

The breakdown of the medieval system of feudal society had one main significance for all classes of society: the individual was left alone and isolated. He was free. This freedom had a twofold result. Man was deprived of the security he had enjoyed, of the unquestionable feeling of belonging, and he was torn loose from the world which had satisfied his quest for security both economically and spiritually. He felt alone and anxious. But he was also free to act and to think independently, to become his own master and do with his life as he could—not as he was told to do.

However, according to the real life situation of the members of different social classes, these two kinds of freedom were of unequal weight. Only the most successful class of society profited from rising capitalism to an extent which gave them real wealth and power. They could expand, conquer, rule, and amass fortunes as a result of their own activity and rational calculations. This new aristocracy of money, combined with that of birth, was in a position where they could enjoy the fruits of the new freedom and acquire a new feeling of mastery and individual initiative. On the other hand, they had to dominate the masses and to fight against each other, and thus their position, too, was not free from a fundamental insecurity and anxiety. But, on the whole, the positive meaning of freedom was dominant for the new capitalist. It was expressed in the culture which grew on the soil of the new aristocracy, the culture of the Renaissance. In its art and in its philosophy it expressed the new spirit of human dignity, will, and mastery, although often enough despair and scepticism also. The same emphasis on the strength of individual activity and will is to be found in the theological teachings of the

In the chapter there is a section on Calvin but this concludes chapter.

Catholic Church in the late Middle Ages. The Schoolmen of that period did not rebel against authority, they accepted its guidance; but they stressed the positive meaning of freedom, man's share in the determination of his fate, his strength, his dignity, and the freedom of his will.

On the other hand, the lower classes, the poor population of the cities, and especially the peasants, were impelled by a new quest for freedom and an ardent hope to end the growing economic and personal oppression. They had little to lose and much to gain. They were not interested in dogmatic subtleties, but rather in the fundamental principles of the Bible: brotherliness and justice. Their hopes took active form in a number of political revolts and in religious movements which were characterized by the uncompromising spirit typical of the very beginning of Christianity.

Our main interest, however, has been taken up by the reaction of the middle class. Rising capitalism, although it made also for their increased independence and initiative, was greatly a threat. In the beginning of the sixteenth century the individual of the middle class could not yet gain much power and security from the new freedom. Freedom brought isolation and personal insignificance more than strength and confidence. Besides that, he was filled with burning resentment against the luxury and power of the wealthy classes, including the hierarchy of the Roman Church. Protestantism gave expression to the feelings of insignificance and resentment; it destroyed the confidence of man in God's unconditional love; it taught man to despise and distrust himself and others; it made him a tool instead of an end; it capitulated before secular power and

relinquished the principle that secular power is not justified because of its mere existence if it contradicts moral principles; and in doing all this it relinquished elements that had been the foundations of Judaeo-Christian tradition. Its doctrines presented a picture of the individual, God, and the world, in which these feelings were justified by the belief that the insignificance and powerlessness which an individual felt came from the qualities of man as such and that he *ought* to feel as he felt.

Thereby the new religious doctrines not only gave expression to what the average member of the middle class felt, but, by rationalizing and systematizing this attitude, they also increased and strengthened it. However, they did more than that; they also showed the individual a way to cope with his anxiety. They taught him that by fully accepting his powerlessness and the evilness of his nature, by considering his whole life an atonement for his sins, by the utmost self-humiliation, and also by unceasing effort, he could overcome his doubt and his anxiety; that by complete submission he could be loved by God and could at least hope to belong to those whom God had decided to save. Protestantism was the answer to the human needs of the frightened, uprooted, and isolated individual who had to orient and to relate himself to a new world. The new character structure, resulting from economic and social changes and intensified by religious doctrines, became in its turn an important factor in shaping the further social and economic development. Those very qualities which were rooted in this character structure—compulsion to work, passion for thrift, the readiness to make one's life a tool for the purposes of an extra personal power, asceticism,

