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CONSCIENCE AND REASON

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TO

A. WYNN KENRICK

PREFACE

'Whoever you speak to, they're in trouble.' It was a chance remark overheard from a weeping woman in a railway carriage. It was the summary of a moment of time. And to the challenge of that moment each of us must make his own however small response, lest life come to seem to us a tale told by an idiot, full indeed of sound and fury, but signifying nothing. It may of course be that:

> The troubles of our proud and angry dust
> Are from eternity and shall not fail.

I do not know. I do know that happiness and beauty, truth and love are sometimes manifest in our humanity. I believe that they might be more clearly manifest, that our troubles need not be so unfailing nor our dust so angry, if we could learn a new way of thinking about life and, even more, a new way of feeling about it. And I believe that one approach to such a new way of feeling and thinking lies in the examination and re-education of that mental function which we call conscience.

It is such an approach that I have tried to indicate here, as my own best response to the sorrow around and within me. The inspiration for it I have found chiefly in the description of the super-ego given us by the late Dr. Sigmund Freud, and it is to his work that I owe the profoundest of many debts. Indeed I have come to believe that such increased happiness as mankind may find in the future may owe more to Freud than to any other of the great moderns.

But the argument of the book is not based on Freudian psychology alone. It is an interpretation of such reading as I have been able to do about the origins of conscience and morality; and such thinking as I have been compelled to do —two world wars are somewhat thought-provoking!— about life, personality and relationship as I have experienced

them. An interpretation rather than a description of human 'fact' must inevitably have a personal bias; an interpretation made under the guidance of a ruling idea must inevitably be an over-simplification; but possibly only in such a way can one make a particular point, and the point I have tried to make here seems to me worth making.

I should like to record my faith that, in spite of difficulties and despairs, there has never yet been such wise or such potentially helpful thinking done about human problems as is being done to-day. And the best hope for the future seems to me to lie in the knowledge which is being accumulated and made available about the making of our different culture 'patterns', and the unconscious motivations that underlie our various and sometimes unfortunate ways of behaviour. I have recorded in the footnotes the titles of some of the books responsible for this faith and hope; and to the thinkers of my own day, there mentioned, and to many others who have refused to be stampeded by world disaster into superstition or despair, I should like to express my gratitude. Especially am I indebted to Dr. J. C. Flugel, both for the inspiration of his written work, and for his personal kindness in reading this book in typescript and lending me, with accustomed generosity, the support of his wide knowledge and benevolent wisdom.

For the rest, the reader will have even more cause than I to be grateful to my husband whose thirst for lucidity has reduced many a cherished twenty-line sentence to a mere and comprehensible ten. His sympathy and encouragement have been of more help to me than I can easily express. And for many of those blessed opportunities for discussion in which a train of thought may grow towards its own certainties I should like to thank my friends, Marjorie and Clifford Wood, whose endurance of the theme of the super-ego has been heroic, and whose suggestions concerning it most valuable.

GRACE STUART

Birmingham, 1949

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We think our civilisation near its meridian, but we are yet only at the cock-crowing and the morning-star. In our barbarous society the influence of character is in its infancy.

EMERSON

All I want them to do is to find the beginnings of the way to their own manhood and womanhood. Men are not yet men in full, and women are not yet women. They are all half and half, incoherent, part horrible, part pathetic, part good creatures. Half-arrived.—I mean you as well, Carlota. I mean all the world.

D. H. LAWRENCE

The creature puts his arms and hands to many uses, comes down and walks on his feet and knuckles, and presently begins to stand erect. But we over-rate his present rectitude. . . . There is a way out and up, but only a fellowship of resentment and disillusionment can lead to that. We can make no terms with falsehood. Mankind has to be debunked. When Man realises his littleness, his greatness can appear. But not before.

H. G. WELLS

CHAPTER I

At the Cock-Crowing

'A fellowship of disillusionment!' It is the stark fellowship into which the intelligent of our generation have been born. No cynicism was needed for the debunking of man. He debunked himself before our eyes by his world-wide incapacity for that living in community which should be the mark of his human-ness, and by his mass defection from the ethical ideals of feeling and action which, for the most part, he had professed. But disillusionment means nothing worse than that some seeming good was not really good at all. About the really good, just because it is no illusion, no disillusionment is possible. For the rest, one might just as well be disillusioned, for through disillusionment one comes to the truth. The fool's paradise of man's success as a civilised being may be pleasant to dream in. It has not yet made us a home on the earth.

That man's body is an animal body, and his mind a development of animal mind, is to-day a commonplace of biological, evolutionary thinking. It is not sufficiently a commonplace that he has, so far, 'humanised' himself but sketchily, although, having once started on the process he is never able to be a good animal again. The flaming sword of consciousness, sharpened to the essentially human thrust of oughtness-to-be, bars the way backward to him forever, and he can only be that strange, hybrid thing—an unsuccessful animal, an unsucceeding man. Unless, that is, he learns to improve and expedite his too often makeshift methods of becoming human. And if he is to do this he must first understand more fully, and accept more willingly, the animal basis of his mind as well as of his body. For when, very ape-like

and unfinished-looking to eyes trained by Pheidias and Michelangelo, and as yet unreconciled to the inner truths of Epstein, he came down from the trees and held himself erect, the stuff of his mind had not even begun to be human. He was still the largely non-conscious creature of biological process. There flowed through him the same energy as flowed through all other life. And this energy, in the becoming man as in the receding beast, urged to the fulfilment of two main purposes. It made man concerned, quite apart from will or choice or value of his own, to keep himself alive, and to reproduce his species. So he sought for food and security, as yet without concern for the food and security of most of the rest of his kind. So he mated, as yet without love. So he took such care of his young as enabled some of them to survive until they could fend for themselves.

The mind of primitive man was almost entirely the instrument of these still animal ends. It was neither a human nor a personal mind. In fact, as Lord Balfour said, it was (and often is!) just as much an instrument for seeking food as a pig's snout—an instrument, that is, for staying alive, just non-personally alive; alive as organism, not as man.

It may of course be that those early men had also some dim intimations of beauty, some urges of curiosity that were more than the life-preserving necessity for knowledge of their environment, some moments of tenderness that were more than the processes of instinctive fulfilment, some impulses of playfulness, some aspirations to form and pattern that made life art as well as survival. We have not seen clearly enough into the darkness of human beginnings to know.[1] All we do know is that these 'higher', more human impulses must have been very few; that on the whole man was the creature of nature, and his mind the instrument of

[1] The cave drawings, some 10,000 years old, recently discovered in France; and particularly the 'analytical' portrait of a man, are of interest here. But they are still not the beginnings.

nature, and his chief end if possible to survive, if possible to leave descendants. He was but servant of:

> That life whose dumb wish is not missed
> If birth proceeds, if things subsist.

Mastery, in those rare cases where it should one day be attained, lay very far ahead.

I am using the word 'nature' here—in a personification justified, I think, by its usefulness—to describe as best I can a life-principle that operates throughout the whole range of organic life including the life of man; a principle that is not only non-human in value, but often actually opposed to many of the human values which man came later to put upon his life. It is true that this life-principle has expressed itself in a beauty lavish, radiant and various; and that it has developed forms of co-operation, mutual aid and self-sacrifice which have appealed greatly to the sentimental human mind. And indeed, even without sentimentality, the fact remains that the human social forms could not have evolved without the preceding 'natural' ones. But instinctive co-operation, assistance and even devotion are profoundly different from human co-operation, succour and love.

The values of nature present themselves to us as impersonal and non-human. Nature has no concern with good and evil, kindness and cruelty, sorrow and joy. Like Caliban's 'Setebos', she goes 'making and marring clay at will'.

> Thinketh such shows nor right nor wrong in Him,
> Nor kind, nor cruel; He is strong and Lord.
> Am strong myself compared to yonder crabs
> That march now from the mountains to the sea;
> Let twenty pass, and stone the twenty-first,
> Loving not, hating not, just choosing so.[1]

So works the cancer that attacks the kind and the unkind; so the earthquake that swallows the sinner and the saint.

The ways of a deer are more pleasant to the 'humanised'

[1] Robert Browning: *Caliban upon Setebos.*

mind than the ways of a tiger; the singing of the nightingale in May more beautiful than the rattle of the snake. But for nature they are just different ways, different expressions of life, and that is all about that, except in so far as it is true that survival seems to have favoured the smaller and more sensitive rather than the heavier and fiercer beasts. On the whole, however, the processes of life, until later man comes to put upon them the stamp of his own value, are non-personal and amoral, and the wolf is as innocent as the lamb.

To the end that life may not cease, man has inherited from the animals certain more or less stereotyped and automatic ways of perceiving, feeling and acting which we call instincts.[1] It was once popular to 'divide' the mental equipment into a large and varying number of instinctive dispositions to act in such and such ways. This manifold division of the mind has quite rightly been discarded, but the hypothesis of three main instincts still seems to be as useful a way of describing and understanding the mental 'handling' of the life force as any we possess. These main instincts are that of self-preservation, or the ego instinct; of race-preservation, or the sex instinct; and the less well-defined instinct of child-preservation, or the parental instinct.

These inherited instincts make us disposed to act in ways that will (or are intended to) fulfil the natural ends of self- and race-preservation quite apart from our own personal

[1] There has been much controversy as to whether there really are 'instincts' in McDougall's sense of 'innate psycho-physical dispositions'. But when one reads the arguments for and against, and more especially when—as I did this morning—one sits on a lawn and watches young chickens on the distant approach of an as yet unknown and unseen cat, there appears to be, as the man said of God, 'a sort of a something' there. As a descriptive term is necessary, the word 'instinct' does for the present at least as well as another, and I shall take Freud's 'the inmost essence of human nature consists of elemental instincts, which are common to all men and aim at the satisfaction of certain primal needs. These instincts in themselves are neither good nor evil.'

Civilisation, War and Death, p. 7 has a useful basic statement.

decision to do so, although of course we may make such decisions. But when we command that extra pumping of the blood, that extra power of the muscles, that extra outflow of adrenalin which enables us to leap from the path of an oncoming 'bus or bull with an agility we did not know we possessed, it is not because we have willed it (though we might will it if we could), but because we have inherited modes of response designed to keep us alive. When we feel that vague, discontented, homesick feeling in the spring, it is not because we have consciously chosen to mate, but because we have within us that which urges us to reproduce our kind.

There is much that we cannot say. But we can surely say of all men, always—of the best and the worst, of the most highly developed and of the least developed—that they will both desire and endeavour to preserve the warm, friendly life of the body, and feel the urgent stirrings of sex. We had indeed, during the years of war, ample opportunity of recognising in ourselves and others—and with more than academic recognition—the urgent and often unbidden desire to live. And they have not been the least socially-minded who have admitted it most honestly. The feelings that Bruce Marshall describes in his novel, *Yellow Tapers for Paris*, must have come to us all. Of the declaration of war, for instance: 'Poured down within himself each stood, poured down within himself and unable to get out. Behind Baco's eyes Bigou could see his own fears darting; "Will I come through all right? Will it hurt to be bombed? Will it be sore, being buried alive? Can *I* stand the splintered iron, the stench, the knowledge that *I* may never drink wine again, or dine with a girl by the river?" ' And of trying to get a lift on the retreat from Paris: 'When he tried standing in a traffic block, they were even ruder because they did not like having to show that they did not care how much anybody else might get shot or torn asunder so long as they themselves were safe, safe, safe.'

That such naked self-preserving impulses exist is not

contradicted by the fact that they may be controlled and, on occasion, transcended. Nor by the fact that some individuals and some cultures have shown a pathological, suicidal tendency, and indulged in martyrdoms that were nothing more than manifestations of the death impulse.[1] And as to sex, those men and those religious communities which have most regarded it as evil and most tried to cut it out of their lives, have best demonstrated its strength, frequently spending their days and their nights in tortured, feverish, phantasy-ridden combat with a creative urge that may be twisted or repressed but can never be denied. To say that some people have found adequate sublimations for their physical sex urge is quite another thing. Where one admits the sublimation, one recognises the instinct.

We are taking it therefore, if only as a convenient method of description, that these instinctive tendencies to self-and-race-preservation exist; that they have abundant and powerful emotional energy at their disposal; that their ends are amoral and non-personal, and that they represent man's initial mental equipment. So much is generally admitted.

[1] Freud hypothesised a life-instinct and a death-instinct, associating and sometimes even equating the latter with aggression. There seems to be little doubt that certain forms of nurture, and the external human environment to which these give rise, may greatly increase the strength of the death-instinct, with its various manifestations of sadism and masochism, suicide and war. Recent mass suicides by the Japanese, and their noticeable suicidal methods of fighting, might almost seem to be symptoms of a mass neurosis. And not a few contemporary thinkers suggest that this neurosis infects our whole civilisation—that our lack of mastery of the art of life is such that we find it easier to die than to live. But such a *perversion* of the life-preserving instinct does not alter the fact that it is a *life* preserving instinct which is perverted. Moreover—if we leave out of consideration for the moment the very closely interwoven sexual elements in all suicidal tendencies—we might even say that the self-preserving instinct itself, in its largely unhumanised form, has made the struggle for survival so formidable as to induce men to turn from the difficulty of life to the ease of death. Yet it is notable that even the most suicidal movements of our time are inspired, at least verbally, by the idea of 'survival'—the survival, for instance, of some mystical, super-individual entity such as 'Germany'.

What seems to me to be also true, but not sufficiently realised, is that those same instinctive tendencies, though sometimes in subtle and complicated manifestations, underlie and determine much of our 'civilised' activity. There is still a too common illusion that animals live by instinct and men by reason; that animals without any conscious choice, any intelligently appreciated value, are driven to do what they must by blind urges within them, as the swallow migrates in the autumn, and the spider waits for her prey. Whereas a man reasonably and consciously considers alternatives and acts in accordance with a chosen value or purpose.

It would be pleasant indeed if it were true! But if one once begins to ask how far the self-preserving instinct pursues its ends by the light of reason, and how far it works blindly the blind purposes of nature; if one thinks, even for a moment, how considerably the life-activity of men and nations is directed with ant-like industry and tigerish intensity to securing for themselves food to eat, clothes to wear, houses to sleep in, and heat to warm the body, and a certain security of tenure in all this; if one watches the feverish striving, the ruthless competition and the tireless devising, and then considers how little food there is at the end of it, how terrifyingly little security for the physical body, one may well ask if this is a reasonable way of dealing with a pleasant and fruitful earth, or if it is a very blind one? If it is the way of a man or the way of a beast?

In fact, we bring very little reason to bear upon the matter. The instinct merely to *live* is so strong that the half-living it knows is better than the risk that must be taken for the real living it knows not of. And although it is clear that co-operative effort would solve most problems, men still, except when it suits them, co-operate very slowly.[1] It would

[1] cf. the suggestions of Dollard and others in their study, *Frustration and Aggression* (Kegan Paul, 1944), that frustrations by society of individual urges produce aggressions which slow up the possibilities of co-operative development. 'Individual aggression puts sand in the

over-simplify the matter to ascribe this failure solely to our self-preserving and self-regarding tendencies. We are not, generally speaking, nurtured or educated to be co-operative (a premium is in fact put upon aggressive individual effort), and we have not yet produced any such cultural development of the sex instinct as leaves much overflow of love from that given to self and mate and family. In our present nurtural and social setting we tend to appear at our worst, unco-operative and individualistic. Even so, this worst is the more easily possible just because we have 'naturally', biologically, a fundamental out-for-selfness, which can only be civilised when we find new ways of self and sex and social fulfilment. Meantime we fear—and not unnaturally—both for the bread that keeps the body alive and the recognition that is food to the mind. *And* we fight for them!

> Each for himself, his family, his heirs,
> For the wan, weltering nations, who concerns, who cares?[1]

It is surely owing to some strange incapacity that having discarded, in the long ago adventure in more sensitive living, the claws and horns and tearing teeth of his animal brothers, man should then have devoted his larger brain and greater manual skill to developing their self-preserving tactics! He used precisely the achievements of his evolutionary progress to turn back and imitate those features which evolution was leaving behind, washing them up from the main stream on the barren shores of the past. The tiger grew self-preserving fangs and claws. The man grew self-preserving arrows and bayonets. The brontosaurus developed a thick, self-preserving skin which weighed him down to his destruction. The man developed around himself a

gears and slows up the co-operative activity on which all are dependent . . . Sumner has long since noted the antagonistic undercurrent of social co-operation. One may paraphrase him by saying that co-operation is the lesser of the evils presented to social animals . . . co-operative activity involves definite sacrifices and inconveniences.' This is a similar argument though from a different point of view.

[1] Thomas Hardy in *The Dynasts*.

self-preserving armour in which, like the brontosaurus, he could hardly move at all, and then a self-preserving tank in which he too moves to destruction. And he has out-jungled the jungle, for although the brontosaurus contrived for himself a tank-like skin he did not, unless the old dragon-myths be true, sprout flame-throwers as well.[1] There is even an apt, if an unconscious, reference to the jungle in the names of many of our tanks and aeroplanes—tigers, wild-cats, hornets, mosquitoes, and the rest—unconscious in that the use of such accurate terms curiously conceals their accuracy. Sir Osbert Sitwell may well write of that day in 1918, when 'the war to end war' was over at last: 'That day, we entered a world of wolf-and-buffalo politics, where to howl over your prey is to be realistic, where to bellow is to prove strength, and to whine is to show grace! the world in which we still, but only just, survive: the world in which the sabre-toothed tiger and the ant are our paragons, and the butterfly is condemned for its wings, which are uneconomic.'[2]

The world is full from end to end of self-preserving

[1] I have later drawn attention to the remarkable and increasing resemblance between our modern engines of mechanised aggression, and those old dragon shapes of the aggressive life of the mind as they appear in myth and legend, dream and phantasy, morality and religion. It is useful to remember that a sexual symbolism also obtrudes itself. 'The dynamic essence of the masculine spirit,' says Dr. Karl Menninger (*Love Against Hate*, p. 106), 'based perhaps chiefly on biological functions, has been described as the impulse to penetrate, to make an impress upon something or someone. It is this that leads to clashes between men, this that leads to the happy union of the receptive female and the propulsive male.' One hardly need point the resemblance between the penetrating phallus and the penetrating weapon. And it may be that in a wiser and happier handling of sex we shall find one way to the lessening of war.

[2] *Laughter in the Next Room*, pp. 5 and 6; cf. also W. H. Auden, in *The Age of Anxiety*, writing of the depths of the sea:

> 'their wildness haunted
> By metal fauna moved by reason
> To hunt not for hunger but for hate's sake . . .'

activity. Countries pour out millions for war, but if it be suggested that they might therefore pour out thousands for peace, then the blind, instinctive mind cries out that money must be spent on war, for war is self-defence. And so, in a way, it is, but more money, more thought, more labour, more education spent on peace might be a better self-defence. The trouble is that instinct doesn't know that.[1]

And that is the tragic irony. In human affairs the self-preserving instinct is defeating its own ends. Having emerged to keep us alive, it is working much of our destruction. And yet it is still rightly called self-preserving, for that is what it was in the animal world from which it came; that is what it still is in its own blind intention. We must understand it as such, both to discover why it fails, and how, since it is so fundamental and necessary an urge, it may be helped to succeed. 'Helped' because I believe Dr. Julian Huxley to be right in saying that man must now, and for the first time, take a conscious responsibility for his own evolution—or there may be no evolution! 'Progress is a major fact of past evolution; but it is limited to a few selected stocks. It may continue in the future, but it is not inevitable; man, by now become the trustee of evolution, must work and plan if he is to achieve further progress for himself and so for life.'[2]

This view would appear to be reasonable in that the emergence of mind slowly increasing in 'consciousness' seems to be the distinctive feature of human evolution. So there would naturally come a time when consciousness changes, however gradually, from a determined feature of

[1] Instinct still tends to use, naturally and of course unwittingly, the hitting, or hitting-back, method. cf. Drever: *Instinct in Man.* 'Why should the pain, say, of a blow determine us to retaliate rather than to relieve the pain?' And the answer would seem to be that we are endowed with a psycho-physical tendency to do just that—and that that is what, for the most part, we do, even though our weapons are much more complex and extensive, and require much more intelligence to construct and use, than the fist or club of primitive days.

[2] Julian Huxley: *Evolution*, p. 578 (Allen and Unwin, 1942).

evolution to a determining factor. The time of transition is one of those tides 'in the affairs of men' which the race must take—or perish. For evolutionary progress, in so far as it concerns man, must surely mean at the least 'survival' (self- and species-preservation) of the body in a reasonably healthy and well-nourished condition,[1] and at the most 'increases of aesthetic, intellectual and spiritual experience and satisfaction',[2] with greater harmony between the many complex parts of the human society—these three being obviously one, and attainable indivisibly or not at all. And if the mental mechanisms serving the possibilities of survival, in the narrower and the wider sense, are only attaining their end in a limited, hit-and-miss fashion, it should be possible to discover why.

I think the reason may lie in the immense difference despite all resemblances, between the human and the natural world. In man, as distinct from the animal, the aggression and destructiveness at the command both of the ego and the sex instincts are so greatly increased by specifically human factors (as I shall try to show later) as to be out of all proportion to any necessity of survival. Surplus 'amounts', biologically 'unemployed', get into mischief, and threaten man's continued existence. As 'Wrath' said, in Marlowe's *Faustus*, 'I have run up and down the world with this case of rapiers, wounding myself when I had nobody to fight withal.'[3]

[1] cf. 'In this twentieth century since Christ, most people are miserable most of the time, and many of them from sheer hunger.' Karl Menninger: *Love Against Hate*, p. 225.

[2] Julian Huxley: *Evolution*, p. 576.

[3] And cf. the comment in Eugene O'Neill's play *Mourning Becomes Electra* of the young man, Orin, on his own participation in war: 'I had a queer feeling that war meant murdering the same man over and over, and that in the end I would discover the man was myself!' Or the words which, in *I Live under a Black Sun*, Edith Sitwell puts into the mouth of the young German, Hans Orthoven: 'For this boy whom I had killed, as he lay in my arms, suddenly it was my child who lay there, my child that was murdered by a man as foolish and as blind as me.'

Moreover, man's capacity for compassionate assessment of life erects a standard that could hardly have existed in the evolutionary process as such. The process may, indeed, over the millennia, secure the survival of better adapted and more highly-organised creatures. But one cannot see how, to any of its creatures or in the process itself, the incalculable wastage involved can have been of any account.

Millions of eggs never hatched into cod; millions of acorns never grew into oaks; millions of tadpoles never turned into frogs.[1] Some cod, some oaks, some frogs survived. The waste of all the rest did not matter. It did not matter at all until it came to be seen through compassionate, valuing human eyes, as Walt Whitman saw it on the seashore when he listened to the Mocking-bird mourning its mate:

> Yes, when the stars glisten'd,
> All night long on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake,
> Down almost amid the slapping waves,
> Sat the lone singer wonderful causing tears.
> He call'd on his mate,
> He pour'd forth the meanings which I of all men know.
> Yes, my brother, I know.[2]

It mattered to Whitman because he was human. It does matter in human life. It matters when the waste is unnecessary infant mortality, unnecessary under-nourishment of children, unnecessary unfulfilment of a hundred, thousand talents and graces, unnecessary slaughter of youth in war.

[1] R. H. Tawney in *Equality* has aptly invented the phrase 'tadpole philosophy' to describe the way of thinking—if it can be called thinking—which underlies and accepts a competitive society, where few of the 'tadpole' humans emerge from the pool of struggle and arrived full-grown on the shores of a decent and dignified life. He rightly points the resemblance to 'natural' rather than 'human' process.

[2] From *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*—lines which may be classed as an example of the 'pathetic fallacy', a mere projection of human feeling on to bird life. But the fact remains that the human alone knows pathos, the human alone projects.

A million cod's eggs unhatched; a million young men cut down in Europe! Is there much difference from the evolutionary point of view? Except that cod as fish seem to have been successful as a species in spite of the wastage, whereas there can be no success for humanity if its youth is to be repeatedly exterminated in increasingly efficient mutual slaughter. But again, if humanity were to prove an unsuccessful experiment, if in some mysterious way the evolutionary process were to have thrown up the sensitive awareness which was Euripides and Shakespeare and Beethoven, and then sunk back to 'unconsciousness', what would that matter except to humanity itself, capable of watching and assessing its own unsuccess? And to it at least, and to it alone, the million young men do matter. It lifts up a voice of mourning—Rachel, weeping for her children and not to be comforted.

It is true that a sufficient number of people so far survive even a total war—sufficient, that is to say, to provide numerically a more than adequate population of the earth—but these survivors are not necessarily either the physically strongest or the humanly fittest.[1] The musician, the artist, the scientist, the surgeon may be killed, and he who was kind in his everyday ways. A sufficient number of people survive the present competitive struggle for existence, but not necessarily those who are humanly most excellent. The perpetuation of *natural* struggle does not serve any good end, humanly or biologically.[2] We could find more reasonable and successful ways of securing the fit, sensitive and

[1] cf. Huxley: *On Living in a Revolution.* 'The more total war becomes, both intensively, as diverting more of the energies of the population from construction to destruction, and extensively as involving more and more of the countries of the globe, the more of a threat does it become to the progress of the human species.'

[2] ibid, p. 62. 'Recent studies of the way in which Natural Selection works, and how the Struggle for Existence operates in different conditions have resulted in this rather surprising but very important conclusion—that intra-specific competition need not, and usually does not, produce results of any advantage to the species as a whole.'

beautiful body than the rough and ready ones of ordeal by combat. And when it comes to that more humanly essential thing, the fit and sensitive and beautiful mind—well, the self-preserving instinct knows not a thing about that.

The fact would seem to be that man has developed a new idea of survival! He—I speak here only of self-conscious and altruistically-disposed man—has abandoned the natural standard of the physical survival of an adequate number (quantitatively considered) of the species. He desires now not only the survival, but the humanly happy and fulfilled survival of an adequate number (qualitatively considered) of his fellows. And although the pursuit of this human—or shall we say, humanised?—end would provide man with his only remaining chance of biological success, it is not, strictly speaking, a biological end at all. Or, if it be a biological end transformed, the transformation is great enough in degree to seem like, and function as, a difference in kind.

The sex instinct as a *human* function presents much the same difficulties as the ego instinct. It, too, is well enough adapted in its own by and large and somewhat wasteful fashion to securing a sufficient survival of individuals and species, but ill-adapted, unless it be consciously understood and skilfully handled, to man's survival as a happy and fulfilled human being. Civilisation has, of course, in fact interfered (the word appears preferable to 'understood' or 'directed') with biological sex urges and expressions in more numerous and fundamental ways than with ego urges and expressions. Our present culture, for instance, sanctions almost unlimited competition, but no 'free' sexual relations at all. (The two attitudes are, of course, connected.) And most interference with sex has been interference as with an evil.

There do exist, and have existed, cultures, generally small, where sex has been treated unfearfully and non-repressively, and where it does seem to have contributed considerably

both to race-preservation and human peace and happiness. But many of these cultures have been too unsophisticated and undeveloped to show all that sex might contribute both to the greater freedom and happiness of men and women, and to the greater peace and creativity of the community. They can give us only hints and intimations and even those come gratefully. For on the whole human life has been patterned by widely-spread and long-enduring cultures and ideologies in which sex has been in greater or lesser degree associated with sin, and in which sex education has been inadequate and fearful.

In our own culture a large proportion of marriages, when they are not positively unhappy, are still not positively happy. A rubbing-along-together state is achieved with, at best, mutual toleration and a degree of mutual affection. But this is hardly a fulfilled, adult relationship, of which one might surely ask not only a fuller sexual satisfaction than is usually the case, but also the active delight of the partners in one another and their conscious sense that their association is good. Which all too rarely happens! The reasons are complex and various, but an important one is that the sex instinct, simply as an animal urge and not as a human emotion, still plays a far greater part than we realise. The girl and the boy marry because that is the way in which mating is socially permitted. They marry sometimes out of sheer curiosity. They marry very often because, however unconsciously, they are driven by the strong impersonal urge of the life-force.

It is so easy for youth to be 'caught' by the old and serpent-subtle urge of sex. Adam putting on hair-oil and Eve buying a lipstick are hardly Adam and Eve at all, but atoms in an infinite process. And even that Adam appears possessed of all the virtues and Eve of all the graces has little more of personal reality. For Nature has thrown a halo around them, and the light that never was on land or sea has broken for a moment over their everyday world. The primroses are sweeter in the grass and the stars brighter in the sky, and the

wings of beauty beat and bless.[1] But, if it remain on the instinctive level, even that beauty is not enough. It is indeed less than enough. It is a mockery and a delusion. For people look back and wonder how what was once so beautiful can have become so ugly, and do not know that they were taught neither intellectually nor emotionally how to catch the will-o'-the-wisp of natural allurement and turn it to a steadier light.

So Adam, thinking he does it for quite other reasons, marries Eve because of the urge of the sex instinct. Curiosity is satisfied. Children are born. Nature has done her job. And Adam and Eve are tied together, people who hardly know one another, who, if they had chosen for really personal and reasonable ends, would never have married each other at all.[2] It is more to their credit that Adam and Eve so often make as good a thing of this situation as they do, than to their discredit that they so often fail. They are not wicked or ill-intentioned people—they have only tried to live *human* life on an *animal* instinct about which their culture has allowed them to know all too little. Like the self-preserving instinct, the sex instinct served the turn of keeping enough of the species going. But the wastage in human value, human happiness, human fulfilment was and is incalculable.

This is not to relegate sex to the position of a poor relation of the emotions, only to be entertained beneath the

[1] E. M. Forster in *Howard's End*, says of the passing emotion of 'a chance collision of human beings'—'We recognise that emotion is not enough, and that men and women are personalities capable of sustained relations, not mere opportunities for an electrical discharge.' At the same time admitting that by collisions of this trivial sort 'the doors of heaven may be shaken open'.

[2] It is not only on the young and unsophisticated that this poor joke may be played. Proust's Swann is a pattern of the sophisticated victim, Swann crying out: 'Dire que j'ai gâché des années de ma vie, que j'ai voulu mourir, que j'ai eu mon plus grand amour, pour une femme qui ne me plaisait pas, qui n'était pas mon genre.' (*A la Recherche du Temps Perdu.*)

aegis of its more sustained and developed loves. It is not to despise those lesser and lighter contacts in which still 'the doors of heaven may be shaken open'. But only to say that sexually-motivated relationships are not *necessarily* 'human' relationships at all. And that even to lust well a man must have learned to love well, too. The beasts only may lust without love; man, not winning love, must lose lust too. Instinct is no longer enough.

If it be true anywhere that instinct is not enough it is true of the much lauded 'maternal' instinct,[1] the inadequacies of which, from a human point of view, are frequently shared by parents of both sexes.

The maternal instinct has come in for more sentimentalisation even than romantic love itself. Often all that can be

[1] I should perhaps point out here that a maternal, or possibly better, a parental instinct cannot be said to exist in so clearly-defined and unquestionable way as an ego and a sex instinct. Taking it that an instinctive activity has an 'appetitive' and a 'reactive' element (Drever), Dr. Flugel, in his admirably clear discussion of this matter in *Population, Psychology and Peace* (pp. 72 ff.) writes: 'What is now the state of affairs as regards the parental instinct? There is obviously a reactive element; children are fed and protected, loved and cherished when they have arrived. But there is an appetitive element in virtue of which children are desired by those who are not yet parents? . . . in a review of the subject a few years ago D. W. Harding came to the conclusion that there is no biologically determined desire for children as such, and that Nature has, so to speak, staked all in endowing men (like other animals) with a strong urge towards the sexual act.'

I am inclined to think, but without due evidence, that in some women at least, there may be something very much like an appetitive element in their desire for children, but the connection between sex and reproduction is admittedly very close, and a distinction is difficult. For the point which I wish to make above it hardly matters. The human situation *seems* (even when one has disentangled one's mind as far as may be from the influence of culture patterns) to allow for the drawing upon for the nurture of one's own child or children of considerable resources of energy which are obviously only available in certain highly developed sublimations for children in general.

said about it is that in most of the higher and some of the lower species the female gives enough care to her young to ensure that some of them—the physically fittest—survive, and are sufficiently 'educated' to fend for themselves. One can easily over-estimate the fierce maternal tenderness that makes some creatures die for their young. It may be the dim beginning of a more human nurture but if it exists, as it often does in human life, without any real 'humanising', it may even be antagonistic to human values. It may show itself in an intense devotion to one's own young, and be at the same time indifferent or even antagonistic to the young of other people and other communities.[1] Maternal love is often in this way possessive, jealous and self-centred—self-centred in the sense that it turns the family into an extended ego, whose survival and interest need in no way contribute to the survival and interest of others, and may indeed greatly hinder them.

We still live very instinctively in this matter, as in self-preservation and sex-expression. Only a small, a very small minority live humanly, and care for the interests of the children of the world as they care for the interests of their own children, or work for the feeding of the children of the world as they work for their own children's food. And that, of course, is wholly natural, which is just its trouble. The natural is only the stuff out of which humanity may be made. We can no longer preserve, we can no longer even feed our own children, by the best of our endeavours to feed and preserve them alone. That, too, served in the natural world, but for humanity it is too wasteful and too cruel.

This, of course, is not the whole story. All that is really human in man's strange process through the ages is, also, some form of development of the old instinctive energies.

[1] State insistence on free places in hitherto fee-supported schools has brought out this aspect of the matter. Some parents avowedly want, not only a certain type of education, but perhaps even more, a type of education in which others may not share.

Courage and curiosity, intelligence and high self-consciousness, have been born of the self-preserving instinct; beauty and art, affection and tenderness, of the sex instinct; protectiveness, responsibility and self-forgetfulness, of the parental instinct; and nobody, having begun to be human, can ever again be accounted for in terms of instinct alone. Few of us are not in some degree too good for the way we are living, and yet few of us are not responsible, in the way we are living, for the immeasurable unfulfilment and unhappiness of life. For our civilisation itself is constructed too largely on self-preserving and family-preserving lines. The pattern that runs through it, in small groups and large, is myself, my mate, my family, my race, my religion, my country. And 'my' is the blind, unfulfilling cry of animal life. 'Our' is the clear-sighted, reasonable affirmation of the animal turned man.

I realise, also, that I have with unjustifiable, but I think unavoidable, personification spoken of the apparent 'purpose' manifested in evolution as though it were a conscious purpose; and have drawn too clear a distinction between 'animal' as manifested simply by the tiger in the jungle and the lamb in the field, and 'human' as manifested not simply at all by those who seem to me (for we have each our own standards) successful men. And I have set something called 'nature', in what Thomas Hardy would describe as its 'nescience', over against man as a conscious, knowing entity.

These are all no more than 'ways of speaking'; but necessary ways in so far as one must describe human 'feeling' about historical process as well as scientific fact within it. Perhaps, indeed, the feeling should be more readily admitted as an aspect of the fact—the feeling of jealousy described in *Othello* is for instance a humanly important aspect of the chemical, physiological, neurological (or whatever they may be) happenings of sex. It is similarly important to us as human beings that nature 'feels' to us to have ends in which we, her conscious children, are so much

pawns as to make understandable Hardy's 'cri du coeur' in *Jude the Obscure*.[1] T. H. Huxley's assertion that between man and the cosmic process as it has been there ought to be war,[2] and that still more impassioned sense of reasonless enmity in Gloucester's:

> As flies to wanton boys, are we to the Gods,
> They kill us for their sport.[3]

It may be true that all these feelings are explicable rather in terms of personal psychology than cosmic philosophy: but it is also true that the conditions of cosmic process, un-irksome to other creatures are curiously irksome, narrowing and inadequate to sensitive and intelligent man. In a world where other things 'belong' he must walk, even at the best, with alien feet, and the inescapable sadness of heart of the freak. But it may be, for all that, that this sense of 'againstness' in the nature of things to much of human desire and purpose has not been the best guide to such measure of

[1] Recording Jude's inner disillusionment Hardy says: 'And then he again uneasily saw, as he had latterly seen with more and more frequency, the scorn of Nature for man's finer emotions, and her lack of interest in his aspirations.' And later he tells, speaking almost certainly for himself, how Sue came to see '—that the First Cause worked automatically like a somnambulist, and not reflectively like a sage; that at the framing of the terrestrial conditions there seemed never to have been contemplated such a development of emotional perceptiveness among the creatures subject to those conditions as that reached by thinking and educated humanity. But affliction makes opposing forces loom anthropomorphous; and those ideas (i.e. Sue's earlier, happier ones) were now exchanged for a sense of Jude and herself fleeing from a persecutor.' Hardy wrote, of course, at a moment when what he calls nature was even less understood and accepted than it is to-day, but I still know intelligent young women of definite goodwill who find in the absorbing demands of their small children upon them something of a persecution.

[2] Quoted from a contribution by Dr. E. W. Barnes in the Symposium: *Science and Ethics* (ed. C. H. Waddington) (Allen & Unwin, 1942).

[3] Shakespeare: *King Lear*.

fulfilment as may be had. For the sense of againstness has been attached to the instinctive life within us as well as to the natural world outside us.

It may well be that the next stage of our progress—if progress it is to be—depends upon our acceptance and conscious nurture and direction of instinct rather than our repudiation and unconscious repression of it. Humanness, with so great an ally, might then find such beauty, affection and happiness as is possible to its frailty and its transience.

This sense of sin . . . is neither more nor less than the natural discomfort of an imperfectly adapted animal to its environment.

H. G. WELLS

I have come to see sin not as the breach of a dictated law, but as a growing pain or a cramp of the evolving powers of human nature; and so regarded it is as understandable as all the other maladaptations on the purely physical plane which have caused other species to become extinct or wantonly destructive.

LAURENCE HOUSMAN

Love is too young to know what conscience is,
Yet who knows not conscience is born of love.

SHAKESPEARE

I cannot err;
There is no creature
Whom I belong to
Whom I could wrong.

W. H. AUDEN

CHAPTER II

The Birth of Consciousness and the Sin Error

So man began as a creature of instinct. So, to varying extents, he continued. Yet never, because he was man, could he act wholly instinctively again. Something happened to him. And we have to try to discover what it was that happened—how, out of the neutrality, the nescience, the indifference, of the processes of the animal world, something we can call 'human-ness' emerged. Nothing is more difficult. A story like that in Genesis could make it simple enough—for there a God breathed into a creature made of the dust of the earth the breath of his own life, and that creature became a man—immediately different from the animals, immediately human. But that was in a small, tidy, explicable world that had never looked down the long, dim vistas of evolution. Now nothing is certain, except that no ape-like creature came down from the tree-tops in some primeval forest and was—just because he attempted to stand erect—immediately human, immediately different from the beast. All we know is that humanity did emerge. That there were at length men where once there had been only beasts and birds and fishes.

