

criminal type behavior. Or one part of the Super-Ego may evade the other, as when a rebellious act is committed and the person "wants" to be caught. Or the Ego may evade the Super-Ego, by representing that it was not the Ego but rebellious impulses in command of the Ego which produced some action.

We may recall that Flugel discards the concept of "wishful thinking" on the ground that it connotes psychological hedonism, and prefers the term "autism." So the distortions of reality are not made in "simple disregard of its less pleasant aspects."<sup>1</sup> More often than not the Super-Ego is also involved, so that the pleasant or releasing aspects of reality may not be "seen and experienced. It is obvious in deep depression (still "melancholia" in Britain) that the patient is under command of the Super-Ego.<sup>2</sup> The comparison of dreams with day-dreams in the same person usually reveals that the day-dreams are less unpleasant than the dreams, thus suggesting that the Super-Ego is more "vigorous" during sleep. Why, Flugel says, we do not know.<sup>3</sup>

So autism helps to explain many things, myths, magic, and religion among others. Magic is autistic but not moral.<sup>4</sup> Myths are autistic, but seldom moral.<sup>5</sup> Religion is autistic and moral, the Super-Ego playing a larger part. There is both pleasure-thinking (the loving parent) and punitive thinking (the Super-Ego), and "In both directions there may be a distortion of reality, which may therefore appear to the believer to be both more re-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 223.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 224.

assuring and more terrible than it seems to those who do not share his faith."<sup>1</sup> When there is a view of future individual life in higher religions, the result may be to increase or decrease moral effort, but in any event this is "likely to entail an element of reality distortion."<sup>2</sup> But "wishful thinking" in the usual sense would not explain it; the fact is much more complex.

The tendency to autistic thinking is not to be regarded just as a sign of weakness; it may have positive value.<sup>3</sup> It may provide temporary relief "from the pressing problems of reality," and so long as it does not deflect us from taking reasonable precautions against real dangers, it is all right. There is some autism in all optimism, but optimism is nevertheless to be preferred to pessimism.

There are many matters--including some that may be of life-and-death importance--as regards which both our knowledge and our power are limited, perhaps almost to vanishing point. As regards these matters optimism has survival value even when the prospects are blackest, inasmuch as it gives us strength and confidence to deal successfully with difficulties and dangers to which we might otherwise succumb, and enables us to make full use of any lucky chances that may come our way.<sup>4</sup>

We can almost see the British bulldog at the Battle of Britain.

Flugel notes that the deeper kind of "confidence and optimism is one that depends upon a fundamental harmony between the Id and the Super-Ego."<sup>5</sup>

Flugel notes the equal dangers of too much imagination

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 225.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 230.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 231.



without implementation, and too much drudgery without imagination. He goes so far as to concede that the deeper levels of autistic thinking, symbolic and even "unreal" though they may be, may perform some useful psychic functions, in line with Jung's theories.

It may be too that, as Jung and his followers appear to hold, a temporary regression to a deep level of autistic thinking can sometimes act recuperatively, or perhaps even creatively, in such a way as to enable us to deal more efficiently with grave problems and difficulties . . . <sup>1</sup>

This is almost Flugel's sole concession to any form of intuitionism, any concession that the non-conscious levels or aspects of personality may at times possess a wisdom greater than clear consciousness.

At this point in his argument Flugel discusses the psychology of true moral progress as psychoanalysis contributes to our understanding of its nature, which we presented at the beginning of this chapter. He acknowledges the similarity of his basic views to those of Herbert Spencer--that moral progress is evolution with more differentiation and more integration.<sup>2</sup> What we need is not to cut out some part of man, but a higher synthesis. The Super-Ego is to be seen as a crude instrument for morality. What we need is to reform it with empirical and rational means, so that we will use the higher level of "reason" not the lower level of "conscience and tradition."<sup>3</sup>

### War, Peace and Social Issues

The three concluding chapters of Flugel's book on ethics are not a part of his main argument, but applications of it re-

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 237.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 257

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 260.

spectively to religion, to attitudes on social issues, and to war and peace. We may comment briefly on the two last, and at greater length on his treatment of religion because of our concern for the relevance of his material to Christian ethics.