and a compulsive sense of duty—were character traits which became productive forces in capitalistic society and without which modern economic and social development are unthinkable; they were the specific forms into which human energy was shaped and in which it became one of the productive forces within the social process. To act in accord with the newly formed character traits was advantageous from the standpoint of economic necessities; it was also satisfying psychologically, since such action answered the needs and anxieties of this new kind of personality. To put the same principle in more general terms: the social process, by determining the mode of life of the individual, that is, his relation to others and to work, molds his character structure; new ideologies—religious, philosophical, or political—result from and appeal to this changed character structure and thus intensify, satisfy, and stabilize it; the newly formed character traits in their turn become important factors in further economic development and influence the social process; while originally they have developed as a reaction to the threat of new economic forces, they slowly become productive forces furthering and intensifying the new economic development.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ A more detailed discussion of the interaction between socioeconomic, ideological, and psychological factors is given in the Appendix.

If one examines the processes Fromm has described and explained one sees the individual embodied persons being changed by the situation, and changing the situation.

Alienated from the Medieval Communities healthy social structure they first adapt in unhealthy survival and then these adaptations shape their world.*

APPENDIX

Character and the Social Process

THROUGHOUT this book we have dealt with the interrelation of socioeconomic, psychological, and ideological factors by analyzing certain historical periods like the age of the Reformation and the contemporary era. For those readers who are interested in the theoretical problems involved in such analysis I shall try, in this appendix, to discuss briefly the general theoretical basis on which the concrete analysis is founded.

In studying the psychological reactions of a social group we deal with the character structure of the members of the group, that is, of individual persons; we are interested, however, not in the peculiarities by which these persons differ from each other, but in that part of their character structure that is common to most members of the group. We can call this character the *social character*. The social character necessarily is less specific than the individual character. In describing the latter we deal with the whole of the traits which in their particular configuration form the personality structure of this or that individual. The social character comprises only a selection of traits, *the essential nucleus of the character structure of most members of a group which has developed as the result of the basic experiences and mode of life common to that group*. Although there will be always "deviants" with a

totally different character structure, the character structure of most members of the group are variations of this nucleus, brought about by the accidental factors of birth and life experience as they differ from one individual to another. If we want to understand one individual most fully, these differentiating elements are of the greatest importance. However, if we want to understand how human energy is channeled and operates as a productive force in a given social order, then the social character deserves our main interest.

The concept of social character is a key concept for the understanding of the social process. Character in the dynamic sense of analytic psychology is the specific form in which human energy is shaped by the dynamic adaptation of human needs to the particular mode of existence of a given society. Character in its turn determines the thinking, feeling, and acting of individuals. To see this is somewhat difficult with regard to our thoughts, since we all tend to share the conventional belief that thinking is an exclusively intellectual act and independent of the psychological structure of the personality. This is not so, however, and the less so the more our thoughts deal with ethical, philosophical, political, psychological or social problems rather than with the empirical manipulation of concrete objects. Such thoughts, aside from the purely logical elements that are involved in the act of thinking, are greatly determined by the personality structure of the person who thinks. This holds true for the whole of a doctrine or of a theoretical system as well as for a single concept, like love, justice, equality, sacrifice. Each such concept and each doctrine has an emotional matrix

and this matrix is rooted in the character structure of the individual.

We have given many illustrations of this in the foregoing chapters. With regard to doctrines we have tried to show the emotional roots of early Protestantism and modern authoritarianism. With regard to single concepts we have shown that for the sado-masochistic character, for example, love means symbiotic dependence, not mutual affirmation and union on the basis of equality; sacrifice means the utmost subordination of the individual self to something higher, not assertion of one's mental and moral self; difference means difference in power, not the realization of individuality on the basis of equality; justice means that everybody should get what he deserves, not that the individual has an unconditional claim to the realization of inherent and inalienable rights; courage is the readiness to submit and to endure suffering, not the utmost assertion of individuality against power. Although the word which two people of different personality use when they speak of love, for instance, is the same, the meaning of the word is entirely different according to their character structure. As a matter of fact, much intellectual confusion could be avoided by correct psychological analysis of the meaning of these concepts, since any attempt at a purely logical classification must necessarily fail.