The difference must certainly have been more a matter of consciousness than of form. It is perhaps an arbitrary distinction but I think that the animal mind, from the standpoint of our human valuing, was largely 'unconscious' mind. It is possible, of course, to guess at rudimentary forms of consciousness in animals, even perhaps in amoebae. But for practical purposes we do know that there is a great gulf fixed between the 'consciousness' of, for instance, the dog,

and the consciousness of the man. One cannot imagine in the dog, as one knows in the man, the sense of being a self, the knowledge of good and evil, the dream of canine brotherhood, the aspiring knowledge of the stars, the proud assumption of immortality.

One calls the animal's mind unconscious because it seeks its food, mates, feeds and trains its young without having deliberately decided to do so. Indeed, it does these things because it *must*, and cannot, manlike, stand outside itself and watch and assess its own performing.

> Ther is a young black ouzel, now building her nest under the Rosemary on the wall, suspiciously shunning my observation as I sit in the porch, intentiv with my pencil as she with her beak: Coud we discourse together, and wer I to ask for-why she is making such pother with thatt rubbishy straw, her answer would be surely: 'I know not, but I MUST.'[1]

Robert Bridges could have discoursed on the pother he was making with his pencil; could have told you he made it because he chose to do so.[2] But the bird did she knew not what. The 'must' was the measure of the instinctiveness, the unconsciousness, of her life. And similarly instinctive and 'unconscious' in mind were those earliest ancestors of ours when they came down from the trees and began, indeed knowing not what they did, the human adventure, or—if you prefer it—the human tragedy.

Out of this unconscious—somehow, somewhere—consciousness, the beginning of humanity, emerged. Just as the one-celled creatures became multicellular and the groups of cells differentiated themselves to act as stomachs, hearts, etc., so in the early human brain was slowly strengthened and more clearly differentiated the function we call consciousness. And this emergent consciousness gradually

[1] Robert Bridges: *The Testament of Beauty.*

[2] It is possible, of course, that Bridges too, though in more complicated fashion, obeyed a 'must'. The difference is nevertheless immense, and consists precisely in divergence from instinct in its stereotyped form.

developed quite new powers. It became able reasonably [*sic!*] to think, explain and choose, became conscious of me-ness, conscious most of all that relationship was not just relationship, but that it could be better or worse relationship, more comfortable or less comfortable, more or less dangerous, and that something could be *done* about it. In fact, through their consciousness, men came to know good and evil as no other creature could or did know it. The knowledge became their blessing and their bane.

There are many theories—all necessarily speculative—about the birth of the specifically human in man. For myself, I like to imagine that it came about in two different, but still interrelated, ways—the one mechanical and the other emotional. When our ancestors left behind them the safer tree-tops and the protection of thick hides (not entirely forsaken!) and tearing teeth and claws, they had to find new, compensatory ways of keeping themselves alive. And they had slightly larger brains, focusing eyes, and those extremely important hands at the ends of their now free front limbs. These both determined, and were determined by, their line of development. Consciousness was forced into being partly in order that they might more clearly understand and more skilfully handle—literally handle—the stuff of the material world around them. It was, that is, partly a mechanical, a manipulative, consciousness.[1]

The swallow builds only one kind of nest, year after year after year. The man can think out how this kind of material or that, this form of shelter or that, this or that position, best serves his purpose. The swallow builds repeatedly in the chimney out of which you have just as repeatedly smoked it. The man can think how to avoid the recurrent disaster which is not, of course, to say that he always does so. Thinking is not the most practised of human arts. The point, however, is

[1] Some theories seem to make consciousness wholly or almost wholly a derivative of the sexual life. It seems to me that there must have been, as so often, a number of contributing factors.

that he does have the basis on which to think when some day he learns how to and becomes emotionally unafraid of thought. The swallow has not even the basis—or it would presumably not have remained a swallow.

Man is not, of course, moved to this thinking about and manipulating of the stuff of life by some quite new energy. Instinct is still his motive and his power, but it is instinct with a difference—an instinct no longer acting of itself, as when the blood rushes to the heart, but under the direction, however slight, of conscious mind. And with his instinct so directed, man rapidly became not only proficient, but remarkably and even alarmingly proficient, in his mechanical control of life. He had a facility for it. 'Monkey tricks', the Chinese philosopher Lin Yutang calls it, and monkey tricks it has often been, producing almost accidentally either drain or dynamite, bath-tub or bomb.

Man became homo faber—man, the maker—long, long before he became homo sapiens—man, the wise. Indeed, he is now, in this mighty, mechanical phase of his development, most eminently and skilfully—and most diabolically—homo faber, and only occasionally and in small measure, homo sapiens or homo amans. His inventive and manipulative power comes as yet only partially into the realm of human value. The building of the house is human value. The making of the bomb is the destruction of that value. And this argument is not in any way vitiated by the fact that sometimes he makes the bombs because he sincerely believes that by knocking down houses on some other part of the earth he is serving the cause of civilisation. It is notorious that he invents those things which may destroy civilisation out of sheer inventiveness[1] when there is no threat to civilisation in sight. For like a child he builds and like a child he knocks down. He is a great creator, but one can give him no certificate for continuous reasoning and reasonable creativity.

But although it was largely mechanical, although it was

[1] Inventiveness or, of course, some emotional perversity.

only very partially human, that part of consciousness which developed through the assessing and controlling of the stuff of the material world, was humanly important. It had, and has, possibilities of human value far beyond any of those yet realised. It was that which could make of the external world a place of human habitation. It was that out of which was born scientific curiosity and the love of knowledge for knowledge's own sake. But it was not nearly so important as that other function of consciousness which differentiated itself to assess and control conduct; to manipulate not the outside material world but the dynamic, explosive world of inner feeling and the relationship of man with man.

How did new evolutionary processes begin? By what inner urge, or of what external necessity, did some reptilian creatures grow wings and take flight for their activity, and the air for their world? Perhaps it was partly an urge to safety, partly a choice of delight. However it was, the beauty of song came out of it, and the poetry of motion. It was a new activity and a new world.

How was it that some animals especially seized upon, manipulated and developed the affectionate, comradely vestiges in the instinctual life? Perhaps this, too, was partly an urge to safety, partly a choice of delight. However it was, the beauty of human-ness came out of it, and the poetry of living. It was a new activity and a new world.

One imagines as the beginning of emotional, as apart from mechanical, humanity a certain rudimentary sociability, a liking on the part of the creature to be with, and to be accepted of, other creatures of his kind. Whether this rudimentary sociability existed in its own right, and apart from the need for love which developed within the family, it is hardly possible to know. Nor at this stage of our argument[1] does it greatly matter. What seems certain, and

[1] It seems to me very probable that 'humanity' in its emotional aspect derives from the long childhood of man, which involves a complete dependence on one or more human beings who are therefore both loved and hated. And that, in the guilt felt about the hatred (which is not, for

what does matter, is that emergent man evidently had a need for the actual feeling-sense of being liked that was far more than the need for such solidarity as aided his physical survival. And I, for my own part, find in this need to like and to be liked *the* human principle. And as soon, I imagine, as it has entered, however slightly, into the evolutionary process, the whole situation has changed. Something possibly like this—*A* and *B* are men; primitive, but still men. Whether they are father and son, brother and brother, or just unrelated males, is immaterial for this story. The point is that they both desire the woman *C* for mate and so they fight. In the course of the fight, *A* notices and picks up a piece of flint. He strikes *B* on the head, and *B* falls down. Blood pours from the wound. He does not move. He is dead.

Now this is a situation that may and does occur equally in the animal world. Two bears fight for the same female. One vanquishes and kills the other. The female accepts the victor. Indeed, she prefers the victor. No good or evil is involved. No human value can be read into the picture. It serves natural ends that the stronger should mate. So long as bigger and better bears survive, a few fallen by the wayside are neither here nor there. It is not a moral situation nor an immoral one. It is just a natural situation.

But when it comes to the two primitive men and the primitive woman we, with our developed human valuing, find the situation ugly, disturbing, inconvenient. We tend, even, to look back and describe it as an indication of Original Sin, a proof that there is in 'human nature' something inherently evil. But I would contend that the human

the infant or the race, a survival value), is to be found the beginnings of the human knowledge of good and evil. With this all-important aspect of the matter I have dealt as fully as I am able in subsequent chapters. Here I have only tried to imagine for myself—and I can put forward this part of my argument as little more than an exercise in imagination—how man, as a dimly-conscious adult, may have come to 'feel' about the shoulds and should-nots according to which he attempted to govern his life.

situation was, *at first*, no different from the bear situation. It too was neither good nor evil, but natural, *until*—and here is the crux of the whole matter—the men and women concerned put their own value upon it. And their value was not, at first, a moral one. It was what one might call an 'acceptance' value.[1] *A*, *B* and *C* were beginning to be human because they were beginning to be conscious and could, in just a small way, view their actions from outside, and assess them as acceptable or unacceptable to themselves and to others. They wanted their actions to be acceptable because they themselves wanted to be liked.

The situation becomes still more complicated if, as is quite possible, *A* and *B* have been friends before they quarrel over the woman *C*. Then, when *A* sees *B* lying dead at his feet he is vaguely sad and disturbed. He has only obeyed the sex urge as an *animal* would, but he has killed his friend as only a *man* can.[2] He is distrustful of that something within himself which has made him do the killing. Judgment has crept in. And the judgment is that he has done that which was not acceptable, either to himself or to his community. What was neutral in the animal world has turned out to be

[1] Two 'sins' are described to us at the beginning of the Book of Genesis. The first is that man—tempted, of course, by woman, who was tempted, of course, by the serpent, who was—anyway that man preferred to innocence, 'unknowing', the knowledge of good and evil. Which in some deep underlying sense, means also that he preferred to childlike obedience an adult right to choose and err. The second 'sin'—the murder of Abel by Cain suggests to us that having so chosen, adulthood proved, as always, too difficult, and non-acceptance by the 'father' inspired nothing less than murderous hate. So the second of the great 'sins' had the same 'acceptance-value' as I have imagined above.

[2] cf. Susan Isaacs: *Social Development in Young Children*, p. 277 (Routledge, 1933), for a somewhat similar situation between two three-year-old children. Martin would like to satisfy his aggressive urge, but is deterred by idea of the loss of friendship which would be involved. 'Tommy and Martin were in the sand-pit, and talked to each other thus: Martin; "Do you love me?" "Yes, I love you." Martin: "I love you—I'm not going to hit you again. Shall I hit you again? No, I'm not going to hit you again." Martin repeated this two or three times.'

evil (unacceptable) in the human world. The life-force itself was not evil. The sex urge was not evil. It was following its own impersonal ends. Only they turned out not to be in this case human ends—for the 'end' of human life is love.

And then there was the woman, *C*. Let us suppose that she had happened to like *B*, and that, when she saw him dead, she turned against *A*, as the female bear would hardly have turned against the victorious male. Poor *A*! He found that he was not acceptable—not humanly acceptable—to *C* either. The sex urge had not served his purposes either in one way or the other. As an animal he was bewildered. As a man he was bewildered. In fact, the beginning of his humanity meant for him that he had not functioned well as an animal, nor had he functioned well as a man.

Moreover, *A*, *B* and *C* were members of a small group and *C*, poor dear, was probably the property of father or brothers. Then there were *D*, *E*, *F*, *G* and the others to consider. It became apparent to them too that if men were always quarrelling over women, life within the group would be uncomfortable and dangerous.[1] *A* had behaved as was not convenient. He had incurred the displeasure of the group—he was not acceptable to them. It was all very awkward for *A*. The dawn of humanity had made for this awkwardness. 'There was a mean trick played on us somewhere. God put us in the bodies of animals and tried to make us act like people. That was the beginning of trouble.'[2]

In some such way I imagine consciousness coming to be. Because the potential man had abandoned some of the animal means of defence, he must differentiate a part of his brain to deal more consciously and skilfully with the external

[1] This judgment by the group may spring from the older (chronologically) and deeper (in the layers of the unconscious) judgment by the father of the primeval horde, and his internal representative—the super-ego. But it later becomes also, and is felt as, a social judgment. It is true, however, that our social judgments might become more enlightened and humane if their origin in father-judgments were understood.

[2] Erskine Caldwell: *God's Little Acre*.

world than the animal was able to do. And because the potential man had chosen the way of affectionate relationship—had put great value, that is to say, on social acceptance—he had to develop the capacity for assessing and controlling the instinctive urges so that they fitted in, both with the human demands of the group, and with his own human desires. This assessing and controlling consciousness working in the interests of the desire for love and approval is the real beginning of humanity. It is not 'the moral law within' which makes us human. It is the need to give and to receive love. Love is primary. Morality secondary. It was out of the love need and because of the love need, that morality, i.e. the capacity to assess conduct as good or evil, the desire to be good, was born.

It seems to-day almost fantastic to imagine that there ever was at any time an inborn knowledge of an absolute good which a man was capable of seeing and free to disobey. But there *was* something very strong and absolute—the need to be loved and approved, by the family first, and then by the group.[1] Good in any family or in any group was such conduct as was convenient to, and approved by, that family and that group. Evil in any family and any group was that which was inconvenient to, and disapproved by, that family and that group. There was not, in the early days at least, even any suggestion of a community of goods and evils, arrived at independently by many different human groups owing to some 'inner light'. The only 'inner light' was the flickering dawn of love, and the good of some groups was the evil of others. It was only much later that a few wise men

[1] cf. Freud: *Civilisation, War and Death*, p. 58. 'One may reject the suggestion of an original—as one might say natural—capacity for discriminating between good and evil . . . it is easy to discover this motive (i.e. for accepting a standard of conduct), in man's helplessness and dependence on others; it can best be designated the dread of losing love. If he loses the love of others on whom he is dependent, he will forfeit also their protection against many dangers . . . what is bad is therefore to begin with whatever causes one to be threatened with a loss of love; because of the dread of this loss, one must desist from it.'

began to visualise forms of conduct which might be universally good, happy and free. But those were men who had outgrown both the childhood of the race, and the psychological childhood which has beset it for so long. In the beginning, goodness was approvedness, loveworthiness; evil disapprovedness, unloveworthiness—no more and no less.

Freud's ideas in this matter have been most interestingly confirmed from another angle by Professor J. H. Breasted. In his examination of some of the earliest written records of morality he traces the 'Dawn of Conscience'—which one might equally well call the dawn of humanity—to the need for approval within the family. 'The realm of family life' (i.e. in Ancient Egypt) 'reached a high development as a world of tender emotions, inevitably inclining to become those of approval and disapproval, and leading to notions of praiseworthy or reprehensive conduct. Voices within began to make themselves heard, and moral values as we know them were discerned for the first time.'

He records a twenty-seventh century B.C. tomb inscription which admirably points the close connection between good conduct and 'lovedness'. 'I speak no lie, for I was one beloved of his father, praised of his mother, excellent in character to his brother, and amiable to (his sister).' And another: 'My father made a Will in my favour (for) I was excellent . . . (one beloved) of his father, praised of his mother, whom all his brothers loved.'[1] Excellent conduct was at first that which won the love of the family group.

Had the course of evolution only meant that various human societies came to have some conception of excellent conduct, there would have been no difficulty. Such a conception was necessary if real humanity were to emerge, and varying standards could have been worked into a common excellence. What went wrong—or so it seems to me—was that while (for most communities) acceptable conduct gave

[1] *The Dawn of Conscience*, pp. 19 and 117.

only a small sense of the goodness of life, unacceptable conduct gave a disproportionately great sense of its evil. It is true that in some small 'primitive' peoples the development of consciousness has apparently not meant that the natural was thought of as evil. But, looking back over the historically known part of the human story, it does seem that, for many centuries and over large parts of the 'civilised' world, men came to believe in some form or other of 'original sin'. They came to believe that there was something inherently wrong with the very stuff of life itself, and they frequently felt, therefore, that physical life was a worthless thing, and took refuge from it, either in a sense-denying asceticism, or a concentration on some more rewarding life in some more pleasant world.

This sense of something evil within oneself and within others arose largely out of a profound, all-embracing ignorance and an urgent, all-demanding need. I, with thousands of years of human consciousness behind me, with a vast science of humanity available to me, sit and surmise, with many of my contemporaries, that the beginnings of humanity were thus and thus. And our surmises almost suggest that our early ancestors knew that they were becoming human, and that it was happening to them in this way and that. They could not have known any more than we know now what our race is becoming. It was all dim, all half-conscious, all spread over unknown ages of time. And it is no wonder that, in the long processes of adaptation, much bewilderment was felt, many mistakes made, much frustration experienced. It must have been all too easy to get the idea that there was something wrong with the whole business. What I should like to call the sin-error was made.

One might summarise the argument so far by suggesting four main sources of this sense of something wrong; the group, oneself, ignorance, and the magnitude of the human task. It was clear, because one felt it deeply within oneself, that one needed love and approval. One did something that

the group disliked. Therefore that which one did was evil. The group indicated this to one. Moreover, one felt it oneself. If it alienated the liking of the group it must be wrong.

But the group was never the only assessor. It was not the group that dictated the deep sadness, the aching bewilderment,[1] that one felt when one had defeated one's own purpose, as when

> Each man kills the thing he loves
> But each man does not die.

Nature said: 'Kill the rival!' Friendship said: 'Yes, but I wanted my friend alive. We had good times together.' How evil must have seemed to the bewildered early consciousness that unknown nature in oneself that made one do the thing which, above all, one would not have done. For indeed it seems evil enough to the almost equally bewildered consciousness of later men, contemplating the evil it has, and yet would not have, done.

Unknown! That was the next difficulty. Consciousness was young and new. Instinct was old and strong. Consciousness knew dimly that it must make the unknown thing, instinct, fit in, but it did not know what the thing was —which is about where much consciousness is to-day. And that of which the nature is unknown, that which is not understood, is typically feared and felt to be evil. The un-understood is the evil—and that in many ways.

Then, of course, it was a huge task that the new consciousness had undertaken, and to attempt something very big can easily give one a disproportionate sense of failure;

[1] An excellent expression of this most cruel of bewilderments is to be found in Mr. H. G. Wells's *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*: 'I want to tell you that all the stress and passion has not made us here in Matching's Easy forget our friend your son. We found him honourable and companionable, and we share something of your loss. I have got together for you a few snapshots . . . you will see that next to your son is a youngster who is touching glasses with him. He is my eldest son, he was very dear to me, and he too has been killed in this war. They are, you see smiling very pleasantly at each other.'

and failure in its turn gives one a feeling of not being good enough—that is, of being evil.

This sense of something evil came later to be developed by consciousness into a method of handling the instinctive life. I think it was a mistake, and a disastrous mistake because, consequent upon the sense of evil, there follow the practices of condemnation, punishment and undue repression, and those are all in their nature opposed to the growth of that understanding which alone makes 'humanisation' possible. For all that, it may have been an inevitable mistake. Perhaps, given the newness of it all, the fact of the development of any human consciousness at all was a tremendous advance, nothing else could have been done, as a *beginning*. And the necessary division following on the sense of sin—the division between that in oneself which was trying to be human and that, also in oneself, which seemed to work against the human-ness—may have been a first and essential stage in the evolution of humanity. However that may be, the next stage in human development, the stage which lies before us now, might well be the supersession of that division with a human unity which at least aspires to be as complete (although humanity because of its very possibilities of development never can be complete) as the animal unity out of which the division arose. And this might be done by replacing the concept of sin by that of error, and by looking upon life as a process of development rather than an unending strife of factions. The present state of our human affairs has caused many of our moralists to suggest to us the need for an increased sense of our personal and social sinfulness. It is heresy to suggest that an increased sense of our capacity for good might better lead us out of our impasse.

We look
But at the surfaces of things; we hear
Of towns in flames, fields ravaged, young and old
Driven out in troops to want and nakedness;
Then grasp our swords and rush upon a cure,
That flatters us because it asks not thought;
The deeper malady is better hid,
The world is poisoned at the heart.

WORDSWORTH

'I did this', says my memory. 'I cannot have done this', says my pride. In the end, memory yields.

NIETZSCHE

More hypocrisy than truth hides in the relations of mankind to one another. Indeed, these relationships are built upon the capacity for simulation . . . Truth is in most cases forbidden by good manners or is even an offense . . . Cultural moral hypocrisy leads in the end to compelling men to play a part and to want to feel themselves better than they really are.

STEKEL

Besides, only animals who are below civilisation and the angels who are beyond it can be sincere. Human beings are, necessarily, actors who cannot become something before they have first pretended to be it; and they can be divided, not into the hypocritical and the sincere, but into the sane who know they are acting and the mad who do not.

W. H. AUDEN

CHAPTER III

The New 'Unconscious' and the Gentle Art of Labelling

The slow emergence of consciousness meant a gradual assessing of, a fumbling attempt to control, the animal instinctive life in the interest of human value. It meant also, of course, that the human mind came to be divided—however shadowy and variable the line of division—into two 'parts'. When we said that the animal had what might be called 'unconscious' mind that was, and could only be, from the human point of view. Non-conscious might have been a better description. When, however, the small, new function of consciousness had once emerged, the older, more considerable function of the instinctive life could for the first time justly be called 'unconscious mind'; although not, of course, 'unconscious' in the sense—later associated with the name of Freud—of a source of impulses, desires, energies which were disallowed by, and would not be known of, consciousness. One might say that in the beginning consciousness attempted to handle what it did not know; and that later—and still—it attempts to handle what it will not know. Once no worse than a stranger in the house of life, the unconscious came to be disowned—a poor and disreputable relation, developing all those unpleasant qualities which grow out of ostracism and contempt.

While man was almost wholly animal, the instinctive life must have been almost wholly accepted; if one can speak of acceptance where consciousness had hardly emerged. At least where there was little else but instinctive life, and where instinctive life was neither good nor bad, but only natural

and adequate to its own ends, there was nothing for the creature to repudiate, nothing of which it had to be ashamed. When the human principle came in—when man the animal, needing and seeking approval, so began to be man the human—there came in also the tendency to repudiate and the possibility of experiencing shame. And largely through this non-acceptance of it did the 'innocent' unconscious become the 'guilty'.

We might more easily see how this could happen if we consider further the single instance of aggression. In the preceding chapter our story of only-just-human life imagined a situation where *A* and *B* had wanted the same woman. *A*, in a hot uprush of natural feeling had killed *B*, and in the coolness that followed on passion, had realised that he had killed his friend. And because *A* had begun to be a man, his new me-part (ego) had taken as a standard:[1] 'I want to be good. I want to be accepted—by others, by myself.' Sometimes this standard made him able to control the impulse to kill.

'I wanted the woman *C*', then muses *A*. 'And *B* had to go and cut in. He told me I was a poor sort of fellow. I felt so hot, so angry, so humiliated, I should have liked to have killed him on the spot. I took up the flint hatchet, and then I let it drop. After all, they wouldn't have liked me if I'd killed *B*. And I didn't want to kill him myself. I like to go hunting with him when he is sensible. But it's all very difficult. It nearly chokes me—the hot feeling of wanting to hit. I have to keep it pushed down. Every time it rushes up, I have to push it down again. Sometimes, I feel as if it has all gone, and then I get on all right. Sometimes it makes me want to explode. I'm glad then when we go on a head-hunting expedition, because I *can* explode, and they all praise me for it. I like that. They don't praise me when I

[1] How the ego takes over its standards from the super-ego will be discussed in a later chapter. The point at the moment is that the standard seems to the ego to be its own standard—and represents, at least to a certain extent, the valuing 'I' faced with the stuff of itself and its world.

explode at home. It's funny, but it's like that. Anyway, I can stay good by pushing down the hot killing feeling.'

Something like that was probably the beginning of repression, the beginning of the change in *A*'s 'unconscious', instinctive life. The aggressive impulse in the animal arises only in response to a given, concrete situation; and the aggression spends itself, successfully or unsuccessfully, on that situation. If the bear wins, that's all right. He is the best bear to mate. If he loses, it is still all right. Nature has other bears. In either case, there is no 'stored' aggression. With the *feeling* of it has gone the *expression*; and then the feeling is there no more. For *A*, the man, it is very different. The impulse to aggression remained latent in his mind, and was incorporated there—as dangerous a habitant as an unexploded bomb. And with the incorporation of that aggression the 'content' of *A*'s unconscious began to change. His instinctive life had now no longer only its 'natural' moments and impulses of aggression, arising and spending themselves in definite situations. It had also its—equally natural—moments and impulses of aggression which were unspent and which, accumulating, created an ever-increased proneness to an ever greater aggressiveness. What was in effect—from the point of view of animal life—an 'unnatural' emotional condition had arisen, and indeed man became (except perhaps in certain rare forms of culture) potentially and often actually more aggressive than any of the beasts.[1]

[1] cf. just as two out of many similar opinions—*Conan Doyle* by Hesketh Pearson (Methuen, 1943), where (p. 163) the biographer, commenting on the pterodactyls, dinosaurs, iguanodons, stegosauri, and such-like fauna which 'crowd the landscape' of one of Doyle's stories (*The Lost World*) says: 'but since then (1914) we have discovered that nothing sub-human, super-human, pre-human or preter-human could possibly surpass in horror the primitive doings of ordinary humanity'. And Durbin and Bowlby, *Personal Aggressiveness and War* (Kegan Paul, 1939) where the authors (p. 12) contend that 'no group of animals could be more aggressive or more ruthless in their aggression than the adult members of the human race'.

But this is looking back from an infinitely later day. Man when he began to repress his aggressive impulses was only endeavouring to make himself a good and safe member of society. On the edge of some primeval forest, by some lake-side of long ago, he could not possibly know that the mechanical unity of his world would long precede the human unity of his mind, or that he would learn to arm his aggression long before he learned to understand it. He was doing his best to become a human being and acceptable to his kind.

Let us then get back to our primitive friend, *A*. So vital is his need for acceptance that the mere repression of, the mere acquiring and using the power not to express (the tragic summum bonum of much education) his aggressive impulses will not be enough. He will know, although with 'unconscious' knowledge, that even the impulse to aggression is not approved. He will therefore, still unconsciously, comfort himself, make himself good, by pretending. He will go about telling himself and other people that he is not, and would never dream of being, precisely the kind of man that in fact he is. Let us suppose that on several occasions he successfully represses his desire to attack. He may then say to himself: 'See what a good man am I! I am not one of those people who go about quarrelling and hitting and killing. In fact, I never want to do anything like that. Of course, I take a scalp when the group goes fighting. But that's quite different. That's good. I'm not one of these aggressive people at all. There's nothing in me like that.'

A has, you see, not only repressed his aggression. He has repudiated and disowned it. He has made his unconscious much more incalculable to his consciousness, much more unknown by it, than it was before. He has unwittingly created within himself a force that may make him do things (e.g. the head-hunting) which he might not have done if he had not gone in for this misrepresentation to himself. But he *had* to misrepresent. His desire to be good was so much stronger than any capacity which he had at that time to know

what was objectively right. He had, in fact, taken another step towards making himself bad just because he wanted to be good.

Repression with misrepresentation was not, however, the only way open to him. He could also indulge in expression with misrepresentation. For instance—*A* who, after all, cannot always manage to repress, does kill his friend *B*. And then we find him musing: 'I want to be a good man. In fact, I must be a good man. But it was all rather awful. My friend *B* wanted my woman. I was angry. I hit him and killed him. I didn't really know what I was doing. I didn't really want to kill him at all. I was very uncomfortable for a long time. Then I thought again. I thought that, after all, I had been mistaken in my friend *B*. He wasn't such a good fellow as I had imagined him. In fact, I began to think it was better for everybody that I *had* killed him. He wasn't the kind of person one really wants about. My woman would never have been happy with him. I'm a good person because I have killed him. I'd never have done a thing like that in the ordinary way. I'm not the kind of fellow who does things like that. I'd never have dreamed of doing it if *B* hadn't done it first. But I had to do it because it was right. I'm always ready to put myself out to do what is right.' In this case a spontaneous uprush of aggression has been discharged, not repressed; but as it has still been repudiated and disowned *as* aggression the result, as far as it affects man's knowledge of himself, is much the same. The content of the unconscious remains unknown—no longer only because at that moment man cannot know himself, but also because he has in any case made a decision pregnant with disaster[1] not to know himself.

[1] cf. Flugel: *The Psychology of Clothes*, p. 191. 'Now all recent psychopathology tends to stress very strongly the difference between non-indulgence and non-recognition. Restraints on indulgence may often be essential (though they are far from constituting the highest pinnacles of virtue); restraints on the recognition of reality (even though they be undertaken in the interests of morality) we have learnt to look upon as

'Made a decision!' But of course he hadn't. He couldn't. In order to make a necessary point I have represented *A*, *B* and *C* as immensely more self-conscious than they could possibly then have been. What happened must have happened largely unconsciously; the 'censor', the repressor, must have developed somewhere below the threshold of that surface world ruled over by the 'I', must have been born in the infant rather than the adult—Yes, all that. And yet—had not consciousness and self-consciousness emerged none of it could have happened. Man could never have reached up and plucked the apple, and *known* good and evil.

By the emergent consciousness, then, aggression, and many other impulses, had to be disowned. There was, for example, the Cain-Abel jealousy. It was not convenient that brother should murder brother even under the provocation of so crude a favouritism as that shown by the god (the father) in the old story. So jealousy too became a feeling not approved, a feeling therefore to be misrepresented. There came to be so much—so much—that could not be openly expressed, that had to be masked, to be given other, more reputable seeming than its own, that man became not only a creature very jealous, very aggressive, very full of hatred, but also a creature who, having no sort of idea that he was like that, became therefore over many ages largely incapable of improvement.

Nor, unfortunately, is the difficulty only that impulses to aggression, jealousy and the rest tend to be stored and misrepresented. They tend also, during the period of storage, if one may so put it, to change in character and consequently in mode of expression. Durbin and Bowlby[1] suggest that the psycho-analytical and anthropological evidence 'show overwhelmingly . . . that the suppression of simple aggression

highly dangerous. This is, indeed, one of the most important contributions of psycho-analysis to ethics, one which has already produced far-reaching modification in ethical thought.'

[1] *Personal Aggressiveness and War*, p. 41 (Kegan Paul, 1939).

does not kill it. It drives it underground and makes it far more horrible and destructive.' Almost as if one were to store a civil aeroplane for a dozen years and then, on going to the hangar where one had left it, to find not a dilapidated and deteriorated civil plane but a brand-new and fully-effective jet bomber. Sexual emotion, in similar fashion, unexpressed through its more normal channels, turns into sadistic emotion which may vent itself in the most revolting physical and mental cruelty.

The trouble is that all these repressings, disownings, pretendings, happened at a time when consciousness had developed only enough to judge—an elementary (though too often also contemporary) development, and not enough, not nearly enough, to know and to understand. So it not unnaturally adopted methods of pretence in order to maintain at least an acceptable surface over the only-with-difficulty-to-be-adapted animal life. If one wants very much to be liked one naturally goes to the potential liker and says: 'See here, and here, and here, I am just the kind of person you like.' And if the facts of the case are in contradiction—well then, disregard the facts! Pretend they are not there. Pretend they are anything else. Like the small boy who said to his grandmother: 'I am a dear, aren't I?' when he had just, in fact, been anything but a dear. It was, of course, the correct time for the remark.

It looks indeed as if the one unbearable thing for man becoming human is precisely to know that he *is* human—a creature of certain instinctive dispositions which, accepted for what they are, and developed in certain ways, have certain and not inconsiderable possibilities of beauty, understanding, affection and happiness. But he tries to use material he will not recognise to be what he cannot be: and prefers to know himself wicked than frail. And the rare wisdom of Anatole France: 'It seems, indeed, that men make themselves unhappy by the exaggerated opinion which they hold of themselves and their kind, and that, if they could get a

humbler and truer idea of human nature, they would be gentler to others and gentler to themselves',[1] is a thing too humble for them to accept.

Man set out on his journey with misconceptions which widened and hardened as time passed. And there developed such competent mental mechanisms of defence and pretence that we have them as naturally as we have noses on our faces, and for all our knowledge of the external world, we know very little of what we are or what we do. We can, of course, discuss every fine point of human morality and human relationship till the cows come home. Our scientific, technical, artistic, literary and musical attainments are immense and remarkable. Our conscious knowledge of good and evil, in the best insights of the great religious and ethical systems of the world, is more than adequate to some wiser ordering of society. Yet frequently people with the most competent conscious knowledge behave like babies of two. And our rational-seeming world has broken down in the horror of two world wars. Our surface decency has broken, too, and from beneath it have come forms of sadism, brutality and aggression which would make the creatures of the jungle blush for shame. And this was not because most of us were not decent people, but because our civilisation has capitalised surface form rather than inner reality. We have in fact become adepts at the gentle art of putting pleasant labels on unpleasant facts.

So we are often just as ignorant, to-day, of the reality of ourselves as was our friend *A* in his primeval forest. For our predatory, our sadistic, aggressive and destructive impulses we have our labels—'righteous indignation', 'our backward brothers', 'being cruel to be kind', 'the good of others', and all the rest of them. So Goering said, in 1938:

[1] *Les Opinions de M. Jerôme Coignard.* 'Il semble bien, en effet, que les hommes se rendent malheureux par le sentiment exagéré qu'ils ont d'eux et de leur semblables, et que, s'ils se faisaient une idée plus humble et plus vraie de la nature humaine, ils seraient plus doux a autrui et plus doux à eux-memes.'

'If I take men from their homes and families it is for their own and their children's good'.[1] Everything is always for somebody's 'good'; and as one listens to the clashing, clamorous voices of all those who will not let us be because they have 'our own best interests at heart,' it is hard not to feel that the altruism of the world is in urgent need of restraint.

In one way and another we go on letting the self-preserving instinct get away with it. For we have labelled it something that it is not, and we have believed, or more than half-believed, our labels. But to label an old instinct 'humanity' is a very different thing from humanising the instinct, and contributes more than anything to keeping us from knowing that we ought to humanise it. There is, indeed, nothing more consoling, nothing more supporting, to the conscious mind than a good store of the right kind of labels, a good store of the right kinds of disownment. And there may even be some elementary merit in our disguises. They indicate that we are ashamed of some of our impulses—not ashamed enough to change them, but ashamed enough to label them so that we may think them something else. The self-deception is the beginning of humanity, but we have to grow up out of it to become really human. If we cling to it, our development is arrested at the stage of saying: 'I don't like this about myself, so I'll pretend it isn't there', and we are

[1] It seems unfair, but it is true, that other people are just as good at labelling as we are. cf. Meerloo, *The British Journal of Psychology*, vol. xxxv, 2, p. 28. 'They (the Dutch "collaborators") took over the Nazi scapegoats, Jewry and Bolshevism, and declared, almost with tears, that the existence of these made inhumanity necessary.' And, in a wider context, Durbin and Bowlby, *Personal Aggressiveness and War*, p. 12. 'Apes and children when they fight, simply fight. Men and women first construct towering systems of theology and religion, complex analyses of racial character and class structures, or moralities of group life and virility before they kill one another. Thus they fight for Protestantism or Mohammedanism, for the emancipation of the world proletariat or for the salvation of the Nordic culture, for nation or for king. Men will die like flies for theories and exterminate each other with every instrument of destruction for abstractions.'

prevented from going on to the very necessary: 'I'll change this about myself.'

To this newer, better stage it would seem that some of us are, although imperfectly, coming. But in our varying degrees all of us are still able hypocrites. The race has made hypocrisy one of its ways to virtue. And that is probably how those who have made 'debunking' (or should one say 'provoking to re-thought') their business, have been so bitterly hated, so irrationally attacked, by men. The debunker is, of course, often himself a hater, and so it may sometimes be the underlying hatred rather than the surface home-truth which is met in return by hatred. But not always. Truth is an awkward commodity. You can take away man's goods much more easily than his good, for his semblance of virtue is his human acceptability, and that he needs most of all.

As one reads Plato's *Apology*, it is easy enough to see why they had to give Socrates hemlock to drink. He is standing his trial, and tells his judges how earnestly he had gone about trying to find someone wiser than he was himself. 'Accordingly I went to one who had the reputation of wisdom, and observed him—his name I need not mention; he was a politician whom I selected for examination—and the result was as follows: when I began to talk with him, I could not help thinking that he was not really wise, although he was thought wise by many, and still wiser by himself; and thereupon I tried to explain to him that he thought himself wise, but was not really wise; and the consequence was that he hated me . . . So I left him, saying to myself, as I went away, "Well, although I do not suppose that either of us knows anything really beautiful and good, I am better off than he is, for he knows nothing and thinks that he knows. I neither know nor think that I know." . . . Then I went to one man after another, being not unconscious of the enmity I provoked, and I lamented and feared this; but necessity was laid upon me.'

Socrates's naïveté here is certainly almost incredible; but most credible is the discomfort caused by anyone who attempts to show the poverty that lies beneath the pretentious surfaces of life. The truth is never a safe thing to tell. And the truth-tellers have never been safe, for the truth-teller must be put in the wrong. But if one day, instead, men put themselves in the wrong, and begin to discover the reality of themselves, they will take an important step forward towards their real humanity. As H. G. Wells says: 'There is a way out and up, but only a fellowship of disillusionment can lead to that. We can make no terms with falsehood.'

It seems, then, that we have to reckon with a tendency of mankind to make themselves a super-ego.

C. H. WADDINGTON: *The Scientific Attitude*

The romance has perished that the young man adored; the legend has gone that deluded the boy; but the deep, deep tragedies of infancy, as when the child's hands were unlinked for ever from his mother's neck, or his lips for ever from his mother's kisses, these remain lurking below all, and these lurk to the last.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

Everything has always been referred back to mother.
When we were children, before we went to school,
The rule of conduct was simply pleasing mother;
Misconduct was simply being unkind to mother;
What was wrong was whatever made her suffer,
And whatever made her happy was what was virtuous—
Though never very happy, I remember. That was why
We all felt like failures, before we had begun.

T. S. ELIOT

Behold the infant helpless in cradle and
Righteous still, yet already there is
Dread in his dreams at the deed of which
He knows nothing but knows he can do . . .

W. H. AUDEN

CHAPTER IV

The Coming of Conscience.

