.⁹

In authoritarian philosophy the concept of equality does not exist. The authoritarian character may sometimes use the word *equality* either conventionally or because it suits his purposes. But it has no real meaning or weight for him, since it concerns something outside the reach of his emotional experience. For him the world is composed of people with power and those without it, of superior ones and inferior ones. On the basis of his sado-masochistic strivings, he experiences only domination or submission, but never solidarity. Differences, whether of sex or race, to him are necessarily signs of superiority or inferi-

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9. Rauschnig has given a good description of the nihilistic character of Fascism in *The Revolution of Nihilism*, Alliance Book Corporation, Longmans, Green & Co., New York, 1939.

ority. A difference which does not have this connotation is unthinkable to him.

The description of the sado-masochistic strivings and the authoritarian character refers to the more extreme forms of helplessness and the correspondingly more extreme forms of escaping it by the symbiotic relationship to the object of worship or domination.

Although these sado-masochistic strivings are common, we can consider only certain individuals and social groups as typically sado-masochistic. There is, however, a milder form of dependency which is so general in our culture that only in exceptional cases does it seem to be lacking. This dependency does not have the dangerous and passionate qualities of sado-masochism, but it is important enough not to be omitted from our discussion here.

I am referring to the kind of persons whose whole life is in a subtle way related to some power outside themselves.¹⁰ There is nothing they do, feel, or think which is not somehow related to this power. They expect protection from "him," wish to be taken care of by "him," make "him" also responsible for whatever may be the outcome of their own actions. Often the fact of his dependence is something the person is not aware of at all. Even if there is a dim awareness of some dependency, the person or power on whom he is dependent often remains nebulous. There is no definite image linked up with that power. Its essential quality is to represent a certain function, namely to protect,

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10. In this connection, cf. Karen Horney, *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 1939.

help, and develop the individual, to be with him and never leave him alone. The "X" which has these qualities may be called the *magic helper*. Frequently, of course, the "magic helper" is personified: he is conceived of as God, as a principle, or as real persons such as one's parent, husband, wife, or superior. It is important to recognize that when real persons assume the role of the magic helper they are endowed with magic qualities, and the significance they have results from their being the personification of the magic helper. This process of personification of the magic helper is to be observed frequently in what is called "falling in love." A person with that kind of relatedness to the magic helper seeks to find him in flesh and blood. For some reason or other—often supported by sexual desires—a certain other person assumes for him those magic qualities, and he makes that person into the being to whom and on whom his whole life becomes related and dependent. The fact that the other person frequently does the same with the first one does not alter the picture. It only helps to strengthen the impression that this relationship is one of "real love."

This need for the magic helper can be studied under experiment-like conditions in the psychoanalytic procedure. Often the person who is analyzed forms a deep attachment to the psychoanalyst and his or her whole life, all actions, thoughts, and feeling are related to the analyst. Consciously or unconsciously the analysand asks himself: would he (the analyst) be pleased with this, displeased with that, agree to this, scold me for that? In love relationships the fact that one chooses this or that person as a partner serves as a proof that this particular person is loved just because he is "he"; but in the psychoanalytic situation this illusion cannot be upheld. The

most different kinds of persons develop the same feelings toward the most different kinds of psychoanalysts. The relationship looks like love; it is often accompanied by sexual desires; yet it is essentially a relationship to the personified magic helper, a role which obviously a psychoanalyst, like certain other persons who have some authority (physicians, ministers, teachers), is able to play satisfactorily for the person who is seeking the personified magic helper.

The reasons why a person is bound to a magic helper are, in principle, the same that we have found at the root of the symbiotic drives: an inability to stand alone and to fully express his own individual potentialities. In the sado-masochistic strivings this inability leads to a tendency to get rid of one's individual self through dependency on the magic helper—in the milder form of dependency I am discussing now it only leads to a wish for guidance and protection. The intensity of the relatedness to the magic helper is in reverse proportion to the ability to express spontaneously one's own intellectual, emotional, and sensuous potentialities. In other words, one hopes to get everything one expects from life, from the magic helper, instead of by one's own actions. The more this is the case, the more is the center of life shifted from one's own person to the magic helper and his personifications. The question is then no longer how to live oneself, but how to manipulate "him" in order not to lose him and how to make him do what one wants, even to make him responsible for what one is responsible oneself.

In the more extreme cases, a person's whole life consists almost entirely in the attempt to manipulate "him"; people differ in the means which they use; for some obedience, for some "goodness," for others suffering is the main means of manipula-

tion. We see, then, that there is no feeling, thought, or emotion that is not at least colored by the need to manipulate "him"; in other words, that no psychic act is really spontaneous or free. This dependency, springing from and at the same time leading to a blockage of spontaneity, not only gives a certain amount of security but also results in a feeling of weakness and bondage. As far as this is the case, the very person who is dependent on the magic helper also feels, although often unconsciously, enslaved by "him" and, to a greater or lesser degree, rebels against "him." This rebelliousness against the very person on whom one has put one's hopes for security and happiness, creates new conflicts. It has to be suppressed if one is not to lose "him," but the underlying antagonism constantly threatens the security sought for in the relationship.

If the magic helper is personified in an actual person, the disappointment that follows when he falls short of what one is expecting from this person—and since the expectation is an illusory one, any actual person is inevitably disappointing—in addition to the resentment resulting from one's own enslavement to that person, leads to continuous conflicts. These sometimes end only with separation, which is usually followed by the choice of another object who is expected to fulfill all hopes connected with the magic helper. If this relationship proves to be a failure too, it may be broken up again or the person involved may decide that this is just "life," and resign. What he does not recognize is the fact that his failure is not essentially the result of his not having chosen the right magic person; it is the direct result of having tried to obtain by the manipulation of a magic force that which only the individual can achieve himself by his own spontaneous activity.