The fact that ideas have an emotional matrix is of the utmost importance because it is the key to the understanding of the spirit of a culture. Different societies or classes within a society have a specific social character, and on its basis different ideas develop and become powerful. Thus, for instance, the idea of work and success as the main aims

of life were able to become powerful and appealing to modern man on the basis of his aloneness and doubt; but propaganda for the idea of ceaseless effort and striving for success addressed to the Pueblo Indians or to Mexican peasants would fall completely flat. These people with a different kind of character structure would hardly understand what a person setting forth such aims was talking about even if they understood his language. In the same way, Hitler and that part of the German population which has the same character structure quite sincerely feel that anybody who thinks that wars can be abolished is either a complete fool or a plain liar. On the basis of their social character, to them life without suffering and disaster is as little comprehensible as freedom and equality.

Ideas often are consciously accepted by certain groups, which, on account of the peculiarities of their social character, are not really touched by them; such ideas remain a stock of conscious convictions, but people fail to act according to them in a critical hour. An example of this is shown in the German labor movement at the time of the victory of Nazism. The vast majority of German workers before Hitler's coming into power voted for the Socialist or Communist Parties and believed in the ideas of those parties; that is, the *range* of these ideas among the working class was extremely wide. The *weight* of these ideas, however, was in no proportion to their range. The onslaught of Nazism did not meet with political opponents, the majority of whom were ready to fight for their ideas. Many of the adherents of the leftist parties, although they believed in their party programs as long as the parties had authority, were ready to resign when the hour of crisis

arrived. A close analysis of the character structure of German workers can show one reason—certainly not the only one—for this phenomenon. A great number of them were of a personality type that has many of the traits of what we have described as the authoritarian character. They had a deep-seated respect and longing for established authority. The emphasis of socialism on individual independence versus authority, on solidarity versus individualistic seclusion, was not what many of these workers really wanted on the basis of their personality structure. One mistake of the radical leaders was to estimate the strength of their parties only on the basis of the range which these ideas had, and to overlook their lack of weight.

In contrast to this picture, our analysis of Protestant and Calvinist doctrines has shown that those ideas were powerful forces within the adherents of the new religion, because they appealed to needs and anxieties that were present in the character structure of the people to whom they were addressed. In other words, *ideas can become powerful forces, but only to the extent to which they are answers to specific human needs prominent in a given social character.*

Not only thinking and feeling are determined by man's character structure but also his actions. It is Freud's achievement to have shown this, even if his theoretical frame of reference is incorrect. The determinations of activity by the dominant trends of a person's character structure are obvious in the case of neurotics. It is easy to understand that the compulsion to count the windows of houses and the number of stones on the pavement is an activity that is rooted in certain drives of the compulsive character. But the actions of a normal person appear to

be determined only by rational considerations and the necessities of reality. However, with the new tools of observation that psychoanalysis offers, we can recognize that so-called rational behavior is largely determined by the character structure. In our discussion of the meaning of work for modern man we have dealt with an illustration of this point. We saw that the intense desire for unceasing activity was rooted in aloneness and anxiety. This compulsion to work differed from the attitude toward work in other cultures, where people worked as much as it was necessary but where they were not driven by additional forces within their own character structure. Since all normal persons today have about the same impulse to work and, furthermore, since this intensity of work is necessary if they want to live at all, one easily overlooks the irrational component in this trait.