It would seem reasonable to suppose that 'humanity' comes into the life-story of the child in some such way as it comes into the life-story of the race. For the infant, like the prehistoric man is small and ignorant in a large and unknown world, and each must endeavour to find his way to mastery and to love. We have had to guess, on a basis of some small relevant knowledge, what may have happened in the story of the race. But in the case of the child we can use the description given us by Freud—remembering that it is a description, a certain way of making understandable certain observed phenomena in the development of personality. It has been chosen here because it seems to explain, at least more satisfactorily than any other description, many aspects of humanity as it appears in history, in creative literature and in personal and family life.

Freud divides the mind into three 'parts', or functions, which he calls by names whose aptness is artistic as well as scientific. There is, first (in chronological order) the ID, which in previous chapters has been called the animal, instinctive life-force: the mind while still in a state of 'unconsciousness'. The word ID, literally IT, very well describes the impersonal, non-human, non-conscious nature of this instinctive energy in its original aspect. For the libido itself, until it is humanised, is an IT.[1] The brain, in its primitive state of a regulator of animal instinct, is an IT.

[1] This is not entirely true of the baby. Certain 'human' tendencies are, of course, inherited. But it is true enough when one thinks of the necessary humanisation of life which must take place if the baby is to become a successful adult.

Selfhood, personality, human valuing and directing, have nothing to do with the case. 'It' is the neutral pronoun, and admirably describes a quality of life which is humanly neutral.

Secondly, in time, and 'above' the ID, for surely it is the highest function of all, comes the EGO. The EGO which is the 'I', the SELF; which is that mysterious sense of 'me-ness' so intimately known to each of us, so difficult to describe, so next-to-impossible to imagine in any other 'me'. It is consciousness. It is reason. It is memory. It is hope. It is love. It can stand 'above the battle' and look at and assess its own self and other selves. It is the potentially human arisen out of the beast.

Third—again chronologically—and above the EGO, not necessarily in quality or humanity, but in the role it assumes, is the SUPER-EGO.[1] Super in the sense of feeling superior,

[1] In giving the development of the mind in this chronological order I am disregarding for the moment the more recent psycho-analytic theories which, especially in the work of Melanie Klein (*The Psycho-Analysis of Children*), suggest that a powerful and terrifying super-ego function arises in early infancy—a supposition which has been widely accepted. It is based partly on the hypothesis of a disparity in development between the germ plasm and the soma—the plasm being sexually mature long before the body which contains it. The early super-ego would therefore exist to repress incestuous desires for the mother and the consequent parricidal wishes against the father —repressed because the father's protection is needed more than his rivalry is hated. The super-ego in this case is the outcome and instrument of the Oedipus-complex. Although it is not certain that this theory is universally true—it has to be reconciled with the fact that some cultural patterns appear to their observers to develop a much weaker Oedipus-complex ('The Oedipus-complex of the European does not seem to exist among the Trobriand Islanders.' Reich: *The Function of the Orgasm*, p. 200)—it does seem certain that the child's super-ego is conceived by him as possessing a harshness far in excess of any shown even by a harsh parent. Nevertheless this infantile super-ego with all its harshness becomes later the vehicle for the transmission of social and parental morality. And as differences in this morality do obviously play a great part in determining the nature of the super-ego and therefore of the developing character, I think I am justified for the

super in the sense of assuming the right to control. It is the part of the mind which takes upon itself, or one might even say which creates itself, in order to regulate the instinctive energy of the ID so that it may fit in with the demands of consciousness and the human environment. This it does on behalf of the EGO which desires above all things to be acceptable, and also, curiously enough, on behalf of the ID, which desires expression, but must find it in ways allowed by consciousness.

This development of the mind from ID, mere IT-ness, to ID, EGO and SUPER-EGO—from instinct to selfness and self-regulation, is more readily understood if one considers it for the moment in the case of some particular child. Now the child, although he seems to the parental eye a most unusual and remarkable specimen of humanity, is really a very usual and unremarkable little animal, human only in form, and with the real humanity that may one day inhabit the form still rather a possibility than a fact. There is no doubt that he has already inherited through the germ-plasm a given potential of intelligence, given strengths of instinct, given temperamental possibilities determined by glands and the rest. But none of these by themselves make him human.

He is a 'squirming mass of protoplasm'; largely, if not entirely an IT. Indeed, we often refer to a small baby as IT, a habit grievous to the maternal mind, but nevertheless indicative of our sense of the infant's 'impersonality'. And the baby's mind, like himself, is IT. The life-force that flows so strongly and so passionately through him is devoted largely to primitive, self-preserving ends. He is equipped to suck his milk. He—for all his appearing helplessness—is equipped to demand, vociferously, those conditions of warmth, comfort, support, which will enable him to grow.

present purpose in limiting myself to this later aspect. By the right treatment at the higher levels of consciousness we can help to modify for the small child whatever fear, aggression, hatred or guilt may have been aroused at the lower. In fact probably in no other way can we modify them.

He is at present much more nearly related to those instinctive creatures from whom man sprang than to the higher humanities of the civilisation into which he is born. He is man just down from the tree-tops, man just out of the womb—ignorant, instinctive, largely 'unconscious'.

But one day he will be human. Out of this IT-ness, this non-humanity, of his beginning, his he-ness, his humanity, is to be born. Probably self-consciousness comes to him much as it came to the race, slowly, out of love and out of pain; but chiefly out of love. Out of love, in the long evolutionary story, humanity is born. Out of love in the short, individual story, human-ness is born. It is difficult to imagine, impossible to remember, the baby's world when he is newly-born. It is probably a big, buzzing, blurred something of which he feels himself to be a part. Of persons he has only a vague he-she-it idea. There is no 'you', the other person; no 'me', my person. Even when he has some dim conception of mother, he probably feels himself to be part of her and her part of himself.

But still, there his mother is—the one person in his world with whom he has a very close and very necessary relationship. She is food, she is warmth, she is security. She is a feeling of comfort in discomfort, a sound of reassurance in alarm. Moreover, though he does not know it, she, the mother—the provider, the warmer, the succourer—also *loves* him. He is value for her, hope, possibility. Because of this loving, which is food, warmth, safety, and more than all these, he learns to distinguish one person as different from himself, one person as especially belonging to himself, one person who becomes *you* to him. It may be at some time or times when she is not available and then comes back to comfort or feed him, that he senses her as different. But the important thing is that as soon as he gets the sense of *you* about his mother, the lover, he gets the sense of *me* about himself, the beloved.

If, that is to say, he is sufficiently beloved, so that he feels

the love physically,[1] which is his only way of feeling. Indeed he must be able to feel it all the more because it must be large enough to enfold, as it were, soften, compensate for, babyhood's inevitable pain.

'The very birth of self-consciousness then, for the helpless infant, must be attended by experience of wish-frustration, by gratifications, longings and by anxiety . . . The important thing to remember is that consciousness of SELF as isolated from, and independent of the rest of the world, is probably associated with some measure, however trivial, of anxiety and resentment from the very beginning, but on the other hand, it is also associated with loving feelings towards others as well as with angry claims upon them.'[2]

The varying proportions of love and pain which go to the awakening of the ego will make for wide differences in the quality and attitude of the self. A good love will obviate the possible harmful effects of such pain and frustration as is inevitable, and leave the self still balanced and secure. An undue amount of pain and frustration, without an adequate reassuring love, may very well tend to produce an antagonistic, and even a hating and destructive self. So that, although pain may take its share in pushing the ego up out of unconsciousness into its conscious being, it is love which is the really determining and creative factor; for there is, as it were,

[1] An admirable study of the results of an insufficient feeling-sense of being loved in childhood, is made by Santayana in his novel *The Last Puritan*, where the suicide at the end is a logical and psychologically accurate conclusion. Leonora Eyles in *For My Enemy Daughter* (p. 193) tells how—'an American doctor, Josephine Butler, has discovered that babies in highly-organised clinics and hospitals had not nearly the good resistance to illness of the poor, dragged-up, slum child; daringly she took a number of babies from a Home for the Dying, and experimented with them . . . Her experiment consisted in putting each dying baby into a poor home, carefully chosen because the mother of the home was a loving, kindly creature. And the babies did not die. Dr. Butler gives chapter and verse for her insistence on love for babies; "an atmosphere of psychic warmth, a little cuddling".'

[2] Suttie: *The Origins of Love and Hate*, p. 27.

a second birth—*the birth of the self qut of love, which follows the birth of the body out of the womb.* And no self good to and for itself, no self safe to other selves, is born but out of love. 'L'âme n'est quelque chose que sous le regard qui l'aime, mais alors elle est beaucoup.'

It may seem strange at first sight to express anxiety about the birth of the self. Baby soon becomes a most important small self. 'He has a will of his own', 'He knows his own mind', and so he should. After infancy, there comes a phase when the small mortal seems to be as much all EGO as once he seemed all ID. For there is an EGO period, when a rather emphatic self-fulness is quite in order—a self-fulness which tends to say to life—'I want: I like: I won't: I shall: The world, in fact, is my oyster, and if you interfere too much with my opening of it, I shall howl and kick and sulk and even, if necessary, bite. So there!'

This is not wicked. It is not the first desperate much-to-be-feared manifestation of original sin—the inherent evil-ness of human nature. It is perfectly natural at that stage and therefore, at that stage, perfectly right. It would be undesirable if it were to go on—as it so frequently does—beyond its appropriate moment, but at its moment, it is no more morally wrong than the cat playing with the mouse is morally wrong. Self (or consciousness) develops before self-regulation. It is quite logical that it should be so. One must have a self before one can discover how and why that self needs regulating. It happened so with the primitive man. It happens so with the child. On the developing selfhood of both impinge the circumstance of the natural world and the need for human relationship.

The child, for instance, quite naturally wants to light a match. Either he is not allowed to do so, in which case he meets one kind of block. Or he is allowed to do so, and burns his fingers, in which case he meets another kind of block. The world, in fact, turns out to be not entirely his oyster. Moreover, he discovers that although he badly wants to

impose his will on his own small world, and have his way with it and in it, he also wants, and even desperately needs, to be loved and approved. The Gods of his world—mother, father, nurse—for reasons utterly beyond his finding out, approve of some kinds of conduct and disapprove of others. The approval makes him feel happy and comfortable. The disapproval makes him feel unhappy, desolate and at odds with himself and the world. And indeed, painful situations do sometimes arise. The child who *will* throw his food about the table, and is—quite normally at that age—impervious to reason, has to be carried, howling, from the room. He doesn't like this, and begins dimly to perceive that life may become easier and pleasanter—he may attain both his own ends and the desired and necessary favour of his gods—if, instead of letting them do the regulating of his conduct (great hulking brutes that they are, who can lift him up and, with great affront to his self-esteem, carry him hither and thither!), he does some regulating himself.

Now, *how* is he to begin to regulate his own life? By what standards shall he govern himself? What shall be his good and what his evil? It is all very difficult as neither he nor his primitive ancestor is born with the Ten Commandments written on his brain! He is born only with that prerequisite of morality—the need for love and approval. So his good and evil shall be the good and evil which his parents make him feel in their approval and disapproval of his own small deeds and ways. His standards shall be those felt but inexplicable standards by which his parents judge him—these and no others. So what happens? His adapting, developing mind differentiates a special part of itself to act as a governing function. The SUPER-EGO comes upon the scene—the SUPER-EGO, that 'strutting player', who so often out-Herods Herod, so often steals the thunder from the EGO, the real hero of the human drama.

This new part, or function, of the mind sets itself over the EGO, and tells the EGO how to behave. Which is not to say that the child, any more than our friend *A* of a previous

chapter, either says or thinks consciously: 'I'm not getting on very well. People are always at me. And they quite often don't seem to like me. So I will now develop a super-ego to tell me how to behave.' The whole process is completely unconscious. But it is as though a part of his mind does say: 'I will now oversee myself, and tell myself how to regulate my instinctive life, so that I shall fit in with my community and get what I need. So, most of all, that they shall *like* me.'

The SUPER-EGO becomes, as it were, a voice within the mind. At first it is nothing more nor less than the voice of the parents imposing their standards, issuing their commands, indicating their desires. But it is also, even while it speaks at first only as a parental voice, a social voice as well, for the standards of the parents are not only personal but social standards. They themselves have taken them, affirmatively or negatively, from their social group. As the child grows, this social aspect becomes stronger. The super-ego incorporates into itself the standards of, shall we say the child's first school, or his first Sunday school, or whatever it may be.

In fact, we can now give another set of descriptions to the three 'parts' of the mind. The ID is the impersonal animal instinct in us; the EGO is the very personal, individual, conscious self in us; the SUPER-EGO is the not-personally-chosen dictate (for we do not choose our parents) of society in us. We are animals, individual human beings, and members one of another. But most of all it is true to say that the super-ego, which is formed in childhood, is the parents in us. As Freud says: 'When we were little children we knew these higher natures, we admired them and feared them; and later we took them into ourselves.'[1]

'We took them into ourselves.' That is the important thing about the super-ego—that it begins as a wholly parental voice (or the dictate of an imagined and distorted parental image), but that it becomes a wholly personal one.

[1] *The Ego and the ID*, p. 47.

For as soon as the parental standards for the child are taken into its own mind, they do become literally a part of that mind, and function entirely from within it. It is not that a part, conscious or unconscious, of the child's mind continually says to him: 'Mother wouldn't like this, father wouldn't like that, so you mustn't do it.' The new super-ego says—using, of course, parental standards: '*I* don't like this; *I* don't like that, so you mustn't do it.' And it is precisely because the parental voice within the mind has assumed so completely the form of a voice personal to ourselves, that we have been so slow—slow by thousands of years—to realise that what we have so respected as our conscience has been no divinely established sign-post to a divinely decreed right or wrong, but just the voice of two particular parents in one particular time and place, and good, bad or indifferent accordingly.

In one respect only perhaps, may the 'voice' be said to have universality—and that is in so far as it says: 'Thou shalt not be too aggressive, thou shalt not too greatly hate or seek to destroy that which thwarts thee.' And here, of course, the commandment is biologically as well as psychologically determined. If one damages that on which one depends for the means of life, then there may quite simply be no life. Even this dictate, however, comes to us through the parent who naturally does not propose to suffer our hatred or destructiveness.

Now because the super-ego is, in large part at least, an agency 'unconsciously' developed, and functioning in the 'unconscious' part of the mind, its dictates tend to come to consciousness as voices from another world, which gives them a quite incalculable power and mystery. And they have, besides, the immense authority of the parent in the small child world. In the greater part of the world, and for most civilisations, the authority of the parent, owing partly to the long and complete dependence of the human infant, is absolute. So we must always think of the voice of the super-ego as the voice of a quite incomparable autocracy, as

the voice of the completest dictatorship that the human story has ever known. And dictatorships in the external world are not wholly unrelated to the internal dictatorship of the super-ego, or to the infantile emotional state in which the super-ego develops.

Dr. Waddington is right when he says, in discussing the super-ego, that 'Every human life starts in complete dependence on its parents, and under their absolute control. The most important process in development is the movement away from reliance on the power and protection of the parents, and the acquisition of the capacity to deal with circumstances unaided. No one, at the present state of human evolution completes this movement. No one entirely escapes the loving, commanding parent, who becomes built up into the structure of a man's mind under the disguise of a conscience or a God: *who remains something which one can, perhaps disobey, but whose power, such as it is, does not derive from this world, but is primary and unquestionable, standing outside the world and coming before it.*'[1]

Overweeningly powerful, with a primary and unquestioned power![2] That is the super-ego, and the super-ego is, and yet is not quite, what we have always called the conscience. One might say, perhaps, that the conscience is that part of the super-ego and its standards with which we are consciously acquainted—the promptings, however

[1] *The Scientific Attitude*, p. 118 (the italics are mine). The existence of cases of abnormally weak super-ego does not alter the general profound truth of Dr. Waddington's statement. cf. also Flugel: *The Psycho-Analytic Study of the Family*, p. 120. 'Persons of authority . . . may . . . serve in later life as substitutes for those aspects of the parents in virtue of which these latter were in childhood reverenced as the possessors of unlimited power, wisdom, virtue or knowledge. Especially is this the case perhaps with regard to ecclesiastical authorities; the priest, as the interpreter of wisdom that transcends earthly knowledge and the transmitter of commands that transcend earthly authority.'

[2] I shall refer later (see p. 145 ff.) to some primitive communities where the super-ego assumes no such despotic power. But the generalisation I am making here is so true, for our civilisation and our present stage of evolution, as hardly to be a generalisation at all.

unanalysed and undefined, which we are prepared to acknowledge. The difference lies in the fact that the power and what one might call the 'extent' of the super-ego is much greater and wider than anything we associate with conscience. And many of its judgments are so deeply unconscious that we know them, not as conscience at all, but only as an unaccountable but very disturbing sense of guilt.

So the super-ego is conscience, and more than conscience. But the difficulty of working out the correspondence is increased by the fact that our everyday use of the word conscience covers many different conceptions. It is made for instance to refer

(1) to those standards of conduct which we absorbed in our childhood, and which are either consciously or half-consciously known and accepted;

(2) to those 'unconscious' and compulsive promptings to, and approvals or condemnations of, certain forms of thought, emotion or activity, which we feel bound to obey; and

(3) to those informed and reasonable insights into good and evil which we have consciously, and as objectively as may be, worked out for ourselves from our experience of life and some knowledge of the facts.

Most commonly 'conscience' refers to the first and third of these; though it should not properly speaking be used for the third at all, unless it is to lose its popular sense of an inward monitor rather than a thought-out standard. Unlike the word 'conscience', Freud's word 'super-ego' never refers to reasonable, objective (they are never wholly so) ego-judgments, but it does cover all the unconsciously-working repressing forces of the mind, with the standards these forces have adopted, whether the standards be known or unknown, and their power acknowledged or unrecognised. It is, therefore, the correct word for this study and has, as well as accuracy, the advantage of being a 'scientific' word,

and therefore reasonably free from religious and moral preconceptions. But the word conscience will, sometimes and in some connections, be used as well lest it be forgotten that this super-ego which has so much evil mixed with its good includes the conscience to which we have so long paid an undue homage, and accepted with a too unquestioning faith. For conscience has so often been called the voice of God that we might well examine it rather as the voice of the parent and his group and age. Conscience has, in such philosophies as Kant's, been exalted as man's greatest good. We might well ask ourselves whether it be not sometimes as much an evil as a good; whether there be not better guides, guides more reliable and more humane.

We can nevertheless see easily enough how conscience came to be regarded as the voice of God. The fact that it comes from a source unknown (the unconscious), working often by mysterious promptings, imposing heavy burdens of guilt for disobedience, and representing those most god-like and omnipotent beings we shall ever know—the parents of our infancy—must have made it seem very much like some divinely implanted guide. And yet—if conscience be the voice of God, then the Spanish Inquisition has been the voice of God. A thousand wars, a thousand cruelties, a thousand oppressions have been the voice of God. By the voice of God, the 'fallen' woman, the illegitimate child, the compulsive drunkard, have been branded. At the voice of God, joy has been smothered and beauty turned out of doors. Stern justice has been the voice of God, and only rarely an understanding compassion.

Merciful, humane, generous and joyful things have, of course, also been decreed by this same voice of God—though not so often or so much. Or should one say that merciful, humane, generous and joyful things have broken through whenever 'the voice of God' was too weak to hold them down? Certainly if the promptings to good *are* taken as the voice of God, the promptings to evil must be so taken too. Whereas if conscience be taken as the voice of the

parent and teacher, sometimes the gentler voice of a gentler age, sometimes the dark voice of an age of darkness, then at least we need not saddle a god with all the vices of the devil.

The fact is that the voice of conscience is a non-intelligent voice. If it has been lucky enough to pick up an intelligent code, it may issue commands which will not, later, be distasteful to the intelligence. But as the time and place of birth are a chance, so is it a chance whether this is so or not. Generally speaking conscience appears to aim at expedient conduct rather than at anything more thorough or more real. For, you remember, it did not differentiate itself to make us good in any final sense. That was not its job at all. *Its job was to make us good enough to be acceptable to our own group even if the goodness required were evil.*

This does not mean that there is no virtue in conscience. But the virtue lies in the fact that a conscience came into existence at all, rather than in the nature and methods of various historical consciences. It is a regulating mechanism, and not an absolute internal knowledge of good and evil. Kant spoke of 'the moral law within'. Jung says: 'Man has it within himself; not the law indeed, but the essence of morals.' And Jung, I think, is right. Conscience is not a moral law within. It is the essence, or perhaps rather the beginning of morals. For it is that which evolved in the human story and the human mind to turn the individual into a member of a community, a companion and a friend. It may and often does work in a primitive, blind and bungling fashion. It certainly needs reconsideration and remaking. But because it represents what one might call the willingness to fit in—and not for any other reason—conscience is, in the evolutionary story, a remarkable thing. Not even on the soaring reason or the nimble inventiveness of the mind can a new world be built, unless there is also the possibility of my being able and willing to regulate my desires to fit in with yours, and your being able and willing to regulate your desires to fit in with mine.

Somehow it dawned on me—and dawned is the only word because I was never told—that there was a side to life so unclean as to be quite unmentionable. This nebulous 'something' was called sex but, apart from the fact that it was wicked and dirty, I was denied further enlightenment. I did learn that God made the body in His image, but the Church, or perhaps my aunts, disapproved of the lower part . . . Prudery made my aunts damnably cruel. Instead of allowing me to leave the room when I was in trouble in a friend's house, a trouble brought on by drinking too many cups of tea, I was made to remain in the high chair, where with white face and tight lips, I suffered torture. But they suffered too, for whenever we got home after a prolonged tea-party, they often beat me in the usual race to wash our hands in the lavatory. That was what we said we were anxious to do.

PETER ARNOTT: *This Impertinence*

The neurotic parents, those who are afraid of life and especially too authoritative mothers who do not allow their children to develop normally, create obstacles to their development and forbid it. Everything is wrong; the expression of the individual's most elementary and natural need becomes a crime; under a pretext of making a child clean they make sacrileges out of the most necessary evacuations. And thus these fatal reflexes, this divinity, Moloch, to whom humanity, still to-day, has the custom of sacrificing children, are created.

RENÉ LAFORGUE: *Clinical Aspects of Psycho-Analysis*

But to the Girdle do the gods inherit,
Beneath is all the fiends.

SHAKESPEARE: *King Lear*

CHAPTER V

The Making of a Conscience

Conscience came upon the scene! And it came not as a function of absolute value or absolute morality but only as a means to such modes of conduct as should win the support, liking and approval necessary to human living. Better, perhaps, if it had never appeared at all; if the desire for goodness could have been independent of the need for love and the way to goodness more clearly defined and less beset by pitfalls. But so far only in a Shavian dream can one skip the first seventeen years of life and emerge from an egg without ever having known a complete dependence on a god-like adult. As, however, the human child does happen to be for so long so dependent, conscience did evolve, and with conscience we have to reckon. With the fact of conscience, that is, as to its nature, there have been many kinds of conscience at different times and in different places. And in our present, immensely complex Western civilisation, there are many kinds of conscience all at one time. For all that, we shall probably not generalise too much if we suggest that there is a typical 'puritan' conscience (though the word does less than justice to the best aspects of Puritanism), which on the whole, and making due allowance for the rapidly changing modes, dominates a great part of Western civilisation.

One might not unfairly describe this conscience as being essentially without faith in the life it must direct—a conscience *against* rather than *for* life—a conscience that, like the statue of the Puritan in Eugene O'Neill's play, 'looks over the head of life without a sign of recognition—cutting it dead for the impropriety of living'.[1] Most adults to-day

[1] *Mourning Becomes Electra.* Orin Mannon, musing over his dead father's body, comments on the closer relationship of repressive

believe—or so it seems to me—that there is something evil about life itself, something wrong with the very stuff of it; that it is a bad job to be made a poor best of, a battleground on which may be won with much courage and endurance a not too certain and not too satisfactory victory. 'If they (men) believe in happiness at all, it is only with the belief of the philosophical charwoman who said that as "there ain't no 'appiness in this world; we've got to be 'appy without it".'[1] And this is the feeling not only of the out and out believers in original sin (who still exist), but of many of the most modern of the modernists, the highest of the high-brows, the most rational of the rationalists. They may not feel it consciously. In fact often, consciously, they refute it, but they feel it just the same. And it is into this general atmosphere of distrust of life that the child is born—against this dark background that he learns to act his own small part.

Of course, most people never tell a child that he is an evil part of a sorry scheme of things, though some tell him even that. Probably most people do not even think it, so that the child may never come consciously to think it himself—though he often does. But he comes to *feel* it. And that in many and insidious ways. He comes to feel it, for instance, in the simple-seeming business of cleanliness training. When he is newly-born it is probable that very few people feel his

Puritanism to death than to life. 'Death sits so naturally on you! Death becomes the Mannons! You were always like the statue of an eminent dead man.' And cf. also Wilhelm Reich: *The Function of the Orgasm*, pp. xxiii and xxiv. 'The Character structure of man of to-day . . . is characterised by an armoring against nature within himself and social misery outside himself . . . Human beings have taken a hostile attitude toward that in themselves which is living, and have alienated themselves from it.'

[1] This delightful saying is quoted in Prof. Mackail's *The Approach to Shakespeare*. And I ought perhaps to add that people who have lived through two world wars, and are facing the confusion that follows them, are hardly to be blamed for thinking that life is a bad job. My point is not that life is not bad as it is, but that believing it to be fundamentally and inherently bad is making it worse and worse.

lack of control to be anything but natural. But very soon there creeps in—creeps in because it is so deeply embedded in most of us—a sense of shame and disgust. The child quickly perceives, for he can perceive these things at a very early age, that here, in his behaviour over his excrements, is a way of winning great approbation, creating great anxiety, giving great annoyance, or achieving great power.

It is worth noting two of the many results of this. The child gets, not an intellectual idea which would not matter much and of which in any case he is incapable, but a *feeling* (much deeper and more important) that the natural is somehow bad; that the physical life of the body is shameful. And he does not need to wait till small boyhood to get this feeling. It can be given to a quite small infant, for infants absorb the feelings in the atmosphere around them just as they breathe its air. It is what they are doing as they lie there in their cots and prams—growing their bodies and absorbing and developing their feelings. And however much a later reasonable outlook may disown these early feelings, the sense of them remains, more potent than reason.

Then, also, as this is the first approval-winning activity on which the baby can embark, the first love-gift he can make, he may try (not consciously or deliberately—none of this is conscious and deliberate) to attain a too-early control. And this involves a too-great sternness with himself, which may lead later to a sternness with many others and about many other things.

It is an interesting and cannot be an insignificant fact that in those primitive cultures which do not train too hardly or too quickly in cleanliness, the children are happier and less quarrelsome, and the adults less anxious and more co-operative. The significance lies, of course, not only in the less urgent training, but in the underlying acceptance of life, the lack of fear and disgust, which permits the ease. 'We find certain African peoples whose children', Aubrey Richards reports, 'hardly ever quarrel . . . (They) are not subjected to any cleanliness training because the mothers say, "It would

be too cruel. They will learn for themselves in good time."'[1] To quote one example gives only a small idea of the evidence available on this point.[2] 'And', says Suttie, 'we ought to remember the smallness of the baby's world in which quite a little matter may loom large. We ought to remember that these (i.e. excretion, feeding, etc.) are first impressions of life and the *foundations*, therefore, of organised experience . . . Cleanliness training and washing are therefore . . . important factors in the development of social disposition.'[1]

The quotation from Mr. Arnott's book at the head of this chapter does not belong to the remote past, nor is it in any way an exaggeration. The feeling he describes there, that there is a side of life unclean and unmentionable, may go back even to infancy, and become, contrary perhaps to expectation, the beginning of a conscience. For a conscience is not so much a repository of given rules as an attitude which will govern the living of life. And no subsequent intellectual repudiation of what Sir Edmund Gosse called 'the shame of things not shameful' will quite take away the disgust of the conscience with the life it controls.

This sense of unclean, and therefore of evil, is still further deepened by our guilty attitude to sex. So that of sex, too, in the most important unconscious part of his mind, the child will register 'sinful, shameful, not approved by the higher powers, to be feared, to be repressed'. His conscience has added another *attitude*. It will not only suspect sex but later, when it comes to regulate it in adult life, it will feel that what it is regulating is evil.[3]

[1] Suttie: *Origins of Love and Hate*, pp. 55 and 56.

[2] Of this evidence and its importance see for example Money-Kyrle; 'If we wish to abolish war we should cease to put our faith too much in leagues and covenants, and learn from the Arapesh how to run our nurseries.' *Superstition and Society*, pp. 128–9.

[3] I have omitted from the above any attempt to describe the sexual jealousies and fixations arising out of the Oedipus-complex. It would not be in place here, and I am not in any case competent to make it. And the successful development from infantile to mature sexuality

But the injury to the growing conscience is not yet at an end. Having gone through difficulties with sex and excretion, so much more important for adult life than we ever dreamed before, the child must pass through the natural ego-period. Some training, even some thwarting and frustration, will be necessary before the small ego learns to fit into its community. But training, if it goes slowly, patiently and encouragingly, will be helpful rather than otherwise—it will make the world less bewildering and uncertain. But if the training is moral and not just convenient, if it looks upon error as sin, and ignorance as inborn depravity, then it may do infinite harm. For the child is not bad at that age, though we can easily make him bad by calling and believing him so. Dr. Fritz Wittels gives an excellent example: 'The child has licked the wall near which his crib stands. Is that not dreadful? "Johnny, how could you do it!" The child is shocked—not because he regards what he has done as dreadful. That is rather pleasurably toned, and Johnny thinks of repeating it. But he is a bit afraid of his mother, who has repeatedly shown that she is stronger than he is. His mother says: "Give me your word of honour, Johnny, that you will not do it again." The larger hand is outstretched, and the little hand places itself within. The next morning, the wall has again been licked. "Oh, Johnny, you have broken your word," says his mother in a grieved tone. The child answers quite unabashed and pleasantly: "That doesn't matter, Mother; I have many

depends also, and perhaps more than we think, on the ideology and emotional attitude of the environment. cf. Susan Isaacs: 'As I have shown, the prudish and negative attitudes of the mother . . . affected the boy's own feelings and phantasies. They were an adverse influence . . . They contributed much to strengthen Jack's castration anxieties, and confirmed his feeling that . . . sexuality was a bad thing.' *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, vol. XXIV, p. 26.

cf. also the Puritan, Wilcox, in E. M. Foster's novel *Howard's End*. 'Whether as boy, husband or widower, he had always the sneaking belief that bodily passion is bad . . . he could be a little ashamed of loving a wife.'

more words left." This mother would have attained her purpose if she had said nothing at all to Johnny, but had simply prevented him from licking the wall. For Johnny is only two years old.'[1]

One could go on indefinitely multiplying the small-seeming details of his life, his physical habits, his errors in breaking cups and affronting the Vicar, through which the child gets the sense of something bad about *himself*. It is not that he feels: 'I am an essentially good boy now doing this bad thing, an essentially acceptable boy now doing this unacceptable thing, an essentially approved boy, now doing this disapproved thing.' That would not matter. What matters is the sense that he himself is bad; that the substance and essence of himself is bad; that the life that is in him is bad life, and because of that badness the things he keeps doing are bad.

The child is, in fact, helped—and not only helped but driven—into making the same sin-error that was made by his primitive ancestor so very long ago. And it is more than a pity for, like his ancestor, he is not a committer of sins, but a maker of mistakes. The terminology matters, as the attitude behind it matters. For the maker of mistakes is free to learn from his mistake. The committer of sins is bound by his guilt and fear to the committing of still more sins—and more and more.

The child's unconscious sense of the evil of life would not however increase so steadily, or with such disastrous effect, if nothing more were involved than a sense of wrongness

[1] Fritz Wittels: *Freud and His Time*, p. 327. And see also, for the uselessness of reasoning with a small child before reason has sufficiently developed, a letter quoted by Susan Isaacs: 'She (the small child in question) was playing in the garden with her doll's pram . . . suddenly she started crying . . . on being questioned as to what was wrong . . . she refused to answer and continued to cry and scream for about an hour. Some time later on being questioned as to what was wrong, she told me she could not manage her pram on to the lawn. I tried to explain to her that if she had only asked I would have helped her—but she evaded my reasoning.' *Social Development of Young Children*, pp. 70–1.

—wrongness about excretion, wrongness about sex, wrongness about behaviour. A thing more vital than goodness is involved, for indeed what in any case can the small child know about goodness? 'At this stage', says Freud, 'the sense of guilt is obviously only the dread of losing love, "social" anxiety. In a little child it can never be anything else.'[1] What is, in fact, involved for all children in their training is the very mainspring of their personal, human life—their acceptableness, their lovableness. And how extremely precarious must these most essential things of all seem to be in a training traditionally and continually swinging between approval and disapproval—a felt approval and disapproval long before there can be a spoken one. And then later, when the child understands words, a training that uses love as a threat and a prize, neither of which it can ever be. 'If you behave like that nobody will love you.' 'Mummy won't love you if you do this.' 'Nobody loves little boys who do that.'

To a certain extent, though not wholly, these are only ways of speaking. Mother will not stop loving the child if he does whatever it may be. But the child does not know that. He does not know that the appearance of withdrawn affection is only a popular method of coercion, and not a reality. So he is subjected, long before he has any chance of being able to bear it—and none of us is really able to bear it at any time—to the gravest and most disruptive of human anxieties; the anxiety about lovableness. There is re-created for him that which was always, for all men, the most fearful of all situations—the fear of losing the acceptance of the group. It becomes very clear that as his conscience is there to make him acceptable, it will be a most anxious and fear-driven conscience. And with what could it be less enabled to regulate that life which it has come to feel as evil than with fear and anxiety?

Love is life, and especially for the child should never be

[1] 'Civilisation and its Discontents', p. 59 of *Civilisation, War and Death* (Hogarth Press, 1939).

conditional upon behaviour. It should never even seem, for a moment, conditional on behaviour. Love should be that which one can never endanger, that which is with one all the time, whatever one is, whatever one does. Nor has this unconditional love anything to do with what is known as 'spoiling'. It does not involve making the child's path an entirely unnatural bed of roses. (Which is in any case impossible, and would be the work of fear, not love.) It does not mean coddling and brooding over, anxiously and possessively. The word 'love' is difficult to define, but it must at least involve a complete acceptance of another person; a value for that person, be he infant, child or man, that is quite independent of any use that person is to oneself; a belief in him as essentially good; a warmth of affection that does not now flame and now die away; a positive delight in him as and for himself and not as an extension of one's own ego.

No one so loved is likely to stray very far, or do anything very terrible, so there is no cause for alarm. It is not an unconditional love that sends human beings astray, but a love they are never sure of, a love they have always anxiously to earn. And this should be clear enough to us in whose religious literature there shines the bright light of the Father's love for the Prodigal Son. But we generally feel that the Father was making a grave mistake, and that surely he should have made the son *feel* bad in order to make certain that he would *be* good! Ignoring the simple fact that it is, on the contrary, when one feels good that one is good. But those who bring up our children do not always know that. Why should they, when so many of us never know it at all?

So the child's developing conscience absorbs as its attitude to life the attitude of the mother. It absorbs also her methods with life as its methods. As she too had been brought up with a 'Puritan' conscience, she profoundly suspects life, and therefore tends to act aggressively and

anxiously towards it.[1] She fears the spontaneous, vigorous life that is in her children. She fears that it lies there, all ready to jump out in evil, horrible manifestations. So *she* must be ready to jump too. She must be ready to dominate in them, as she dominates in herself, the shooting and flowering of Life itself, so that it is clipped into shape like an old yew hedge, and stands there tidy and ugly, stupid and safe. She hardly dare express affection, lest in its warmth and freedom some outcropping escapes her control. For she lives under that 'taboo on tenderness'[2] which we ourselves have laid upon ourselves. It is not that she does not feel love. But she will fear to express it, for she will feel that unless she is hard on life it will never behave. Hence the tragedy of many grown-up people who have never really known, with the secure, valid knowledge of *feeling*, that their parents loved them.[3]

Most of us are poor lovers. We cannot love well, not only because we do not feel free to express our love, but because,

[1] cf. Suttie: *Origins of Love and Hate*, p. 89. 'The mother who was herself love-starved and who, in consequence, is intolerant of tenderness, will be impatient of her own children's dependency, regressiveness and claims for love. Her suspicion and anxiety really amount to a feeling (rooted in self-distrust) that children are naturally bad (St. Augustine!) and require to be "made" good by disapprobation . . . This creates a corresponding anxiety in the children.'

Also Laforgue: *Clinical Aspects of Psycho-Analysis*, p. 212. 'You will try in vain to find normal behaviour towards the child's excrements in these neurotic mothers who are disgusted by food. They hold these excrements as much in horror as they do sexuality, if not more still, and, under the pretext of making the child clean, they submit it to all kinds of tortures.'

[2] This excellent phrase is to be found in Suttie: *The Origins of Love and Hate*. The chapter called 'The "Taboo" on Tenderness'—pp. 80–96 contains a fuller description of its cause and effect.

[3] Peter Quennell in *Four Portraits* said of James Boswell: 'In movement he existed; but left alone, he was visited by a dreadful negation of feeling that reduced him to despair. He was no-one. There was no real life. He was a wraith, the shadow of a shadow.' Quennell puts this feeling which haunted Boswell all his life down to the fact that he had never been able to love his very stern Scottish father.

deep down underneath, we hate.[1] It might seem fantastic to say that a parent hates a child. But it is not so fantastic as it seems. Because we have been made to feel that the life in ourselves is hateful, we come to hate ourselves, and so to hate others. In our withholding of love, and the expression of love, we unconsciously express our hatred—our hatred of life that we turn into hatred of people—our hatred of people that we turn into hatred of life—and this is our tragedy.

It is, of course, very unfair that in all this the mother should be made to appear as the villain of the piece. But it is, after all, the mother who has the closest relationship to the child, who is almost exclusively associated with the important emotional experiences of feeding and cleanliness training, and who, in the earliest years spends the greater part of the time with the child. As she is the first provider and the first withholder of food, succour and affection, some of the most important social relationships begin in the relationship to her.[2] But the truth of the matter is that the super-ego is the representative of parental (mother + father) authority, and that in some circumstances and some cultures the mother-authority will be the greater, and in others the father-authority.

[1] The war in us between the love with which, consciously, we should wish to love, and the hate with which, unconsciously, we do in fact hate is the subject of Karl Menninger's book: *Love Against Hate.*

[2] There is a general tendency to-day to give a more important place to the mother in the emotional development of the child. Freud's position—in which the father had overwhelming importance—may have been dictated by the feeling of the Jewish patriarchal tradition in which he was reared, by some special psychological determination of his own, and by the fact that not nearly so much careful observation of children had then been done. Suttie writes: 'it (the infant) is dominated from the beginning by the need to retain the mother—a need which, if thwarted, must produce the utmost extreme of terror and rage, since the loss of the mother is, under natural conditions, but the precursor of death itself . . . I consider then that love of mother is primal in so far as it is the first formed and directed emotional relationship.' op. cit., pp. 16 and 31.