The phenomenon of life-long dependency on an object outside of oneself has been seen by Freud. He has interpreted it as the continuation of the early, essentially sexual, bonds with the parents throughout life. As a matter of fact, the phenomenon has impressed him so much that he has asserted that the Oedipus complex is the nucleus of all neuroses, and in the successful overcoming of the Oedipus complex he has seen the main problem of normal development.

In seeing the Oedipus complex as the central phenomenon of psychology Freud has made one of the most important discoveries in psychology. But he has failed in its adequate interpretation; for although the phenomenon of sexual attraction between parents and children does exist and although conflicts arising from it sometimes constitute part of the neurotic development, neither the sexual attraction nor the resulting conflicts are the essential in the fixation of children on their parents. As long as the infant is small it is quite naturally dependent on the parents, but this dependence does not necessarily imply a restriction of the child's own spontaneity. However, when the parents, acting as the agents of society, start to suppress the child's spontaneity and independence, the growing child feels more and more unable to stand on its own feet; it therefore seeks for the magic helper and often makes the parents the personification of "him." Later on, the individual transfers these feelings to somebody else, for instance, to a teacher, a husband, or a psychoanalyst. Again, the need for being related to such a symbol of authority is not caused by the continuation of the original sexual attraction to one of the parents but by the thwarting of the child's expansiveness and spontaneity and by the consequent anxiety.

What we can observe at the kernel of every neurosis, as well as of normal development, is the struggle for freedom and independence. For many normal persons this struggle has ended in a complete giving up of their individual selves, so that they are thus well adapted and considered to be normal. The neurotic person is the one who has not given up fighting against complete submission, but who, at the same time, has remained bound to the figure of the magic helper, whatever form or shape "he" may have assumed. His neurosis is always to be understood as an attempt, and essentially an unsuccessful one, to solve the conflict between that basic dependency and the quest for freedom.

2. Destructiveness

We have already mentioned that the sado-masochistic strivings have to be differentiated from destructiveness, although they are mostly blended with each other. Destructiveness is different since it aims not at active or passive symbiosis but at elimination of its object. But it, too, is rooted in the unbearableness of individual powerlessness and isolation. I can escape the feeling of my own powerlessness in comparison with the world outside of myself by destroying it. To be sure, if I succeed in removing it, I remain alone and isolated, but mine is a splendid isolation in which I cannot be crushed by the overwhelming power of the objects outside of myself. The destruction of the world is the last, almost desperate attempt to save myself from being crushed by it. Sadism aims at incorporation of the object; destructiveness at its removal. Sadism tends to strengthen the atomized individual by the domination

over others; destructiveness by the absence of any threat from the outside.

Any observer of personal relations in our social scene cannot fail to be impressed with the amount of destructiveness to be found everywhere. For the most part it is not conscious as such but is rationalized in various ways. As a matter of fact, there is virtually nothing that is not used as a rationalization for destructiveness. Love, duty, conscience, patriotism have been and are being used as disguises to destroy others or oneself. However, we must differentiate between two different kinds of destructive tendencies. There are destructive tendencies which result from a specific situation; as reaction to attacks on one's own or others' life and integrity, or on ideas which one is identified with. This kind of destructiveness is the natural and necessary concomitant of one's affirmation of life.

The destructiveness here under discussion, however, is not this rational—or as one might call it “reactive”—hostility, but a constantly lingering tendency within a person which so to speak waits only for an opportunity to be expressed. If there is no objective “reason” for the expression of destructiveness, we call the person mentally or emotionally sick (although the person himself will usually build up some sort of a rationalization). In most cases the destructive impulses, however, are rationalized in such a way that at least a few other people or a whole social group share in the rationalization and thus make it appear to be “realistic” to the member of such a group. But the objects of irrational destructiveness and the particular reasons for their being chosen are only of secondary importance; the destructive impulses are a passion within a person, and they always succeed in finding some object. If for any reason other persons cannot

become the object of an individual's destructiveness, his own self easily becomes the object. When this happens in a marked degree, physical illness is often the result and even suicide may be attempted.

We have assumed that destructiveness is an escape from the unbearable feeling of powerlessness, since it aims at the removal of all objects with which the individual has to compare himself. But in view of the tremendous role that destructive tendencies play in human behavior, this interpretation does not seem to be a sufficient explanation; the very conditions of isolation and powerlessness are responsible for two other sources of destructiveness: anxiety and the thwarting of life. Concerning the role of anxiety not much needs to be said. Any threat against vital (material and emotional) interests creates anxiety,¹¹ and destructive tendencies are the most common reaction to such anxiety. The threat can be circumscribed in a particular situation by particular persons. In such a case, the destructiveness is aroused towards these persons. It can also be a constant—though not necessarily conscious—anxiety springing from an equally constant feeling of being threatened by the world outside. This kind of constant anxiety results from the position of the isolated and powerless individual and is one other source of the reservoir of destructiveness that develops in him.