The main point made about war is a warning that we not underestimate the strength of its appeal to both moral and impulsive factors in personality. War appeals, he says, in four ways: to adventure, to social unity, to freedom from individual worries and restrictions, and to aggression. When all these are appealed to in war, they form a powerful collective enemy of peace. With his usual common sense Britishness, Flugel suggests the "the application of the notion of moral responsibility to the state" should go hand in hand with "an insistence on the ultimate value of the individual."<sup>1</sup>

His chapter on left and right as social attitudes makes a point which we indicated in Chapter I, that such attitudes tend to cluster together and make a pattern of rightishness or leftishness. Flugel deals with this in detail, although he does not indicate that the content of what is considered right or left is culturally determined. His summary of the situation is as follows:

The radicals tend to be unorthodox or free-thinkers in religion, progressives and internationalists in politics, socialistically inclined in economics, liberal in regard to sexual matters, and in favour of freedom and the arousal of good will as against coercive discipline in penal methods and in education; while the conservatives tend to the opposite views in all these fields.<sup>2</sup>

Flugel himself belongs in the left by this definition. Hence

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 282.



the importance of the warning in the following:

I think it should be generally clear that in so far as the "left" aims at an escape from blind authority and a social adjustment in the light of conscious ego-functions, it does on the whole correspond to the "tendencies" of progress. When, however, rebellion is so intense as to become dominated by aggression, and hence mainly destructive in character, it represents rather an overcoming of the Ego by the Id, and therefore ceases to exhibit any orderly progress.<sup>1</sup>

Flugel's failure to distinguish the content of what is considered right and left as a culture-determined fact weakens the force of his argument.

### Religion and Morals

On "The Problem of Religion," as he entitled his chapter, we shall give his comments more fully. His basic position is that of a good-tempered but firm anti-theistic humanism because, although the goals have often been excellent religion tends to be full of unreality. Those moral goals of religion which are still valid should be secularized. Here is the way the argument runs in more detail.

The kind of attitude man has to his gods "is determined to a large extent by displacement of his attitude towards his parents."<sup>2</sup> This is a projective mechanism in which the Super-Ego, built up through parental contact, is projected onto God with no awareness that the projective mechanism is in operation.

The second important point about religion is that it usually contains "the deliberate restriction of enjoyment and submission to hardship."<sup>3</sup> Third, the forms of taboo which are

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 297.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

socially approved may often be religious.<sup>1</sup> Fourth, religion tends to foster the Polycrates complex, that the gods are jealous of success or pleasure.<sup>2</sup> Fifth, there are the atonement doctrines, a peculiarly deceptive way of dealing with guilt.<sup>3</sup> Sixth, the exalting sense of unity with the divine bears some relation to fusion between Ego and Super-Ego, although presumably this is illusory.<sup>4</sup> Seventh, even though the idea of God compensates for loss of the parent we once thought to be all wise, our real attitude remains ambivalent. Even if the idea of God is abandoned, the Super-Ego demands may be just as strong. Eighth, the road to progress is, in the long run, by realistic thinking; and religion is full of unrealistic thinking.<sup>5</sup>

Psychoanalysis has tended to "undermine" religion by demonstrating its autistic nature, making things in the image of our desire. This is different, however, from saying that it has disproved religion. But "A science that possesses so many vulnerable glass frontages of its own can perhaps ill afford to throw stones at the exposed windows of religion."<sup>6</sup> More specifically psychoanalysis has undermined religion in the following four ways:

1. . . . by revealing religious beliefs as elaborate social forms of 'autistic' thinking, psychoanalysis has reinforced the objections to the metaphysical implications of these beliefs

. . . .<sup>7</sup> The term "metaphysical" as used by Flugel seems to mean supernatural in the sense of a "second world."