There is one other point. Suppose life in the child—life in its more awkward, aggressive manifestations—were not hastily and anxiously repressed? Suppose aggression, for instance, were sometimes allowed to work itself out, with no result of punishment, anger, or shocked dismay? What happens then? Actually, the important thing is what does not happen? And what does not happen is precisely the thing the child would most have feared—the alienation of his parents' affection and approval.[1] So he need not fear and hate and repress the life within himself that broke out as aggression. The anger will be cleansed right out of him—not driven back, to trouble and fester and break out some other time.

Of course, it may not make for such a peaceful life if what is in the child comes out, but at least it will be *out*, and so can be understood and directed. And it certainly does not make for a peaceful life for the world if what is in him is driven back, down, to break out later in anger, jealousy, competitive aggression. 'I beat it out of him' is a phrase that used to be—and still is—heard. One word of it is wrong. It should be 'I beat it *into* him.' Stekel reports this saying from the Talmud: 'He who strikes his children trains them for sin.'[2]

The idea that children might be allowed to express emotions like aggression and jealousy—indeed even the idea that they naturally and inevitably have these emotions (as

[1] The following example given by Susan Isaacs (*Social Development in Young Children*, p. 178) gives some idea of the reassurance that comes to the small child when he finds that aggression has not alienated love. 'Dan gave Harold a motor bus. Harold (5.2) put it in the cloakroom, and when his mother came, she said it was not convenient to take it home that day. Harold was very angry at this, and hit his mother several times and said hostile things. She said she was very sorry, but she could not do it. The next day she told Mrs. I. how, all the way home, he kept hitting her and saying hostile things, and how a long time afterwards he asked her: "Do you still love me?" and when she said: "Yes", he said: "What, after all that?" '

[2] *Sadism and Masochism*, vol. I, p. 422.

apart from naughtiness, i.e. having them when they should not) is still revolutionary. And yet it is one of the least controversial of current psychological opinions, and is the basis of some highly successful educational experiments. Here are just two of many opinions. First the story of a very aggressive small boy.

> A small boy in an Institution displayed unusually strong aggression against adults . . . Under the severe discipline of the institution this overt aggression was soon inhibited by expectation of punishment. Then the child began running after other children biting them, pinching them, and pulling their hair. These manifestations of aggression were in turn eliminated . . . Then the child commenced to pinch himself, bang his head, and to pull out his own hair. These actions were so injurious that he created bad sores on his forehead and two large bald spots on his head, and he finally had to be sent to another institution for treatment. Therapy consisted of removing frustrations . . . and of attempting, by complete absence of threats, to remove the anticipations of punishment which were inhibiting direct aggression against adults. Under this treatment the child first expressed more aggression against adults and less against himself. Then, as the frustrations which seemed to be the root of his trouble were lessened, his manifestations of aggression against adults began to weaken . . . As aggression against adults became possible, self aggression disappeared, and as frustrations were lessened, all aggression waned.[1]

The above is a single instance, although by no means an isolated one. What follows is an excellent general comment on the situation:

> To permit children to express their feelings of aggression whilst preventing acts of irremediable destruction is, we suggest, one of the greatest gifts that parents can give to their children. We believe the evidence suggests that such methods of education will have consequences precisely the opposite of those expected by the parents unaware of the evidence of modern analytical psychology . . . we suggest that the child, freed from frustration and unsympathetic discipline will in fact become the very opposite of the popular picture of the 'spoiled child'. Instead of violent and ungovernable anger,

[1] Dollard etc.: *Frustration and Aggression*, p. 35.

inordinate selfishness and vanity, the child that is not afraid to express its feelings is likely to exhibit affection, independence, sociability and courage more rapidly and more naturally than a repressed child.[1]

It would seem that we must be more tolerant of our children—and childhood is after all the time for tolerance—in order that there may not be so much to tolerate in adults. 'If children could be frustrated less frequently—given more open access to the means of their satisfaction—or if they were punished less severely when they resented frustration; if, in short, they were allowed to express desire and anger more freely it should follow, contrary to common expectation, that they would make more happy, more peaceful, and more social adults.'[2] A similar recommendation to tolerance is made by Dr. J. C. Flugel: 'The jealousy of the child should not be needlessly and gratuitously aroused. It seems not altogether unlikely that in future we shall learn to be much more tolerant of jealousy in a child, and less tolerant of it in the adult than we are at present.'[3]

The typical super-ego of our day is, however, trained to undue repression of jealousy and aggression. And often, to make sure, as it were, it represses many other things as well. So that we, of this culture, are rarely able to express ourselves freely, exuberantly, happily, affectionately. Yet all this is done in the name of goodness. It is all a desperate effort to establish the acceptableness and lovableness of the self. And it establishes more often a sense of guilt and failure instead of that infinitely enabling sense of goodness in which alone the self is generous and secure.

[1] Durbin and Bowlby: *Personal Aggressiveness and War*, pp. 42 and 43.
[2] ibid., p. 41.
[3] Flugel: *Men and Their Motives*, p. 120.

Modern capitalism and imperialism have a number of different causes; but among these causes must be numbered the Protestant and Jansenist habit of brooding on sin, damnation and an angry God, arbitrarily dispensing or withholding grace and forgiveness . . . There is a logical and psychological connection between obsession with one's own sins and obsession with those of others, between the haunting terror of an angry personal God and an active desire to persecute in the name of that God.

ALDOUS HUXLEY

The notion that we can transfer our guilt and sufferings to some other being who will bear them for us is familiar to the savage mind . . . Upon this idea he acts, and the result is an endless number of very unamiable devices for palming off upon someone else the trouble which a man shrinks from bearing himself.

SIR JAMES FRAZER

CHAPTER VI

Methods of Conscience

We are now getting deeper into the heart of our problem—the problem of a being who both needs and wants to be accepted and loved, but who has been nurtured in such a way that he finds love and acceptance very hard indeed to come by. To all the difficulties, mistakes and failures which must inevitably attend his learning and growing are added the unconscious feeling that he is not much good anyway, and the not wholly unconscious feeling that acceptance is very precarious and love not certainly to be counted upon. It is probably not only one little boy of six who has told his mother: 'I'd no idea when I was born that I should have such a bad time.'[1]

We have, therefore, a person who *feels* bad, and indeed a person who in a sense *is* bad, for however innocent he himself may be of the undue measure of aggression and hatred nurtured within him, as soon as they have come into existence he knows them to be dangerous. He knows it with 'unconscious' knowledge, and promptly takes equally unconscious measures to deal with the situation. To hold his aggression in check he allocates to the controlling super-ego an 'amount' of aggression equal to the task of inhibition. To anticipate the adverse judgments that may be made upon him by those whose favour he seeks, he builds within himself a stern function of self-judgment. Because he feels parts of himself to be hateful he piously hopes to cancel them out by self-hatred. And to dominate the unruliness of his self he establishes an internal power-agency.[2]

[1] Quoted by Alice Balint: *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, vol. XXIV, p. 105.

[2] It is not strictly accurate to use the term 'self' in these connections. The impulses of the 'ID' also are hated and feared. But for the purposes

And that would be all right if it happened that human nature worked that way. But it doesn't. The judgment, aggression, hatred and domination which, through our super-ego, we bring to bear upon ourselves do not really make for ease, happiness and goodness. Aggressive feeling, aggressively held in check, is an intolerable burden. There is too much fear, too much insecurity, in the situation. As there is in self-judgment. For where the super-ego has set up an impossibly high standard it must sit in such continual and fearful judgment on the self, that the strain may at any time become too great—even to the point of insanity.

So, too, with self-hatred. Anyone who has lived with hatred, consciously or unconsciously expressed, from someone whose love is necessary or desirable will know that the situation which then exists is not humanly supportable. And it is no more supportable when the 'hater' is internal.

Self-dominance is perhaps less, but only just less, insupportable. No human being, small or large, young or old, easily bears the attempt of another to dominate him—an observation not at all invalidated by the masochist's love of playing the door-mat.

If, as in the case of the super-ego, the dominance is internal, the freedom and independence of the ego are seriously threatened. The super-ego may have taken upon itself to rule the ego in the interests of an ideal utterly remote from the ego's own best nature and capacity. And such is its strength—at least in the social, moral and religious set-up which we are considering—that its aggression, judgment, hatred and domination come eventually to matter more to the self than any outward aggression, judgment, hatred or domination whatsoever. Indeed it turns out that none of

of ordinary, everyday living it is in the 'me' part of us that we feel harassed and inferior and guilty, and we are not able to separate off from our consciousness the disowned impulses of the 'ID'. Freud has made clear the difficult position occupied by the self, sandwiched as it were between the ID and the super-ego. And it is that difficulty, as it is *felt* by us all, that I want to emphasise here.

these things, coming from outside, are ultimately intolerable unless they reinforce a similar attitude of the super-ego to the self. It is as though, in the beginning, the protection, approval and love of the parents or their substitutes mattered so very much to us that the super-ego, in representing them, was compelled to overdo its own attitudes. And, having once become an inalienable part of the self, it then and forever after has that exasperating thing—the last word!

However that may be we have, within the personality, 'amounts' of aggression against the self, of self-hatred, self-judgment and self-domination which, when they are added to all the aggressive and hating impulses they hold in check, are literally not to be borne. Even when both impulses and inhibitions are unconscious the situation is still not to be borne. The obvious thing would be to release the repression—to recognise in consciousness the discomfort-making things for what they are. But—apart from the fact that it all happened when we were very young, so that we don't know that it has happened at all—there is also the fact that we should not be in a position to recognise the truth about ourselves even if we could. To know ourselves aggressive, hating, jealous or whatever it might be, that might be possible—but to know ourselves therefore as evil, as unacceptable and unloved, would not be possible at all. And except by unusually fortunate chances of self-development it is probable that only in psycho-analysis can adult repression be lightened and unconscious emotions acknowledged for what they are. And then only because the analyst does *not* consider these things evil, does *not* withdraw acceptance and 'love'. Even so, the old attitudes of self-blame and self-hatred are eased rather than cancelled out.

So now, in that desperate search for goodness which we are following, we have selves against whom part of their own life-energy has, through the super-ego, been turned in

aggression, hatred, judgment and dominance; selves who may know nothing about all this and yet be unable to bear it. The first effort (i.e. repression) at goodness hasn't come off very well, and as it can't—as we saw—be undone, new efforts have to be made. The aggression, hatred, judgment, dominance must somehow be discharged—and they must be discharged blamelessly. The aggressive, hating, judging, dominating person must get these emotions 'worked off' on others. And the minimum he will accept is that he should be able to work them off with complete justification. The maximum he prefers is that he should neither know that he has them or is using them. It seems a lot to ask of those unconscious mechanisms which work so hard to protect us. But the mind with its infinity of tricks is equal to the task.

There is first the possibility of *displacement*. The aggression against the self can be considerably lightened by attacking someone else. And as there is almost always someone, or some group, who appears to need aggressive measures this is comparatively simple. In a generally aggressive civilisation one is never oneself the only aggressive person. And it is notable how, on those days when we feel a vague kind of 'out-ness' with the world, and are too fair to vent it on the wholly innocent, we feel a distinct relief when anyone behaves in such a way towards us as appears to constitute an attack. We can then righteously 'let go' a burdening charge of aggressive feeling that is not really aroused by the offence at all, that is far in excess of that deserved by the offence, and that rarely makes any contribution towards putting the matter right. The sense of shame we feel when once the aggression has been discharged shows that we really, half-consciously, know all this. The 'righteous' is usually taken out of 'righteous anger' the moment the anger ceases to exist, which perhaps goes to prove that the word is used rather as a justification for discharge of anger than as a real conviction either that we were righteous in feeling it, or that it produces righteousness.

Even more notable is the justifiable discharge of aggression provided by war. Some group almost always is, in effect, committing some aggression against the community of groups. When some such aggression becomes the occasion for war the 'righteousness' is even more easy to assume. For while we are not, on the whole, encouraged in the expression of personal aggressiveness, the declaration of war means that those symbolic super-egos, the Church and the State, say in effect: 'Here is a legitimate, dangerously aggressive enemy. It is your duty to attack him. You will be doing and being good in so attacking him. Moreover you will make him good again. Go to it.'[1]

Much the same thing happens with self-judgment, which turns us into inveterate judges of others. Never surely was a civilisation more full of self-dissatisfaction, or more full of judgment. But the relief that judgment affords is notable, both privately and publicly. The person who is very hard on himself can scarcely, however he may deprecate the fact, feel other than 'lightened' when he is really able to judge that some person of his own kind has behaved or achieved less well than himself. And it is surely a pathetic thing—not that we all make mistakes and show inadequacies—but that we *need* each other's mistakes and inadequacies, as well as each other's mental and physical disabilities, in order to feel in some way, any way, better than somebody else. In this matter, the 'criminal', domestic or international, is a god-send to us, for he cries aloud to be judged, and we feel it obviously and urgently right that we should in fact judge him. Whenever a dispassionate, scientific understanding of

[1] The ultimate, however distantly ultimate, redemption of the enemy as a further justification for aggression appears to play a great part in any war, although room is generally left for the intermediate discharge of retributive feelings, as they too arise 'naturally' in response to injury, and are also burdensome. Field-Marshal Montgomery in explaining our non-fraternisation order to the Germans (withholding of love being a form of aggression), justifies the attitude on the ultimate-good basis. 'We have done this in order to save you, your children and the whole world from another war.'

wrong-doing is suggested there is usually a violent protest lest the 'right' (in both senses) to judgment be taken away.

Dominance is perhaps even easier to displace from ourselves than judgment—so easy that D. W. Harding suggests that the pattern of our Western culture is woven of the impulse to dominate,[1] with its always intertwining thread, the impulse to submit. This may be something of an oversimplification, but it is at least a justifiable one. There are few of us indeed who are free from the impulse to dominate, few of us who do not spend much of our time, thought and energy in dominating somebody—husband, wife, child, friend, employee, or some group or other, some nation or other. And this domination of others, although the fact may not be immediately apparent, is a very useful support to our own sense of goodness. If, for instance, I can make you appear to agree with my point of view, if I can make you alter your way of life to fit in with mine, I feel more secure in my point of view, and my way of life than I did before. Also, if I dominate you for your own good, as I shall always pretend to do, then in forcing your submission, I have done good. I am a good person. And how beautifully easy this is in a world full of small things—like children. And, of course, dogs!

But why should we go to such lengths to secure our goodness? Surely it is because most of us have no real feeling-sense of goodness at all, and so must perpetually bolster up the one we are pretending to have. 'Domination seeks self-preservation', says Harding. 'The dominative person is "trying to preserve status". Difference of outlook in other people cannot be welcomed positively unless we feel secure.'[2] We are, in fact, not so much consciously determined to dominate as unconsciously afraid *not* to dominate. We dare not lose any chance of showing what fine, big fellows we are, lest suddenly we should see ourselves as small and very far from fine. And there is a real correlation

[1] *The Impulse to Dominate* (Allen & Unwin, 1941).

[2] ibid., pp. 20–2.

between the fact that periods of dominative Puritan conscience have also been periods of imperial expansion. Dominators of ourselves, we must have someone to rule.

Hatred of others provides a similar catharsis. Our unconscious hatred of ourselves is easier to bear if we see others as hateful, too. We don't, of course, generally talk about hatred except in such disguised phrases as 'hating the sin and loving the sinner', or 'the necessity for eliminating the hateful things in the world'. In fact, there are no hateful *things*. Thunderstorms and earthquakes may be fearful, but we do not hate them. The 'things' we hate are twisted manifestations of personality, and I believe we should do well to realise that we do often hate people, and that the mass outbreaks of hatred which from time to time so disconcert us come from the repressed hatred of ourselves and others which we have nurtured so unwittingly and yet so carefully.

'You say that you love your brothers,' said Lamennais, 'what would you do if you hated them?' It is Freud who answers the question when he says that we do indeed quite frequently hate them. And that when we do hateful things to them—that is to say, things which we should regard as hateful if they were done to ourselves—we do actually do them out of hatred, and not out of a desire for their good or whatever we may choose to call it.

It is true that undue self-aggression, self-hatred, self-judgment, self-domination may be dealt with in ways exactly opposite to those described above. It is possible for *so* much aggression to be turned against the self that that self will become unnaturally meek, incapable of expressing aggression against others even verbally or of using any of the legitimate sublimations of aggressive emotion. The self-judging and self-hating person may refuse, in quite 'saintly' fashion, to express any judgment at all, gazing reproachfully on the innocent maker of some small obvious criticism, and 'loving' everyone in a way whose falseness we sense even while we cannot quite explain what we sense. And the person who dominates himself may take up a distressingly

self-sacrificing attitude. But all these attitudes, while superficially fair-seeming, may be just as damaging to personal and social relationship as those more obviously hating and aggressive.

Meantime another important fact emerges—that we actually need the objects of our aggression, judgment, hatred and domination as a means to the cleansing of intolerable emotion. That a 'criminal' may in actual fact have committed a 'sin' against us, who are law-abiding members of society, does not alter the fact that *we* need the criminal *as* a sinner, in order that we may judge and hate him. As we need the aggressor *as* an aggressor, in order that we may attack him. These unfortunate people and groups are therefore in some real sense means to our private ends—which fact alone should make us suspect the virtue of our methods with them. It is hardly a healthy civilisation in which the 'good' so need the 'bad' that they would find it difficult to be good without them.

But even the existence of 'legitimate' objects for the discharge of our own destructive emotion is not sufficient to make us feel really good. In all the cases so far mentioned there is admitted, at least by some of those using them, that they are in fact using aggression, judgment, hatred and dominance although not the fact that they need to use them for personal ends. Judgment, which is the most respectable, is the most freely admitted. Hatred and dominance the least. And it would obviously be better—from the point of view of the mind protecting and building up goodness—if we could be quite sure that we weren't ever, at all, hating, dominating, judging and aggressive people; if we could completely and not just partially, disguise from ourselves the fact that we had or used these attitudes. So displacement proves not to be enough, and *projection* is brought in to reinforce this curious position of inviolable blamelessness[1] which has been taken up by the ego.

[1] 'Inviolable blamelessness' is in no way incompatible with extreme guilt, out of which, indeed, springs the need for it.

Projection is a subtler process than displacement, and may take devious and complicated forms. At its simplest it means that one rids oneself of the discomfort caused by something—conceit, perhaps—which one would feel to be a fault in oneself (if one ever got so far as to recognise that one had it!) by seeing it in someone else; by pretending, unconsciously, of course, that that someone else is actually possessed of one's own conceit. Literally the word means that one throws a thing out from oneself. The mother slaps the child and says: 'Naughty girl.' The child slaps the doll and says: 'Naughty dolly.' She has thrown out from herself on to the doll the guilt she felt when her mother said 'naughty'. And moreover—this is very important—she has had the satisfaction of punishing it there. The child has, of course, no idea what she is doing, but her unconscious has provided her with a threefold release. She dissociates herself from the naughtiness by seeing it in the doll, 'What a naughty dolly you are!' She punishes the naughtiness in the doll, thereby making the dissociation more complete. 'This naughtiness is not only something which does not exist in myself, but something which could not exist in myself, for I hate it so much that I punish it wherever I find it.' And, by striking her doll, she gets rid of some of the actual aggressive feeling with which her super-ego would like to punish her, and so, feeling less aggressive towards herself, she feels more comfortable. She has, in fact, done something about the naughtiness in herself without letting the fact of that naughtiness being in herself come into consciousness for more than a moment, if at all.

The way of the child with the doll is not a chance method adopted sometimes by some children. It is the expression of a universal and age-old method of dealing with evil in oneself. The scapegoat, on whom we lay our own transgression, is almost as old as man. Some primitive peoples, for instance, put down everything that goes wrong within their tribe to the agency of sorcerers in another tribe. A hut that burns down, a marriage that comes to grief, is the work of

the sorcerer. This leaves the people themselves comfortably blameless, comfortably uncommitted to the harder task of discovering why huts burn down and marriages go wrong. It further justifies them in hating or attacking the (apparent) external cause of the evil—the sorcerer, for example—which is pleasanter than dealing with the internal cause in themselves, and easier than understanding the real external cause in nature.

There are hundreds of examples of this, from the more simple projection of the child and the primitive to the less easily traceable process by which, to-day, Russia for instance bears not only her own burden of folly and wrong, but is made also the scapegoat for all that other folly and wrong which, with hers, is breaking our world. Similarly Germany, after 1918, loaded the guilt *she* felt for losing the war on to her fantastic composite scapegoat, the Jew-Bolshevik-Autocrat-Democrat. And chiefly, unhappily, the Jew.[1]

Of the primitive with his sorcerer one might say: 'But is not this simply ignorance? Is it not just that he still knows so little about himself and his world?' And, of course, it *is* partly ignorance, as it is with us, who also know so little about ourselves and our emotional world. But the admission of ignorance still leaves one to explain why man has 'progressed' in the knowledge of good and evil so largely by finding out how much the other person is to blame. 'Man', says Dr. Rickman, 'has been observant of other people's motives and the behaviour of other groups for a longer time than he has studied his own personal problems and those of his tribe.'[2]

[1] 'Was the Germany of the past worth less than we thought? . . . Germany's military defeat was, alas, not an undeserved catastrophe but a merited chastisement of eternal retribution. The defeat was more than deserved by us . . . If we review all the causes of the German collapse, the final and decisive one is seen to be the failure to realise the racial problem and, more especially, the Jewish menace.' Hitler: *My Struggle*.

[2] Rickman: Preface to *Superstition and Society*, p. vii, by R. Money-Kyrle.

The mote in our neighbour's eye is still much larger than the beam in our own. It cannot all be put down to ignorance. We are intelligent enough where we are emotionally able to be intelligent. And we can probably best explain so wide and old and deep a predilection not only for seeing our neighbour's faults so clearly, but for seeing our own faults in them, by regarding it as part of this compulsive fear-driven necessity to preserve in ourselves our conviction that we are good. 'To see wickedness in others, though terrifying, is better than to be divided against oneself. It avoids the terrible burden of guilt.'[1]

So the situation is not really so simple as was suggested in the discussion of displacement. While the 'enemy', public or private, may be in reality aggressive, he will appear to us as the impersonation of *his* aggression and—by projection—of *ours* also. Our justification in attacking him, now doubly aggressive, will therefore be much fuller than it would have been if only the mechanism of displacement were involved. Moreover many of us will be enabled not even to know that it is aggression *we* are using in opposing aggression. And the curious though immensely comforting situation is created in which we (by 'we' I mean any group with which any self is associated in 'righteousness') quite unaggressive people, quite unaggressively stop someone else's aggression. Just what *we* use in war I have never been able to discover. Our language (in sections of the British press, for instance) is often aggressive and sadistic to a degree—we spoke of 'killing grounds' in Germany, of 'a giant rake tearing the heart out of the city'—about a raid on Berlin and so on—but so much are we all self-protected that even the use of aggressive words does not convey to us our aggression. But that the other, the 'enemy', is aggressive and sadistic is never in doubt. So by 'projection' we acquire both an amazing innocence, and a most dangerous false security. As the aggression which may upset the balance of the nations is never in us, we have only to stop somebody else's

[1] Durbin and Bowlby: *Personal Aggressiveness and War*, p. 23.

aggression, and all will be well—a way of thinking which has long militated against the building of any lasting peace.

But, for all its unfortunate consequences, projection does serve its immediate end of strengthening the 'goodness' of the projecting individual or group. And as it works with aggression so does it work with hatred, judgment and domination. It is not sufficient, for instance, to find someone against whom 'superfluous' hatred of the self may be directed. The object of the hatred must also bear the 'sins'—the hated and disowned impulses—of the hater. And we do not in fact simply hate those things which are hateful from the point of view of human peace and happiness. On the contrary those who see these things most clearly and disinterestedly tend not to use the method of hatred. While those who do hate, although what they hate may sometimes be objectively hateful, tend to pick out for hatred such things as they unconsciously hate in themselves, and have, also unconsciously, projected on to their scapegoat. Consciously nothing would be more indignantly or sincerely repudiated than their own possession of the hated characteristics.

The crusades against 'vice' provide one of the most obvious examples of this. The crusader's exaggerated horror of, and exaggerated preoccupation with, the impulses he professes to hate do suggest that they are his own impulses, disowned and projected on to his victims, where he can at once persecute and vicariously enjoy them. Shakespeare put it rather more forcibly: 'Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand: why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thy own back, thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind for which thou whipp'st her.'[1]

The projection of the impulse to dominate gives equal immunity from any possibly disquieting suspicion that one is oneself a dominating person. It is hardly possible in fact to exaggerate the invulnerability of the innocence in which this mechanism of projection leaves the group and individuals who practise it. We appear upon the stage of the

[1] In *King Lear*.

world as white and woolly lambs because we have cast our neighbour for the wolf—our wolf and his. Until we understand that this is so—until we understand that those mechanisms of the mind which protect us from guilt are universal—we shall continue to go about the world as powers of darkness and to see ourselves as angels of light. We shall continue to build and secure our pseudo-goodness in such elaborate and costly ways that we shall never know how simply we might just have been—good.

Your gentleness shall force
More than your force move us to gentleness.

SHAKESPEARE

And am I then a man to be beloved? . . .
Then, since this earth affords no joy to me,
But to command, to check, to o'erbear such
As are of better person than myself,
I'll . . . account this world but hell,
Until my misshaped trunk that bears this head
Be round impaled with a glorious crown.

(*Henry VI,* Pt. III, where Gloucester speaks of . . . *Mine arm . . . like a withered . . . shrub, an envious mountain on my back . . . my legs of an unequal size.*)

SHAKESPEARE

If you will not love me, then you must feel the power of my hatred.

STEKEL

CHAPTER VII

Concerning Guilt Clauses.

We have seen how a nation, or group of nations, which is behaving badly at any given moment may serve a useful psychological purpose in the comity of nations. For by the process of projection, or scapegoatism, the 'guilty' nation will be made to bear not only its own current delinquency, but also all those other international delinquencies in which we all, to some extent, share. And the consoling phrases —'the democratic nations', 'the peace-loving nations', 'all-freedom-loving people', and so on—can be happily taken to themselves by the currently 'not guilty' nations. While to the other group conveniently belongs all war-loving and all freedom-hating and suppressing. And there is no doubt that this laying-on of guilt, this declaration, 'you are a guilty person', 'you are a guilty nation', is extremely releasing and rehabilitating to those who make it.

But the imputation of guilt, justifiable or otherwise (and it is often justifiable), solves nothing—a fact which would be abundantly evident had we not got so deeply into the habit of believing that it does. For we do have a semi-magical belief that when we—whether 'we' are the more powerful or the more virtuous of the moment, or both—tell some group that we consider it guilty and why, it must forthwith see this to be so and, unless very depraved indeed, be willing to confess the guilt, and mend its ways. But it does not happen so. The imputation of guilt does not in fact produce this desirable result. Nor does it explain why the guilty have acted so unfortunately, nor how an alteration in their behaviour is to be brought about. There are, in fact, no easy answers to these questions. But I think that a clue to the

nature of more satisfactory answers than are usually given is to be found in the fundamental need for love and approval —which is also the need for the assurance of 'goodness'. I believe there to be something very like a national 'ego' which needs to feel itself good and know itself accepted just as urgently as does the individual self. And many national and international delinquencies might at least be considered from the point of view of 'not feeling good enough' rather than from that of 'being wicked'.

The world is not, after all, unlike a family disrupted by that hatred which can only arise where the bond should be love. The hierarchy system, the balance of power, the unequal distribution of the food which is symbolic of love, the aggravations of false and self-congratulatory nationalistic history books, the complacent superiorities with which those go about the earth who are at any given moment occupying a place in the sun, all these and many other things must at all times constitute a situation in which, to the starved individual ego, identifying itself with the inferior national self, there appear to be chosen and beloved children and children repudiated and cast out. It is a situation in which one of the stronger among the repudiated children may at any time attempt to lay hold upon the tokens of favour which—according to our common international values—are the mark of the beloved, the many coloured coat which only one is wearing.

It is a situation which is, moreover, heavily laden with guilt. Long ago as children we felt ourselves guilty when the warmth of our parents' affection seemed to be withdrawn from us. And the remembrance of that exile, though hidden in the unconscious, lends a fine fury to the feeling of any group which is denied a place in the sun. There is aroused in it an intense desire to attack and hurt the withholders—the parent-surrogates. And as these withholders are not different from the potential lovers—they are, indeed, the lovers with their faces turned away—the outcast group

finds itself in that most feared human situation in which it may 'kill the thing it loves', the thing whose love it needs.

Such an international situation is a repetition of the emotional dilemma which has torn so many of us since childhood. At one and the same time we want to hurt and we need to love. Our aggression makes us feel still guiltier, for the aggressor, however justified his aggression, always puts himself in the wrong with himself and with others. That is part of his tragedy and part of the tragedy of civilisation. But if guilt be already the very feeling-tone of outcastness and aggressiveness, it becomes apparent that merely to say 'you are wrong' to the group involved can do no more than intensify the guilt and strengthen the aggression. If the guilt feeling were more objective—if the sinner himself realised how and why he had sinned, and recognised his past conduct as blameworthy, the whole situation might be different. But it is not different. We do not necessarily—though it may happen—feel guilty because we have done something objectively and reasonably considered by ourselves and others to be wrong. We feel guilty rather because we, through our super-ego, disapprove of ourselves, and that equally whether the standards of our super-ego are good or bad. We feel guilty when others disapprove of us, whether their disapproval is worth our concern or not. We feel guilty when we have failed in something we set out to do, even if that thing be evil. We feel guilty when we have never succeeded at all. And it is precisely in any such inferior position that we must repudiate any further charge of guilt, for such a charge is then emotionally intolerable, and arouses in us chiefly a conviction of the cruelty of the accuser.

The assurance of goodness to a good person will strengthen his goodness; the assurance of guilt to a guilty person will strengthen his guilt. Homeopathic remedies do not cure these particular ills, as one wrong does not put right another, nor one war make all wars to cease. Gilbert Murray, in his Preface to the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus,

speaks of the 'everlasting unsolved problem of "The ancient blinded vengeance and the wrong that amendeth wrong!"'

And yet that never amends it, for 'every wrong is justly punished; yet, as the world goes, every punishment becomes a new wrong, calling for fresh vengeance. And more; every wrong turns out to be itself rooted in some wrong of old . . . In the old order of earth and heaven there is no escape. Each blow called for the return blow and must do so *ad infinitum*.'

Or, as Ludwig Lewisohn wrote: 'The ages pass and war follows war. Mankind has not yet learned that the blow returned does not heal the pain of the blow suffered, neither does it touch the impulse that aimed the blow, nor cure the suffering from which that impulse leaped, nor make order of the moral chaos in which the suffering was born.'[1]

So with guilt. We might say that every wrongdoer may justly be called guilty; but that every imputation of guilt leads to the doing of a new wrong which calls in its turn for a further imputation of guilt. And so it may go on until there comes the word of a new order: 'Son, thy sins are forgiven thee.' The word 'son' is significant, and the word 'sins'.

In the unsettled years after 1918 we had a very pointed example of the results of the imputation of guilt in the famous 'guilt clause' in the Treaty of Versailles. This is not, of course, to say, as some people did, that the guilt clause of the Treaty of Versailles was the chief cause of the 1939 War, although it was a major aggravation of a situation bound for many other reasons to be difficult and delicate. Nor is it to say that the German nation was not 'guilty' in its militarist designs—although the responsibility for the general anarchical state of international affairs was a shared responsibility. Nor is it to deny that, after a period of moderately healing years, the emotional effects of the guilt

[1] In *Upstream*.

clause might have died down if they had not been deliberately reactivated. Although, again, the reactivation could not have happened unless the imputation of guilt were one which man normally deeply resents and violently repudiates. That, in fact, it could arouse the feeling it did arouse; that it never for a moment appears to have conveyed any objective sense of their wrong-doing to the guilty; that it could even help to provoke a repetition of the 'sin'; make it a most significant phenomenon.

To understand this more clearly we must examine the psychological situation as it exists at the beginning of any war. And the most important aspect of this situation is that the causes of every war are presented to the peoples concerned in black and white. A 'good' group sets out forcibly to turn an 'evil' group from the error of its ways: or alternatively forcibly to demonstrate its 'goodness' to groups who are evil in the sense that they have not offered sufficient submission and recognition. That each group should feel this 'goodness' is a prerequisite of all war; just as it is a prerequisite that each group should set out to convince the other of the error of its ways!

According to popular wartime phraseology the enemy, through its pain and loss, will come to (*a*) know and (*b*) to learn. What it will know is the nature of the suffering it has been inflicting—'what it feels like'. What it will learn, presumably out of that feeling-knowledge, is how very wrong it has been, both in fighting the war at all, and in all the desires and obstinacies that led to the fighting. It is then further supposed that the enemy, having seen, or rather felt, where its evil courses lead, will turn to better ones. For so profound is the need of all groups to feel 'good' in engaging in war that they assure themselves not only of the righteousness of their own cause, but also of their desire for the reformation, the goodness, of their enemy, after that enemy shall have 'known' and 'learnt'.[1]

[1] Examples are legion. A typical one occurred in an article 'It is Time for Reprisals', by the Rev. R. D. Davies, after the appearance of the

The theory may be all very well, but very little human experience, either personal or historical, seems to justify it. To the sufferer under it, physical hurt does *not* convey a sense of desire for his good but precisely—it seems logical enough—of desire to hurt. And that, if only unconsciously, is usually just what it is. We are more accurate in our feelings than our thoughts. People 'understand' everything you do to them,[1] however loud your protestations that you are

flying bomb, and *before* (for his comfort) the use of its atomic successor. In the course of an argument involving a distinction between reprisals and vengeance too fine for the ordinary mind, he wrote: 'What's the good of wasting air power on concrete platforms built by slave labour? Use it on the living flesh of the nation whose consent, active or passive, alone makes their use of this weapon possible . . . Let the German people be convinced that the violation of the laws of war entails immediate consequence in the terrible destruction of their own people *and they will develop a sense of political responsibility.* Thorough-going reprisals for this latest and greatest German outrage *will do more for the re-education of the German people* than all the text-books which the romantic Liberals propose to write. So reprisals . . . become a *moral duty.*' The italics are mine. A leader in the *News Chronicle* of 2 June 1942, made the same claim to reform by suffering: 'The German people must be made to feel in their own bricks and bones the meaning of their rulers' creed of cruelty and destruction. If they do feel it . . . if by the ferocity of our retribution we can convince them at last that violence does not pay and induce them to become good citizens of the world—then the loss of their monuments will be as nothing compared to the contributions to our common inheritance which their conversion to "civilised conduct" will make.'

[1] Like the lion in Bernard Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion*:

> *The Emperor*: I'll have you burnt alive for daring to touch the divine person of the Emperor. (*The lion growls.*)
>
> *Androcles*: Oh, don't talk like that, sir. He understands every word you say: all animals do; they take it from the tone of your voice.

The situation with animals is only more simple than that which maintains with human beings. How rightly E. M. Forster wrote in *Passage to India*: 'Indians know whether they are liked or not—they cannot be fooled here. Justice never satisfies them, and that is why the British Empire rests on sand.' Since Mr. Forster wrote the sand has given!

doing something quite different. So deeply rooted, indeed, is the feeling that physical pain and personal disaster mean *somebody's* ill-will that very frequently people who suffer these things without apparent human causation still feel a malignancy in the Universe itself, as Hardy showed so well in *Jude the Obscure*.

In the recent war, when the weight of our bombing operations began to fall heavily on Germany, and homeless people had to leave the cities for the countryside, it was especially often said—'now they will know', 'now they will learn'. But that was exactly the moment when, least of all, would they know or learn,[1] for it was exactly the moment when they would most experience what was done to them as evil, and therefore feel the doers as evil. So, from the point of view of the conviction of guilt, the situation became more and more hopeless. Let us remember that they—'the enemy'—had embarked on the war with the conviction of their goodness and our evil. But because many people embark unwillingly on war our evil may still have remained something of a tale that was told. As soon, however, as they began to suffer greatly from it, our evil became—to them—immediately and urgently apparent. This, in turn, greatly strengthened their sense of their own goodness in resisting such evil. Moreover, because they were so hurt, their 'goodness' had become the dangerous martyred 'goodness' of people who feel they have suffered unjustly, and who therefore attack more fanatically than before. This gave to us, equally naturally, a greater sense of *their* wickedness—and the vicious circle turned and turned.

In all this endless divergence and confusion between what any of us actually feels and what any of us thinks the other

[1] There is, of course, some evidence that *some* people who have suffered greatly in a war are less vindictive than others who have suffered scarcely at all. But we have to deal with the situation as it exists at our present stage of civilisation—in which there can be little doubt that *on the whole* suffering is resented, and gives rise to feelings of aggression and hatred against the inflictor of suffering, and quite apart from any question of desert.

should or does feel, the possibility of even the guilty feeling guilty becomes more and more remote. We have taken it too easily for granted that people are most prone to repent while suffering pain which has been inflicted upon them. In fact we have often taken it for granted that in such circumstances they *do* repent, in spite of ample evidence to the contrary. It is clear that we need to know much more about the effects of pain than we do. Humanity has suffered a good deal of it, but it has not so far led us to a peaceful, a happy or a virtuous world. One might have thought that even the advocates of suffering would have noticed this.

But in spite of all the perfervid protestations of goodness, in spite of the fact that suffering does not tend to make people confess how guilty they are, guilt in war *is* felt by everyone concerned. Aggression, which Freud seems at times almost to have equated with the 'death' instinct, is always associated—at least unconsciously—with guilt. Deeply built into the feeling-knowledge of every child's unconscious mind is the 'law' that he—the child—*may* build and restore, but *may not* knock down and destroy, lest, as we have seen, he destroys those on whom his life depends.

This fact, that the unconscious feeling of guilt is more fundamental than the conscious assertion of goodness, has its own repercussions on victory. It has been said that there are no victors in a modern war—the truth of which, from many points of view, we are realising at the moment. But from the psychological point of view there are undoubtedly victors and vanquished. The accomplishment of what one sets out to do—whatever it may be—is regarded by the 'unconscious' as a token of goodness. And so, for the victor group, the unconscious guilt and anxiety are greatly lessened. It is as if the 'unconscious' of the nation—if one may so speak—were able to sit back and say: 'Yes, we are right about our goodness after all. It was a near go! What a relief!' The victors, moreover, have the satisfaction—the virtue-conferring sense—of having done that which they set out

to do. They have removed the 'evil' from the world, which is to say that *they have removed from that evil the chance of showing itself further in that form at that moment.* No more than that. But that has long been regarded by our civilisation as the removal of the evil itself. It has been one of our greatest mistakes, but our disposition to make it goes back to childhood.