We have now to ask what function character serves for the individual and for society. As to the former the answer is not difficult. If an individual's character more or less closely conforms with the social character, the dominant drives in his personality lead him to do what is necessary and desirable under the specific social conditions of his culture. Thus, for instance, if he has a passionate drive to save and an abhorrence of spending money for any luxury, he will be greatly helped by this drive—supposing he is a small shopkeeper who needs to save and to be thrifty if he wants to survive. Besides this economic function, character traits have a purely psychological one which is no less important. The person with whom saving is a desire springing from his personality gains also a profound psychological satisfaction in being able to act accordingly; that is, he is

not only benefited practically when he saves, but he also feels satisfied psychologically. One can easily convince oneself of this if one observes, for instance, a woman of the lower middle class shopping in the market and being as happy about two cents saved as another person of a different character may be about the enjoyment of some sensuous pleasure. This psychological satisfaction occurs not only if a person acts in accordance with the demands springing from his character structure but also when he reads or listens to ideas that appeal to him for the same reason. For the authoritarian character an ideology that describes nature as the powerful force to which we have to submit, or a speech which indulges in sadistic descriptions of political occurrences, has a profound attraction and the act of reading or listening results in psychological satisfaction. To sum up: the subjective function of character for the normal person is to lead him to act according to what is necessary for him from a practical standpoint and also to give him satisfaction from his activity psychologically.

If we look at social character from the standpoint of its function in the social process, we have to start with the statement that has been made with regard to its function for the individual: that by adapting himself to social conditions man develops those traits that make him desire to act as he has to act. If the character of the majority of people in a given society—that is, the social character—is thus adapted to the objective tasks the individual has to perform in this society, the energies of people are molded in ways that make them into productive forces that are indispensable for the functioning of that society. Let us

take up once more the example of work. Our modern industrial system requires that most of our energy be channeled in the direction of work. Were it only that people worked because of external necessities, much friction between what they ought to do and what they would like to do would arise and lessen their efficiency. However, by the dynamic adaptation of character to social requirements, human energy instead of causing friction is shaped into such forms as to become an incentive to act according to the particular economic necessities. Thus modern man, instead of having to be forced to work as hard as he does, is driven by the inner compulsion to work which we have attempted to analyze in its psychological significance. Or, instead of obeying overt authorities, he has built up an inner authority—conscience and duty—which operates more effectively in controlling him than any external authority could ever do. In other words, *the social character internalizes external necessities and thus harnesses human energy for the task of a given economic and social system.*

As we have seen, once certain needs have developed in a character structure, any behavior in line with these needs is at the same time satisfactory psychologically and practical from the standpoint of material success. As long as a society offers the individual those two satisfactions simultaneously, we have a situation where the psychological forces are cementing the social structure. Sooner or later, however, a lag arises. The traditional character structure still exists while new economic conditions have arisen, for which the traditional character traits are no longer useful. People tend to act according to their character structure, but either these actions are actual handicaps in their eco-

economic pursuits or there is not enough opportunity for them to find positions that allow them to act according to their "nature." An illustration of what we have in mind is the character structure of the old middle classes, particularly in countries with a rigid class stratification like Germany. The old middle class virtues—frugality, thrift, cautiousness, suspiciousness—were of diminishing value in modern business in comparison with new virtues, such as initiative, a readiness to take risks, aggressiveness, and so on. Even inasmuch as these old virtues were still an asset—as with the small shopkeeper—the range of possibilities for such business was so narrowed down that only a minority of the sons of the old middle class could "use" their character traits successfully in their economic pursuits. While by their upbringing they had developed character traits that once were adapted to the social situation of their class, the economic development went faster than the character development. This lag between economic and psychological evolution resulted in a situation in which the psychic needs could no longer be satisfied by the usual economic activities. These needs existed, however, and had to seek for satisfaction in some other way. Narrow egotistical striving for one's own advantage, as it had characterized the lower middle class, was shifted from the individual plane to that of the nation. The sadistic impulses, too, that had been used in the battle of private competition were partly shifted to the social and political scene, and partly intensified by frustration. Then, freed from any restricting factors, they sought satisfaction in acts of political persecution and war. Thus, blended with the resentment caused by the frustrating qualities of the whole situation, the psychological

forces instead of cementing the existing social order became dynamite to be used by groups which wanted to destroy the traditional political and economic structure of democratic society.