Another important outcome of the same basic situation is what I have just called the thwarting of life. The isolated and

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11. Cf. the discussion of this point in Karen Horney's *New Ways in Psychoanalysis*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 1939.

powerless individual is blocked in realizing his sensuous, emotional, and intellectual potentialities. He is lacking the inner security and spontaneity that are the conditions of such realization. This inner blockage is increased by cultural taboos on pleasure and happiness, like those that have run through the religion and mores of the middle class since the period of the Reformation. Nowadays, the external taboo has virtually vanished, but the inner blockage has remained strong in spite of the conscious approval of sensuous pleasure.

This problem of the relation between the thwarting of life and destructiveness has been touched upon by Freud, and in discussing his theory we shall be able to express some suggestions of our own.

Freud realized that he had neglected the weight and importance of destructive impulses in his original assumption that the sexual drive and the drive for self-preservation were the two basic motivations of human behavior. Believing, later, that destructive tendencies are as important as the sexual ones, he proceeded to the assumption that there are two basic strivings to be found in man: a drive that is directed toward life and is more or less identical with sexual libido, and a death-instinct whose aim is the very destruction of life. He assumed that the latter can be blended with the sexual energy and then be directed either against one's own self or against objects outside of oneself. He furthermore assumed that the death-instinct is rooted in a biological quality inherent in all living organisms and therefore a necessary and unalterable part of life.

The assumption of the death-instinct is satisfactory inasmuch as it takes into consideration the full weight of destructive tendencies, which had been neglected in Freud's earlier theo-

ries. But it is not satisfactory inasmuch as it resorts to a biological explanation that fails to take account sufficiently of the fact that the amount of destructiveness varies enormously among individuals and social groups. If Freud's assumptions were correct, we would have to assume that the amount of destructiveness either against others or oneself is more or less constant. But what we do observe is to the contrary. Not only does the weight of destructiveness among individuals in our culture vary a great deal, but also destructiveness is of unequal weight among different social groups. Thus, for instance, the weight of destructiveness in the character of the members of the lower middle class in Europe is definitely much greater than among the working class and the upper classes. Anthropological studies have acquainted us with peoples in whom a particularly great amount of destructiveness is characteristic, whereas others show an equally marked lack of destructiveness, whether in the form of hostility against others or against oneself.

It seems that any attempt to understand the roots of destructiveness must start with the observation of these very differences and proceed to the question of what other differentiating factors can be observed and whether these factors may not account for the differences in the amount of destructiveness.

This problem offers such difficulties that it requires a detailed treatment of its own which we cannot attempt here. However, I should like to suggest in what direction the answer seems to lie. It would seem that the amount of destructiveness to be found in individuals is proportionate to the amount to which expansiveness of life is curtailed. By this we do not refer to individual frustrations of this or that instinctive desire but to

the thwarting of the whole of life, the blockage of spontaneity of the growth and expression of man's sensuous, emotional, and intellectual capacities. Life has an inner dynamism of its own; it tends to grow, to be expressed, to be lived. It seems that if this tendency is thwarted the energy directed toward life undergoes a process of decomposition and changes into energies directed toward destruction. In other words: the drive for life and the drive for destruction are not mutually independent factors but are in a reversed interdependence. The more the drive toward life is thwarted, the stronger is the drive toward destruction; the more life is realized, the less is the strength of destructiveness. *Destructiveness is the outcome of unlived life.* Those individual and social conditions that make for suppression of life produce the passion for destruction that forms, so to speak, the reservoir from which the particular hostile tendencies—either against others or against oneself—are nourished.

It goes without saying how important it is not only to realize the dynamic role of destructiveness in the social process but also to understand what the specific conditions for its intensity are. We have already noted the hostility which pervaded the middle class in the age of the Reformation and which found its expression in certain religious concepts of Protestantism, especially in its ascetic spirit, and in Calvin's picture of a merciless God to whom it had been pleasing to sentence part of mankind to eternal damnation for no fault of their own. Then, as later, the middle class expressed its hostility mainly disguised as moral indignation, which rationalized an intense envy against those who had the means to enjoy life. In our contemporary scene the destructiveness of the lower middle class has been an important factor in the rise of Nazism which appealed to these

destructive strivings and used them in the battle against its enemies. The root of destructiveness in the lower middle class is easily recognizable as the one which has been assumed in this discussion: the isolation of the individual and the suppression of individual expansiveness, both of which were true to a higher degree for the lower middle class than for the classes above and below.

3. Automaton Conformity

In the mechanisms we have been discussing, the individual overcomes the feeling of insignificance in comparison with the overwhelming power of the world outside of himself either by renouncing his individual integrity, or by destroying others so that the world ceases to be threatening.

Other mechanisms of escape are the withdrawal from the world so completely that it loses its threat (the picture we find in certain psychotic states¹²), and the inflation of oneself psychologically to such an extent that the world outside becomes small in comparison. Although these mechanisms of escape are important for individual psychology, they are only of minor relevance culturally. I shall not, therefore, discuss them further here, but instead will turn to another mechanism of escape which is of the greatest social significance.

This particular mechanism is the solution that the major-

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12. Cf. H. S. Sullivan, *op. cit.*, p. 68 ff., and his *Research in Schizophrenia*, American Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. IX, No. 3; also Frieda Fromm Reichmann, *Transference Problems in Schizophrenia*, The Psychoanalytic Quarterly, Vol. VIII, No. 4.

ity of normal individuals find in modern society. To put it briefly, the individual ceases to be himself; he adopts entirely the kind of personality offered to him by cultural patterns; and he therefore becomes exactly as all others are and as they expect him to be. The discrepancy between "I" and the world disappears and with it the conscious fear of aloneness and powerlessness. This mechanism can be compared with the protective coloring some animals assume. They look so similar to their surroundings that they are hardly distinguishable from them. The person who gives up his individual self and becomes an automaton, identical with millions of other automatons around him, need not feel alone and anxious any more. But the price he pays, however, is high; it is the loss of his self.