The child's time-sense is notoriously of the moment. A day is a lifetime. If rain prevents a promised picnic, the world is broken. The sunny to-morrow, when the picnic may be held, is an age away—incomprehensible, not to be got at! If an outbreak of aggression appears to alienate mother's affection, then mother's affection is gone. The world is dark, cold, empty of succour. Panic lurks round the corner. The knowledge that mother will get over it, and that there is a to-morrow full of affection is a later acquisition. So *immediate* action must be taken. Immediate restoration is necessary. One must have the surface of goodness back, no matter what is underneath. The late Sir Hugh Walpole expressed this with great delicacy of insight in *Jeremy*, where he wrote: 'He was wicked, an outcast; his word could never be trusted again. He would be pointed out as the boy who told a lie . . . The eternity of his punishment hung around his neck like an iron chain . . . He did not even now feel really wicked, but he saw quite clearly that there was one world for liars and one for truthful men. *He wanted, terribly badly, someone to tell him that he was still in the right world.*'[1] The child has a present, but not a future. It is characteristic of the mature person that he can conceive of a future, and can therefore take time. He can take time to discover what has gone wrong with a relationship, and what is needed to restore it. He is able to bring patience, knowledge and understanding to bear on a problem. But as most of us are not psychologically adult, our methods of dealing with evil are the methods of the nursery, to which indeed the bogey of evil itself belongs. And to the nursery-age belong our methods

[1] The italics are mine.

of peace-making! Let it but appear that the evil that menaced us is gone, and we are good again. And even though the years bring their disillusionment, the semblance of goodness, the pride of being evil-removers, continues to hang round us in faded and shoddy glory.

The vanquished are in much worse case. Although they may, as I have already suggested, feel a more outraged and martyred goodness, unconsciously their guilt-sense is enormously increased. *They* have not the satisfaction of having done what they set out to do, and so they have lost the approval of their own super-ego. And it is just at the moment when one doubts one's own goodness, and only at the moment when one doubts one's own goodness, that the condemnation of others has a really disintegrating effect. It is then that, frightened and insecure, the unloved make their appropriate response. 'If you will not love me, then you must feel the power of my hatred.'[1]

Hatred and compensatory activity! The defeated nation tends, as Germany did after 1918, to indulge in a measureless orgy of self-love. Her people were—as so many others have been—the 'Herrenvolk'. She chose for herself a symbolic father, Hitler—a good parent to set against that hard stepmother, the League of Nations. One should have seen it as the situation of a child among children, if only by its close resemblance to a folk-story. The despised child turns out to be the prince or princess who is then able to despise, and be revenged upon, the despisers.

Did not the Germans present their armistice terms to France in the very railway dining-car where the 1918 Armistice had been signed? And did not the New York Herald-Tribune say: 'Hitler found his great moment not in a victor's conquest of the future, but in a childish triumph over the past. Hitler has waded through the blood of a million men, women and children to taste the sweets of that moment.' Of course it was a childish triumph. But curiously

[1] *Sadism and Masochism*, vol. II, p. 67.

enough, by using the word 'childish' in that way, we blind ourselves to the fact that the situation was childish and could best so be understood. We blind ourselves to the fact that—as Suttie paraphrased it—'Hell hath no fury but a baby scorned.'[1] But the fury of the 'baby' does nothing but cause more hurt. One cannot re-establish oneself by oneself, whether one is the punished child flying into a tantrum to attract attention as a substitute for love, or tormenting the cat to obtain the perverted pleasure of love denied, or eating too much toffee to show oneself how much one loves oneself, or whether one is the punished nation bestriding the narrow world to reconstitute one's diminished self a Colossus.

So one example of the effect of guilt, experienced from within, imputed from without, goes into history. But even as we consider it a new situation even more deeply fraught with guilt grows around and threatens to envelop us. Victory could not bring to us in this country its usual feeling-reward. The 'guilty compassion' aroused by the contemplation of the destruction we had wrought in Hiroshima; the continued 'austerity' which made us doubt a virtue that brought so little reward; the possession of new weapons of unexampled destructiveness; all these things tend to make guilt the very atmosphere of our world. And it was noticeable how quickly there arose among us the 'scapegoat' thinking that goes so inevitably with guilt. Some form of Government, some great Power, some ideology, became responsible—in many people's conversation —for the entire aftermath of a world war, and one was left with the consoling impression that world wars would have no aftermath, and that everything in the national and international garden would have been lovely but for——! And we are back again in the good old belief in the one sinner.

The black and white thinking characteristic of all periods of unease and insecurity seems to become almost daily more

[1] *The Origins of Love and Hate*, p. 23.

common, and with it grows the accompanying tendency to make judgments without adequate, or sometimes indeed without any, evidence. This means that, as snippets of world press opinion fly hither and thither, and are reported —or misreported!—here, there and everywhere, different national groups grow more and more aware of the uncomplimentary opinions held of them by other groups; and a state of affairs liable to serious deterioration maintains.

To describe it in terms of group needs for love and admiration may seem a fantastic over-simplification of a vastly complex international situation. The ill-opinion of others may, however, be a major aggravation; and I find most interesting confirmation of this general thesis in Gorer's recent study, *The Americans*, where he takes the need for love-worthiness, reassurance, as fundamental to the existing culture pattern of the U.S.A. 'This belief in love', he suggests, 'as a major factor in international relations . . . engenders an excessive sensitivity to the changing attitudes of foreign countries or those who are believed to be their representatives or spokesmen; . . . Coupled with this desire to be loved is a strong fear of rejection, of being treated as unworthy of love.' Or, as Mr. Hannibal Chollop, in *Martin Chuzzlewit* more tersely has it: 'Our backs is easy ris.'

I am myself inclined to think that Mr. Gorer's comment —not to mention Charles Dickens's—on the American situation is in fact even more justly a comment on the human situation; a comment which sheds a rather revealing light on the reason why nations, like individuals, are touchy to such an alarming degree, and the world situation so obviously charged with irrational, wholly unassimilated emotion.

So much for that. And if it be in any part so—if national egos need love and approval, if they feel guilty according to the measure of their aggressiveness, if to tell them how wrong they are has often worse than no effect—what then?

Only, it would seem, this very long term policy—that, so far as possible on a world scale, every movement which gives worth and love to every human being and every human group be patiently supported. 'It was clear', Ludwig Lewisohn wrote after the First World War, 'that the world needed to be rebuilt after another pattern of thought and aim, that the very source of men's emotional response needed to be changed and nearly all the fundamental traditions to be reversed.' It is still clear. 'In the old order of heaven and earth there is no escape.' The cycle of 'the wrong that amendeth wrong' has to be broken. From somewhere—through someone—there has to break into it the right that amendeth wrong. And if it be not in time—it is at least the only way of living worth the while, and the only thing that will succeed if any succeed at all.

And the Lord God said: Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.

GENESIS

We have many standards, but we still believe that only one standard can be the right one. We present to our children the picture of a battlefield where each group is fully armoured in a conviction of the righteousness of its cause . . . Realising that our own ways are not humanly inevitable nor God-ordained, but are the fruit of a long and turbulent history, we may well examine in turn all of our institutions thrown into strong relief against the history of other civilisations, and weighing them in the balance, be not afraid to find them wanting.

MARGARET MEAD, in *Coming of Age in Samoa*

CHAPTER VIII

Good and Evil

It is not only our ways of acting toward one another which may be determined by feeling-attitudes towards life unconsciously acquired in childhood. Our ways of thinking about life may also be so determined, our world views, our philosophies. Dr. L. P. Jacks, for instance, in his *Confession of an Octogenarian*, says that the misery of his childhood 'lasted long enough to brand itself on my memory, and lend a touch of dark colour to my vision of the universe which has never completely faded out'. All such frank admissions as this of subjective factors point the way to the possibility of an increasingly objective philosophy. The more we become able to recognise our own and other peoples' emotional bias —and chiefly our own!—the less shall we see life either more darkly or more brightly than its facts and possibilities warrant. It will always, inevitably, be a matter of more or less.

The whole question of the often unconscious emotional determination of thought-patterns has already a considerable literature and is bound to be examined more and more fully in the future. All I am able to do here is to touch upon a certain duality in our thinking which seems to me to arise from the duality in the child's mind, where the principle of the super-ego (the principle of what society requires the child to be) is set over against the pleasure principle of the ID. This duality seems to depend upon the fact that, as the child's mind is without knowledge of time, so inevitably is it without knowledge of complexity. The child is, for example, easily able to sense the difference between love-earning and blame-winning forms of conduct. These are

simple and clear to it. But much too difficult is the idea of one self who acts both wrongly and rightly, so the child's mind 'conceives' dimly of two selves within it, a good and a bad. Some children even personify the bad self as another imaginary child who takes the blame for all faults. (The good self is always, obviously, kept for oneself!) A small boy of my acquaintance had the ingenious idea of imagining a family of cats living somewhere in the region of his stomach. When something went wrong his 'pussies', not he, were responsible. If he remained conveniently deaf to one of his mother's injunctions, he would explain (if the situation became sufficiently uncomfortable) that his 'pussies' hadn't heard. If asked why they hadn't listened, he explained —having a mind of imposing creative capacity—that they had just gone out. He had heard them shut the door. Before so convincing a dissociation from one's misdeeds, the unfortunate parent can but withdraw even if not 'according to plan'.

This method of splitting the now good, now bad, aspects of life into two, a clearly good, an undeniably bad, colours other fields of child 'thinking'. The parent image is also split, and the child thinks of a good father and a bad father; a good mother and a bad mother. The mental image of the good father or mother is made up from the father or mother as 'felt' at all those times when they are doing just what baby requires—consenting, protecting, feeding, loving, approving! The bad father or mother are made up from the same father or mother when doing what does not suit baby—denying, abandoning, withholding, disliking, disapproving. It is once again a simpler idea than that of one parent who is now kind, now 'cruel'; as it must have been simpler to the primitive mind to think of Odin the Thunderer, and Balder the Sunshine, than of one elemental force that expressed itself both in threatening storm and reassuring warmth.

This splitting of one into two—this over-simplifying by dualism—is the more influential for later life in that it is done quite unconsciously. As with the voice of the super-ego, its

very unconsciousness gives it power. One *feels* it so deeply to be so, without knowing why, that one comes to *think* that it is so. Moreover, the divisions arise at a period when feeling itself is more strong and more absolute than at any later time whatsoever. One has no knowledge and little judgment. The assessment is wholly emotional—an assessment of need and fear, not of reason.

Similarly in the arms of the loving, approving parent is to be found a very heaven of comfort. Alone, unloved, disapproved even for the moment, one dwells in a very hell of hatred and fear.

> Banished?
> O Friar, the damnèd use that word in hell.

And the good self which wins the heaven is very, very good. The bad self which is cast down to hell is 'horrid'. Never again, in all the years that lie ahead, will emotion be so strong and so clear, and heaven and hell so very, very far apart.

These dualisms are primitive and childish. They arose variously in infancy out of the varieties of the parent-child relationship, and out of the curious capacity of the unconscious mind for exaggerating these varieties. But for all that —because of all that—they provide the pattern for later thinking and feeling about the world. Out of the child's early perception that there are two forms of conduct, one acceptable and the other unacceptable, there arises the assumption by individuals, groups, religions, nations, civilisations, of absolute standards of right and wrong. And we cling to them desperately, often, as Dr. Mead points out, to the extent of turning them into a battlefield, not because of our rational certainty about them, but because they once represented the heaven of acceptance and the outer darkness of repudiation. It is only rarely that we realise that standards which seem unalterably right to us—shall we say the convention of attempting to confine sex relationships within the framework of monogamous marriage, or the protection of property?—may seem quite wrong to other people. It is

only rarely that we realise that what seems to us a God-given, or absolute law, is only that which seemed acceptable to the 'fathers' of some special group at some special time. The 'fathers' may occasionally have been humanly and universally right. They much more frequently, and very naturally, legislated for their own convenience.

It was doubtless convenient for the fathers in Israel who had more wives and servants and cattle than the rest to make a law, i.e. stabilise what was pleasing to them, saying, 'Thou shalt not covet', but it is no more an absolute law for human conduct than it would have been had they said: 'Thou shalt not live in such a way as to cause covetousness.' To the Esquimaux fathers it seems just as convenient that there shall be no right to private property at all, and that you are a 'barbarian' if you claim one. The Esquimaux think it uncivilised to a degree to strike a child, but they have no objection to what we call adultery, provided it be friendly, and with the consent of everyone concerned.

Our standards, good and bad, are too often unexamined because they have come down to us from our 'fathers', and have therefore become part of our own super-ego. They have all the powerful sanction of the 'father says so' of infancy. Because as children we only felt safe within the bounds of what we ourselves had learned as good, we quickly tend as adults to regard any differing 'good' as a threat to our own emotional security. And we are then driven, in the same fearful, compulsive way in which we deal with other threats, to try either to remove it or to repress its manifestations.

The more we are able to realise that people may have different 'goods' for different reasons, the more shall we be able to approach them with understanding and without condemnation, and ask them to work out with ourselves a common good. Such an approach, which says: 'We have our good. You have yours. We are sure ours is imperfect, and we are afraid yours doesn't seem quite right to us' eliminates the antagonising business of putting the other person in the

wrong and is, I am sure, the only way of growing up out of all our joint and various evils.[1] That is why a standard of right and wrong, built up childishly in childish years, and vested in the super-ego, is not enough for a better civilisation.

Just as the splitting into the good and bad self and the good and bad standard tends to produce a narrow and antagonistic ethic, so the splitting of the parent image tends to produce a narrow and antagonistic philosophy. As most cultures do not allow any adverse criticism of the father (obviously, as they were framed by fathers, and how pleasant not to be criticised!), the child does not generally regard his own father as bad. Instead, he separates off the goodness of his father and makes of it a symbol of beneficence, and the badness of his father and makes a symbol of malevolence. He then throws these symbols outward from his mind and projects them upon the universe—frequently in the figures of a god and a devil.

At a religious conference I once heard people discussing the possibilities of reformulating their own especial doctrine. Several of them protested that they had the idea of God as Father, and they confidently asserted that was enough. It seems to me to be far from enough. I know fathers from

[1] In confirmation of this, I was much impressed, recently, when in a lecture given at Birmingham University, Dr. Margaret Mead described—I write from memory, and cannot quote her exact words—the resolution of difficulties at various international round-table conferences by what she calls the anthropologist's approach. That is to say, that what might formerly have been considered purely obstructive could be understood as part of the other person's culture pattern—while he, the other person, might similarly understand what were once thought of as merely obstructions on our part. And Mr. Attlee, speaking to the World Forum of Youth on 15 May 1950, is reported (*News Chronicle*) to have said: 'Remember if you want to build up a peaceful world you will not build it up on elaborate written constitutions or on a mass of formalities. You will build it up first of all on an acceptance of common ideas, particularly the common idea of democracy. You will build it up on personal friendships and on the understanding of other people's points of view.'

whom I would take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost part of the earth—and still shiver a bit! And I know fathers in whom that in me which is childish can still enjoy the idea of sheltering in kind and delightful safety.

But whether one call God Father or not, and however much one's conception be modified or enlarged by other conceptions, the god-figure tends to be made out of some aspect of one's own father, and the corresponding aspect of one's super-ego, the father-representative. One frequently finds that where the father has been harsh and punitive, and the super-ego similarly harsh and punitive towards the self, the god-symbol is harsh and punitive—especially of course towards publicans and sinners and Communists. Unless, of course, a 'reaction-formation' takes place, and the god-symbol is pictured as loving in a vague, diffuse and sentimental sort of way in order to provide a compensation for harshness experienced in childhood. In either case the figure is that of the good father, but in neither case is he a very useful guide, either to one's thinking about the nature of life or to one's way of treating one's neighbour.

One is often tempted to say to the believer in the stern and punitive God: 'But you yourself are better, kinder, more merciful than your God.' And this is frequently true. For where the god-figure is a projection of an infantile 'apprehension' of the father, one may reasonably suppose that the grown-up self will have developed ideas more enlightened and humane.

Indeed, some very curious anomalies arise out of the discrepancy between childish and adult 'conceptions' co-existing in the same mind. There are many instances of the nature and ideas of the devil being better, by any reasonable standard, than the nature and ideas of the god. A striking one—to me—is to be found in Newman's *Dream of Gerontius*, and another in the sixteenth-century 'Morality' *The Theatre of the World*. In the former, the chorus of devils, and in the latter the devil himself, seem to represent enlightened and humane insights and values which I imagine

had been acquired by the ego of the writer, and then repudiated by the super-ego because they did not fit in with its own infantile (but how powerful!) standards of right and wrong. The poor, wretched ego, compulsively driven as so often by the super-ego, had then to repudiate its finer wisdom and put it into the mouth of the devil.

This situation was delightfully parodied in *The Devil's Disciple*, where the rule of the super-ego-god—Shaw does not call it that—is so ugly as to make preferable discipleship of the devil. And in a later play, *Mr. Bolfry*, James Bridie gives to his devil some of the arguments which one might well look upon as the dictates of reason. The super-ego in man leaps continually to the flouting or destroying of the still, small voice of reason. As in Martin Luther's: 'What could be more rationally impossible, laughable, ridiculous, than God's command to Abraham? All the articles of our Christian belief are, when considered rationally, just as impossible and mendacious and preposterous. Faith, however, is completely abreast of the situation! It grips reason by the throat and strangles the beast.' It was doubtless not faith that was equal to the situation but the super-ego!

Matters would, however, be simpler if the worst we had to deal with were unfortunate aspects of the father exalted into symbols of deity. We are, ironically enough, worse off when it is the best of the father—all that was good in the real father, as well as all that the child imagined to be good, and profoundly needed as good, in a dream-father—which is projected on to the god-figure. For the good father, the dream-father, is he who completely protects, loves and provides for the child; he who is concerned *absolutely* for its good. If, therefore, God be the projection of such a figure, then the things which he allows to befall his children *must* be good, even if only in some ultimate and not-yet-understood sense. It is notorious, for instance, that the unjustly punished child may often prefer to feel a sense of guilt itself than admit the parent to be guilty. Its conviction of the goodness of the

parent must not be jeopardised. Far safer to say: 'I must have deserved it.' I myself have met, in books and in personal experience, justifications of so many frustrations, injustices, diseases, deaths, maladjustments and failures in relationship, on the ground that they must be meant for some good purpose by a loving God, that I feel that the world must be full of removable evil tolerated on that childish principle. Nor is the 'will-of-God' sanction of evil a thing of the past. One meets it in constant advocacy of the moral value of suffering, the moral virtue of struggle, and in the very prevalent fear of happiness which is ultimately fear of life.

The extreme of this childish reliance on the good father is to be seen in certain forms of prayer. An excellent example occurred during the war in a News-Reel. A food convoy, after an extremely dangerous passage, had arrived (in part) safely in port. The men were shown thanking God for their safe deliverance. Now it is surely only the childishness of the infant safely back in its mother's arms that can be of such deep 'unconsciousness' as not to realise that if God had *personally* saved the survivors He had, also personally, allowed the others to be drowned. Prayers to be delivered from bombs come into the same category. If God will divert from me personally the bomb in its course He must, in the nature of the case, be responsible for every bomb that falls, and the destination thereof.

And if the reply be: 'Well, perhaps the other people are not praying, or not praying enough', I can only say that this seems to me tantamount to saying: 'God will naturally give preferential treatment to such a good child as I am.' And when even that 'argument' appears to be invalidated by the denial of some prayer of the very faithful, one is then led to understand that sometimes God sees fit in His good purposes to let a bomb drop on a good child. The feeling about life which underlies such a metaphysic seems to me to be unrealistic and unhelpful. It blinds us to the fact that none of us will ever be safe until all of us together decide to

remove bombs—and other dangerous things—from the world. It blinds us to the fact that we sometimes conceive a god not only so terrible, but so childish, that he takes the most appalling revenges on those who do not sufficiently grovel before him; that he inflicts upon people for their good such terrible injuries that, were he to walk this earth, even we, who can bear so much inhumanity would shut him up in a mental home or send him to the gallows. But, of course, he is not God. A family likeness peeps out. Who is the taker of appalling revenges, who the inflictor of incredible injuries—who but our old enemy, the super-ego?

And then there is the devil! To-day, perhaps, we refer to him less crudely,[1] calling him 'aggressiveness', 'something inherently evil in the nature of things', and all the rest, but he is the same old ravening beast whom our fathers pictured in red tights and a tail; the same, who, tiger- or bear-shaped, chased us down the attic stairs in the dark when we were small! He is the 'bad' father, and also the 'bad' aggression that is aroused in our mind by the 'bad' father. It is little wonder that we have painted him in lurid colours, for the imagination has never bodied forth shapes horrific enough for that death-impulse, aggression, which was felt to exist in the bad parent and the bad self, and which pursued one, unceasingly, down the dark corridors of the unconscious mind. But it is not very useful to project this aggressive power on to a devil; partly because, if we saw him for what he is, we might be able to convert him into a very friendly creature indeed;[2] and partly because the very idea of something inherently evil in the nature of things gives us a sense of impotence. The problem, ceasing to be human, ceases also to be humanly soluble or even humanly ameliorable. And as soon as one ceases to see the human problem, however ugly,

[1] T. S. Eliot has an amusing comment on this in *The Cocktail Party* where the girl, Celia, says: 'Well, my bringing up was pretty conventional—I had always been taught to disbelieve in sin.'

[2] See next chapter for the discussion on the convertibility of dragons.

as anything but an aspect of human nature which is potentially understandable and at least partially changeable, then one loses faith in the only power that can understand and change—the conscious, adult mind!

And if, after all, there be some power not ourselves that makes for righteousness and, I hope, even more for beauty and happiness, then it must be the conscious, adult, human mind that is able to understand its nature and co-operate in its purpose. Babies in arms may be the most delightful creatures in the world, but they are only delightful *when* they are babies. Babies-in-arms hiding in the depths of 'adult' minds are monsters and anachronisms. The moment in human evolution has been reached when man—as distinct from men—must grow up in psyche as well as in years, and take upon himself the responsibility for himself, for his relationships, and for the state of affairs in his world.

There are, of course, the difficulties inherent in all periods of unusual disturbance, but even those lend themselves to our understanding. Freud pointed out, years ago, in *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, how between 1918 and 1939, when the atmosphere of the world was one of threat and insecurity, the guilt sense of the peoples involved was profoundly deepened.[1] The argument of the childish part of the mind ran something like this: 'Father is displeased with me. If he weren't, he wouldn't have made my world so extremely unpleasant. It seems clear that I am incapable of winning his love, *therefore* (post hoc *and* propter hoc) how very wicked I must be.' And, as the sense of sin increased, the introjected father-symbol, the super-ego, became more transcendent, more 'other', less assimilable. The burden of carrying such a super-ego within the mind became more and more intolerable. So it had to be projected upon the universe

[1] 'Fate is felt to be a substitute for the agency of the parents; adversity means that one is no longer moved by this highest power of all, and, threatened by this loss of love, one humbles oneself again before the representative of the parents in the super-ego, which in happier days one had tried to disregard. . . .' *Civilisation, War and Death*, p. 60.

more remotely and more definitely. The god-symbol was more and more clearly differentiated, while at the same time it had to be more humbly and more anxiously propitiated in order that its wrath might be averted.[1] In fact we were in those years much in the position of Browning's Çaliban. We had reached a stage where growing knowledge was making us ask more and more questions about the nature of our universe. But we were still Caliban, still primitive, still afraid. From the distance came the first rumblings of the thunderstorm of war, and our small, proud questionings faltered and died.

> What, what? A curtain o'er the world at once!
> Crickets stop hissing; not a bird,—or yes,
> There scuds His raven that hath told Him all,
> It was fool's play, thus prattling! Ha, the wind
> Shoulders the pillared dust, death's house o' the move,
> And fast invading fires begin! White blaze—
> A tree's head snaps—and there, there, there, there, there,
>
> His thunder follows, Fool to gibe at Him!
> Lo! 'Lieth flat and loveth Setebos,
> 'Maketh his teeth meet through his upper lip,
> Will let those quails fly, will not eat this month,
> One little mess of whelks, so he may 'scape,

And as the thunder rolled, and the father-symbol in the skies grew more powerful, more feared, more condemning, so similarly grew in power the father-symbol on earth—the dictator, the prime-minister, the president, the 'big' man who would protect the 'children' in their helplessness, regularise their sinfulness, and offer, at last, to take them back to the garden of Eden where the little child is irresponsible, well-fed and secure. But 'grown men', said H. G. Wells, 'do not need leaders'. And there are now certain reassuring indications that some groups, at least, prefer to get along without a too obvious father-figure at their head.

[1] A notable example, though only one among many, is the religious philosophy of Karl Barth.

Some sense of confidence, of human capacity to handle human affairs, must be in process of renewal.

But to return to the various projections on to the universe of the dualisms that arise in the immature mind. As these give rise to good and bad parent-symbols, so do they lead us to imagine a good and a bad state, a heaven and a hell. The good state for the child is the state of security in affection, security about his own goodness, freedom from conflict, freedom from necessity—to wit, heaven. The bad state for the child is the state of anxiety about his own wickedness, chiefly his own aggression, which alienates him from love and approbation (i.e. heaven), and causes him to be pursued, punished, tortured by his own aggressive super-ego. And hell on earth is actually made by the letting loose of these internal forces, 'once-upon-a-time' personified as dragons and witches, but since brought up to date and scientifically disguised, as tanks and submarines and bombing planes.

Now it is hardly sensible to endure 'the whips and scorns of time' because of an infant's timeless dream—a return to the womb, where everything was peace—a separation-off of all that was magically right when one was a small child—a compensation for all that was wrong—an overwhelming recompense for all harshness the father should never have shown—a phantasy set at the end of a transient, disillusioning contact with the 'real'. Such an idea of heaven has not only, it seems to me, been born of earthly pain and frustration. It has also made it possible for that pain to continue and increase.

One cannot, perhaps, become too aware of the exaggerated phantasies which may be born in the child's mind while that mind is still largely 'unconscious', and which may live on in the 'unconscious' of the adult. The punishment that the angry father may inflict, and that the erring self deserves, gives a picture of a state and place of torment too dreadful to imagine—except that it is, in fact, too often imagined. And the place and state of bliss to be conferred by

the rewarding parent, sometimes even as a kind of last-minute reprieve is equally extravagant and, in some of its aspects equally, I should imagine, undesirable. I feel some sympathy with Fred Hoyle where he says, in a broadcast talk on 'Man's Place in the Expanding Universe', 'What the Christians offer me is an eternity of frustration . . .'

There is, certainly, about both states sufficient of the 'unrealism' we have been discussing. Those who have believed in them most firmly have most often (and understandably on this hypothesis) thought of them as being arbitrarily awarded. According to some special belief, in distinction from some special effort to produce a more heaven-like state on earth, does one become sure of heaven! According to some special guilt, in distinction from one's share in the hell-on-earth that often exists, does one fear an eternity of damnation!

When these necessities of the inner world are turned outwards and made the basis of a metaphysic, the results are—not always, but on the whole—destructive of a more real happiness and endeavour. If physical life on earth had not been too long detrimentally compared with 'spiritual' life in heaven, we might not have so easily acquiesced in so much frustration, sickness, unfulfilment and death. 'Father can't possibly let me have such a bad time. I must put up with it, though, for he must mean it for my good. In any case, I can't give up the idea of his great regard for my most important self (these phantasies have, of course, much of the hard-to-relinquish omnipotence of infancy) and so he is sure to have something especially good in store for me. Something better, indeed, I can't help feeling than he is storing up for most other people.' So it goes—or something like that. And it doesn't help. It doesn't help at all.

Nor is the 'concept' of hell of any greater help to us on our way to freedom and happiness; nor has that 'concept' disappeared. C. S. Lewis, in *The Problem of Pain* has a chapter on 'Hell' where he asserts that: 'Some will not be redeemed. There is no doctrine which I would more

willingly remove from Christianity than this, if it lay in my power. But it has the full support of Scripture and, especially, of Our Lord's own words; it has always been held by Christendom; and it has the support of reason . . . I am not going to try to prove the doctrine tolerable. But I think the doctrine can be shown to be moral . . . In all discussions of Hell we should keep steadily before our eyes the possible damnation, not of our enemies nor our friends, but of ourselves.'[1]

Now I believe, with all due respect, that where Mr. Lewis says that the doctrine of hell has 'the support of reason' he is making a mistake—that it is his reason and his humanity which argue so valiantly against the doctrine, only to be overthrown by the condemning super-ego. And a psychological clue to the whole argument is to be found in the last words of the quoted passage—'We should keep steadily before our own eyes the possible damnation . . . *of ourselves.*' This appears to me to be but another instance of the tendency I have already mentioned to feel that our goodness is only secure when we hold it by fear. But it is a pretty pass to which we have come when we dare not trust ourselves to be good out of love, but only if we paint for ourselves the most terrible consequences of evil.

It will be understood that this argument deals primarily with the consequences in personal and social life of the incorporation into the mind of unreal parent-figures whose blessing and cursing are both, happily, far beyond those of most actual parents. More adult speculations on the 'bourne from which no traveller returns' are not within its scope. To the writer it does however seem amply clear that there could be no immortality which did not depend upon the utmost valuing of the mortal—the handling indeed of the mortal as though it were all we had, a brief and brittle stuff of great worth and beauty deserving of our best skill and kindness. If life be not worth the trouble, it is hard to see why our carelessness with it should be compensated. Our

[1] pp. 106, 108 and 116.

most 'real' moments—our moments most worthy of extension may be those where, in the love of friends or the appreciation of beauty, we are fleetingly aware that any heaven would do well that gave us half as much.

Of the existence of hell we need hardly be in doubt. We make it ourselves when the life within us has become in some way perverted and drives us to perverted action in the world. But I must still believe that this perversion can be understood, and that we can find ways of preventing its happening, but only if we see it where it is and for what it is. If we project hell into the after-life, where it is not, we shall by that much be held up from a reasonable effort to redeem it where it is—in our hearts and in our world.

If there be, as has now been suggested to minds already stunned with size and wonder, and unable any longer to appreciate the implications of a universe wildly expanding beyond the wildest imaginative grasp—if there be other worlds, with other human, or like-to-human beings on them, having, may we hope, some happier and more common-sensical time than we, it is still permissible to wonder whether love might not be a final principle, making not only the world, but worlds, go round. But love in such a sense, as far as it is possible to conceive of it, would not be the arbitrary, so often hate-like love, of an infant's wish or fear. It would be a 'spirit', and anything we should ever know about it—or should I here say 'feel' about it?—we should know and feel only with the love with which we, in this flesh, at this time, on this planet, were able to love.

First and foremost, the dragon is the symbol of the fluid, rapid, startling movement of life within us . . . From earliest times man has been aware of a 'power' or potency within him—and also outside him—which he has no ultimate control over . . . It is something beyond him, yet within him. It is swift and surprising as a serpent, as overmastering as a dragon. It leaps up from somewhere inside him and has the better of him . . . The fluid, rapid, invincible, even clairvoyant potency that can surge through the whole body and spirit of a man, this is the dragon, the grand, divine dragon of his super-human potency, or the great, demonish dragon of his inward destruction . . . Man can have the serpent with him or against him. When his serpent is with him, he is almost divine. When his serpent is against him, he is stung, envenomed and defeated from within.

D. H. LAWRENCE: *Apocalypse*

CHAPTER IX

St. George and the Dragon

Another of the old and popular dualisms by which we try to grasp and simplify the problems of our life is the division, made originally by the infant, into the good and bad self. According to this division we think of the life within us as a principle inherently evil over which some other principle, either human or divine, must come in and win a victory. That men should have come to believe in these two principles and in their essential antagonism is very natural. There is now, and possibly always has been, from the time when a knowledge of good and evil emerged, a more or less serious dualism in human beings. But it is doubtful whether this dualism, at least in its present form, is essential. Animal energy may be indifferent to human ends, but need not surely be antagonistic to them. Indeed animal energy, because of certain instinctive tendencies already manifest in it, was that which could have been 'converted' to the needs of human life. When, however, this neutral energy was repressed, disowned, un-understood, it changed in quality, and frequently became an unconscious force actually and disastrously antagonistic to human ends. And because this change of quality has happened in most of us in this civilisation, there are very few of us without a sense of sin. Those who are freer than the rest tend to be very unpopular, as Walt Whitman was, when he lay under an apple tree and invited his soul, provoking thereby both envy and fear. What would happen to the world if people insisted on lying under apple trees? What has happened to it because they don't?

The life of the average person has been forced, by the

conception of an evil inherent in it, into a wholly unnatural and crippling dualism. But for the influence of this dualism, for so long inculcated by so much of our religious and moral philosophy, we might have learned by now that we have an instinctive life of certain given potentialities which we could, in certain ascertainable ways, run into more 'human channels' than has hitherto been the case. And if 'unhuman' tendencies had showed themselves we might have regarded them chiefly as incentive to greater understanding of, and harder work upon, the 'stuff' of our existence, and not as antagonistic forces within us against which we had to fight, even to the death.

Such an attitude towards 'evil' could not, of course, have arisen early in the history of man. It needed time, and much time, for its development.

> Man, therefore, thus conditioned, must expect
> He could not, what he knows now, know at first;
> What he considers that he knows to-day,
> Come but to-morrow he will find misknown.[1]

Yet surely, had it not been for the idea of sin, the handling of life might have become, at least somewhat earlier than this, more like the artist's handling of his medium—a handling that would still mean hard work, that would mean technique, wisdom, love, vision, and—discipline; and yet remain an art and not a warfare. And the stuff of life, like the block of marble, might have been to our minds that which lends itself to the working of the sculptor; not that which is, of its very nature, obstructive of that working. Our method has too often been that of the warrior with the bludgeon, not the artist with the tool. We have felt that one part of us —the part that was willing to fit in with the human community—was good, and must through the super-ego fight the evil, the not-yet-fitting-in part, and if at all possible destroy it.

This deep-rooted, often unconscious, feeling that we must destroy a part of ourselves, has been popularly and

[1] Browning: *A Death in the Desert.*

widely expressed in the St. George and the Dragon stories.[1] It is notoriously difficult to find a single historical St. George. Other people than our own claim him for their patron saint, and the truth would seem to be that he is a typical legendary figure, a white knight who goes out to fight a dark dragon. And the poor, dark dragon, as D. H. Lawrence says, is really life itself, life with its strength, its vitality, its alarming unexpectedness. Because man found this life difficult to understand and control, he conceived of it as evil, and projected it outwards from himself in the shape of a life-devourer, a dragon. Then, in the person of his permissible, acceptable self, the white knight, he went out to slay the dragon. There is considerable evidence to suggest that the mind does unconsciously conceive of the turbulent, uncontrollable life-energy within itself in the shape of dragons and other terrible monsters.[2] Infants often feel their aggression in this way, and many of us, as small children, have probably fled in dire terror in the dark from the imaginary pursuit of imaginary tigers—tigers that grew first in our minds because we had stored and feared our not at all imaginary aggression.

The division of ourselves into St. George and the Dragon is, I believe, as hindering now to human progress as any other dualism. In the first place it confirms and makes concrete the suspicion that there is something in us terrible and alien, and so diverts our minds from the reality that we possess a vital and potentially benevolent power which only needs humanising. It holds up the necessary understanding, and indeed there seems to be no sphere of life where the fearful branding of something as evil does not in its very nature preclude understanding.

Moreover, the division leads to a total misconception of

[1] There are other psychological interpretations of these stories which deal with deeper levels of the unconscious mind. They do not, however, invalidate the present interpretation which has its own logic on its own mental level. In popular thought the dragon does mean evil.

[2] A friend tells me that he was, in childhood, pursued by no less a creature than a brontosaurus—a most superior pursuing!

where and what the evil really is. As the method of projection is cleverly designed to protect us from self-knowledge, man very soon forgets—in fact he never consciously knows—that the dragon-symbol is the symbol of disowned impulses in his own mind. He finds it easier, and much more comfortable, not merely to project it, but to project it on to any person or group which he happens to dislike at the moment. This is very unhelpful, for it means that the world is quite overcrowded with St. Georges and Dragons. Every enemy person, every enemy group, is the Dragon. How can such a playboy attitude lead to human understanding? For one never understands oneself if one sees oneself *only* as the white knight, nor one's enemy if one looks upon him as a perpetual dragon. At the end of any conflict, one takes it for granted that the vanquished dragon will see that it was right for St. George to have killed it. But as the dragon was clear that *it* was St. George, our confusion is worse confounded.

Then there is the even more serious difficulty that dragons cannot be slain. The dragon is the life-force, and the life-force is indestructible. It can be repressed, disowned, perverted, projected. It cannot be slain. It is not slain, however dead it may seem. And the attempt to slay can only turn what should be creative energy of life into destructive energy of death. That is the tragedy! We need—and how sadly!—both the energy with which we slay and the energy which we try to slay. As long as we use this energy destructively we are only half-living. If we could use it creatively we might live as we have never yet known life. 'Man can have the serpent with him or against him. When his serpent is with him he is almost divine.' But we have divided ourselves against ourselves, which not only makes us destroy each other, but sends us through life 'envenomed and defeated from within'.

The St. George and the Dragon conception of life belongs to the realm of folk- and fairy-tale. It gives us a simple, vivid picture of a childish effort to master evil which belongs to the childhood of the race. It was good enough, valiant

enough in its day, but we ought to have outgrown it. We should be moving 'from what once seemed good to what now proves best'. We should not still be living in the nursery and thinking in fairy-tales.