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 263.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 265.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 270.



2. "... by demonstrating the fundamental nature and infantile origin of the needs underlying religion . . . religion is seen to have much greater significance than physical science would give it."<sup>1</sup>

3. Psychoanalysis shows "the great significance of the higher types of emotional attitude involved in religious experience," but demonstrates that it is possible to get comparable types of attitude "apart from metaphysical religious beliefs . . ."<sup>2</sup>

4. "... religion in its cruder forms can exercise a severe crippling and inhibiting effect . . ."<sup>3</sup>

Christianity, says Flugel, has had a magnificent intention, but in fulfilling this it has been in most respects a failure.<sup>4</sup>

"Christianity then is a great attempt to escape from the authoritarian father-figure and the archaic aspects of the Super-Ego.

It is pre-eminently a son and brother religion rather than a father religion."<sup>5</sup>

But "It has failed both to remove internal guilt and to abolish external aggression--largely . . . two aspects of the same problem."<sup>6</sup>

The conclusion is, "The religious emotions must be largely or entirely secularized and be put in the service of humanity. The religion of humanity is surely the religion of the nearer future."<sup>7</sup>

Here is the content of this "religion of humanity":

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 271.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 274.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 273.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 274.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 275.

... it is man's duty and destiny to carry on the process of evolution by utilizing all his powers for the betterment of himself, for the improvement of his spiritual and physical welfare, for the increase of his knowledge and of the power with which this knowledge can endow him, for the reshaping of the world into a fitter place for human beings to live in, for the attainment of more exalted and more fundamentally satisfying experience--in a word, for what we mean by Progress in the widest sense.<sup>1</sup>

There is a religious and philosophical world view, descended from Comte, Feuerbach, Spencer and Mill, which contains a good deal of *liveté* in terms of contemporary theological and philosophical thought, but which is nevertheless far from being a "disillusioned liberalism." It was never full of illusions about the ease of progress, moral or otherwise. It has always held that man's greatest enemy is himself and his projected creations. It wants man somehow to follow not fight nature's intent, to encourage strength through unity and variety within the nature-imposed limitations. It wants neither false confidence nor hand-wringing desuetude at the British Battles of Britain. This is, albeit with a mild and British tone, militant anti-theistic humanistic secularism. Flugel's religious views are in no way unique. With less hostility, more subtlety, better humor, and a somewhat broader cultural orientation, these views are the same as Freud's.

### Summary and Critique

We turn now to a summary and critique of Flugel's views on ethics. At the beginning of the chapter, we suggested that Flugel in effect made three basic contributions: first, about the nature and functions (not to say tortuosities) of the Super-Ego;

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 320.



second, about the aggressive elements in morality; and third, that morality in the usual sense is an unconscious protection of unintegrated psychic structures, while true morality appears only as integration takes place or unconscious factors become conscious and cease to exercise automatic control.

Throughout, there is a tendency to refer to "morality" and "conscience" when the automatic operation of forces inaccessible to consciousness is in operation; and when positive views about conduct are being stated, to use some qualifying adjective. I have generally used the phrase "true morality" to indicate Flugel's views on the second although he himself uses a variety of terms and circumlocutions. He is true to the earlier Freudian tradition on the former; but moves away from it on the latter, albeit with enough sense of guilt seldom to come out and use such phrases as "true morality."

I have presented his argument in detail, rather than merely in summary in my own words and with my mode of organization, for two important reasons. In the first place, only in this way can the very wide relevance and flexibility of the traditional Freudian language, and especially of the psychic topographical symbols, be appreciated. Having already stated my own conviction that such substantive metaphors are necessarily on the way out, it would be attempting to conclude that they do not succeed at all in mirroring psychic reality. But this is not true. Up to a point they are capable of dealing with an extraordinary variety and depth of psychic reality; but this can be demonstrated only by going along in detailed consideration as we have done.