The assumption that the "normal" way of overcoming aloneness is to become an automaton contradicts one of the most widespread ideas concerning man in our culture. The majority of us are supposed to be individuals who are free to think, feel, act as they please. To be sure this is not only the general opinion on the subject of modern individualism, but also each individual sincerely believes that he is "he" and that his thoughts, feelings, wishes are "his." Yet, although there are true individuals among us, this belief is an illusion in most cases and a dangerous one for that matter, as it blocks the removal of those conditions that are responsible for this state of affairs.

We are dealing here with one of the most fundamental problems of psychology which can most quickly be opened up by a series of questions. What is the self? What is the nature of those acts that give only the illusion of being the person's own acts? What is spontaneity? What is an original mental act? Finally, what has all this to do with freedom? In this chapter we

shall try to show how feelings and thoughts can be induced from the outside and yet be subjectively experienced as one's own, and how one's own feelings and thoughts can be repressed and thus cease to be part of one's self. We shall continue the discussion of the questions raised here in the chapter on "Freedom and Democracy."

Let us start the discussion by analyzing the meaning of the experience which if put into words is, "I feel," "I think," "I will." When we say "I think," this seems to be a clear and unambiguous statement. The only question seems to be whether what I think is right or wrong, not whether or not I think it. Yet, one concrete experimental situation shows at once that the answer to this question is not necessarily what we suppose it to be. Let us attend an hypnotic experiment.¹³ Here is the subject A whom the hypnotist B puts into hypnotic sleep and suggests to him that after awaking from the hypnotic sleep he will want to read a manuscript which he will believe he has brought with him, that he will seek it and not find it, that he will then believe that another person, C, has stolen it, that he will get very angry at C. He is also told that he will forget that all this was a suggestion given him during the hypnotic sleep. It must be added that C is a person toward whom the subject has never felt any anger and according to the circumstances has no reason to feel angry; furthermore, that he actually has not brought any manuscript with him.

What happens? A awakes and, after a short conversation

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13. Regarding the problems of hypnosis cf. list of publications by M. H. Erickson, *Psychiatry*, 1939, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 472.

about some topic, says, "Incidentally, this reminds me of something I have written in my manuscript. I shall read it to you." He looks around, does not find it, and then turns to C, suggesting that he may have taken it; getting more and more excited when C repudiates the suggestion, he eventually bursts into open anger and directly accuses C of having stolen the manuscript. He goes even further. He puts forward reasons which should make it plausible that C is the thief. He has heard from others, he says, that C needs the manuscript very badly, that he had a good opportunity to take it, and so on. We hear him not only accusing C, but making up numerous "rationalizations" which should make his accusation appear plausible. (None of these, of course, are true and A would never have thought of them before.)

Let us assume that another person enters the room at this point. He would not have any doubt that A says what he thinks and feels; the only question in his mind would be whether or not his accusation is right, that is, whether or not the contents of A's thoughts conform to the real facts. We, however, who have witnessed the whole procedure from the start, do not care to ask whether the accusation is true. We know that this is not the problem, since we are certain that what A feels and thinks now are not his thoughts and feelings but are alien elements put into his head by another person.

The conclusion to which the person entering in the middle of the experiment comes might be something like this. "Here is A, who clearly indicates that he has all these thoughts. He is the one to know best what he thinks and there is no better proof than his own statement about what he feels. There are those other persons who say that his thoughts are superimposed upon

him and are alien elements which come from without. In all fairness, I cannot decide who is right; any one of them may be mistaken. Perhaps, since there are two against one, the greater chance is that the majority is right." We, however, who have witnessed the whole experiment would not be doubtful, nor would the newcomer be if he attended other hypnotic experiments. He would then see that this type of experiment can be repeated innumerable times with different persons and different contents. The hypnotist can suggest that a raw potato is a delicious pineapple, and the subject will eat the potato with all the gusto associated with eating a pineapple. Or that the subject cannot see anything, and the subject will be blind. Or again, that he thinks that the world is flat and not round, and the subject will argue heatedly that the world is flat.

What does the hypnotic—and especially the posthypnotic—experiment prove? It proves that we can have thoughts, feelings, wishes, and even sensual sensations which we subjectively feel to be *ours*, and yet that, although we experience these thoughts and feelings, they have been put into us from the outside, are basically alien, and are not what we think, feel, and so on.

What does the specific hypnotic experiment with which we started show? (1) The subject *wills* something, namely, to read his manuscript, (2) he *thinks* something, namely, that C has taken it, and (3) he *feels* something, namely, anger against C. We have seen that all three mental acts—his will impulse, his thought, his feeling—are not his own in the sense of being the result of his own mental activity; that they have not originated in him, but are put into him from the outside and are subjectively felt as if they were his own. He gives expression to a

number of thoughts which have not been put into him during the hypnosis, namely, those "rationalizations" by which he "explains" his assumption that C has stolen the manuscript. But nevertheless these thoughts are his own only in a formal sense. Although they appear to explain the suspicion, we know that the suspicion is there first and that the rationalizing thoughts are only invented to make the feeling plausible; they are not really explanatory but come *post factum*.