There have, however, been interesting evidences of a new way of thinking. The dragon is ceasing to be that which is incontrovertibly evil. He is coming to represent the power that man needs for creative life, the power he may win to his side. The dragon is no longer to be slain, but to be humanised. This conception is found, not only in such literature as D. H. Lawrence's *Apocalypse*, but also in much psychology and, curiously but significantly, in some new fairy-tales. I am sure it is not that we are a degenerate race who like to spare our children the ancient horrors which they love so much that makes us reluctant to kill the reluctant dragon. I think Walt Disney represents—either consciously or unconsciously—something of the spirit of the age when he shows the dragon as most reluctant to fight the man. Indeed, one might perhaps go further and say that the dragon has always been reluctant to be a dragon at all. It is as though —as in other old fairy-tales—we had imprisoned Life—the Prince, the hero—in dragon-form because we had laid upon him the curse of our evil imagining. And indeed he had acted dragonishly enough at times—but it was never the role he was meant to play, and that is perhaps why he overdid—and overdoes—the fearfulness, out-Heroding Herod! It would be good if now we could take the curse away and set Life free—by Love. For in this the fairy-tales point a wise way to fulfilment. The Beast, the Frog-Prince, Snow-white, the Sleeping Beauty and all the rest of them, were redeemed from ugliness and death by the kiss of love upon them.

From such a fairy-tale solution of our problem we are still far. St. George with his foot on the neck of the slain dragon is a good enough symbol of our age. For such victory as any of us has had has generally been victory by force. And the St. George who looks so triumphant has won but a Pyrrhic

victory, for he must live henceforward with only a part of himself, while an immensely larger part lies useless beneath his lance. It is not much of a victory over evil that kills most of yourself and possibly all of your would-be friend. And the symbol of the future should surely be St. George astride a friendly dragon that carries him forward into life.

A suggestion to similar effect is, if I understand him aright, to be found in W. H. Auden's *The Sea and the Mirror—A Commentary on Shakespeare's 'The Tempest'*. Caliban, the repressed, neglected, infinitely un-understood beast who dwells within the human, and whom the human does not even like to glimpse ('How *could* you (the audience is demanding of the dramatist) . . . how could you be guilty of the incredible, unpardonable treachery of bringing along the one creature . . . whom she (our native muse) cannot and will not under any circumstances stand, the solitary exception she is not at any hour of the day or night at home to?'). Caliban is Prospero's great failure.

> But Caliban remains my impervious disgrace,
> We did it, Ariel, between us; you found on me a wish
> For absolute devotion; result—this wreck
> That sprawls in the weeds and will not be repaired:

And Caliban accuses: 'At last you have come face to face with me, and are appalled to learn how far I am from being, in any sense, your dish; how completely lacking in that poise and calm and all forgiving because all understanding good nature which to the critical eye is so wonderfully and domestically present on any page of your published inventions. But where, may I ask, should I have acquired them, when . . . you have never in all these years taken the faintest personal interest in me? . . . If I do not yield you kind answer or admire you for your achievements I was never allowed to profit from, if I resent hearing you speak of your neglect of me as your 'exile', of pains you never took with me as 'all lost'. But why continue? From now on we shall have, as we both know only too well, no company but each other's, and if I have had, as I consider, a good deal to put up with

from you, I must own that, after all, I am not just the person I would have chosen for a life companion myself; so the only chance, which in any case is slim enough, of my getting a tolerably new master and you a tolerably new man, lies in our both learning, if possible and as soon as possible, to forgive and forget the past, and to keep our hopes for the future, within moderate, very moderate limits.'[1]

It is a pity that, after such an apt description of the Caliban and Ariel in man, after suggesting the method of a long-needed reconciliation, Mr. Auden should in the end wash his hands of the whole matter in a more than Calvinistic despair.

Ariel-Caliban, soul-body, mind-matter, higher-self, lower-self, divine-human, spirit-flesh, Christian-Apollyon—in such terms and many others man has described the dualism within himself. And almost always he implies that there is in himself a principle other than, and completely different from, the life of the body. This can best be illustrated by the most popular of these dichotomies—the division of man into the two principles of soul and body. It is not always clear what is meant by this division. Both in speech and in writing it is explained in different and sometimes incoherent terms. The general idea seems to be that somehow or other man has in his body, either actually or potentially, an immortal soul different in nature from, and quite independent of, the substance of his body.

The difficulty, or one of the difficulties, here, is that if one takes an evolutionary point of view, one cannot see at what moment the Creator breathed into some of his creatures this soul-principle that was different from the life-principle of all the rest of creation. If, on the other hand, one takes it that over some long period of time a slow humanisation of instinctive life was brought about by an emergent love, then one is able reasonably to fit man, the human being, into an evolutionary process. Moreover one's sense of justice is no longer revolted by the fact that the very existence of a 'soul'

[1] W. H. Auden: *For the Time Being* (Faber and Faber, 1945).

may depend upon a properly working thyroid gland, that a soul may be negated by sleeping-sickness, or blotted out by mental disease.

From this point of view, too, it becomes easier to understand how, owing to one or more of the various possible misunderstandings and repressions of life-energy, a great many people who may have intelligence, appear to have no 'soul', or only an extremely perverted one. If one takes it that some people, for some not easily understood reason, consciously deny their immortal soul and are wicked people, while others affirm it and are good, one is not only unable to discover why exactly the deniers deny, or on what principle virtue should have been permitted to the virtuous, but one is once again aghast at the injustice of the whole business. But if one takes it that, for already ascertained or for potentially ascertainable reasons, the humanisation of many people's life-energy has been hindered or perverted, one has a reasonable picture and one which gives an acceptable hope of a better humanity in the future. For where one cannot see why a much larger number of people should deliberately decide not to be 'wicked' in the future, when so many, in spite of most fervent appeals and most horrific threats, evidently deliberately decided to be 'wicked' in the past, one can see that a wiser nurture and more equitable social system might eliminate many fears, hatreds, jealousies and aggressions.[1]

For myself, I cannot believe that an immortal soul was at some historical moment injected into man. But I do believe that that 'portion' of man's life-energy which has become human—loving, sensitive, generous, happy, intelligent, appreciative and creative of beauty and art—is what he has called his soul. And I *can* see how this humanised life-energy

[1] Far better than the most modern moanings of our disillusioned philosophers on the ineradicable evil in man, is H. G. Wells's more positive: 'Eye hath not seen yet, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what his world might be like were every human being in it fed and lovingly educated.' *Babes in the Darkling Wood.*

has come to cry out upon the other part of itself that had—all unconsciously—been turned inhuman, as in this passage from Helen Waddell's *Peter Abelard*:

> Yea. The soul cries out upon the body; and I have heard the body cry out upon the soul, to the Creator of them both. 'Daily the soul complains of me' it cries, 'because I conform to my own nature, and dishonour her daily. But Thou didst fashion me of earth; how can I but smell of it? Had I been cleanly fashioned of things clean, then might she blame me for my filthiness. But now, rather might she cry out on that which made me of such stuff, and yoked us in one yoke.'

I can see how the human in man cries out with a voice of perpetual mourning upon the inhuman. I can see how, if the Creator had fashioned it so, man might well cry out too upon Him. But if we could start again, and believe that man can fashion the human life cleanly out of the clean things of the animal world, he might be no longer made up of 'enemies yoked in one yoke', but be at one and at peace.

The body-soul division, and all other such divisions, may have served some useful purpose in the evolution of man. But if that purpose did exist it seems to me to have outlived any usefulness it may have had, and become simply a hindrance. To go on thinking of life in terms of conflict is merely to create conflict. The 'soul', the human principle, needs to have with it the animal principle of the body just as much as St. George needs his Dragon alive. It would even seem to some of us that the 'soul' is made, at least partly, out of the body. That it is, in some sense, the power of the instinctive life turned to the creation of human happiness. And that, could this but be understood, could one know better both the nature of the force to be humanised, and that it is humanisation which is needed, it might be possible to go forward to some finer and gentler humanity. But so long as 'soul'—humanity—is looked upon as being something of a quite different nature from body, then man, with one part of himself, makes an abortive effort to become what he calls divine, while his misunderstood and mishandled

body becomes inhuman. The impossible better becomes, in this case, the enemy of the more realistic good, and one has the many cruelties, joylessnesses, fears and oppressions of the 'unco' guid'. Man is certainly not to be excused of his worse-than-brutishness 'because he is an animal, and what more could you expect?' But he is to learn by what methods an animal can best be turned into a man, a dragon into a knight, and a body into an instrument of human reason and human love. It is not men like gods that we want, but men like men!

How good is man's life, the mere living! How fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in joy.

ROBERT BROWNING

It was so beautiful to be mortal.

LIN YUTANG on the Ancient Greeks

CHAPTER X

The Goodness of Life

As so many of the attitudes of our own civilisation depend upon the presupposition, implicit or explicit, that there is something evil in life, we naturally find ample evidence of the result of those attitudes; and unfortunately correspondingly little evidence that a faith in life as good might produce goodness. This makes all the more welcome some recent anthropological studies which seem to suggest that there is a definite connection between a sense of sin and social disharmony and war, and a sense of goodness and co-operation and peace.

Margaret Mead in her important *Sex and Temperament* describes the life of a pacific and co-operative New Guinea tribe, the Arapesh.[1] This small tribe seems to welcome as good every aspect of life—sex is good, pregnancy is good, babies are good, childhood is good, adolescence is good, marriage is good, age is good. In fact, one of the words on which the child is nurtured is the repeated 'good, good, good', about food, dogs, other people. Suckling is made a delightful game, the infant is never denied the breast, and weaning is easy and late. Cleanliness-training is kind. There is no harsh, authoritarian parenthood—indeed, stress is laid on the 'maternal, cherishing' ideal of both men and women so that the father in the authoritarian patriarchal sense can hardly be said to exist. Children are not punished. They never have to 'earn' affection; it is there abundantly whatever they do. So they never feel 'naughty', and consequently, never feel that life itself is bad.

[1] This study is dated 1935. I have no knowledge of the present state of affairs.

The result of this attitude seems to be a very considerable modification of the super-ego. Nothing has happened—not even the withdrawal of the breast—to make the baby feel unwanted, outraged, unloved, and consequently bad. Nothing, therefore, has aroused to any great extent its aggression or hatred. Therefore it feels within itself no destructive emotion which it fears may alienate affection. No considerable amount of energy has to be detailed off to the super-ego to keep the rest of the libido in order, and there is little need to project one's own badness on to an enemy, and to relieve one's own aggression by attacking that enemy.

The land of the Arapesh is by no means, on this account, a garden of Eden. There is a certain projection of evil by the Arapesh on to the sorcerers of a neighbouring tribe, and this sometimes causes a certain amount of enmity. The Arapesh, like the rest of us, apparently likes to dissociate himself from any conduct in himself of which he does not approve. But this whole aspect is so small, and the enmity so slight and so occasional, that it is hardly an exaggeration to say that, compared with any European society, Arapesh aggression and competitiveness scarcely exist.

The Arapesh super-ego, if I interpret the situation rightly, certainly takes over from the tribe, through the elders, some simple taboos by which the self is to be directed. But the commands are gentle, positive and constructive. Growth is the tribal ideal. One does this in order to grow. One does not do the other in order to grow. Or when one is grown one does this or that in order to 'grow' the children. One does not do the other lest the growth of the children—or the pigs or the yams—be hindered. There is no imposition or even idea of guilt in the whole of the phraseology. It would seem that if one grows up in a community which has no sense of sin, and if in consequence no stern parental rule makes one take into oneself and establish in one's own mind a stern super-ego, then a considerable amount of strain, anxiety, dominance, condemnation, competitiveness,

ambition and war will naturally and inevitably be eliminated from that community. And it is little wonder that there emerges from Dr. Mead's description of the Arapesh a singing memory of human happiness.

> This is the texture, the pattern, of Arapesh life, quiet, uneventful co-operation, singing in the cold dawn, and singing and laughter in the evening, men who sit happily playing to themselves on hand-drums, women holding suckling children to their breasts, young women walking easily down the centre of the village, with the walk of those who are cherished by all about them.[1]

Another study of Dr. Mead's, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, gives a similar impression.

> The Samoan background which makes growing up so easy, so simple a matter, is the general casualness of the whole society. For Samoa is a place where no one plays for very high stakes, no one pays very heavy prices, no one suffers for his convictions[1] or fights to the death for special ends. Disagreements between parent and child are settled by the child's moving across the street, between a man and his village by the man's removal to the next village, between a husband and his wife's seducer by a few fine mats. Neither poverty nor great disasters threaten the people to make them hold their lives dearly and tremble for continued existence. No implacable gods, swift to anger and strong to punish, disturb the even tenor of their days. Wars and cannibalism are long since passed away, and now the greatest cause for tears, short of death itself, is a journey of a relative to another island. No one is hurried along in life or punished harshly for slowness of development. Instead, the gifted, the precocious, are held back, until the slowest among them have caught the pace.[2]

[1] *Sex and Temperament*, p. 122.

[2] I feel sure, as I write, that someone reading will immediately exclaim that this is but a poor life and a poor place where no one suffers for his convictions. And it is true that something is lacking. But I would also point out that for a few people who, like Socrates and Jesus, have suffered for their convictions without making other people suffer too, there have been many more who have—for their own convictions—inflicted a deal more suffering on other people than they have suffered themselves; and others still have suffered not so much for their convictions as because they have a masochistic love of suffering. And men have ever been much too willing to go to war rather than find other ways out of their conflicts, just because of our confirmed belief in the

This study of life in Samoa was undertaken chiefly to learn more about the amount of strain 'natural' to an adolescent and especially to an adolescent girl. In our Western civilisation, the adolescent period is so 'normally' one of 'sturm und drang' that we frequently make a very usual error in thinking, and imagine that all adolescence is like that—not that our adolescence is like this. Just as we say of human nature familiar to us—human nature is like that, rather than that our human nature is like this. Samoan adolescence was marked neither by strain, rebellion, conflict nor pain.

Adolescence, it turned out, was like that too. As it is not the purpose of her study, Dr. Mead does not mention in so many words the equally important difference, springing from the conditions she describes, in the formation, nature and method of the super-ego, but this difference is implicit in all she says. In assessing it one should perhaps take into account the ease of physical life on the island. Abundance of food, warmth, sunshine, the total absence of that grim struggle to win one's bread from a reluctant soil, pictured so vividly by Eugene O'Neill in *Desire under the Elms*, should on the whole make for less hardness in personal relations. It may be that children are brought up less harshly in kindlier lands and so, introjecting a kindlier super-ego, are less burdened with a sense of guilt and consequently less prone to war-making in its lesser and greater forms. For all that, the kindliness is not even chiefly a matter of climate. A kindly climate and a generous soil appear to be by no means essential to that kindly and generous nurture of children which tends to co-operation and peace. Dr. Mead herself, in *Sex and Temperament*, describes the Arapesh people who have built a friendly culture on a most unfriendly soil, and the Mundugumor who, on a spot flowing, if not with milk and

virtue of suffering for convictions. I merely mention these things. No candidate for suffering need, in the meanwhile, despair. There are still convictions to suffer for. I myself suffer for my conviction that less suffering would do us all good!

honey, at least with sago, tobacco and coconuts, have produced a highly-tensed, quarrelsome, anxious, head-hunting culture entirely by the harsh nurture of their children, and the consequent implanting of a harsh super-ego. This fact, of the at least considerable irrelevance of climate, is borne out by the kindly treatment by the Esquimaux of their children, and their co-operativeness and comparative pacifism. There are also observations from Dr. Money-Kyrle, who says:

> The Central Australian baby is never refused the nipple; it is never even weaned . . . The Central Australian adult is generous and often fatally optimistic. He lives in a land of frequent famine, yet he never hoards his food. The Normanby Island baby is treated far more harshly . . . He grows up in a land of plenty where famine is unheard of. Yet his life is dominated by the desire to collect the biggest possible hoard of food.[1]

So while one must stress the fact that a kindly, uncondemning nurture can cancel out the hardness-forming tendencies of an antagonistic climate, it is also possible that an equitable sharing of the plentiful fruits of the earth, so that the means of life should be a natural right and not an unnatural struggle, might take its part in reducing the sternness of our own super-ego, and the consequent terrible division of the self against the self. There is no doubt that an adequate supply of food, especially if that supply were the result of the working out of a gentler and juster humanity, would in itself represent a love-token.

It is also interesting to note, in connection with Dr. Mead's comment on the Samoans, quoted above, that 'no implacable gods, swift to anger and strong to punish, disturb the even tenor of their days'. If one does not carry within one's own mind an implacable super-ego 'swift to anger and strong to punish' one need not save oneself from its immediate pressure by projecting it upon the gods of one's imagination who then, in turn, harry one only a little

[1] *Superstition and Society*, p. 126.

less than they did when they dwelt within. It is not surprising, either, that there are no wars. The war-making principle which, to some minds at least, is as much the super-ego as the ID, is automatically lessened. The super-ego is so much gentler, so much less sin-convicted, that it's yoke is easy, and the ego does not cower under it in impotent hatred and blustering aggression.[1]

Dr. Mead describes other conditions which would seem conducive to the 'gentling' of that ferocious super-ego which drives our own civilisation, for all its achievements, both to the imagining and to the fact of hell. The first is the different constitution of the relationship group—a group which is not, as with us, a *family* group in the strict sense of the word at all. It does not consist of the close, small, inbred, biological family unit of father, mother, and one, or very few, children. The Samoan group has, in each household, from fifteen to twenty loosely related members. And so: 'Children reared in households where there are a half dozen adult women to care for them and dry their tears, and a half dozen adult males, all of whom represent constituted authority, do not distinguish their parents as sharply as our children do. The image of the fostering, loving mother, or

[1] Dr. Roheim suggests in *The Riddle of the Sphinx* that the more pacific primitive peoples may have projected their aggression more definitely on to fearful gods—'the hostile powers, which originally come from the external world return to it again' (p. 239)—and may therefore be capable of greater friendliness among themselves. But in several cases at least it seems that the friendlier peoples have also friendlier gods. This seems logical, although it has not followed that the waning belief in hell in our own culture has been paralleled by waning aggressiveness. This may, however, be because no decrease in super-ego sternness went with the growth of a *consciously* more acceptable metaphysic. Also because, where decrease in super-ego sternness did take place, it was not replaced by any other valuing and guiding function. Moreover, there is little doubt that with the increased aggressiveness of the recent war, the aloofness and sternness of the divinity has also increased. And I believe it to be the sternness that follows—not that precedes. Out of the heart of man comes—perhaps even his idea of the divine.

the admirable father, which may serve (i.e. in our culture) to determine affectional choices later in life, is a composite affair, composed of several aunts, cousins, older sisters and grandmothers; of chief, father, uncles, brothers and cousins.'[1]

The frequently love-starved and therefore jealous parent of our own culture might well be alarmed at such a picture as this, seeing it as a threat to 'the preservation of the sanctity of family life'.

But the question is not—at the moment anyway—whether such a grouping would or would not be desirable in our own culture, but simply of its effect upon the super-ego. In our small family unit where probably in almost all cases the parents themselves have never been too sure of their own lovedness and goodness, the love which the child needs is continually in jeopardy. If I am right in thinking that the threat (whether felt or actual) of the loss of love is more terrifying to the child's unconscious than any other threat whatever, and means that the self and the parents and the world are 'bad', then the situation of the child in the small family may be difficult to desperation. An all-or-nothing emotional situation is created. There are only the two parents. If one loses their love and favour one loses everything. Anything in one's self, therefore, which seems to alienate love is immediately brought under the heading 'bad'. The sense of guilt is deepened by the limitation in number of the loving-objects. And with the growing sense of guilt grows the internal aggression against the self.

The super-ego in this case becomes within the mind another all-or-nothing principle. If one cannot gain its *full* approval then everything is lost. These absolutes may sound exaggerated. But even so they hardly express the absoluteness of the situation in the child mind, and in that part of the adult mind which remains infantile. In the case of the Samoan child, the love it needs is vested in a number of loving objects. If one of them does not appear, at any

[1] *Coming of Age in Samoa*, p. 209.

moment, to like one so well—there are the others! Threat to the love-need is practically non-existent. And if one is securely loved, one need not search out and hound and harry whatever in one seems to alienate love. Little alienation, little guilt. Little guilt, little aggression. So the super-ego is blurred and kindly, and not unduly demanding. One cannot easily lose its approval. One does not need to feel bad.

Even more disastrous in our own culture than the limitations in number of the 'gods' from whom our so greatly needed favour may come is the fact that favour and love must be earned by conduct. If we had never discovered that love might be used as a weapon and a reward, as well as a gift, our civilisation would never have been the guilt-dominated thing it is. But how should insecure people not have discovered the power over others that lay in the 'I shan't love you if——?' The Samoans fortunately lack the major immorality of so using affection. 'The Samoan parent would reject as unseemly and odious an ethical plea made to a child in terms of personal affection "Be good to please Mother." "Go to church for father's sake." "Don't be so disagreeable to your sister, it makes father so unhappy." Where there is one standard of conduct and only one, such undignified confusion of ethics and affection is blessedly eliminated.'

The child in our culture has not only the initial fears of loss of love that arise in the early feeding and cleanliness-training. The anxiety and aggression of its super-ego may be reinforced year by year—the standard of its super-ego forced up and up, as ever-increasing numbers of activities, choices, ways of thinking, come to be regarded not as things to be considered on their merits, but as things by which one may win or lose approval, hold or alienate affection. Indeed, so starved and therefore so grasping is frequently the love wherewith our children are loved that they are held in a permanent bondage of childishness, or driven into an equally childish destructive rebellion. In fact, our children are loved both too well and too ill. They are

loved too intensely, too possessively, too jealously, too conditionally by love-starved parents. They are not loved freely enough, generously enough, unconditionally enough, by satisfied adult people.

It is probable that the competitive nature of much of our social life arises out of our making of conduct a love-earning business—'business' being a good word here. And that, a competitive society once established, the child's sense of having to establish his love-worthiness by personal achievement is powerfully and continually increased. Achievement is not, of course, enough unto itself. 'Reward'—not necessarily in its grosser senses—and recognition are necessary to all of us; and it is only to the best of us, and even then only in part, that virtue is its own reward. But surely it would bring much ease to many of us personally, and to our whole civilisation, if more stress were laid on the virtue of doing a thing well for its own sake, and not of doing it well because, in that way, we earned some affection which should have been secure to us anyway. Our capacity for achievement should not become the measure of our acceptableness to our family, our community and to ourselves.

The Samoans lessen these strains by regarding any too notable surpassing of one's fellows as a thing 'not done', so that the less able are not outclassed, and the acceptance of the community does not depend on difference of ability. A more developed society would, of course, aim at nurturing also the generosity which can not only tolerate but rejoice in outstanding ability; but generosity is never born of emotional insecurity. The difficulties caused by undue strains and failures and comparisons can be lessened.[1] What 'works'

[1] Even if Bertrand Russell, in the Reith Lectures, be right in saying that *some* competition will draw off *some* of our inevitable aggression, there are obvious difficulties in deciding to what extent competition itself causes aggression, and is, indeed, one of the major causes of war. As far as the writer can see there is a great deal of difference between constructive attempts at canalising inevitable competitiveness and aggression, and between consciously nurturing these as accepted cultural values.

among the Samoans works also in other groups with similar patterns of conduct; and in examining these patterns more closely we are not examining freaks of conduct, but trying to discover the laws according to which the common soil of human nature bears either sweet or bitter fruit.

The friendliness of the super-ego is further assured by the Samoans because they regard *as* natural the great natural processes of birth, sex and death. Small children see birth, sickness, death, not once but repeatedly, and they are not shocked because they see them within the protection of the accepting community, and with the tacit understanding that they *are* natural.

> Probably even more influential than the facts which are so copiously presented to them, is the attitude of mind with which their elders regard the matter. To them, birth and sex and death are the natural, inevitable structure of existence, of an existence in which they expect their youngest children to share... And this calm, matter-of-fact acceptance of their children's presence envelops the children in a protective atmosphere, saves them from shock, and binds them closer to the common emotion which is so dignifiedly permitted them.[1]

Our children, carefully protected from the knowledge of these things, may come upon them with both shock and horror, and until they do come upon them they may have an uneasy and fearful sense of things about life that are hidden, dark and evil. Moreover, of course, they risk the sense of guilt conveyed to them if they produce or ask for illicit information.

'False impressions, part impressions, repulsion, nausea, horror, grow up about some fact experienced only once under intense emotional stress, and in an atmosphere unfavourable to the child's attaining any real understanding.'[2]

This is partly true of sex. 'None of the facts of sex or of birth are regarded as unfit for children, no child has to conceal its knowledge for fear of punishment, or ponder painfully over little-understood occurrences. Secrecy, ignorance,

[1] *Coming of Age in Samoa*, p. 220. [2] op. cit., p. 219.

guilty knowledge, faulty speculations resulting in grotesque conceptions which may have far-reaching results, are absent in Samoa.'[1]

There can be no doubt that this secrecy and ignorance are imposed by our culture because of our deep-rooted feeling that sex *is* sin. Not even, be it marked, that some of the less pleasant manifestations (which would not anyway flourish so greatly without the sense of sin) are sin, but that sex itself is sin. It is hardly necessary to repeat how numerous are the occasions in the life of the small and growing child when this feeling about sex will obviously produce a sense of something about one—something *in* one—that is bad and unliked; something about which one must feel guilty, and which must therefore call forth the utmost harshness of the watchful super-ego. And many of the perversions and repressions which strengthen our suspicious attitude to sex spring from the suspicion—not from sex itself—but they increase our disposition to distort the whole business emotionally, and so to change the actual quality of the instinct into sadism, hatred and aggression.

It would seem that wherever the physical life of the body is regarded as natural and good this change is not so liable to happen. Dr. Ruth Benedict, writing of the Pueblo Indians, says: 'The Puritan attitude toward sex flows from its identification as sin, and the Zuni have no sense of sin. Sin is unfamiliar to them, not only in sex but in any experience. They do not suffer from guilt complexes, and they do not consider sex as a series of temptations to be resisted with

[1] cf. also Reich: *The Function of the Orgasm*, p. 131. 'Much of the pernicious inhibition of aggression which our children have to suffer is due to the equation of "aggressive" with "wicked" or "sexual".' And Roheim ('Psycho-Analysis of Primitive Cultural Types') writes of the only boy in a Central Australia group in whom he found traces of sadism: 'He has frequently been punished (i.e. in the Mission School) for the perfectly natural manifestations of his libido and these functions have become associated with the idea of torture and being tortured. For the native may have an aggressive but he has not got a sadistic character.' *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, vol. VIII, p. 37.

painful efforts of the will.'[1] These people neither punish their children nor adopt towards them any authoritarian attitude: 'The mother's brother as the male head of the matrilineal household is arbiter and responsible head. But Zuni does not recognise any authority as vested in the mother's brother, and certainly not in the father. Neither disciplines the children of his household. Babies are much fondled by the men folk. They carry them when they are ailing, and hold them in their laps evenings. But they do not discipline them.'[2]

But the result of all this lack of sense of sin, and mild discipline of the children, is *not* the wild society that might be feared. The Zuni are a peaceful, friendly, co-operative people.[3]

'Personal authority is perhaps the most vigorously disparaged trait in Zuni. The ideal man in Zuni is a person of dignity and affability who has never tried to lead . . . Any conflict, even though all right is on his side, is held against him. Even in contests of skill like their foot-races, if a man wins habitually, he is debarred from running. A good man . . . should without fail co-operate easily with others . . . never betraying a suspicion of arrogance or a strong emotion.'

There are very few 'crimes', and it all sounds extremely

[1] *Patterns of Culture*, p. 126. cf. also Roheim in *The Riddle of the Sphinx* of the Aranda (Central Australian): 'When the Lutheran Missionaries began to talk about the doctrine of original sin and to tell these descendants of the eternal dream folk that they were all sinful, wicked boys, they answered with great indignation: "The Aranda are all good." '

[2] *Patterns of Culture*, p. 101.

[3] Evidence that a harsh discipline is not the way to goodness continues to accumulate. In 'People of the Seal Place', a broadcast talk published in *The Listener* of 19 May 1949, T. T. Paterson says of the Netsilik Eskimo: 'The infants, like the adults, are delightful people. Small, chubby when there is enough to eat, sucking a piece of blubber even from the age of a month, peeping out from the hood on the mother's back where they are snug and warm. They grow into most obedient children, happy as long as there is enough food.'

pleasant at a moment when everybody wants to lead, and everybody wants to win, and everybody wants to lord it over somebody else. And if such a state of affairs can be produced without a sense of sin, one does just wonder where our own emphasis on guilt is getting us, except to rapid destruction.

Somerset Maugham admirably points the final and exceeding irony of the whole business in his story, *Rain*, where a missionary interferes with a native culture which might seem from another point of view more blameless, more happy and more free than his own. His wife is speaking:

> Mr. Davidson and I talked it over, and we made up our minds the first thing to do was to put down the dancing . . . How can you expect people to be moral when they wear nothing but a strip of red cotton round their loins . . . At the very beginning of our stay, Mr. Davidson said in one of his reports: 'The inhabitants of this island will never be thoroughly Christianised till every boy of more than ten years is made to wear a pair of trousers.'

There it all is. Sex is sinful. The body is sinful. Joy is sinful. Life is sinful. One wonders what the founder of Christianity would have thought of Christianisation by trousers! Later the missionary himself speaks:

> When we went there they had no sense of sin at all. They broke the commandments one after the other, and never knew they were doing wrong. And I think that was the most difficult part of my work, to instil into the natives the sense of sin.

And yet these people who have no sense of sin do not go to war with each other. They do not compete with each other in the horrible internecine strife of business. But Mr. Somerset Maugham's story would be less good than it is if he did not point out that the missionary was a *good* man.

> He was a medical missionary, and he was liable to be called at any time to one or other of the islands in the group . . . In cases of illness or accident he never hesitated. A dozen times he had spent the whole night baling for his life.

And that is the whole trouble. It is our goodness, not our badness, that fails us—our hardly-earned goodness

which we carry as a lash when we might wear it like a flower.

This is not to suggest that the best of these primitive cultures point the way backwards to a lost paradise which we might regain. They are unsophisticated, unselfconscious cultures. They are a natural childlikeness, delightfully and happily opposed to the unnatural childishness of our super-ego-ridden world. They lack those adult values of art,[1] thought, sophisticated living, and highly differentiated personality, which have been the lamps in our own darkness, the flames at which we have warmed our hearts and minds. It is not unusual—or indeed unnatural—in our own tormented age for men to feel that if they could get 'back to nature' things would be better. But there is no going back.[2] And in any case to what nature should one go? Some simpler, happier form of human nature? Rousseau's Noble Savage? There are, certainly, simple, happy societies. There are noble savages. But they are not 'human nature'—not *just like that*! They are nature run into certain moulds by certain chosen methods. Equally among the 'primitives' there are less happy forms of human nature. There are ignoble savages. They, too, are human nature run into other moulds by other methods.

To which should we then return? Or should we return to the nature that precedes all these forms—to the nature of the

[1] Although some of them have produced some remarkable art.

[2] It has been interesting to find how many of our modern rebels who have tried to go 'back' have, like D. H. Lawrence, found it impossible. Lawrence, writing of Mexico, said: 'It was not for me and I knew it. We do not need to live the past over again. Our darkest tissues are twisted in this old tribal experience, our warmest blood came out of the old tribal fire. And they vibrate still in answer, our blood, our tissue. But me, the conscious me, I have gone a long road since then. And as I look back, like memory terrible as bloodshed, the dark faces round the fire in the night, and one blood beating in me and them. But I don't want to go back to them, ah, never. I never want to deny them or break with them. But there is no going back. Always onward, still further.'

beast? Well, some of them are pleasant creatures and some are not! Some of them co-operate mindlessly in intricate communal activities, and the tooth and claw of some is against every other! But there is no human value. They are just beasts. It is consciousness and selfhood that make the man, and there is no going back, even if one would. Human regression never, in any case, stays at the beast, but goes below it. Robert Browning was hardly accurate when he wrote:

> A beast I might have been
> But would not sink i' the scale.

For man the rune is writ—'a beast I can never be again, but I may sink lower in the scale'.

For all that, there is a great deal to be learned, both from the happier and the less happy primitive societies. Much more, indeed, to be learned than we should generally be willing to admit. We know immensely more with our minds, but our hearts are not always so wise as those of some of our 'backward brothers'. We might well, without loss, incorporate some of their wisdom into our own culture. With it, indeed, we might even increase the signal artistic and human achievements of our own more developed civilisations.

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Mr. Bayfield found it his duty to find fault with his children to their faces, and think well of them, if he could, only behind their backs; in no other way could a family be controlled. And he failed to see any significance in the fact that Dolly, the least scolded, had turned out a Credit, while her sister Agnes had been a Disgrace, and her young brother, Ernie, though conscientiously cuffed from time to time, was in process of becoming a Worry.

GERALD BULLETT

The mother (i.e. the Puritan mother) who was herself love-starved and who, in consequence, is intolerant of tenderness, will be impatient of her own children's dependency, regressiveness, and claims for love. Her suspicion and anxiety really amount to a feeling that children are naturally bad, and require to be 'made' good by disapprobation. . . . This creates a corresponding anxiety in the children about attaining approbation and winning more. The child feels too early that love must be deserved or earned, and excessive anxiety may reach the point of despair. This . . . may lead to a jealous competitiveness, the quest for power, position, 'prestige', possession. Love has now become aggressive, anxious, covetous. Unintentionally the mother has imparted her own inhibitions (on tender feeling) to her children, has substituted the ideal of duty for that of good-fellowship and established a morality of guilt and distrust in place of that of benevolence and confidence which I maintain would have developed naturally.

IAN SUTTIE

CHAPTER XI

Guilt and Achievement

There is a phrase very common among us. It takes various forms, but it is the same phrase. It runs: 'I mustn't let him get above himself.' 'Better not let him know we value him. He may take advantage.' An acquaintance of mine, who was devotedly served by a quite excellent cook, said to me in reply to my praise of the meal we were eating: 'Yes, she is a good cook, but, of course, I don't let her know that, in case she stops trying.' The 'of course' included me in what the speaker evidently took to be a natural community of thought and conspiracy of action in the matter. And although I personally did not share that community the speaker was none the less right in assuming it to exist.

We are, in fact, profoundly convinced that if we show too much approval, if we let people feel and see our affection for them (except when they are safely dead), something awful will happen. They will with eager abandon throw to the winds such goodness as—beneath the damnation of our faint praise—they have hitherto professed, and 'go bad on us' in dire and unspecified ways. Only as we make them feel they are not doing well enough (i.e. guilty) will they go on trying. For we believe little in goodness for goodness' sake, but in goodness chiefly for the sake of something to be got, some reward, in money, position, prestige, approbation, love. According to which faith (or lack of faith?) the reward once obtained, the goodness would logically cease—and indeed often does cease.

Psycho-analytical writing has often made this point for us, suggesting that much of our 'goodness' is dependent on our sense of guilt. We may feel that it has even over-stressed

one point, as in the statement that: 'All cultural strivings are to be accredited to the normal repressive tendencies under the influence of the super-ego. It is through this inhibiting activity that various asocial urges are hindered or sublimated and the demands of social adjustment met. The domestication, under pressure of the super-ego, of aggressive and certain asocial strivings makes for social serviceability which finds expression in industry, art, science and religion.'[1]

'Under pressure of the super-ego', might almost be read as, 'under pressure of guilt', for the 'love super-ego'[2] is as rare among individuals as among societies. So that from guilt would supposedly spring the 'social serviceability that finds expression in industry, art, science and religion'. And yet, if we look at the world around us, the social serviceability of industry and science is, so far, less noticeable than competition, prostitution of scientific discovery and a massive destructiveness. Even where the products of commerce, industry and science are actually or potentially serviceable, their social availability is notably reduced by wealth and power-seeking factors. And we have to ask once again whether our manifold aggressive and asocial strivings are not as often created as domesticated by the super-ego? Whether not only our present civilisation, but also our present lack of it, be not in some part due to this agency.

The psychological view of 'Civilisation' would sometimes seem to be unduly rosy. Roheim writes of the impulses repressed by the super-ego: 'If the chained monsters are loosed, if the impulses are freed, the end of all things would arrive, culture would crash and the world would see the "Twilight of the Gods".'[3] But is it certain that the unfreed impulses have not become monsters precisely because we have

[1] Healy, Bronner and Bowers: *The Structure and Meaning of Psycho-Analysis*, p. 296.

[2] This significant term is used by Karin Stephen of the super-ego 'whose energy is borrowed from the child's love impulses'. Essay in *Science and Ethics*, p. 74.

[3] *The Riddle of the Sphinx.*

kept them—at intervals—somewhat insecurely chained? But, whether they be monsters by nature or nurture, never chained all the time? For surely to-day we have seen the monsters loosed, surely our culture has been crashing, and the more heavily where there has been the most intensive development of repressive mechanisms. Surely we have lived for years in the Twilight of the Gods, unless our idea of twilight be a greater darkness than this.

It is not enough that within the separate national groups greater kindness and less cruelty be practised if, at the same time, an increasing unkindness, a more indiscriminate cruelty, is practised internationally. This is more definite canalisation of emotion, not greater civilisation of it. We have all bought our still too small kindness to each other within our social groups with the blood of our brothers outside them. The price has been too high and is not, in any case, ours to pay. And 'the domestication under pressure of the super-ego of aggressive strivings' is hardly adequate if we are to have a world war in every generation.

Aldous Huxley, discussing repression in so far as it involves the inhibition of sexual impulse, takes a more realistic view of the difficulty which arises. 'As a matter of historical fact,' he writes, 'the energy released by sexual continence has frequently been directed to thoroughly immoral ends. Mental and social energy is comparable to the energy of falling water; it can be used for any purpose that men choose to put it to—for bullying the weak and exploiting the poor just as well as for exploring the secrets of nature, for creating masterpieces of art or for establishing union with ultimate reality . . . Historically, puritanism has been associated with militarism and capitalism, with war and persecution and economic exploitation, with every form of power seeking and cruelty . . . the human organism is so constituted that there would seem to be a natural correlation between compulsory continence and energy that is malevolent at least as often as it is well-intentioned . . . the energy

created by chastity has a *natural* tendency to be, on the whole, more evil than good. By fulfilling conditions upon which, and upon which alone, the higher moral life is possible, we transform our nature in such a way that it becomes easier for us to behave immorally than to behave morally.'[1]

This curious argument which so freely admits the evils attendant upon repression, and yet so hopefully maintains that a set of conditions notably productive of a lower moral life are those *on which alone* our higher life is possible, at least serves to describe the horns of the dilemma on which a guilt-motivated civilisation finds itself impaled—the one horn the accepted efficacy of guilt[2] in producing goodness: the other horn the puzzling predominance of evil over good.