The second reason for considering Flugel in detail is, while doing justice to him, nevertheless to show fairly and thoroughly where the deficiencies in this kind of thought lie. A few pages of acid criticism might make the same basic points but too cavalierly. Having seen him within his own frame of reference, with comments interspersed from time to time, we can now succeed in considering him critically in summary form, while still being true to what Flugel calls our sense of "inner justice."

This critique should be made at two levels, first within the psychological framework, and second on the basis of broader perspectives.

There seem to be four basic points about Flugel's psychology which require criticism, all bearing intimately upon his views of ethics. The first has to do with the place where Flugel stops "leaping," i.e., refusing to adopt a new point of view which his logic demands, because it would require alteration in the whole structure of his thought. The second is his ambivalence about culture and cultural influence. The third is the confusion about the meaning of aggression. And the fourth is his rationalism of consciousness, which as a corollary seems to develop a moral ideal of detachment. We shall consider these in turn.

Despite the distance which the traditional Freudian terms, and especially those of a topographic character, can go in describing psychic processes, it becomes clear again and again in Flugel's argument that we know more than these terms can accurately describe.

More than once tortuous statement must be made to deal with what



is, in another context, a relatively simple fact; this means that the structure of thought is standing in the way of communication of insight.

An illustration of this is when Flugel comes to the point of seeing that punishments sometimes increase the sense of guilt and at other times decrease it, but that we know little about why in either case. So long as the problem is seen in analogy of psychic topography, it may well be unanswerable. But if we change the context to a characterological one (e.g., Horney's with the movement and conflict of neurotic trends), then the very question of what constitutes a punishment is seen first from the internal frame of reference of the person, not initially from that of the outsider. If the coming of a flood makes one person feel guilty because somehow responsible for it, we understand this fact in the light of what this means to him, which is not a generalized "punishment;" and the same would be true of a person who felt released from guilt because the flood gave him something to do, or satisfied an inner neurotic need for punishment.

Another illustration is the point where Flugel says we do not know why day-dreams tend to be less unpleasant than dreams while asleep. If we pose this problem in the topographic context, then we must try to say why the Super-Ego is more vigorous during sleep. But if we look at it in cultural terms, and see the strong though often empty culturally induced drive for mastery, getting ahead, or assertiveness which is in western culture, then it is easier to see how one can day-dream "wishes," more pleasant possibilities, because the element of assertion receives cultural out-

support; while in sleep the imbalance of assertion as against quiescence or relaxation is broken up, and what concerns the psychic structure itself at this stage becomes symbolized in the dream. The heroic day-dreams of Walter Mitty may quite easily give way to dreams of anxiety and panic at night, when Walter's real situation, i.e., having a wife who squeezes the psychic life out of him, is dealt with through the dream's symbolization.

If Flugel were to take the "leap" which would get him beyond the limitations of the traditional Freudian concepts, he would have to do one of two things: either reinterpret these symbolically, as Fromm has tried to do; or cast them aside entirely, as many others have attempted. In either event, a new thought pattern would be required. Flugel made a couple of leaps beyond Freud; but then, like Freud, stopped.

This fact is especially apparent when we turn to our second critical point, Flugel's ambivalence about culture. How do we look at culture? Do we, like Freud, have mostly a jaundiced eye, because if our patients had not been over-punished, over-indulged, or over-something they would not have their psychic problems? Or do we, like George Herbert Mead, see culture as the indispensable matrix of selfhood and personality, hence as basically benevolent? Flugel can not decide altogether with Freud, for he knows much more about culture than Freud did. Yet the Mead type of view has never yet been set forth accompanied by an adequate view of the diabolical treacheries which can be perpetrated on personality, and which psychoanalysis documents so vividly. So to assume that view would take Flugel to a limb



where security is none too great.