We have not spoken of the role which the educational process plays with regard to the formation of the social character; but in view of the fact that to many psychologists the methods of early childhood training and the educational techniques employed toward the growing child appear to be the cause of character development, some remarks on this point seem to be warranted. In the first place we should ask ourselves what we mean by education. While education can be defined in various ways, the way to look at it from the angle of the social process seems to be something like this. The social function of education is to qualify the individual to function in the role he is to play later on in society; that is, to mold his character in such a way that it approximates the social character, that his desires coincide with the necessities of his social role. The educational system of any society is determined by this function; therefore we cannot explain the structure of society or the personality of its members by the educational process; but we have to explain the educational system by the necessities resulting from the social and economic structure of a given society. However, the methods of education are extremely important in so far as they are the mechanisms by which the individual is molded into the required shape. They can be considered as the means by which social requirements are transformed into personal qualities. While educational techniques are not the cause of a particular kind of social character, they constitute one

of the mechanisms by which character is formed. In this sense, the knowledge and understanding of educational methods is an important part of the total analysis of a functioning society.

What we have just said also holds true for one particular sector of the whole educational process: the *family*. Freud has shown that the early experiences of the child have a decisive influence upon the formation of its character structure. If this is true, how then can we understand that the child, who—at least in our culture—has little contact with the life of society, is molded by it? The answer is not only that the parents—aside from certain individual variations—apply the educational patterns of the society they live in, but also that in their own personalities they represent the social character of their society or class. They transmit to the child what we may call the psychological atmosphere or the spirit of a society just by being as they are—namely representatives of this very spirit. *The family thus may be considered to be the psychological agent of society.*

Having stated that the social character is shaped by the mode of existence of a given society, I want to remind the reader of what has been said in the first chapter on the problem of dynamic adaptation. While it is true that man is molded by the necessities of the economic and social structure of society, he is not infinitely adaptable. Not only are there certain physiological needs that imperatively call for satisfaction, but there are also certain psychological qualities inherent in man that need to be satisfied and that result in certain reactions if they are frustrated. What are these qualities? The most important seems to be the

tendency to grow, to develop and realize potentialities which man has developed in the course of history—as, for instance, the faculty of creative and critical thinking and of having differentiated emotional and sensuous experiences. Each of these potentialities has a dynamism of its own. Once they have developed in the process of evolution they tend to be expressed. This tendency can be suppressed and frustrated, but such suppression results in new reactions, particularly in the formation of destructive and symbiotic impulses. It also seems that this general tendency to grow—which is the psychological equivalent of the identical biological tendency—results in such specific tendencies as the desire for freedom and the hatred against oppression, since freedom is the fundamental condition for any growth. Again, the desire for freedom can be repressed, it can disappear from the awareness of the individual; but even then it does not cease to exist as a potentiality, and indicates its existence by the conscious or unconscious hatred by which such suppression is always accompanied.

We have also reason to assume that, as has been said before, the striving for justice and truth is an inherent trend of human nature, although it can be repressed and perverted like the striving for freedom. In this assumption we are on dangerous ground theoretically. It would be easy if we could fall back on religious and philosophical assumptions which explain the existence of such trends by a belief that man is created in God's likeness or by the assumption of a natural law. However, we cannot support our argument with such explanations. The only way in our opinion to account for this striving for justice and truth is by the