We started with the hypnotic experiment because it shows in the most unmistakable manner that, although one may be convinced of the spontaneity of one's mental acts, they actually result from the influence of a person other than oneself under the conditions of a particular situation. The phenomenon, however, is by no means to be found only in the hypnotic situation. The fact that the contents of our thinking, feeling, willing, are induced from the outside and are not genuine, exists to an extent that gives the impression that these pseudo acts are the rule, while the genuine or indigenous mental acts are the exceptions.

The pseudo character which *thinking* can assume is better known than the same phenomenon in the sphere of willing and feeling. It is best, therefore, to start with the discussion of the difference between genuine thinking and pseudo thinking. Let us suppose we are on an island where there are fishermen and summer guests from the city. We want to know what kind of weather we are to expect and ask a fisherman and two of the city people, who we know have all listened to the weather forecast on the radio. The fisherman, with his long experience and concern with this problem of weather, will start thinking, assuming that he had not as yet made up his mind before we

asked him. Knowing what the direction of the wind, temperature, humidity, and so on mean as a basis for weather forecast, he will weigh the different factors according to their respective significance and come to a more or less definite judgment. He will probably remember the radio forecast and quote it as supporting or contradicting his own opinion; if it is contradictory, he may be particularly careful in weighing the reasons for his opinion; but, and this is the essential point, it is *his* opinion, the result of his thinking, which he tells us.

The first of the two city summer guests is a man who, when we ask him his opinion, knows that he does not understand much about the weather nor does he feel any compulsion to understand anything about it. He merely replies, "I cannot judge. All I know is that the radio forecast is thus and thus." The other man whom we ask is of a different type. He believes that he knows a great deal about the weather, although actually he knows little about it. He is the kind of person who feels that he must be able to answer every question. He thinks for a minute and then tells us "his" opinion, which in fact is identical with the radio forecast. We ask him for his reasons and he tells us that on account of wind direction, temperature, and so on, he has come to his conclusion.

This man's behavior as seen from the outside is the same as the fisherman's. Yet, if we analyze it more closely, it becomes evident that he has heard the radio forecast and has accepted it. Feeling compelled, however, to have his *own* opinion about it, he forgets that he is simply repeating somebody else's authoritative opinion, and believes that this opinion is one that he arrived at through his own thinking. He imagines that the reasons he gives us preceded his opinion, but if we examine these reasons

we see that they could not possibly have led him to any conclusion about the weather if he had not formed an opinion beforehand. They are actually only pseudo reasons which have the function of making his opinion appear to be the result of his own thinking. He has the illusion of having arrived at an opinion of his own, but in reality he has merely adopted an authority's opinion without being aware of this process. It could very well be that he is right about the weather and the fisherman wrong, but in that event it would not be "his" opinion which would be right, although the fisherman would be really mistaken in "his own" opinion.

The same phenomenon can be observed if we study people's opinions about certain subjects, for instance, politics. Ask an average newspaper reader what he thinks about a certain political question. He will give you as "his" opinion a more or less exact account of what he has read, and yet—and this is the essential point—he believes that what he is saying is the result of his own thinking. If he lives in a small community where political opinions are handed down from father to son, "his own" opinion may be governed far more than he would for a moment believe by the lingering authority of a strict parent. Another reader's opinion may be the outcome of a moment's embarrassment, the fear of being thought uninformed, and hence the "thought" is essentially a front and not the result of a natural combination of experience, desire, and knowledge. The same phenomenon is to be found in aesthetic judgments. The average person who goes to a museum and looks at a picture by a famous painter, say Rembrandt, judges it to be a beautiful and impressive picture. If we analyze his judgment, we find that he does not have any particular inner

response to the picture but thinks it is beautiful because he knows that he is supposed to think it is beautiful. The same phenomenon is evident with regard to people's judgment of music and also with regard to the act of perception itself. Many persons looking at a famous bit of scenery actually reproduce the pictures they have seen of it numerous times, say on postal cards, and while believing "they" see the scenery, they have these pictures before their eyes. Or, in experiencing an accident which occurs in their presence, they see or hear the situation in terms of the newspaper report they anticipate. As a matter of fact, for many people an experience which they have had, an artistic performance or a political meeting they have attended, becomes real to them only after they have read about it in the newspaper.

The suppression of critical thinking usually starts early. A five-year-old girl, for instance, may recognize the insincerity of her mother, either by subtly realizing that, while the mother is always talking of love and friendliness, she is actually cold and egotistical, or in a cruder way by noticing that her mother is having an affair with another man while constantly emphasizing her high moral standards. The child feels the discrepancy. Her sense of justice and truth is hurt, and yet, being dependent on the mother who would not allow any kind of criticism and, let us say, having a weak father on whom she cannot rely, the child is forced to suppress her critical insight. Very soon she will no longer notice the mother's insincerity or unfaithfulness. She will lose the ability to think critically since it seems to be both hopeless and dangerous to keep it alive. On the other hand, the child is impressed by the pattern of having to believe that her mother is sincere and decent and that the marriage of the

parents is a happy one, and she will be ready to accept this idea as if it were her own.

In all these illustrations of pseudo thinking, the problem is whether the thought is the result of one's own thinking, that is, of one's own activity; the problem is not whether or not the contents of the thought are right. As has been already suggested in the case of the fisherman making a weather forecast, "his" thought may even be wrong, and that of the man who only repeats the thought put into him may be right. The pseudo thinking may also be perfectly logical and rational. Its pseudo character does not necessarily appear in illogical elements. This can be studied in rationalizations which tend to explain an action or a feeling on rational and realistic grounds, although it is actually determined by irrational and subjective factors. The rationalization may be in contradiction to facts or to the rules of logical thinking. But frequently it will be logical and rational in itself; then its irrationality lies only in the fact that it is not the real motive of the action which it pretends to have caused.