The result is an unclear compromise. Man has tendencies toward a "natural morality" but he needs a "superimposed factor" of control as well. This is an unstated identification of "man" with impulses which include social contact impulses, and the "superimposed factor" with "culture." And yet he points out that restraint of the child, and even having the restraint business internalized, becomes a welcome protection to the child himself. He speaks almost with open regret of the fact that we seem to have a need for approval by our fellows all our lives, a carry-over from childhood; yet it is easy to become too autistic. When Flugel comes to the left and right attitudes on social questions and places himself on the left (any reader who has followed him thus far would no doubt also be rather much on this left), he fails to note that the content of leftishness is given not by him but by his culture. What has happened seems to be this. In loyalty to Freud (and, we might add, to Freud introjected), he "forgets" to see certain cultural implications which his own knowledge, if not impeded by this loyalty, would make him see immediately. In general, he minimizes the positive aspects of cultural influence and maximizes the evil ones.

The third point of criticism, on which we commented briefly at the beginning of the chapter, is the use of the term "aggression" to denote all kinds of movement against (others or self), where the movement against be the primary factor in the situation or merely incidental to something else. A simple illustration of the confusion comes when he is discussing sex life in

animals and says, "There is therefore ample biological reason for a close association of sexual function with the use of violence and the inevitably correlated infliction and suffering of pain."<sup>1</sup> Here we have, presumably, a strong form of aggression, "violence." But whether a violent result, e.g., torn organs, has anything to do with a violent intention is another problem. If the proper distinctions are not made, then shortly all creative or productive endeavor will be seen as "aggressive," and we will be talking at some times of injury done, at others of injurious intent, at still others of many kinds of behavior which in one aspect involve a movement against.

If we can speak properly of an intention in some segment of the personality to do harm to another part, or to some one else literally or symbolically, this intention nevertheless being below the level of clear consciousness--then it is a unique contribution of psychoanalysis to have revealed the aggressive element in much action which believes itself to be moral. But if we stretch too far the meaning of "aggression" and become pan-aggressive in the way psychoanalysis was originally pan-sexual--then our point of correction ceases to correct and becomes a rigid theory which must be fought in the interests of a more inclusive truth.

Fourth, and most basic of all the criticisms which can be made of Flugel, is what he would no doubt be horrified to hear called his "rationalism." Let us be sure we say exactly what we mean by this epithet. We mean that he considers any important

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 97.



(emotionally charged) psychic content to be good, or not harmful which means the same thing, to the degree that it can be brought into clear consciousness, and that it is bad, or automatically potential of harming through controlling, if not capable of emerging at any time into clear consciousness. Any psychic content which exists but can not at once be brought to awareness stays away for a dynamic reason, because it would upset the illusory equilibrium of the personality structure if it could come to consciousness; but any such peace of mind is illusory because based on dissociation.

At first glance a rationalism of this kind appears to be a virtue rather than otherwise. Not only can we not assert an irrationalism or obscurantism against it; but we concede from the outset that this form of rationalism is not anti-emotional. One is not reasonable unless he respects his own emotions. And as a general trend in man's psychic life, we could not question the thesis that any dissociated dynamic material can control us at unexpected moments and thereby impede our growth in selfhood. This is to say, insofar as Flugel asserts his form of rationalism to enhance psychic autonomy against psychic heteronomy, we need to agree and in strong terms.

But even while remaining within the psychological realm of discourse, we may have questions about whether this is the whole story. Super-Ego and Id, tender impulses and tough, can alike become dissociated. Let us suppose we have a tough mature citizen who, by psychoanalysis or some other means, comes to realize that he had dissociated desires or impulses or needs to

express himself tenderly, or aesthetically, or in some other ways at variance with his picture of himself as tough. He might then say, "Yes, I suppose I shouldn't have been so one-sided. But that's the way I am now." Result: no change, because although he "knows" in one sense that he is more than he has thought himself to be, he does not associate his "self" as much with what has been dissociated as with what has been clear and distinct. One may reply to this illustration that he did not have true knowledge of himself, and this is correct. But in that case, true knowledge would mean making the dissociated material conscious; it would involve a feeling amounting to a conviction that what emerged was the life stuff, the very structure of his own being. This kind of point Flugel's form of rationalism does not make clear.