This dilemma is worth examining more closely. Whenever a way of thinking is old and deep-rooted it tends to be taken for granted. And whenever the need to feel and impose some emotion—such as guilt—is very compulsive, the assessing eye tends to be blinded to the effects, or seeing them, to rationalise. So we have still to ask if we are reaping in this civilisation—in freedom and happiness, in peace and goodness—a satisfactory harvest of such widespread guilt? Whether the world is, as we expected, full of real achievement or pathetically empty of it? And whether the most notable products of civilisation are the harvest of guilt at all, or whether they may spring from some other and sounder root?

In the first of the passages quoted above we heard of 'the domestication . . . of aggressive and asocial strivings' which made, among other things, for social serviceability in art. But creative art would seem to have flourished best in

[1] *Ends and Means*, pp. 315 and 316.

[2] Huxley does not actually mention guilt in the passage quoted above, but his other work would suggest that a profound disgust with sex underlies his philosophy concerning it. And it is probably from the guilt rather than the inhibition that there spring the evil results which he deplores.

periods which have been relatively free from super-ego regulation. The greatest period of Greek art, despite the depiction in the tragedies of terrible divine retribution, was much freer than our own from a sense of sin. The Renaissance, thrusting too short-lived roots down into faith in man and the life of man, had a diverse and brilliant flowering. And Shakespeare's immense and various creativity is not even to be compared with Bowdler's virtuous and terrified editing of it. The Victorians were, *par excellence*, a conscience-ridden age, but their greatest artists were rebels against Victorianism.

And as to Aldous Huxley's contention that 'energy released by sexual continence' can be used 'for exploring the secrets of nature and creating masterpieces of art', the fact is that we simply do not know how much creative art and thought actually is produced by energy gained from sexual repression. Not all our great artists and thinkers have been sexually continent, or distinguished by their talent for monogamous marriage. Indeed, their shortcomings in this respect have been much bewailed, and you can't have it both ways.

To say that energy employed in creative activity is a derivative, a 'human' expression, of sexual libido is another thing. And there seems no reason to suppose that such energy is not sufficient in quantity to fulfil its own immediate ends and to invest its excess in art and thought; or even to suppose that it engages in greater and better activity if its ordinary sexual outlet is first denied. To support such a supposition we should need a list of the world's artists and thinkers with those known to be sexually continent (if one could know) on the one side, and those known not to be so (an easier matter) on the other. It would then have to be immediately apparent that the output of those practising sexual continence was more and finer than that of the others. But no such list could be made. And how in any case are we to presume to say that Shakespeare or Beethoven could have been more than they were?

As well might we say that the artist starved would be greater than the artist fed. But the evidence would suggest that starvation results in the death of artists rather than the increase of art. And there is no good reason for supposing that fulfilment of life's primary urges and desires does other than free energy for its cultural pursuits. Only a frightened, a guilty, a grudging or a sadistic attitude (and perhaps they are all one) could suggest otherwise. Against Huxley's contention might be put Flugel's more demonstrable: 'Social sentiments will flourish most, not where there is a deep-seated inhibition of the sexual functions, but where there is a diversion of interest from the sexual to the social field after the sexual functions are already well-developed.'[1]

Social sentiments, in their simplest forms of happy, affectionate, unafraid and peaceable relationships do in fact seem most to prevail in those 'primitive' societies which have least sense of sin about the sexual function; and where the super-ego possesses at most a minimum of severity. But while this is generally admitted to be so it is also taken, almost as a corollary, that it is precisely the happiness, the freedom from guilt and inhibition, and the consequent diminution of aggressive energy, which have prevented the development of those cultural achievements which characterise the higher civilisations at their best. Other co-existing cultures, however, nurture more than enough guilt to produce the propitiatory energy needed to 'civilise' them —if that were how it was done. But they are equally without notable achievement; they have, equally, remained primitive. 'X' the civilising factor—would not therefore appear to be guilt.

The religious position is equally anomalous. In the West, at least, religion has all too frequently sponsored war, injustice, intolerance, punishment, persecution—in fact, all the typical super-ego activities. And yet its greatest insights

[1] *Men and their Motives*, p. 96.

would seem to have been inspired by a generously accepting, a freely forgiving, a non-dominative and uncomparing attitude which is the reverse of that adopted by the super-ego. What we know—or are told—of Jesus would suggest that he was singularly free from super-ego compulsion, not even, if the records are to be believed, being over-concerned about earning his living. How it would worry and shock us to-day if he tramped our roads begging. How virtuously we should try to direct him, neatly and tidily, into a Labour Exchange..

It is certainly not his freedom which has been most eagerly accepted by his followers. In spite of much talk of forgiveness the binding on of guilt rather than the release from it has been if not the main intention, at least the main result of two thousand years of Christianity. There has been, in fact, so very much guilt that we should all, by now, have reached perfection. But we have not. And so much guilt having so notably failed, more guilt is usually suggested as the remedy!

This is not to say that guilt may not have, and have had its uses. It seems certain that some of our social and cultural activity, some of the imperfect cohesion which holds us precariously together in times of 'peace' has been a guilt-motivated propitiation. And the fact of guilt-motivation has not necessarily meant that the activity has not had also real elements of love and goodwill. But even where this is so, and precisely because of the amount of super-ego pressure involved in most of our conscious attitudes, we are not in a position to know how much apparent socialness is a too-easily breakable surface over a deep spring of anti-social impulse. Nor, where the propitiating goodness is more real and dependable, are we able to guess how much greater in amount, how much happier and more fruitful in action, it might be were it spontaneous and guilt-free. Nor, again, can we know how many of those attitudes we assess as social are those that have escaped from, those that flourish in spite of, the pressure of guilt?

The human 'facts' at our disposal are still insufficient. But some exist. There are individuals who, on a lightening of their sense of guilt, have found themselves capable of more and more spontaneous achievement. There are 'problem children', there are delinquents, young and older, whose hatred, aggression and destructiveness turn out to have arisen under the pressure of guilt, and to have decreased with a lifting of that pressure.

So we have two mutually contradictory opinions. On the one hand, in the more generalised psychological theories, guilt often figures as a civilising motive-power because it urges us, by way of atonement, to mend what we have broken. On the other, in more particular and practical applications, in the treatment, for instance, of anti-social attitudes, and the many and varied nurtural and educational experiments, psychology advocates those methods which do not unduly arouse or exploit guilt and which attempt to reduce it wherever it already exists in excess.

Much more investigation would seem to be necessary; and a more coherent effort to reconcile the general statements about the civilising effects of guilt with the more specific suggestions that we should be more civilised if we had less of it. More careful definition would also be helpful. The word 'civilisation' is used both for the state of affairs at the moment prevailing, and for such a state as would seem desirable to any given speaker or writer. And 'normality' within any group appears to stand both for conformity to the ways of that group, and for some such ideal of a way of living as should show fewer of the agreed symptoms of mental ill-health, should be universally happier, more peaceful and more co-operative. While this confusion exists one reads continually the contradictory statements (*a*) that our present civilisation is disintegrating, and (*b*) that our civilisation (inferentially in this context not disintegrating) is the good work of the super-ego. Or in another form (*a*) that our civilisation is compulsive, anxious, fear-ridden and destructive, and (*b*) that the person sick in mind

becomes 'normal' when readjusted to precisely this civilisation.

In so far as guilt is concerned we obviously need to know more about its actual effects, more about alternative and less repressive methods of nurture and education, and more about the 'amount' of guilt which seems to be inevitable in human development. And such knowledge is especially difficult to a civilisation where guilt-motivation has been so long exploited, and where in consequence no one of us is well fitted to regard the problem objectively. Possibly a distinction might be made between the fact of guilt as a feeling necessarily arising in the child's mind, and making possible its pre-reasonable apprehension of right and wrong, and the more or less deliberate use of guilt by all the various teaching agencies—nurtural, educational, social and religious.

Julian Huxley, in his *Evolutionary Ethics*, considers that 'it is perfectly realistic to feel some guilt about hating one's beloved mother. But the load need not be too heavy and can be dissipated in acts of obedience, love, and co-operation.' The emphasis here, however, is on the dissipation of the load; whereas civilisation generally has attempted to promote man's goodness by emphasis on the guilt rather than on the positive releases to be found in love and co-operation. This was perhaps unavoidable when one considers how immense a power has been given to all authority by the immense proneness of the human mind to guilt. No more fearful weapon than here exists could have been invented by the dominative or the sadistic: no easier one come to the hand of the harassed or the insecure. Naturally it was used; but equally naturally its use so distorted the human mind and the human situation as to make it difficult for us to conceive of small, tolerable and assimilable 'quantities' of guilt, or to approach life without some sense of its inherent evil and enmity. So it would be interesting to discover how much guilt would arise from nurture by people who did not themselves feel guilty (in so far as that is humanly possible)

and who were able to conceive of life as good. The attitude to life within which the inevitable residue of guilt is aroused may be a more important factor than the guilt itself. If the attitude were generous, accepting and loving, what one might call the *primary* guilt—the guilt resulting, that is, from the unconscious infantile conflict between love and hate—might hardly develop at all into guilt as we to-day know it and feel it. The super-ego might then be so much more tolerant, and the regulating function be so much more easily taken over by reason, that love might become at last a stronger motive power than duty, and some reconciliation be effected between the loved self and the loved society.

Such a possibility is at the moment and may be for ever Utopian, but it does seem reasonable to hope that we may in the future come to know more about the quality of feeling and achievement in people brought up with at least much less guilt. The present tendencies of liberal education are towards the reduction of guilt, and towards the entrusting of control to the ego with its appropriate methods of reason and love rather than to the super-ego with its—so far—appropriate methods of discouragement and condemnation. And this is one of the lines of progress most generally indicated by those psychologists and biologists who have concerned themselves with contemporary social problems. The late David Eder is reported to have said to a friend, 'Madam, my job in life is to cure people of a sense of duty.' He considered that it would have been a good thing, 'if the ID impulses could have been controlled by something less inflexible, less severe, more adaptable' than the super-ego, which is not only 'the chief obstacle to mental health, but also a handicap to the progress of civilisation'. Psychoanalysts, he suggested, 'looked forward to the disappearance of the control exercised by the super-ego over the ID and the taking over of this control by the ego, as the more hopeful line of progress for the individual and even for the race'. Franz Alexander writes: 'Psychological experience shows

that the super-ego . . . marks the greatest source of danger for the continuance of the psychic apparatus.' And Rickman seems to think that ideally the super-ego, which is primitive and archaic in its origin and nature, should give way to the ego or a more rational conscience.[1] Flugel suggests that the line of moral progress is 'from moral inhibition to spontaneous goodness', and writes that 'It is safe to say that in general terms the process of development, as seen in the light of psycho-analysis, involves a transition from a relatively crude moral compulsion to a relatively free and spontaneous play of those natural impulses that are compatible with, or conduce to harmonious social life.'[2]

C. H. Waddington calls the super-ego: 'The psychological mechanism whose fantastic, slap-dash character has rendered man's social evolution so miserably slow and full of setbacks.'[3] And Huxley rather more mildly, but in the same sense, says: 'This ethical mechanism is an agency for securing that certain of our actions and thoughts shall be consciously felt and judged to have the qualities of rightness or wrongness. It gives us what is popularly called our moral sense. This sense of rightness or wrongness is charged with the driving force of strong emotions, so that the ethical mechanism, once established, helps to determine both our actions, and those potential actions that are included under the head of sentiments, beliefs, or principles. On the other hand, it provides no guarantee that the feelings it engenders are correct, or its judgments objectively valid.'[4] And it

[1] The passages above are all taken from *The Structure and Meaning of Psycho-Analysis*, by Healy, Bronner and Bowers. They are to be found round about pp. 51–5. Dr. Rickman's opinion is not given in his own words, but as reported by the compilers of the book on p. 115. The book is a compendium of opinions which are not necessarily those of the compilers, and it must be clear to the reader that Eder's ideas are not those of all psycho-analysts. They are, however, the views of *some* psycho-analysts.

[2] *Man, Morals and Society*, p. 248.

[3] Essay in *Science and Ethics*, p. 69.

[4] Julian Huxley: *Evolutionary Ethics*, p. 8.

would seem most urgent in view of the present mechanical unity and social disunity of our world that we should at least begin to discover objectively valid criteria for our judgments, and to nurture feelings more likely to inspire creative and enduring achievement.

I like subways, carrying me so fast, provided they carry me to my destination. But I feel humiliated to see blonde girls in high-heeled shoes overtaking me at my fastest pace. Holy Moses! Where is she going? I love the sight of morning rides in subways, when the lines around men's and women's eyes have been gently smoothed out . . . But I always feel highly uncomfortable during the afternoon rides when the facial lines are so sharp, the eyes so harsh, and the faces so taut drawn . . . And I am left in the midst of eyes staring with a glinting glare and chins sticking out, speaking of a desperate ambition to achieve, and voices without soft modulation.

I always come home a mental wreck from cocktail parties, at which one attains the maximum physical movement with the minimum mental activity. A cocktail party is a place where you talk with a person you do not know about a subject you have no interest in. It is like taking ten wrong trains and coming back ten times . . . after an hour of completely wasted, purposeless activity.

LIN YUTANG: *With Love and Irony*

La plupart des hommes ne demanderaient pas mieux que d'avoir le bonheur du sage. Au fond, c'est cela qu'ils aiment: comme ils aspirent tous à la retraite! Mais on ne les croirait pas heureux, on croirant qu'ils ont renoncé, ou n'ont pas été capables, et alors ils partent sur l'autre rail, font les importants, s'engagent dans la honteuse et ridicule agitation où nous les voyons, donnent beaucoup de coups de téléphone, et bientôt une journée de bonheur devient pour eux une journée où ils ont donné beaucoup de coups de téléphone, c'est-à-dire une journée où ils ont été trés importants.

H. DE MONTHERLANT: *Les Jeunes Filles*

CHAPTER XII

Guilt and Propitiation

An unduly guilt-weighted civilisation will of necessity be an unduly active one. The strenuous doing of this, or that, will be 'offered'—to somebody, to something—as a propitiation. The 'doer', in some less harassed moment—should such a moment occur—will feel that blessedness which descended upon Babbitt when, for instance, he contemplated the automatic cigar-lighter in his car, and reckoned with fearful bliss that it would save him some ten minutes a month.[1] Activity just as such, and ten minutes saved for activity, become valuable and even redemptive! To the nature of the activity and to the end it achieves is given much less consideration;

[1] Babbitt 'rushed into a small news-and-miscellany shop, and bought the electric cigar-lighter which he had coveted for a week. He dodged his conscience by being jerky and noisy, and by shouting at the clerk, "Guess this will prett' near pay for itself in matches, eh?" . . . It was not only, as the placard on the counter observed, "a dandy little refinement" . . . but a priceless time-saver. By freeing him from halting the car to light a match, it would in a month or two easily save ten minutes.

As he drove on he glanced at it. "Pretty nice. Always wanted one," he said wistfully . . . "Be a great convenience for other folks. Might make just the difference in getting chummy with some fellow that would put over a sale. And . . . I . . . By golly, I guess I can afford it if I want to!" '

There, in that one incident is the essence of all Puritanism—whether connected with the Christian religion or not. Babbitt can well afford the cigar-lighter. He wants it just for the pride and pleasure of it. Nothing more. But conscience moves through justification to justification, and in the end is unappeased. Sacrifice is offered to the gods of time-saving and big business (that super-propitiation), but they gape for more. Babbitt, in fact, like the children in T. S. Eliot's *Family Reunion*, feels guilty before he begins.

and we often hear the very busy person commended when more careful thought might show that his 'busyness' did little good or even much harm. Perhaps, indeed, one might distinguish love-inspired activity from that inspired by guilt by its capacity for achieving real ends in real situations.

There are three main ways of contributing towards either the social well-being in general, or the particular happiness and good of any friend or acquaintance. One may act altruistically in order to fulfil one's idea of oneself as a good person, in which case the recipient of the kindness, be it never so great, remains a means to a selfish end.[1] One may act altruistically because such activity eases—whether consciously or half-consciously, a sense of guilt and unworthiness; because it propitiates some 'god' within or without. In which case again the activity is largely self-related, even where it confers some indirect benefit upon the recipient. And one may act altruistically because one has a self so well established that it is free for object-love; able imaginatively to appreciate and delight in the being of another and of many others;[2] able to contribute to their good out of a real

[1] In cases of extreme guilt an almost universal kindness may be used in such a way that all possibility of reciprocation is ruled out, and the doer of the kindness left in a state of satisfactorily exclusive goodness. So kindness, that warmest of the virtues, may be debased to a balm for guilt, or sharpened to a method of revenge. The heaping of coals of fire may be sustaining to the heaper, but the receiver might easily prefer a blow—as in the situation described by Charlotte Brontë in *Jane Eyre*: 'No happy reconciliation was to be had with him—no cheering smile or generous word: but still the Christian was patient and placid; and when I asked him if he forgave me, he answered that he was not in the habit of cherishing the remembrance of vexation; that he had nothing to forgive, not having been offended. And with that answer he left me. I would much rather he had knocked me down.'

[2] A paraphrase of Shelley's beautiful definition of love: 'The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beauty which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man to be greatly good must imagine

desire for it and a real pleasure in it.[1] Such people are able to make as well as to mend and the love in them is greater than the hatred.

It is obvious that, from the point of view of the recipient of the kindness or the social serviceability, the last of these ways must be beyond comparison the most pleasant as it must surely be the most creative. But in all of us, who are inevitably so complex in motive, so little capable of object-love, all three ways must always be, in whatever proportion, mixed. There is, nevertheless, a great difference between the first two, where an infantile personal need is fulfilled through other people, and the last where there is a more adult and integrative relationship of give and take. And it is in the first two that the need to propitiate has the larger part.

This need is, of course, very different in motive and nature from the desirable willingness to rectify error. We all do destructive and hurtful things; often, and perhaps inevitably, where we should least wish to do them. And for these such restoration must be made as reason and love may suggest.[2] Such a reasonable and re-creative handling of error has little in common with propitiatory activity, which is rather that immense busyness in which guilt is the dominant motive, and explanation and excuse the

intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others.'—which lifts morality wholly out of the realm of propitiation.

[1] So negative has our view of the good life become that pleasure even now almost automatically invalidates virtue; and Schiller's lines, written with an eye on Kant, are not wholly exaggerated:

> I gladly serve friends, but alas, I love to do so.
> Thus I brood and worry over my lack of virtue.
> There is but one way out, one must try to hate them,
> And then do with loathing what duty bids one do.

[2] The typical propitiator is so concerned with placating inexorable imaginary powers for inexhaustible imaginary guilt that he has rarely time to do real justice to real people.

permanently distinguishing features. When we hear them from other people we are uncomfortably aware how little foundation in fact have the explanations and excuses. In ourselves realisation is, as always, more difficult. But anyone who has given much help to someone else in order to make peace with an insatiably demanding super-ego, and has later come to see and accept the motive-power of his helping, will understand how different is the flavour (might one say?) of help given afterwards for real love of that other person. But the super-ego-driven giver may first have to pass through a horrifying period when he realises that, needing no longer to propitiate, he simply doesn't want to help at all. It is hardly necessary to point out how unfair—sometimes even cruelly unfair—to the recipient is help given as a sacrifice and not as an act of love.

Unrealism—the property of appearing to be what in fact it is not—is probably the typical aspect of propitiation. As it must be. For the need to propitiate arises in childhood and is appropriate only to childish situations. Its continuation into adult life involves an unceasing effort to achieve a childish end. The child, as we saw, does not feel guilt because he *knows* he has done something objectively undesirable—he is incapable of such knowledge—but because he has done something disapproved by his parents. His propitiation is therefore at any given moment directed towards the removal of some momentary parental disapproval; and the propitiation of later life, which derives from this situation, will tend to devote energy not so much to some good thing in itself as to a childish regaining of a love and approval felt in childhood to be lost. Such an effort must of necessity be unreal for the adult; for while the child cannot understand its parents or their reasons, and so serves a phantom authority, uncomprehended and incomprehensible, and lives in a world of fairy-tale where everything, one day, may come magically right, the adult, on the other hand, must know himself a creature of failure and success, must

adjust to what he understands, and his home is 'Rome or London, not fool's-paradise.'[1]

So realistic an attitude is impossible to the propitiator, who will work on the all-or-nothing principle which belongs to the infantile unconscious. What he feels, rightly or wrongly, that he lost in childhood he feels he has lost irreparably. At the same time he needs it so badly that he is prepared to go on all his life, working at this, working at that ('he never rests', 'her hands are never idle', 'he always overdoes things'), ingratiating himself here, ingratiating himself there, propitiating he knows not what, in order to win the favour of himself or his god, of some group or some class or of the whole community—in order to be once again the child, approved and beloved.

This creates a state of mind in which an end essentially impossible of fulfilment is pursued as life's best possibility; while the ordinary acceptance and affection which adult recognition and friendship may offer is never sufficient. And there is probably much loss of well-merited reward, often some tragedy, in the small satisfaction that even talented people are able to take in the genuine recognition which greets their work; the genuine affection in which they are held by their friends. The considerable acclaim, for instance, with which George Eliot's novels were greeted in her lifetime was robbed of much of its sweetness, and she was driven by the guilt which so obviously dominated her, to work in an anxious, effortful fashion which diminished the worth and permanence of her art.[2]

[1] From *Bishop Blougram's Apology* where Browning formulates the human problem as it confronts the adult mind:

> The common problem, yours, mine, every one's,
> Is—not to fancy what were fair in life
> Provided it could be,—but, finding first
> What may be, then find how to make it fair
> Up to our means: a very different thing!

[2] In her biography *George Eliot and Her Times*, Elizabeth Haldane writes: 'If she could have taken the events of life simply, all might have

She could never be sure that she would do well enough; and even when she had done well enough she suffered agonies of fear that she would never do well enough again. Propitiatory activity is, in fact, essentially perfectionist; and it must therefore be anxious, restless and unceasing—angry, too, with all that threatens or seems to threaten, its fearful pursuit of its impossible goal. One sees it in the person who must never be criticised; in the endless apologies for the burnt rice-pudding which makes everybody far more miserable than the pudding itself would ever have done; in the fatigue of the person who makes a merit of doing ten times too much, a proceeding immensely fatiguing also to those who have to hear about it; in the helpfulness of the person who takes great trouble over everybody else, and allows no trouble to be taken over her (it is often her), because then somebody else might be as good as she. But why, in the name of all that's sane, should one be a person who never burns a rice-pudding, who always wears himself out for others, except that the super-ego says so—the super-ego that once promised that if ever one were 100 per cent perfect it would remit the guilt and love one at last.

One hundred per cent perfect! So the guilt is never remitted; and one must remain for ever untouched by the love that one cannot feel in that real world where one cannot live. But as there seems always to be a last desperate chance one must go on. And it may be that that is why our Western civilisation, and the East in so far as it imitates us, is singularly full of the virtues of effort, and singularly empty of those virtues of being in which the self might develop more fully and more distinctively. If one is never sure that one has offered an adequate sacrifice, then to stop acting, and just

been well; but she had ever the striving of the moth for the star, and never could she throw off the sense of incompetence that this striving brought with it . . . The "Prisoner in the Castle of Giant Despair" as she called herself had made up her mind that her work was detestable.' And later: 'Now she was at the height of her fame and ought, indeed, to have been satisfied; but she was never free from a strange self-conscious dread.' op. cit., pp. 159 and 256.

to be, is a terrifying if not an impossible experience. So activity piles up, and it is customary to apologise for the afternoon under the apple tree. 'I am afraid it was very lazy.' Which means: 'I am afraid *you* will consider me a not-good, i.e. a guilty person.' And further means: '*I* consider myself a guilty person when I am not up and doing.' So we rush to and from endless committee meetings, have six telephones on the desk, and anxiously flutter the leaves of diaries to find a spare half-hour six months ahead, rationing even our friendship until there is nothing left that is real, nothing that is deep, and we are people only of casual acquaintance and surface affection.[1] It sounds so good. It feels so virtuous. But what does it do to bring any sweetness, humanity and peace into the affairs of men? What does it not do to drive them further away?

But it does something. It provides a pseudo-establishment for the self. And that is another point. The activity which is a propitiation for guilt need not necessarily, as might at first be supposed, be activity directed to some form of 'doing good'. What is needed when the personal good is jeopardised by guilt, is *some* activity of *some* kind in which effort, and still better success, will represent a regaining of merit. So it is not always some definite social or reforming work, in which the propitiatory quality is more obvious, which is undertaken. Virtue may be acquired according to some personal idiosyncrasy—some envy or inferiority of childhood—or according to the standards of some particular culture, and beneath much ruthless striving for power and success there may lie the old and simple need to prove oneself good to oneself and to others.

In *Babbitt*, that most admirable commentary on guilt and

[1] T. S. Eliot's comment, in *The Cocktail Party*, via his character, Celia (unless it is just Celia's) is perhaps too caustic; but it says something of what I feel in writing the above.

> . . . everyone's alone—or so it seems to me.
> They make noises, and think they are talking to each other;
> They make faces, and think they understand each other.

propitiation, we find again the apt illustration. Babbitt, lying in his bath, 'was enchanted by it. He looked at the solid tube, the beautiful nickel taps, the tiled walls of the room, and felt virtuous in the possession of this splendour.' Virtuous is indeed the word.

Propitiatory activity, whether it appears to seek the good of others or only to build the success of the self, is in fact always marked by this quality of pseudo-self-establishment —this making of a million pounds, taking of the best degree, climbing the highest mountain, belonging to the only true faith, to one of the too numerous Chosen Peoples, or whatever it may be. And all this may best be called pseudo-establishment, for real establishment of the self requires no under-pinning of 'better than'; but finds its satisfaction in the ordinary give and take of real though imperfect affections and approvals. Whereas, because of inner insecurity which conditions men, the self-establishing activities to which one is driven by guilt cannot be measured or savoured except in comparison with selves less well established. It is even necessary, if possible, to push those other selves down, by criticism or by ousting them from some desired position, in order to be sure of one's own merit.

To be able to say, 'I am doing reasonably well', is sufficient only if one doesn't suffer undue guilt. When guilt comes in, it is necessary to demonstrate in some way measurable by the world's coarse thumb and finger that one is doing better than others. Therefore competitive activity is of the very nature of a civilisation which carries much guilt: and this, although it does not normally figure in the blue-prints of world reconstruction, is a factor which might well be taken into account. Some competition is, of course, of a milder variety, but some is so ruthless and so unsatisfying that it must create endless resentment and discontent, both in those who cannot get as much—of whatever it may be—as they need; and in those who, less able to engage in so fierce a struggle find themselves without any adequate establishment of *their* goodness. The adult, once again, will

be able to accept some 'mean' of success, and will not be driven to go ruthlessly about his achieving of it. Ruthlessness is a feature of childish striving and shows itself—however improbably—in the efforts of guilt to make propitiation. It is as powerful in the religious as in other spheres—in those sects notably which contrive to put themselves even more right than others with a super-ego-like deity by imagining with pleasurable regret an infinite host of the damned.

Much of the energy spent in converting other people, in that horrible activity known as rescuing the fallen, in doing 'good' to the poor, is too often a method of establishing one's own goodness. 'Christian missionaries trying to make converts', writes Lin Yutang, 'generally start out by impressing upon the party to be converted a consciousness of sin and of the wickedness of human nature.' Who after all can be more sure of his own goodness than he who converts or judges someone else? And yet very often the conversion does more harm than good, carelessly and ignorantly breaking up old, well-established culture patterns and frequently making confusion worse confounded. It is notable that in missionary work done by such adult personalities as Albert Schweitzer the emphasis is on service, not conversion.

Ludwig Lewisohn is right when he says that 'nothing is so deeply-rooted in us as a sense of our ultimate superiority. We may appear to yield on this point or on that. At the core of the self is a granite-hard conviction of the betterness of that self and its friends and its group. Such is the spiritual malady of the race. If once we would stop working with the concepts "better" or "worse" which we identify with higher and lower and so, in a primitive and subconscious way, with above and below in physical modes of being—master, slave, slayer, slain: if we could bring ourselves to think in terms of fruitful, co-existent qualities in the psychical world, we would not struggle against such cognitions as I am trying to convey; we would have a much larger chance of deriving

our self-respect from serenity and justice rather than from wilful ignorance and rage.'[1]

It is excellently said and I would only add that we are *compelled* to cherish the 'granite-hard conviction of the betterness of the self', *compelled* to think in all such categories of better and worse as will leave us always in the better, just because we are *not* convinced of the goodness of the self or of the goodness of life. Those who *feel* good, who trust the life within them, never need substitute a striving betterness for a satisfying goodness.

It is not, of course, true that the need to propitiate is always the basic and permanent figure in the pattern of life. There is also a kind of intermittent propitiation which may run through the fabric like a thread appearing now and then. Where this is so one gets not so much the continually striving and ruthless kind of person, but instead what might be called the breaking-and-mending kind, who first destroys something in some way or other, and then most anxiously exerts himself to make the damage good. But the mending is often temporary and inadequate, and the breaking too soon succeeds it again. And in the insecurity of such intermittent creation and destruction too much personal relationship is damaged; while in the social sphere the periods of devastating war can no longer at all be compensated for by the periods of effortful reconstruction. One could hardly expect man, either individually or socially, to have a wholly constructive attitude to life, but that construction should become predominant is now essential not only for progress but for existence. This, in one important aspect at least, means that man must have a conviction of goodness that greatly outweighs his conviction of sin.

[1] *Upstream*, p. 252. Another good phrase in this connection is 'the pathos of difference' applied by Llewelyn Powys to one of these forms of self-betterment, but applicable to them all: 'Pride and ostentation gained power, pride and ostentation based on stored wealth. To the rich the pathos of difference afforded new gratification.' (From *Impassioned Clay*.)

It is true also that there are people who never appear to propitiate at all. They placate nothing. They meet nobody half-way. But their attitude is as little realistic, and as little helpful, as that of the more obviously guilty who placate everything, who are always trying to meet everybody all the way, and can never find the confidence to be themselves. These non-propitiators—these celebrants of the Black Mass of life—have been driven by their incapacity to be good enough into defiance rather than placation of the condemning power, and they too are children in emotion.

Paralysis is yet another aspect of the end-result of guilt. Some people become so afraid that all they do will be inadequate that they take refuge in doing nothing at all. Far from bursting with energy they are unhappily lacking in it, and so they make useful stepping-stones for those who need to climb. But these, the guilt-paralysed—literally, as in the old story of the man who rose up and walked when his sins were forgiven him, as well as metaphorically when zest and energy for life are lacking—are the minority. Those in whom guilt produces undue and feverish energy are they who have given its mark to the phase of Western civilisation which now appears to be ending. The tempo has become faster and faster—even our cinemas have run out of words with which to convey how super, how smashing and crashing and flashing and dashing are their products. Language, like the life it expresses, has gone mad with anxiety.[1]

[1] Definitely different. Has that democratic
Extra elegance. Easy to Clean
Will gladden grand-dad and your girl friend.
Lasts a lifetime. A modern product
Of nerve and know-how with a new thrill.
Patriotic to own. Is on its way
In a patent package. Pays to investigate.
Serves through science. Has something added
By skilled Scotchmen. Exclusively used
By upper classmen and Uncle Sam.
Tops in tests by teen-agers.
Just ask for it always.

Auden: *The Age of Anxiety*, p. 26.

We in the West have called ourselves a Christian civilisation and forgotten that Jesus was a vagabond. We look back over the safe bridge of the centuries and praise the virtues of Socrates. And yet—'Across two thousand three hundred years we can see his ungainly figure, clad always in the same rumpled tunic, walking leisurely through the agora, undisturbed by the bedlam of politics, button-holing his prey, gathering the young and the learned about him, luring them into some shady nook of the temple porticos, and asking them to define their terms . . . How the master lived hardly anybody knew. He never worked, and he took no thought for the morrow.'[1]

I cannot think that we should really like either of them to-day. They might irk us by wondering what all our busyness was about. They might not see the 'virtue' of the six telephones on the office desk, or of the cleanliness of the house-proud woman in whose home one is never at home. We bustle through life like fussy country trains, or shoot through it with the efficient speed of an express, only to find at the end that we have never been *in* it at all. The astonishing beauty of the world, the exhilaration of thought, the exquisite joy of literature, art and music, the warmth of friendship, good talk, good food, leisure, happiness, the fine art of love—what time do we make for these?

And so we are and must be separated from that most essential value—the value of the thing itself. It is desirable, as Ludwig Lewisohn suggested, that we should stop working with the concepts 'better' and 'worse'. But there *is* better and worse. Kindliness is better than cruelty. Freedom better than regimentation. Happiness better than misery. Disinterested scientific curiosity better than the use of knowledge for money, prestige or power. But we can only realise the real human better and worse through a common search, a common effort to agree on value, a giving and a taking. So long as we use so many things self-relatedly—to establish *our* better over somebody else's worse—we shut

[1] Will Durant: *The Story of Philosophy*, p. 11.

ourselves off from the very possibility of discovering the real better and worse. So long as we do things to establish our very insecure selves we never know the joy of the thing in itself—or the person in himself. And that is the great loss and the great failure!

One could not abolish the super-ego by teaching children a set of ideas different to those they learn at present. The only hope of doing so would be by a complete change in the whole nature of the relationship between parents and children . . . There is little doubt that the direction of evolution is towards a restriction of the importance of the super-ego, and an increase in the power and freedom of reason.

C. H. WADDINGTON: *The Scientific Attitude*

CHAPTER XIII

Modification of the Super-Ego

If guilt has not proved itself the most effective or the most benevolent motive-power of human activity, then it would follow that some modification of the guilt-inducing agency, the super-ego, were desirable. A super-ego it would seem there must be; but surely its nature and methods might be changed sufficiently to bring some greater happiness and peace into human living.

The necessity for *some* super-ego lies in the inevitably slow development of the ego itself—slow because of the biologically long childhood of the human being, and because the knowledge of the objective world, out of which reason grows and on which it functions, can only be acquired slowly. The life lived by the baby is largely subjective and internal, and he can only grow 'outward' slowly to meet external reality. That this is not always realised may account for the failure of some experiments in 'new' education. To reason with the small child, or to expect of it, too early, an intelligent control of its own activities, is merely to lay on it a burden which it is in no way able to bear. However scrupulously the adult may refrain from any suggestion of wickedness, however sincerely he may believe in the potential goodness of life, the expectation of reasonable behaviour before reason itself has had a chance to develop, will merely drive the child into as much guilt and anxiety as the profoundest belief in sin.

Moreover, there is always there, from the very beginning, the ID with all its tumultuous instinctive impulses. If the small child finds, as it must find, that it cannot manage these impulses, if the expression of them seems to menace its

love-relationships, once again a sense of guilt will result. It is just as sentimental to imagine that the great store of instinctive impulse will run of itself into human and humane channels as it is mistaken to imagine that it can be forced and dammed into them. (Also damned!) The fallacy of the noble infant is as misleading as the fallacy of the noble savage. Nature is just nature. *Human* nature is the fine work of human art.

The successful training of children, like all successful living, depends more on inner attitude than outward form. And only he who neither needs nor likes the use of power is ever fit to exercise it.[1] The child is the first to sense the difference between a directive guidance from the adult, and a domination of its smaller personality by the personality of the adult. The change of attitude—in the home and in the world—can best be summed up by the use of the pronoun 'we', rather than 'you' or 'I'. We—on behalf of the community of which both parent and child are members—'We do this.' 'We find it kinder or better to do thus, and not thus.' Not 'you must', or 'I want you to'. This attitude makes for a friendlier, more fraternal super-ego, and lessens some of that overpowering, god-like omnipotence that the super-ego assumes, when it holds over the self a threatening '*I* say——'

Moreover, this 'we' attitude has the merit of sharing with the child some of the necessary error of life. To give the very small child the impression that you have no sureness of life in which its own unsureness can rest would be a mistake, —and of course one would not give such an impression unless one really were unsure. But to say—'we all have tumbles', 'we all make mistakes', 'we all spoil things sometimes', 'we all have to take time to learn'—greatly lessens the sense of inadequacy which can be so crippling. A period of learning about life and the world is natural to the child. A period of learning accompanied by a sense of inability, of

[1] Or, to be realistic, shall we say he or she who does not need or like it very much!

failure, and of guilt in failure, is not only unnatural, but does an incalculable amount of harm. The old attitude simply asked for this harm to be done, for it presented the child with a 100 per cent perfect, adequate parent, who knew all about life, and never made mistakes—an attitude that gave great compensations to adults who were probably anything but adequate to their own world. The child naturally compared himself with this imaginary 100 per cent standard, took it into himself, and was thereafter never able to satisfy himself. Nothing makes a better background-atmosphere for the child than at-home-ness in the world on the part of the parent. And nothing is further from the emotional possession of such at-home-ness than a strained perfectionism.

This involves, of course, a 'scientific' attitude to life on the part of the parent—an attitude free from the doctrine of the sinfulness of life and of man, an attitude that can treat a mistake as a mistake and not as a crime. For a mistake is part of an adaptive process. What should be done about it is to find out why one made it, and how to avoid it next time. And the kindly, understanding correction of a mistake is an entirely different matter from the conveying of the sense that the person making it is therefore 'bad'. It is surely possible, so long as it is one's own real attitude, to convey to the child that some forms of conduct are unacceptable, while it is itself completely acceptable. This means, as we saw earlier, that one is oneself so unfearful of life that one can take time, and go slowly—that one does not need, because of one's own fear, to have the child good all at once.

Leisureliness is born of fearlessness. To be able to take time—that is a great 'success'. The child—every child—must not be hurriedly fitted into the standard, but the standard must be fitted at every stage of its growth to the growing possibility of that child. For this reason the widespread and damaging comparison of child with child should be abandoned. It is the next greatest evil after the comparison of the child with the omnipotent parent. At the same

time—and this is a corollary not a contradiction—the inculcation of a generous spirit of acceptance of other people's abilities would go hand in hand with a generous cultivation of one's own. The grudging, ungenerous spirit is the insecure, fearful one. One can only compare oneself and know oneself to have done less well, and still not feel less good, if one has not been forced to compare oneself and so made to feel bad.