An example of irrational rationalization is brought forward in a well-known joke. A person who had borrowed a glass jar from a neighbor had broken it, and on being asked to return it, answered, "In the first place, I have already returned it to you; in the second place, I never borrowed it from you; and in the third place, it was already broken when you gave it to me." We have an example of "rational" rationalization when a person, A, who finds himself in a situation of economic distress, asks a relative of his, B, to lend him a sum of money. B declines and says that he does so because by lending money he could only support A's inclinations to be irresponsible and to lean on others for support. Now this reasoning may be perfectly sound, but it would

nevertheless be a rationalization because B had not wanted to let A have the money in any event, and although he believes himself to be motivated by concern for A's welfare he is actually motivated by his own stinginess.

We cannot learn, therefore, whether we are dealing with a rationalization merely by determining the logicity of a person's statement as such, but we must also take into account the psychological motivations operating in a person. The decisive point is not *what* is thought but *how* it is thought. The thought that is the result of active thinking is always new and original; original, not necessarily in the sense that others have not thought it before, but always in the sense that the person who thinks has used thinking as a tool to discover something new in the world outside or inside of himself. Rationalizations are essentially lacking this quality of discovering and uncovering; they only confirm the emotional prejudice existing in oneself. Rationalizing is not a tool for penetration of reality but a post-factum attempt to harmonize one's own wishes with existing reality.

With feeling as with thinking, one must distinguish between a genuine feeling, which originates in ourselves, and a pseudo feeling, which is really not our own although we believe it to be. Let us choose an example from everyday life which is typical of the pseudo character of our feelings in contact with others. We observe a man who is attending a party. He is gay, he laughs, makes friendly conversation, and all in all seems to be quite happy and contented. On taking his leave, he has a friendly smile while saying how much he enjoyed the evening. The door closes behind him—and this is the moment when we watch him carefully. A sudden change is noticed in his face. The

smile has disappeared; of course, that is to be expected since he is now alone and has nothing or nobody with him to evoke a smile. But the change I am speaking of is more than just the disappearance of the smile. There appears on his face an expression of deep sadness, almost of desperation. This expression probably stays only for a few seconds, and then the face assumes the usual mask-like expression; the man gets into his car, thinks about the evening, wonders whether or not he made a good impression, and feels that he did. But was "he" happy and gay during the party? Was the brief expression of sadness and desperation we observed on his face only a momentary reaction of no great significance? It is almost impossible to decide the question without knowing more of this man. There is one incident, however, which may provide the clue for understanding what his gaiety meant.

That night he dreams that he is back with the A.E.F. in the war. He has received orders to get through the opposite lines into enemy headquarters. He dons an officer's uniform, which seems to be German, and suddenly finds himself among a group of German officers. He is surprised that the headquarters are so comfortable and that everyone is so friendly to him, but he gets more and more frightened that they will find out that he is a spy. One of the younger officers for whom he feels a particular liking approaches him and says "I know who you are. There is only one way for you to escape. Start telling jokes, laugh and make them laugh so much that they are diverted by your jokes from paying any attention to you." He is very grateful for this advice and starts making jokes and laughing. Eventually his joking increases to such an extent that the other officers get suspicious, and the greater their suspicions the more forced his jokes appear

to be. At last such a feeling of terror fills him that he cannot bear to stay any longer; he suddenly jumps up from his chair and they all run after him. Then the scene changes, and he is sitting in a streetcar which stops just in front of his house. He wears a business suit and has a feeling of relief at the thought that the war is over.

Let us assume that we are in a position to ask him the next day what occurs to him in connection with the individual elements of the dream. We record here only a few associations which are particularly significant for understanding the main point we are interested in. The German uniform reminds him that there was one guest at the party on the previous evening who spoke with a heavy German accent. He remembered having been annoyed by this man because he had not paid much attention to him, although he (our dreamer) had gone out of his way to make a good impression. While rambling along with these thoughts he recalls that for a moment at the party he had had the feeling that this man with the German accent had actually made fun of him and smiled impertinently at some statement he had made. Thinking about the comfortable room in which the headquarters were, it occurs to him that it looked like the room in which he had sat during the party last night, but that the windows looked like the windows of a room in which he had once failed in an examination. Surprised at this association, he went on to recall that before going to the party he was somewhat concerned about the impression he would make, partly because one of the guests was the brother of a girl whose interest he wanted to win, and partly because the host had much influence with a superior on whose opinion about him much depended for his professional success. Speaking about

this superior he says how much he dislikes him, how humiliated he feels in having to show a friendly front toward him, and that he had felt some dislike for his host too, although he was not aware of it at all. Another of his associations is that he had told a funny incident about a bald man and then was slightly apprehensive lest he might have hurt his host who happened to be almost bald too. The streetcar struck him as strange since there did not seem to be any tracks. While talking about it, he remembers the streetcar he was riding on as a boy on his way to school, and a further detail occurs to him, namely, that he had taken the place of the streetcar driver and had thought that driving a streetcar was astonishingly little different from driving an automobile. It is evident that the streetcar stands for his own car in which he had driven home, and that his returning home reminded him of going home from school.