Two other critical psychological comments may be made on this form of rationalism. It tends, like Cartesian philosophy, to emphasize the clarity and distinctness with which psychic contents may be brought to awareness. But the fact is that it all depends on what we mean by clarity and distinctness. In psychoanalysis itself the most important is not that which is most clear and distinct in consciousness. The most transforming insights may well be those which one first adumbrates quite dimly, grasps a little better, but never achieves, or at times never needs to achieve, clarity and distinctness in the ordinary sense of those terms. What counts is the capacity to break down the wall of separation so that categorical barriers do not exist; it may not be necessary to have the elevator move all the psychic



~~furniture to the upper story of consciousness. What is entirely clear and distinct may not be worth knowing or feeling; the movement toward clarity is something else, and always valuable.~~

~~Flugel's rationalism tends to confuse these two.~~

In the third place on rationalism, a fairly obvious point which every psychoanalyst recognizes in therapy but which is not found in Flugel's rationalist theory, unconscious content which becomes conscious when the personality is unprepared to accept and assimilate it may work serious psychic harm rather than good. This is, to be sure, a prudential point; but if one's theory includes the "ultimate worth of the individual," surely the process which professes to save him can not run too great risks of destroying him en route, psychically throwing him in the water to teach him how to swim. That is to say, Flugel's theory is rationalistic because it assumes the merit of making unconscious content conscious without discussing the process whereby this can come about with more gain than loss.

From a broader perspective than that of psychology alone, we can easily bring some big guns to bear on Flugel's theory. In doing this, we may note that the four points which we brought under psychological criticism, reading from right to left (rationalism, pan-aggressiveness, ambivalence about culture, and crystallization of thought structure) are all tied dynamically together in his thinking. This is to say that he has a system, and that, in spite of his disclaimers that he is not going to touch certain broader questions of ethics and philosophy he actually does so-- but with a positivistic brush. With a slight caricature, we may

indicate how this is done.

It is as if Flugel were to speak as follows:

I am not going to discuss the general principles of ethics but only the contributions of psychoanalysis to those principles. What is revealed is that much which professes to be moral is motivated by factors which are far from true moral intentions; they are, therefore, a sham and a mask. Psychoanalysis can show them as such, and in this way can have them seen as they really are, not as morality. True morality consists, therefore, in not having sham morality. Anything which has any association with sham morality, therefore, should go out the window. Since tradition, culture, religion and traditional ethics all have such an association, we need to get rid of them--in a nice way of course and, if possible, without offending any one. Then the true morality can appear. By getting rid of the compulsive, the spontaneous will appear; by setting aside the automatic, the reflective will make itself known. But remember that I am not discussing the general principles of ethics.

This is exaggerated, but it illustrates the sense in which Flugel is positivistic. He has plenty of positive principles for which he stands; but he will not state them in the same way as the negative principles. This is certainly a weakness in any ethical thought; for it means that an ethical system remains unself-criticized in part because it does not acknowledge the systematic character it actually possesses.

There are certain more or less obvious points which merit criticism, for example, the philosophical confusion which makes him equate metaphysics with a "second world" type of supernaturalism. We may note also the point made at the beginning, that his ethics is based on conscience, or better, on an exposé of conscience, rather than on search for the good. In his own material it would appear that dynamic reasons are disclosed which would explain a tendency by one person to concentrate on one or the other of the two traditional avenues to ethics. He has not,



however, seen the significance of this. Indeed, at one point

he writes:

In the last resort . . . it can be maintained that all so-called objective values are ultimately subjective in origin, inasmuch as things in the outer world are good or bad only in virtue of our attitude to them.<sup>1</sup>

This is the assertion of a subjective theory of value as against an objective one, both being entirely substantive in character.