All this is closely connected with the important modification of super-ego harshness which would take place if we could but bring ourselves to train to activity for love of the thing in itself; which in its turn involves a patient and disinterested willingness to discover the special ability, small or great, of each individual child. No one can possibly love the 'thing-in-itself' unless he has been encouraged to find the thing which he is best fitted to do and to enjoy. In the past, and too often now, the standard is what the parent—or the community—consider the child ought to be able to do, or what, for its own purposes, it wants the child to do. And nothing could possibly be more disabling than to get the idea that one is no good at anything because one is no good at the thing one is expected to do. The School Certificate, for example![1]

Suppose Tommy shows some ability for drawing. It seems to me that the attitude here should be that drawing is a good thing to do, and that it is a pleasant thing in Tommy that he likes drawing. Good drawing is a contribution to the general goodness of life. Tommy has done this and this well. That and that is perhaps not so good. Tommy can and will do better. There is, in fact, a whole world of better drawing into which he will happily adventure, step by step. It is quite natural that he can't get it right all at once. In fact, there wouldn't be much fun in the world if he could. It is the same with Daddy. He has always been fond of gardening, and he

[1] This phase is fortunately passing in contemporary educational planning. It is, however, by no means past in habit of thought, or in much practice.

is pretty good at it, but he learns something new every year. That is the joy of it, and that is the joy of living. And Tommy, so encouraged, would find this joy, which compensates for much pain and grief and cannot easily be taken away. He would compare himself only with the unreached possibilities in the world of drawing, and so find at once the only desirable humility, and the only desirable pride. He would accept his present incapacities as a natural stage of progress, and *not* as a defect in himself as a person.

Unfortunately there are other possible developments. Mother, for instance, has a friend, Mrs. Brown. And Mrs. Brown, as a girl, was always more popular than mother, and she has, quite unconsciously, never forgiven Mrs. Brown for that greater popularity. So she has a deep compulsion to establish herself over against Mrs. Brown, and she can best do this by pushing her Tommy against Mrs. Brown's John. John also has artistic abilities, but his pace is a little faster than Tommy's, so Tommy must be pushed very hard indeed. Drawing becomes for him now not a thing in itself but a way of establishing himself in his mother's eyes and consequently in his own. And because of this sad fact—that drawing has now become an approval-winning, self-establishing activity of a rather precarious nature—he will probably unconsciously hate John for the whole of the rest of his life; and for the whole of the rest of his life be unable to bear the success of a rival without jealousy and bitterness. He may abandon drawing altogether, or he may work with feverish ambition, his goad being: 'I must try harder to please Mummy', and not: 'I must try harder because I should like to do better drawing.'

Such a goad will make him selfish, anxious, ungenerous, but these unpleasant characteristics will *not* be that unfortunate thing called human nature. They will be no more and no less than what has been done to Tommy's nature by the attitude that made achievement a love-earning business, a better-than-John-self-establishing business, and brought personal insecurity and all its ugly expressions in its train—

that made him feel that he was not as good as John, that he was not good enough for mother, that he would never be good enough for anybody or anything. It is not so much incompleteness of achievement that creates personal insecurity as the sense that one's acceptability depends on one's achievement.

Fine achievement is naturally an acceptable social offering. But surely we err when we think in such a way as makes the man with the one talent so sure that he will not be acceptable that he buries even that talent which he has, as so often happens. There is unalterable difficulty enough already in the fact that life does allot talents in tens and fives and ones. To add—for children especially—to this initial unfairness the fear that lack of talent may mean lack of love is indeed to add insult to injury.

But to return to Tommy and his drawing. There is yet another possibility. Tommy may show an aptitude for drawing. His father may feel that drawing never 'gets you anywhere in this world', and that Tommy must go into business. Once again he is made to feel 'bad'. His drawing-capacity, which is his goodness, is bad, i.e. unacceptable, and if he has no great capacity for business he is 'bad' there, too. This may drive him to a gentle, aimless despair, or to the fulfilment of a ruthless ambition. And these are not small, unimportant things—things that 'children get over'. They are things that may shake and break a world.

There are endless examples, but I am trying to suggest attitudes, not to multiply examples. I would only add that, if it be true of art and science that they should be pursued for their own beauty, truth and joy, it is surely even more true of goodness. A real, free and happy goodness is a beautiful thing in itself. It is an aesthetic value, not a form of conduct adopted to earn a reward—not a thing that battens to bloated self-righteousness on the failures and sorrows of others. It should not even be sought after in order to win love, for though it must in the beginning be born of love[1]

[1] As was suggested in the opening chapters of this book.

and is essentially lovable, it can never be really sound and secure unless one becomes able in the end to be what one is because that is a good thing to be, and for no other reason whatever. A tendentious goodness is the ugliest and most dangerous thing in the world, and the most unsafe, for if one is good in order to 'get' anything at all, one may be let down, and the 'goodness' may break. Only a form of conduct reasonably chosen for reasonable ends can even hope to weather the vicissitudes of our present form of society—and indeed of life itself.

So much for achievement, and the love of the thing in itself—which the 'do it for my sake, I've done so much for you' kind of parent cannot possibly foster, but which the parent who does not make his love a prize, or need to compensate for his own frustrations in his son, may easily develop. But parents are, after all, human! It should be possible to erect cultural safeguards against the emotional intensities of the small family, which is often too possessive and jealous, too much a competitive unit in a competitive world. And yet the large, loosely-knit household of, say, the Samoans, would probably not be congenial to our culture. Other ways might be taken to prevent our children from putting all their emotional eggs into one family basket. Good nursery schools, when there are enough of them, will be a great help. The encouragement of children to like and accept other adults will also help. There must be more than two people who love and approve the child. Its small world must not stand or fall according to the wisdom and maturity of its parents.

The obstacle at present is our personal insecurity and the possessiveness which arises from it. When we know how frequent it is for the two parents themselves to compete for baby's love—and for the love of the growing child—it is hardly likely that other loves on the child's part will be encouraged. We have not the wisdom of the Arapesh who say of other adults to their children: 'This is your other

mother, other mother, other mother . . . She is good . . . She smiles. She is good.'[1] Neither have we their love for *all* children which makes it safe for any child to be handed about among them—a beloved and acceptable loan. 'As the child grows older, it is no longer confined so closely to the care of its own parents. Children are lent about. An aunt comes to visit and takes home the four-year-old for a week's stay, handing him on to some other relative for eventual return to his parents. This means that a child learns to think of the world as filled with parents, not merely a place in which all of his safety and happiness depend upon the continuance of his relationship to his own particular parents. It widens his circle of trust, without, however, over-generalising his affection.'[2] This less jealous and possessive attitude on the part of the parents would surely do much to lessen the jealousy and possessiveness of the super-ego.

As things are at present the introduction of other adults into the child's world often means that worst thing—a conflict of loyalties complicated by a conflict of affections. Grandpa, for instance, lets Tommy see that his affection may be earned by attendance at chapel. Mummy likes him to come to church sometimes. Aunt Ethel tends to approve of him more if he goes to neither of these places. Mummy is obviously put out if he pays too much attention to Aunt Ethel. Mummy has never been secure enough to take a place among a number of loved people. She must be first. So she 'bids' for Tommy's love, and he is never quite sure that he has satisfied her.

The choices which face a growing child in our complex civilisation are numerous and difficult enough without the added complication of feeling that such and such a way of thinking alienates father's affection, and such and such a way

[1] Margaret Mead: *Sex and Temperament*, p. 45.

[2] ibid., p. 47. Since this was written it has been recorded that children have been made to feel guilty and unhappy because, after long periods of evacuation, they have praised their foster-parents to their real ones. The feeling of the real parent is most understandable, which doesn't unfortunately make it helpful.

of behaving is the only way to become acceptable to Uncle James. Whatever the child chooses in such circumstances risks *some* affection, and therefore involves some sense of guilt. No child should feel that some choice or other makes him unacceptable, that he is a less good person because he likes this rather than that. For the super-ego, in such cases, is not only harsh, but as it tries to incorporate one standard after another—this earns love—no—that earns love—it becomes bewildered too, and overshadowed by both harshness and bewilderment the ego *feels* wrong whatever it does. Moreover, it is not on such bases as these that judgments and choices should be made. How can we have sincerity in the world, how honesty, how objective thinking, if a perplexed and insecure child within us is for ever trying to propitiate a doubtfully-complacent authority?

Objectivity as against subjectivity should surely be deliberately and consciously encouraged. The child should be helped in every possible way to approach life *reasonably*. The development of the ego rather than of the super-ego should be aimed at. And this does not mean an elaborate 'reasoning with' a three-year-old who has no idea what you are talking about. It does mean that one should be free enough in oneself to encourage the child to reason as reason grows; and to give reason every chance of growing by exercising itself upon such problems as affect the child's life and enter its world. In this one has everything on one's side; the ego is especially equipped for objective thinking; the child is eminently and disconcertingly reasonable. Its logic is frequently—as we know at so many awkward moments—unanswerable.

The world is empty of reasonableness not because we are without aptitude for reason; but because reason's first clear and courageous stirrings have been so often blunted by adult evasiveness and fear. Shades of the prison-house of social duplicity darkened down on the bright directness of our approach. And it was clearly conveyed to us, even if

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not in so many words, that nobody would like us if we were reasonable. Which was only too true. Nobody did: Nobody does. And our super-ego took up the cry, and said to the ego: 'Honestly, now, old thing, we can't have this. *I* shan't like you if you are reasonable.' And the ego saluted briskly and said: 'No sir! Very well, sir!' All very proper, you see! All very well designed to make of the world precisely the chaos it is.

But the independent, objective reasoning power can only be encouraged in an atmosphere which contains no threat to the self. If the child develops an opinion different from one's own it should be treated with the courtesy given (occasionally!) to an adult with a different opinion. Even where one may be sure that the child is making a mistake, one can help unobtrusively, and without giving it a sense of being outcast. This getting-along-side attitude of the parents will undoubtedly modify the super-ego which flourishes only on the threat to love. Where there is no such threat the super-ego exercises a less harsh and more directive control that can with comparative ease be taken over by the developing ego. There is the difficulty, of course, that all modifying of the super-ego in favour of the ego must eventually mean less submission of man to man. For the super-ego which is the dominating is also the submissive principle. And only the adult who is emotionally secure is likely to tolerate the growing up round him of young people with opinions and personalities of their own.

With the encouragement of independent reasoning power should go—and would naturally go—the encouragement of personal independence. The being of the person, in and for himself, is as important as the loving of the thing, in and for itself. Human infancy and childhood do, of course, present an especially difficult problem. The period of necessary dependence and desirable freedom for education, experimentation, etc., are prolonged far beyond the period of biological maturity—a state of affairs which admits of much

abuse—especially the abuse of power. The power-for, which we must responsibly exercise for the very small child, can so easily be turned to the power-over that satisfies the almost universal power-lust of our super-ego-harried age. Power is hard to come by in a fiercely competitive society. And children are smaller than we are, younger, less experienced, dependent upon us for every necessity of life. Their situation among us is a situation made to the hand of the power-lover.

We find it very hard, with our affection-earning attitude to do anything for anyone—and leave them free! 'Look what I have done for you' we cry, when someone wants to be himself, and we want him to be what we desire—echo of our thought, symbol of our dominance, fulfilment of our ambition! We levy spiritual blackmail on our friends, on our husbands and wives, and on our children, and while the self is depressed by it the super-ego flourishes. The longer time the parent has in which to say (virtually), 'You are dependent on me, so you must fit in if you want to be accepted', the longer time also has the super-ego to say the same thing to the self, and the stronger and more established it becomes.

This greatly affects our planning of the education of the future, for while the raising of the school-leaving age is an essential of any better form of community life, it is also an essential that the content and method of education be such as will 'grow the child up', and not keep it even longer childish. We should be able to combine the widest possible opportunity for the longest necessary training in art, medicine, citizenship or whatever it may be, with the greatest possible adaptation to the functions and responsibilities of a real community life. The children could then range themselves not *below* but *alongside* the adults in a common citizenship of country and world, and growing-up might become gradually and reasonably increased sharing in the ways of the good life which we are all, young and old alike, trying to understand and master.

If growing-up is arbitrarily marked by the moment, at fifteen or twenty-five, when one begins to work, or by the moment, possibly much later, when a dominating parent dies, the sudden assumption of selfhood is bound to be fraught with strain and anxiety. The super-ego period has been too long, and the ego emerges from it too uncertainly to face the tasks of adult life. We are sentimentalists about the freedom and happiness of childhood, as we are about the sanctity of marriage—perhaps just because childhood has not often enough been free and happy, or marriage sacred. An earlier 'growing-up' would, I believe, increase rather than diminish happiness. It would guard against the prolongation of childishness into adolescence, and adolescence into maturity. The child would be helped to take into himself a reasonable standard based on a reasonable education into real life, rather than an arbitrary standard based on the love-giving or love-denying vagaries of parents and educators.

There remains one other point, perhaps the most important of all. It goes back before all this to the period of actual infancy, and concerns the lessening of strain for the baby. From the many existing theories there emerges one agreement. It is very easy for the quite small infant to feel itself threatened, unsafe or unacceptable on quite unreasonable grounds. The emergence from the complete safety, the complete one-ness, the complete comfort of the womb into a rather naked existence characterised for a comparatively long period by the most complete helplessness, and the most complete ignorance of the reality into which it has been launched, must give an immediate and overwhelming sense of insecurity to the infant mind if anything seems to threaten it. Breast-feeding, where it is possible, plenty of cuddling, an easy cleanliness-training, a gentle weaning and a slow and patient introduction to the social requirements which beset quite small children, are evidently desirable. It is almost as though there were a 'mechanics' of the situation as well as a personal attitude. Generosity, peacefulness,

co-operation, happiness depend far more on the handling of these early months than many people like to think.

For, these people say in effect, if the way you feed and clean and wean and play with a baby produces in it some of the major virtues, what of morality? What of all this long and hard struggle most of us have had to make ourselves into reasonably free and decent people? Are these children not to struggle as we have struggled? Are the major virtues worth while if they are not the result of a battle, the hard-won fruit of a victory? And, in fact, is it worth while being virtuous if we can't *feel* virtuous, i.e. superior about it? Is it worth while if we could be virtuous so naturally that we never knew we were being virtuous at all?

There are several answers to these questions. In the first place, whether we like it or not has ceased to be the question. The study of different culture patterns, and of 'problem' and 'normal' children within our own, has proved beyond reasonable doubt that certain methods of handling the baby are greatly conducive to the development of the more desirable human qualities—certain other methods antagonistic to them.

Secondly, the nature of the questions themselves shows how badly our own super-egos have served us. They have involved us in such struggles with ourselves that we are jealous and distrustful of any other person's greater freedom and happiness. We have earned our own 'goodness' so hardly in order that we should be approved, that we cannot bear that somebody else should 'get' something for nothing. 'I have paid for my goodness', says some internal voice. 'I can't let you get it without paying, because I might begin to doubt the worth of what I got for my own heavy payment—and what would be left me? I am so used to paying—so used to a value-for-money society that I can't believe in the things I don't pay for. I always know that a lecture for which I pay a shilling is better than one that some misguided wretch gives me free. So I know that goodness paid for is better than goodness unearned.'

No change will avail in this world except an inner change . . . Their aim (mankind's) being happiness and their happiness consisting in beautiful and rational living, it must be their purpose to discover what actions and agreements will lead to such living.

LUDWIG LEWISOHN: *Upstream*

The happy person is satisfied. If mankind were happy there would be no wars.

STEKEL

The aim is to strengthen the ego, to make it more independent of the super-ego, to enlarge its field of view, and to build up its organisation so that it can appropriate new bits of the id. Where id was, shall be ego. This is the work of civilisation, like the draining of the Zuydersee.

FREUD

To see if we will now at last be true
To our own only true, deep-buried selves,
Being one with which we are one with the
whole world.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

CHAPTER XIV

Towards the Self

'No change will avail in this world except an inner change.' The dissipation of that ignorance which sees the error and perversion of life as an evil necessarily inherent in it, the modification of that super-ego mechanism which attempts ignorantly and childishly to remove the evil, the substitution for it of a maturer conscience reasonably diagnosing and treating that which has been called evil—these things, it seems to me, would be at least an incalculable help. But it is more than obvious as one writes, as it must have been obvious in the reading, that this is an inner change immensely difficult to effect in the world as it is. Indeed, people who have brought up their children, and had them educated, in something of the attitude here described, have found them growing up too co-operative for a competitive world, too trustful for a suspicious one, too generous for an ungenerous one. Despite all the merits of this culture it may be the humanly best individual who finds himself the aberrant individual—and it is never easy to be the odd man out.

Yet we need these 'new' people. If it were possible with a stroke of the pen to create a world economically secure and socially just, and if within that world our old dualistic thought, our old fear of evil, our old repressive method of upbringing were to be maintained we should still breed dominance, greed, competition, fear, hatred and war. We should breed less of them—for even in a short period of justice and security some inferiorities and some fears would go. But injustice and insecurity are much more the outward form of an inward spirit than the reverse; although the thing

works in a vicious circle, and the way towards the stronger, freer, happier self must be both internal and external.

It is not the main purpose of this book to discuss the desirable external changes, but it would be a serious omission not to mention that social as well as personal changes are essential to a better state of world society. Psychological reading does sometimes leave one with the impression that external factors—whatever fear, anxiety, frustration or sorrow they may cause—are almost negligible so long as the years of infancy and early childhood have not left one with too much hatred and aggression, too little self-confidence and capacity for adaptation to 'reality'. Undoubtedly, if infancy and childhood have been favourable, breakdown will be less likely. But to suggest that the present circumstances of the world favour happy childhood or fulfilled maturity, or that they are circumstances to which the 'normal' should be able quite easily to adapt, seems to me to be fantastic. The freedoms suggested by Sir William Beveridge—from want and fear, ignorance and disease—are surely reasonable requirements. They are also largely a matter for social planning. But the optimum psychological good, while it would seem to demand increased regulation of the 'material' of life, would demand also increased freedom for the 'spirit'.

The two do not always go together. Yet within the framework of a planned material environment there should ideally exist real freedom for experimental living, and for a literally infinite diversity of self-expression. To this end 'planning' should explicitly aim at the greatest possible freedom for the instinctual life, with all its power and vitality, to express itself in joy and creation. A much fuller training for a much greater leisure—a conception of time as a means to the enjoyment of life rather than a number of hours in which one works for a living—infinitely increased facilities for the understanding of music, art, literature, and for the expression of the physical joy of the body—these should be aspects of saner living.

A less jealous and possessive attitude towards sexual relationships; a more reasonable divorce law, with at the same time a greater safeguarding of the interests and happiness of children; the acceptance as natural of more numerous affections than the few that 'normally' circumscribe our lives; these, I believe, would all help. A pattern that was woven and interwoven with the colourful threads of more spontaneous living and loving should not lead to a more licentious, but to a more loyal and generous relationship between men and women. It is sex feared and confined, sex robbed of its many sublimations in life and work, which turns aside into licence. I think, too, that the psychologically better world would be a world where parents were not for ever burdened by fear about ends that never meet; where nursery schools were abundant; where a full and varied education—the best the wit of man can devise, which would be good indeed—would be possible for everyone; where the endless comparison of man with man, the cut-throat competition of man with man, had gone. And I think that, Utopian as it all may sound, there is abroad in the world more real endeavour after these things than there ever was before.

Historically, except in rarely favoured groups and individuals and at rarely favoured moments, the 'self', the 'ego', has not been in control. The parent within the self—the super-ego—has legislated to please the parent outside the self—the real parent and the many parent-surrogates, the priest, the state, the church, the father-god. And for this reason the self—the consciously reasoning, consciously loving part of us has been the least developed of all. What is called 'selfishness' is continually and rightly deplored. But it is the under-developed, insecurely established self which expresses itself in this selfishness—the under-developed, insecurely established self which must grab and grab; which must prop itself up with this prestige, that spurious superiority; which must dominate and compare and compete. Most selves are sadly battered and harried creatures driven by an

instinctual life which they hardly understand and rarely trust, and by a parental super-ego that says: 'Do this or I won't love you.'

Some ease might come if we could be helped to understand our own nature as we are taught to understand the nature of the world. We might not then so disown and corrupt the instinctive life of the ID, or so easily accept the dictates of an unrealistic super-ego. These dictates we might instead examine without fear and without favour. 'My conscience tells me to do this.' Yes—but do *I* really think it is a good thing to do? 'I should like to do that, but I feel guilty when I think of doing it.' Yes, but why do I feel guilty? Is it something that may really do any harm to anyone else? Is it destructive of anyone else's freedom and happiness? If not, then why not do it? The guilt means that your parents would not have liked it? Your parents were good people but were they *right* about *that*? Were they happy? Are you sure that their standards are good ones for you? You feel guilty if you are not busy all the time. Who said you were to be busy? Who said that busyness was good? What particular good will this particular busyness achieve? And so on—in all those personal spheres where we half accept and half deny a reasonless compulsion.

The conscience of the group might well be examined, too. 'They' say. But who exactly are 'they'? And where did they get *their* standards? Do such standards make for peace and justice and happiness? Not always! Well then? 'Religion' says! Yes, but what religion, and on what authority? The authority of somebody who told some tribe three thousand years ago that God required that they did such and such? The requirements may sometimes have represented some still valid—perhaps some permanently valid—insight into the way in which human relationship should be conducted. Sometimes they may not. Each requirement must be tested on its own merits, not by age only, not by long authority, but by much other accumulating knowledge of how men make the patterns of their societies; and by such evidence as

we can find as to what good that special requirement works in the world to-day.

Our difficulty does not lie in incapacity of intellect but in emotional withdrawal. Who am *I* to question what so many other people consider right? Who am I—small, dependent, affection-earning child—to question the profoundly authoritative 'father says' of religion? Or even the less authoritative pressure of what 'everybody' does and says. I *feel* I must be wrong—a feeling which may, incidentally, explain the truculence of minority groups, by whose actions and opinions, nevertheless, civilisation has so often advanced. Although, on the other hand, some of humanity's most distinguished members have shown, among other things, a singular independence of mind and heart. One may, apparently, grow up either in rebellion or in freedom.

This is not to say, however, that individual and minority judgments are necessarily right over against those wider judgments made by the community as a whole. Community, or if you like it better, majority opinion, may often have long experience and a certain by and large wisdom behind it. But it is never right *just because* it is authoritative over against the dependent, timorous self. Nor, on the other hand, is it always wrong, just because the same dependent, timorous self, in a kind of reaction formation, allows no wisdom at all to old tradition. Whenever the community is always wrong the self is still a child—a rebel child this time, instead of an acquiescent one—a rebel child who compensates for the hurt that father did him by the assumption that 'father'—his own group, his own country—is always wrong!

Freedom is freedom to affirm as well as to deny—to go with as well as to go against. Rebellion is only the other side of the coin of submission. Our inalienable right is to examine —to be able to say, as Roger Fry always suggested to his students, to be able to say 'let's see'. All opinion is surely for our examination, in the light of such facts as we are able to

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ascertain, and of our realisation that we shall never know more than a very few of the facts.

To be able to say 'let's see!' We are hardly human without that. But it is rarely a welcome suggestion. The person with the authoritarian mind likes to be able to associate himself with an authoritarian tradition. He likes to play father to you. And playing father should only be done by the grown man for the short period when his own children are young. Otherwise it is a childish rather than a grown-up attitude. But to ask anyone to relinquish it, and come down and be a fellow-man, is to ask him to relinquish that complete identification with the father which made him feel so safe when he was small. So he objects, and sometimes vehemently, to the idea of the examination of authority, as does, on similar grounds, the person with the submissive mind who feels more confident in a thing if 'father' (i.e. authority) says it, than if he has to think out its implications for himself.

Acceptance of authority and tradition would be all very well if our world were working smoothly. But in view of the chaos that confronts us everywhere, surely all our standards and values, our customs and conventions, should be examined—to see whether they are good *enough*. To do so may seem an assumption of great arrogance by the self; but the self, too long unfree to think, needs something very like arrogance; an arrogance that does not, however, involve any unwillingness to learn from others. There are rarely to be found people more prone to learn, or more humble in learning, than those who have achieved a moderately independent selfhood. It is just that their learning is done with an open, examining mind, and not with a mind closed and acquiescent. It was said of Socrates that men loved him because he made no claim to be wise. He claimed instead to love wisdom. The child must claim to be wise, because he is afraid not to do so. The grown man may claim to love wisdom because he feels secure in himself, secure in the small knowledge that any one man can have; and able,

in that security, to go on seeking and loving the unknown.

Only at first sight will it appear that the examination of authoritative statements and attitudes may make every man a judge unto himself, with resulting anarchy and chaos. If our affairs were running reasonably and happily we might well approach very tentatively any questioning of the assumptions which underlie them. As it is, there is every evidence that our unexamined standards, our acceptance of traditional ways of acting, our building of present-day morality on moralities of long ago, have already landed us in chaos. The 'let's see' policy could hardly do worse, and it might do much better. The ego which was in the first place differentiated to deal with reality has actually a great capacity for so doing, a great aptitude for the scientific method of trial and error, and for finding out what works.

Man's misfortune may be that his mind has become free first in the comparatively easy world of science, and not yet, perhaps inevitably not yet, in the much more difficult one of human nature and relationship. Freedom there, too, is nevertheless urgently to be desired. On the assumption that there are ways of going about our human affairs that do work, it would be well if the discerning, discovering mind were encouraged to formulate with all possible speed both their nature and the means to their implementation. In effect, we wait for our peace on all the freeing, strengthening and establishing of the ego that can possibly be done.

It has to be remembered, however, that this freeing, strengthening and establishing is the work of a highly-skilled nurture and a highly-developed social ideology. A 'mere' rebellion against super-ego authority is not in any way the same thing as a clear-sighted modification of that authority.

Rebellion was natural enough. Two world wars did little to inspire confidence in the 'parent-in-charge', in whatever sphere. And while some of the 'children' reacted, and still do react by insisting on bigger, better and stronger parents,

others said, in effect, 'no parents at all, and what does it matter what anyone says?' So the breakdown had its double aspect—for these emotional reactions show typically an extreme ambivalence—and there appeared on the one hand the greatest upbuilding, and on the other the greatest overthrowing, of super-ego authority that we have seen since the beginning of the Puritan era. The first we have already discussed in connection with totalitarian movements, both religious and secular. The second shows itself in the abandonment of old conventions. Religious teaching, parental authority, 'Victorian' sexual morality, the weaving of human contacts into a widely accepted pattern of manners, those have frequently gone by the board. People have claimed, more openly than they have done for a long time, the right to do what they please, a claim possibly not unconnected with the present increase in juvenile delinquency.

To do as one pleases has not necessarily, however, anything to do with being an adult person. Rabelais's 'do what you please' might, indeed, be possible for the very mature, very loving, person. In rebellion and hatred and fear it leads to nothing but destruction; and can then in no wise be regarded as the substitution of ego-guidance for super-ego dominance. The cheap, noisy, self-assertive activity of grown-up 'children' was and is an ugly business. Life tends to show at its worst in the formlessness that marks the transition from a pattern in part outgrown to another whose design is still in the making. So the cry is often 'back', back to what is sometimes called the age of faith by people who, apparently, do not take time or trouble to discover whether the culture of that age of faith—whichever it may be—is really what they want to-day.

The past has not been prolific of golden ages, nor would humanity appear to be notably adapted to them. But for something a little more reasonable we may surely reasonably hope! The 'back to faith' advocates, however, assure us that it is precisely reason which has let us down. Our present dilemma is, in this view, to be attributed to man's *hubris*,

since the Renaissance, in attempting to trust his reason at all. *Hubris* is still as certainly the sin that brings its own retribution as it was in any Greek tragedy 2,500 years ago. But the *hubris* that betrays us to-day is, it seems to me, that which uses our proud mastery of the material world for destructive or self-interested ends; it is the *hubris* of cleverness; for reason surely, like love, seeketh not its own and is not puffed up. Not by our small reasonableness have we been betrayed, but by our great unreason. And by the circumstance, too, that our intellectualism has been too thinly spread over an instinctive life too deeply misunderstood. It is precisely here that our 'new' knowledge about the unconscious motivations of 'thought' and action may help us towards a fuller and more competent exercise of reason. And the liberalism of to-morrow will be different from the liberalism of to-day by just the incorporation of that knowledge. Man does not automatically—but how well we know it now!—go upward and onward for ever. He goes upward by a fuller understanding and utilisation of his instinctive life; by the educated heart as well as the educated head.

More important for peace than formal peace-conferences are, therefore, all those international conferences of parents, educators, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists—all sorts and conditions, in fact, of men and women of goodwill —which reach slowly forward to the more universal culture pattern of the future. There are many, already, of such small beginnings; and the inevitable ugliness of this period of transition need surely drive us neither to despair of human nature, nor to shelter beneath even the most benevolent despotism of the old super-ego.

We shall begin, it may be, with our appreciations of certain expressions and patterns of life as beautiful or good or true (or perhaps if they are one of these they must be all, or perhaps it isn't as simple as that!)—appreciations which have arisen not uniformly or universally or progressively, but here and there, in differing 'amounts' and qualities, as

man has learned to live. We shall go on to choices, modifications, integrations, so that we may see more clearly the next step on the way—for it looks, at the moment, as if we might as easily break our world on our different 'goods' as on our different 'evils'!

As we feel our way slowly and humbly forward (for it is we, the men and women of to-day, who, as we are, and despite emotional inhibitions and blindnesses inherited from the past, must set the process in motion) it may be that the 'science' of humanity will become increasingly able to help us. The best ways for us, if we want to survive and be happy, may cease to be so considerably a matter of opinion. We shall *know*, as we know certain facts of the physical world, the kinds of nurture, the kinds of family and social relationship, which produce, in broad outline, certain kinds of human nature—on the whole aggressive or on the whole co-operative, on the whole hating, or loving—on the whole!

The brilliant satire in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* is a cross between a jest and a nightmare; but something a little like it might some day happen not only in literature or in sleep. Indeed, something a little like it has happened already. Existing knowledge of the processes of suggestion, of ways in which first to arouse and then displace aggression, have already been malevolently used. And although we need hardly fear that any nurtural and cultural unity could ever eliminate human variety or produce in evolution's most adaptable offspring the automatic uniformity of an ant civilisation, we have nevertheless something to fear—and something to hope! We have to fear that increased knowledge of human nature might be used for large-scale evil before it is used sufficiently largely for good. Mead has suggested[1] that our power to interfere with the culture patterns of our enemies is a deadlier weapon than the atom bomb. But our knowledge of culture, like our knowledge of the atom, is two-sided, and shows us a bright as well as a dark face. So we have also the hope that the very magnitude

[1] In a lecture given at the University of Birmingham.

of the threats to our survival is combining with a not by any means negligible will-to-construct; and that our choice may increasingly fall on the things that belong to our peace.

Some choice is urgent. Only in one sense is the saying that it takes all sorts to make a world either good or true. Too many of some sorts could easily, now, destroy a world. But many sorts there might and should be—functioning within the stability of some universally accepted value. The struggle for life that goes on in the present instability of conflicting values does not induce but actually militates against a fruitful variety. Even in the biological world, we are told that: 'Where a group is freed from the full normal pressure of competitors or enemies, it is enabled to evolve in quite unusual directions . . . In the Great Lakes of Africa, nature has conducted a demonstrative experiment . . . Where predators are present, as in Lake Albert, only four different Cichlid species have evolved since the Ice Age; but where predators are absent, as in Lake Victoria, there are over fifty Cichlid species, adapted to many new habitats and ways of life.'[1] In the common acceptance of values making for peace and harmony we might reasonably look for greater and not less variety than we now possess. Fear, not love, would appear to be the parent of totalitarianism.

To use the terms 'good' and 'evil' at all, of course, implies a preliminary personal judgment. But ascertainable results of certain ways of acting and feeling will nevertheless become increasingly obvious. The best psychological criterion would seem to be the equation of 'good' with whatever is creative of life, literally and metaphorically, and of 'evil' with whatever destroys—of good that is with love, and of evil with hatred. The 'unity' imposed upon the world and its peoples by scientific invention helps us to assess this 'good' and 'evil' more clearly than was possible before. It may not, for instance, have been sufficiently obvious in the past that the dominance of a man over a woman, a woman over a man, an adult over a child, in any single home was

[1] Julian Huxley: *On Living in a Revolution*, p. 78.

definitely a destructive thing. But when this dominance is magnified into the attempt of one man or one group to dominate either the whole world or a large part of it, it becomes quite clear that dominance is a death-value—an attitude that simply does not work—does not, that is, even justify itself by establishing the dominance—and that produces literal physical death, on a large scale. Competition, which is another form of dominance is also, I think, showing itself to be a death-value.[1] In the nineteenth century it seemed that the competition of man with man evened itself out, and produced a by and large good for all. But as the world unified, and available markets decreased, it became clear that the end-result of competition was death—possibly by starvation! So one can go on distinguishing, by a quite objective examination of their results, the values which destroy.

The values which create do not, perhaps, become equally clear. They do not exist on so wide a scale, they have never been tried out in so large a measure as the others. For all that, the life-values do become apparent if only by contrast. Being-alongside-of rather than dominating, co-operating rather than competing, understanding rather than condemnation, happiness rather than misery, creation rather than destruction, expression rather than repression, these would

[1] In his Reith Lectures (*Authority and the Individual*, p. 22) (Allen & Unwin, 1949) Bertrand Russell says, 'I do not think that ordinary human beings can be happy without competition, for competition has been, ever since the origin of Man, the spur to most serious activities. We should not, therefore, attempt to abolish competition, but only to see to it that it takes forms which are not too injurious . . . in sport, in literary and artistic rivalry, and in constitutional politics it takes forms which do very little harm, and yet offer a fairly adequate outlet for our combative instincts.' I am far from being sure of the truth of this—but, in France's gesture about the merging of her coal and steel interests with those of Germany; in the experience of many industrial combines; in food rationing by control instead of by competing, according to one's means, for what food is available; in the effort which this country has made since the war to pull itself out of financial depression; it looks as if the 'value' of competition were being very widely questioned.

obviously make for life. They are, of course, only a few of the existing life-values, a suggestion rather than a catalogue. And more life-values would probably, as was suggested, be discovered, could the 'set' of world feeling and thinking be but turned from death; could we but choose 'goods' which might be possessed inclusively and not exclusively. Competing value, exclusive value, superiority-conferring value is no longer serviceable to our shrinking world.

All this is by no means irrelevant to the discussion of the super-ego. Whatever they may once have been, the super-ego values are now largely death-values precisely because they make for competition and superiority. That is why, for human evolutionary progress, the old 'type' of super-ego would have to become so much less powerful than it was in the past. It is the ego-values which are the life-values. But as some super-ego regulation is inevitable—and may be desirable—in a race with a long childhood, I do not see that it is beyond the wit of man to devise a kind of universal super-ego. The educators of the whole world might get together and decide (or is this Utopian?) upon a few simple, friendly, universal values by which to regulate our living one with another. We might then nurture all our children in these universal values, helping them thus to create in themselves super-egos which could more easily be taken over by the grown ego, super-egos which would not be in perpetual conflict with other super-egos because they would share both an attitude and a standard. The aim of mankind being happiness, and happiness consisting in beautiful and rational living, 'it must be their purpose to discover what actions and agreements will lead to such living'. And that is pre-eminently the task of the ego.

There is always an interesting congruence among the ideas of any age. Different sciences, arts and philosophies express the same general idea—or trend—in their own distinctive forms and language. Whitehead, who works out such a conception in his *Adventure of Ideas*, suggests that the

adventuring idea of our age is the transition—not perhaps very noticeable, but very definitely in the air—from force to persuasion.[1] And this transition itself may be part of a wider transition, a transition from a childish to a grown-up stage of development; from a subjective to an objective, a romantic to a scientific attitude to life; from an authoritarian to a communal attitude; from the arbitrary rule of the unconscious super-ego to the reasonable direction of the conscious self. And all these are really aspects of the one change, to be summed up best perhaps as the growth of the scientific attitude. This does not mean, of course, that all scientists have the scientific attitude, or that all science is used for human and humane ends. Far from it. But it does mean the growth of the willingness to examine things on their merits, dispassionately and disinterestedly, to try things out with patience, to assess results with impartiality, and above all to abandon moral judgment—the special property of the super-ego—for the unjudging, uncondemning discovery of what has gone wrong and of what methods may best put it right.

The child grows up. One might almost use those words as a description of the new phase of man's story which may now be at its beginning. One might almost use them if they did not suggest something more definite and more speedy than anything that is likely to happen. But if nurture, education and social planning could move towards the establishment of the good self through faith in the good life I think we might at least begin to attain a greater measure of happiness and peace than we have so far known.

The ages of faith are not necessarily behind us. And where faith seems to have failed us it may have been the wrong kind of faith in the wrong kind of symbols and the wrong kind of ends. We have had too much faith in a 'grown-upness' not our own—in parents and parent-surrogates.

[1] Lest it seem entirely fantastic that we are now at the beginning of an age of persuasion rather than force, I should perhaps mention that an 'adventuring idea' may take many years to establish itself.

We have had faith against life rather than faith in life—faith that some small, mysterious, heavily-handicapped, undefinable part of us called the soul could somehow fight against the whole of the world and the flesh and the devil, and win some remote righteousness of its own and some still remoter happiness. The movement away from other-worldliness to the enjoyment of the world did, of course, begin—for our civilisation—with the Renaissance. But it was thrown back by Puritanism, and it never moved noticeably far; and there is still not to be found much real faith that life might be good and free and happy. For indeed, mostly it is not good or free or happy.

Except as isolated individuals and in small aberrant groups we have never yet come within a thousand miles of valuing this life on earth as it should be valued, within a thousand miles of making it happy as it might be happy. And yet I cannot believe that our troubles come because life is cheap and evil, but because we hold it cheaply and treat it evilly. Our first charge upon ourselves should be to make it a work of art and a thing of beauty. Our first social obligation should be our neighbour's happiness. We need, or so it would seem to me, that objective vision of the world which sees the transience of life, the poignancy of passing youth, of scarcely caught beauty, of unrealised happiness; that knows there is difficulty enough and unhappiness enough without any one of us adding to it one whit for any other; that has done for ever with those old childish super-ego fictions of the virtues of suffering and struggle and unending strife with, and fear of, the physical stuff of life; that sees the shortening years as a chance not only for the fulfilment of duty but for the realisation of joy!

And would one not then be good? If one cared more for oneself would one forget one's neighbour? If one were not goaded to work would one not take one's share in such common production of the material good of life as would make the necessary basis for happiness? I believe that we should at least be infinitely better than we have been so far;

that loving ourselves more, we could go out to our neighbour with a deeper compassion and a warmer affection; that having found ourselves, we could afford to tolerate the found selves of other people; and that such work as fell to our share would not be an obligation but a part of our pleasure, not a propitiation of the goaded self but a willing contribution to the common weal. 'Man is not yet.' But if man learns to know and to handle the stuff of his life without ignorance or shame or fear, he may yet work out of it that real humanity which he has sought so long, so courageously, so tormentedly, but only so rarely found.

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