To anyone accustomed to understand the meaning of dreams, the implication of the dream and the accompanying associations will be clear by now, although only part of his associations have been mentioned and practically nothing has been said about the personality structure, the past and the present situation of the man. The dream reveals what his real feeling was at the previous night's party. He was anxious, afraid of failing to make the impression he wanted to make, angry at several persons by whom he felt ridiculed and not sufficiently liked. The dream shows that his gaiety was a means of concealing his anxiety and his anger, and at the same time of pacifying those at whom he was angry. All his gaiety was a mask; it did not originate in himself, but covered what "he" really felt: fear and anger. This also made his whole position insecure, so that he felt like a spy in an enemy camp who might be found out any

moment. The fleeting expression of sadness and desperation we noticed on him just when he was leaving, now finds its affirmation and also its explanation: at that moment his face expressed what "he" really felt, although it was something "he" was not really aware of feeling. In the dream, the feeling is described in a dramatic and explicit way, although it does not overtly refer to the people toward whom his feelings were directed.

This man is not neurotic, nor was he under a hypnotic spell; he is a rather normal individual with the same anxiety and need for approval as are customary in modern man. He was not aware of the fact that his gaiety was not "his," since he is so accustomed to feel what he is supposed to feel in a particular situation, that it would be the exception rather than the rule which would make him aware of anything being "strange."

What holds true of thinking and feeling holds also true of willing. Most people are convinced that as long as they are not overtly forced to do something by an outside power, their decisions are theirs, and that if they want something, it is they who want it. But this is one of the great illusions we have about ourselves. A great number of our decisions are not really our own but are suggested to us from the outside; we have succeeded in persuading ourselves that it is we who have made the decision, whereas we have actually conformed with expectations of others, driven by the fear of isolation and by more direct threats to our life, freedom, and comfort.

When children are asked whether they want to go to school every day, and their answer is, "Of course, I do," is the answer true? In many cases certainly not. The child may want to go to school quite frequently, yet very often would like to play or do something else instead. If he feels, "I want to go to school

every day," he may repress his disinclination for the regularity of schoolwork. He feels that he is expected to want to go to school every day, and this pressure is strong enough to submerge the feeling that he goes so often only because he has to. The child might feel happier if he could be aware of the fact that sometimes he wants to go and sometimes he only goes because he has to go. Yet the pressure of the sense of duty is great enough to give him the feeling that "he" wants what he is supposed to want.

It is a general assumption that most men marry voluntarily. Certainly there are those cases of men consciously marrying on the basis of a feeling of duty or obligation. There are cases in which a man marries because "he" really wants to. But there are also not a few cases in which a man (or a woman for that matter) consciously believes that he *wants* to marry a certain person while actually he finds himself caught in a sequence of events which leads to marriage and seems to block every escape. All the months leading up to his marriage he is firmly convinced that "he" wants to marry, and the first and rather belated indication that this may not be so is the fact that on the day of his marriage he suddenly gets panicky and feels an impulse to run away. If he is "sensible" this feeling lasts only for a few minutes, and he will answer the question whether it is his intention to marry with the unshakable conviction that it is.

We could go on quoting many more instances in daily life in which people seem to make decisions, seem to want something, but actually follow the internal or external pressure of "having" to want the thing they are going to do. As a matter of fact, in watching the phenomenon of human decisions, one is struck by the extent to which people are mistaken in taking as

"their" decision what in effect is submission to convention, duty, or simple pressure. It almost seems that "original" decision is a comparatively rare phenomenon in a society which supposedly makes individual decision the cornerstone of its existence.

I wish to add one detailed example of a case of pseudo willing which can frequently be observed in the analysis of people who do not have any neurotic symptoms. One reason for doing so is the fact that, although this individual case has little to do with the broad cultural issues with which we are mainly concerned in this book, it gives the reader who is not familiar with the operation of unconscious forces an additional opportunity to become acquainted with this phenomenon. Moreover, this example stresses one point which, though being implicitly made already, should be brought forward explicitly: the connection of repression with the problem of pseudo acts. Although one looks at repression mostly from the standpoint of the operation of the repressed forces in neurotic behavior, dreams, and so on, it seems important to stress the fact that every repression eliminates parts of one's real self and enforces the substitution of a pseudo feeling for the one which has been repressed.

The case I want to present now is one of a twenty-two-year-old medical student. He is interested in his work and gets along with people pretty normally. He is not particularly unhappy, although he often feels slightly tired and has no particular zest for life. The reason why he wants to be analyzed is a theoretical one since he wants to become a psychiatrist. His only complaint is some sort of blockage in his medical work. He frequently cannot remember things he has read, gets inordinately tired during lectures, and makes a comparatively poor showing in examinations. He is puzzled by this since in other

subjects he seems to have a much better memory. He has no doubts about wanting to study medicine, but often has very strong doubts as to whether he has the ability to do it.

After a few weeks of analysis he relates a dream in which he is on the top floor of a skyscraper he had built and looks out over the other buildings with a slight feeling of triumph. Suddenly the skyscraper collapses and he finds himself buried under the ruins. He is aware of efforts being made to remove the debris in order to free him, and can hear someone say that he is badly injured and that the doctor will come very soon. But he has to wait what seems to be an endless length of time before the doctor arrives. When he eventually gets there the doctor discovers that he has forgotten to bring his instruments and can therefore do nothing to help him. An intense rage wells up in him against the doctor and he suddenly finds himself standing up, realizing that he is not hurt at all. He sneers at the doctor, and at that moment he awakes.