What Flugel reveals of himself in his neglect of value or good is his tendency to feel at home as critic rather than creator, which in itself, according to his own psychoanalytic theory, would demonstrate motivation for safety reasons, expressing "aggression" in such a way that a criticism back at you would not touch the real you.

But most important of the general criticisms of Flugel is his treatment of psychic autonomy. We dealt with this form of rationalism from a psychological point of view, where it was seen to be inadequate. In the broader perspective, it becomes still less adequate. In Tillich's terms, autonomy under theonomy is desirable; autonomy denying its own support is demonic. That is to say, a movement toward autonomy which sees this as final and sufficient denies the very life structures on which the movement is dependent, and makes, psychologically, for an Ego-Ideal of detachment. There is an Apollonian note in it despite all the "effort" which it may entail. One has trusted and been deceived (in a sophisticated way, to be sure, by Id, Super-Ego, repression, reaction-formation, and the whole Freudian family); so one will

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. lll.

make very sure none of these relatives are around before he makes another move. But the resulting attitude (which Horney suggests is a compulsive search for freedom from) is, at root, one of detachment. To assert only that one trusts "nature," that is, not to examine the nature of the forces in life which may and should be trusted, is to demonstrate the fear that admitting what one relies on is to put it in the same category as the things one once relied on and found wanting, a kind of reversion to unconscious verbal magic. In whatever terms may be used, the autonomy must be under a theonomy, or else the "theos" in the uncriticized theonomy will be "daimon," i.e., capable of either good or ill but without our knowing when. Curiously enough, then, the assertion of autonomy in itself as a psychic goal becomes a form of irrationalism in the light of a higher (bring to awareness) rationalism.

Despite all these criticisms of Flugel on ethics, we need to acknowledge a very important contribution which he makes on behalf of a psychoanalysis which is halfway oriented to cultural phenomena; hence as representative of the orthodox psychoanalysis of today. But these contributions, when we sift them out, are corrective rather than positive in character. They expose moral idolatry. And they make these corrections with a fine-toothed comb which lets very little escape.

In nearly every section of Flugel's work, we see directly or indirectly that behavior which is controlled compulsively, without the free concurrence of the personality, may prove harmful, but in any event is hardly worthy of the name "moral." We may believe it an inadequate notion of compulsion and freedom to





equate them respectively with dissociation from awareness and entrance into awareness. Nevertheless, the tremendous scope and variety of pseudo-moral tendencies, fostered by compulsion, is a unique contribution of psychoanalysis. There is no act and no feeling which may not prove to be other than it appears. It must be seen in psychic context. If it is a compromise expression of an inner psychic battle which the whole person can not or will not face as a battle, no amount of social approval will make it a truly moral bit of behavior. True morality flows from a whole personality. Its motives are spontaneous not evasive. These are legitimate conclusions from Flugel's evidence.

If we are to move from what might be called automatic intrapsychic pseudo-morality toward what Flugel often calls "moral progress," it is clear that this somehow involves coming to grips with, or assimilating, the conflicting forces, even though this may bring suffering in the process. Briefly speaking, what is eating us needs to be faced not evaded. What psychoanalysis contributes is a kind of anatomy and physiology of the modes of evasion. Flugel does not, interestingly enough, use the word suffering or an equivalent in connection with the process of such growth in moral progress. No doubt, if asked, he would see it as "utilitarian asceticism," foregoing something for the sake of a foreseeable goal. But even in psychoanalysis, and still more in the other procedures which may help produce such a movement, the goal is not clearly foreseeable, and this is a chief cause of the suffering incidental to the process of transformation. But what comes clear from Flugel's discussion, despite his evasion of

this point, is that for moral progress we need to keep our eye resolutely on the possible means of evasion or else we shall overlook our falling into them in one form or another. This is of great importance.