analysis of the whole history of man, socially and individually. We find then that for everybody who is powerless, justice and truth are the most important weapons in the fight for his freedom and growth. Aside from the fact that the majority of mankind throughout its history has had to defend itself against more powerful groups which could oppress and exploit it, every individual in childhood goes through a period which is characterized by powerlessness. It seems to us that in this state of powerlessness traits like the sense of justice and truth develop and become potentialities common to man as such. We arrive therefore at the fact that, *although character development is shaped by the basic conditions of life and although there is no biologically fixed human nature, human nature has a dynamism of its own that constitutes an active factor in the evolution of the social process.* Even if we are not yet able to state clearly in psychological terms what the exact nature of this human dynamism is, we must recognize its existence. In trying to avoid the errors of biological and metaphysical concepts we must not succumb to an equally grave error, that of a sociological relativism in which man is nothing but a puppet, directed by the strings of social circumstances. Man's inalienable rights of freedom and happiness are founded in inherent human qualities: his striving to live, to expand and to express the potentialities that have developed in him in the process of historical evolution.

At this point we can restate the most important differences between the psychological approach pursued in this book and that of Freud. The first point of difference has been dealt with in a detailed manner in the first chapter, so that it is only necessary to mention it here briefly.

we look upon human nature as essentially historically conditioned, although we do not minimize the significance of biological factors and do not believe that the question can be put correctly in terms of cultural versus biological factors. In the second place, Freud's essential principle is to look upon man as an entity, a closed system, endowed by nature with certain physiologically conditioned drives, and to interpret the development of his character as a reaction to satisfactions and frustrations of these drives; whereas, in our opinion, the fundamental approach to human personality is the understanding of man's relation to the world, to others, to nature, and to himself. We believe that man is primarily a social being, and not, as Freud assumes, primarily self-sufficient and only secondarily in need of others in order to satisfy his instinctual needs. In this sense, we believe that individual psychology is fundamentally social psychology or, in Sullivan's terms, the psychology of interpersonal relationships; the key problem of psychology is that of the particular kind of relatedness of the individual toward the world, not that of satisfaction or frustration of single instinctual desires. The problem of what happens to man's instinctual desires has to be understood as one part of the total problem of his relationship toward the world and not as the problem of human personality. Therefore, in our approach, the needs and desires that center about the individual's relations to others, such as love, hatred, tenderness, symbiosis, are the fundamental psychological phenomena, while with Freud they are only secondary results from frustrations or satisfactions of instinctive needs.

The difference between Freud's biological and our own

social orientation has special significance with regard to the problems of characterology. Freud—and on the basis of his findings, Abraham, Jones, and others—assumed that the child experiences pleasure at so-called erogenous zones (mouth and anus) in connection with the process of feeding and defecation; and that, either by overstimulation, frustration, or constitutionally intensified sensitivity, these erogenous zones retain their libidinous character in later years when in the course of the normal development the genital zone should have become of primary importance. It is assumed that this fixation on the pregenital level leads to sublimations and reaction-formations that become part of the character structure. Thus, for instance, a person may have a drive to save money or other objects, because he sublimates the unconscious desire to retain the stool. Or a person may expect to get everything from somebody else and not as a result of his own effort, because he is driven by an unconscious wish to be fed which is sublimated into the wish to get help, knowledge, and so forth.

Freud's observations are of great importance, but he gave an erroneous explanation. He saw correctly the passionate and irrational nature of these "oral" and "anal" character traits. He saw also that such desires pervade all spheres of personality, man's sexual, emotional, and intellectual life, and that they color all his activities. But he mistook the causal relation between erogenous zones and character traits for the reverse of what they really are. The desire to receive everything one wants to obtain—love, protection, knowledge, material things—in a passive way from a source outside of oneself, develops in a child's character as a reaction to his experiences with others. If through

these experiences the feeling of his own strength is weakened by fear, if his initiative and self-confidence are paralyzed, if hostility develops and is repressed, and if at the same time his father or mother offers affection or care under the condition of surrender, such a constellation leads to an attitude in which active mastery is given up and all his energies are turned in the direction of an outside source from which the fulfillment of all wishes will eventually come. This attitude assumes such a passionate character because it is the only way in which such a person can attempt to realize his wishes. That often these persons have dreams or phantasies of being fed, nursed, and so on, is due to the fact that the mouth more than any other organ lends itself to the expression of this receptive attitude. But the oral sensation is not the cause of this attitude; it is the expression of an attitude toward the world in the language of the body.