He does not have many associations in connection with the dream, but these are some of the more relevant ones. Thinking of the skyscraper he has built, he mentions in a casual way how much he was always interested in architecture. As a child his favorite pastime for many years consisted of playing with construction blocks, and when he was seventeen, he had considered becoming an architect. When he mentioned this to his father, the latter had responded in a friendly fashion that of course he was free to choose his career, but that he (the father) was sure that the idea was a residue of his childish wishes, that he really preferred to study medicine. The young man thought that his father was right and since then had never mentioned the problem to his father again, but had started to study medicine as

a matter of course. His associations about the doctor being late and then forgetting his instruments were rather vague and scant. However, while talking about this part of the dream, it occurred to him that his analytic hour had been changed from its regular time and that while he had agreed to the change without any objection he had really felt quite angry. He can feel his anger rising now while he is talking. He accuses the analyst of being arbitrary and eventually says, "Well, after all, I cannot do what I want anyway." He is quite surprised at his anger and at this sentence, because so far he had never felt any antagonism toward the analyst or the analytic work.

Some time afterwards he has another dream of which he only remembers a fragment: his father is wounded in an automobile accident. He himself is a doctor and is supposed to take care of the father. While he is trying to examine him, he feels completely paralyzed and cannot do anything. He is terror-stricken and wakes up.

In his associations he reluctantly mentions that in the last few years he has had thoughts that his father might die suddenly, and these thoughts have frightened him. Sometimes he had even thought of the estate which would be left to him and of what he would do with the money. He had not proceeded very far with these phantasies, as he suppressed them as soon as they began to appear. In comparing this dream with the one mentioned before, it strikes him that in both cases the doctor is unable to render any efficient help. He realizes more clearly than ever before that he feels that he can never be of any use as a doctor. When it is pointed out to him that in the first dream there is a definite feeling of anger and derision at the impotence of the doctor, he remembers that often when he hears or reads

about cases in which a doctor has been unable to help the patient, he has a certain feeling of triumph of which he was not aware at the time.

In the further course of the analysis other material which had been repressed comes up. He discovers to his own surprise a strong feeling of rage against his father, and furthermore that his feeling of impotence as a doctor is part of a more general feeling of powerlessness which pervades his whole life. Although on the surface he thought that he had arranged his life according to his own plans, he can feel now that deeper down he was filled with a sense of resignation. He realizes that he was convinced that he could not do what he wanted but had to conform with what was expected of him. He sees more and more clearly that he had never really wanted to become a physician and that the things which had impressed him as a lack of ability were nothing but the expression of passive resistance.

This case is a typical example of the repression of a person's real wishes and the adoption of expectations of others in a way that makes them appear to be his own wishes. We might say that the original wish is replaced by a pseudo wish.

This substitution of pseudo acts for original acts of thinking, feeling, and willing, leads eventually to the replacement of the original self by a pseudo self. The original self is the self which is the originator of mental activities. The pseudo self is only an agent who actually represents the role a person is supposed to play but who does so under the name of the self. It is true that a person can play many roles and subjectively be convinced that he is "he" in each role. Actually he is in all these roles what he believes he is expected to be, and for many people, if not most, the original self is completely suffocated by the

pseudo self. Sometimes in a dream, in phantasies, or when a person is drunk, some of the original self may appear, feelings and thoughts which the person has not experienced for years. Often they are bad ones which he has repressed because he is afraid or ashamed of them. Sometimes, however, they are the very best things in him, which he has repressed because of his fear of being ridiculed or attacked for having such feelings.¹⁴

The loss of the self and its substitution by a pseudo self leave the individual in an intense state of insecurity. He is obsessed by doubt since, being essentially a reflex of other people's expectation of him, he has in a measure lost his identity. In order to overcome the panic resulting from such loss of identity, he is compelled to conform, to seek his identity by continuous approval and recognition by others. Since he does not know who he is, at least the others will know—if he acts according to their expectation; if they know, he will know too, if he only takes their word for it.

The automatization of the individual in modern society has increased the helplessness and insecurity of the average individual. Thus, he is ready to submit to new authorities which offer him security and relief from doubt. The following chapter will discuss the special conditions that were necessary to make

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14. The psychoanalytic procedure is essentially a process in which a person tries to uncover this original self. "Free association" means to express one's original feelings and thoughts, telling the truth; but truth in this sense does not refer to the fact that one says what one thinks, but the thinking itself is original and not an adaptation to an expected thought. Freud has emphasized the repression of "bad" things; it seems that he has not sufficiently seen the extent to which the "good" things are subjected to repression also.

this offer accepted in Germany; it will show that for the nucleus—the lower middle class—of the Nazi movement, the authoritarian mechanism was most characteristic. In the last chapter of this book we shall continue the discussion of the automaton with regard to the cultural scene in our own democracy.

CHAPTER VI

PSYCHOLOGY OF NAZISM

In the last chapter our attention was focused on two psychological types: the authoritarian character and the automaton. I hope that the detailed discussion of these types will help in the understanding of the problems which this and the next chapter offer: the psychology of Nazism on the one hand, modern democracy on the other.

In discussing the psychology of Nazism we have first to consider a preliminary question—the relevance of psychological factors in the understanding of Nazism. In the scientific and still more so in the popular discussion of Nazism, two opposite views are frequently presented: the first, that psychology offers no explanation of an economic and political phenomenon like Fascism, the second, that Fascism is wholly a psychological problem.

The first view looks upon Nazism either as the outcome of an exclusively economic dynamism—of the expansive ten-