Finally, we may rest indebted to Flugel for the light which his material throws on the relation of spontaneity and deliberation in true moral action. All the rationalism and autonomy motifs could be stated as leading to deliberation, at any point where a correct view shows that automatic action may lose as much as it gains. But once there is deliberation of the proper kind, then the person is released and may act spontaneously. That is to say, the road to the goal of spontaneous action on the part of the whole personality is through deliberation at those points where clear vision has shown the distinction between spontaneous action of the whole person and automatic behavior dictated by segments of the personality. The aim is spontaneity; the approach is deliberation, at certain points. This I would regard as a valuable contribution implied though not stated in Flugel. It differentiates his approach from all check-rein or control theories of ethics, showing them as having confused means with ends.

Finally, it remains to bring out for statement a point so obvious as to be usually overlooked. Man's movement to morality in any true sense has at all times two paths, his relationships with other people and his relationships with himself. These constantly interact. But it is not possible for him to be morally adjusted within himself and out of whack with his fellows (barring a concentration camp kind of experience), nor vice versa.



A movement toward integration in the psyche also means better capacity for human relationships. Improved relationships outside mean movement towards intrapsychic integration.

All in all, there is more of a positive character in even semi-orthodox psychoanalytic thought for the reconstruction of ethics than is usually thought. This chapter has had to go through many subterranean caves, but I trust that there have been some refreshing fountains along the way.

## CHAPTER V

## ERICH FROMM ON ETHICS

Erich Fromm was born in Germany at the turn of the century and is now just over fifty years of age. Although he "never had an interest in the rabbinate," he "was brought up in a religious Jewish family, and studied the Bible and the Talmud" in connection with his work in the university.<sup>1</sup> At the age of twenty-two he took his Ph. D. in social studies. He then trained as a psychoanalyst, and that has been his profession ever since.

Even before he was thirty, he had begun to write on subjects which linked his social and clinical interests. His first major work was Die Entwicklung des Christosdogmas: eine psychoanalytische Studie zur sozialpsychologischen Funktion der Religion.<sup>2</sup> This volume is an attempt to account for the early developments in Christological dogma in the light of the social conditions of the people who were involved and with the help of somewhat modified psychoanalytic concepts. Christianity was a brother religion, identifying human beings with the brother, in order to deal with God the authority. For our purposes, what should be noted about this earliest work is the focus of the thought on the problem of

<sup>1</sup>In personal communication, May, 1952.

<sup>2</sup>(Vienna: Internationaler Psychoanalytische Verlag, 1931).



authority, which has continued in all Fromm's writings.

His next major publication appears in the volume Studien über Autorität und Familie, edited by Max Horkheimer, on behalf of the Institut für Sozialforschung, which by the date of publication, 1936, had moved to Geneva from Germany.<sup>1</sup> The first section of this massive symposium is concerned with theoretical considerations; and following a general statement by Horkheimer, Fromm writes the social psychological section.<sup>2</sup> This too focuses around the problem of authority. While Fromm from the first had dissociated himself from Freud's social theories, in both these German publications he remains much closer to the Freudian pattern of thought and terminology than has been true of his works in English.

With the Institut für Sozialforschung, Fromm had left Germany upon Hitler's accession. Somewhere in 1936 to 1937, the Institute moved to New York. Fromm continued his work as a psychoanalyst here. At that time all Freudian psychoanalysis in New York was organized into one society, which did not include non-medical people. Soon thereafter came the controversy precipitated by Horney, and Fromm joined with her group. After a split in the Horney group, one part of it remained with Horney; and the other, including Fromm, joined forces with the Washington-Baltimore Psychoanalytic Society, this combined group becoming closely related to the Washington School of Psychiatry and the White Institute, led by Sullivan. This group admits non-medical

<sup>1</sup>(Paris: Felix Alcan and the Institut für Sozialforschung, 1936).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 77-135.