The same holds true for the "anal" person, who on the basis of his particular experiences is more withdrawn from others than the "oral" person, seeks security by making himself an autarchic, self-sufficient system, and feels love or any other outgoing attitude as a threat to his security. It is true that in many instances these attitudes first develop in connection with feeding or defecation, which in the early age of the child are his main activities and also the main sphere in which love or oppression on the part of the parents and friendliness or defiance on the part of the child, are expressed. However, overstimulation and frustration in connection with the erogenous zones by themselves do not lead to a fixation of such attitudes in a

person's character; although certain pleasurable sensations are experienced by the child in connection with feeding and defecation, these pleasures do not assume importance for the character development, unless they represent—on the physical level—attitudes that are rooted in the whole of the character structure.

For an infant who has confidence in the unconditional love of his mother, the sudden interruption of breast-feeding will not have any grave characterological consequences; the infant who experiences a lack of reliability in the mother's love may acquire "oral" traits even though the feeding process went on without any particular disturbances. The "oral" or "anal" phantasies or physical sensations in later years are not important on account of the physical pleasure they imply, or of any mysterious sublimation of this pleasure, but only on account of the specific kind of relatedness toward the world which is underlying them and which they express.

Only from this point of view can Freud's characterological findings become fruitful for social psychology. As long as we assume, for instance, that the anal character, as it is typical of the European lower middle class, is caused by certain early experiences in connection with defecation, we have hardly any data that lead us to understand why a specific class should have an anal social character. However, if we understand it as one form of relatedness to others, rooted in the character structure and resulting from the experiences with the outside world, we have a key for understanding why the whole mode of life of the lower middle class. its narrowness, isolation, and

hostility, made for the development of this kind of character structure.¹

The third important point of difference is closely linked up with the previous ones. Freud, on the basis of his instinctivistic orientation and also of a profound conviction of the wickedness of human nature, is prone to interpret all "ideal" motives in man as the result of something "mean"; a case in point is his explanation of the sense of justice as the outcome of the original envy a child has for anybody who has more than he. As has been pointed out before, we believe that ideals like truth, justice, freedom, although they are frequently mere phrases or rationalizations, can be genuine strivings, and that any analysis which does not deal with these strivings as dynamic factors is fallacious. These ideals have no metaphysical character but are rooted in the conditions of human life and can be analyzed as such. The fear of falling back into metaphysical or idealistic concepts should not stand in the way of such analysis. It is the task of psychology as an empirical science to study motivation by ideals as well as the moral problems connected with them, and thereby to free our thinking on such matters from the unempirical and metaphysical elements that befog the issues in their traditional treatment.

Finally, one other point of difference should be mentioned. It concerns the differentiation between psychó-

¹F. Alexander has attempted to restate Freud's characterological findings in terms that are in some ways similar to our own interpretation. (Cf. F. Alexander, "The Influence of Psychological Factors upon Gastro-Intestinal Disturbances," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, Vol. XV, 1934.) But although his views constitute an advance over Freud's, he has not succeeded in overcoming a fundamentally biological orientation and in fully recognizing interpersonal relationships as the basis and essence of these "pregenital" drives.

logical phenomena of want and those of abundance. The primitive level of human existence is that of want. There are imperative needs which have to be satisfied before anything else. Only when man has time and energy left beyond the satisfaction of the primary needs, can culture develop and with it those strivings that attend the phenomena of abundance. Free (or spontaneous) acts are always phenomena of abundance. Freud's psychology is a psychology of want. He defines pleasure as the satisfaction resulting from the removal of painful tension. Phenomena of abundance, like love or tenderness, actually do not play any role in his system. Not only did he omit such phenomena, but he also had a limited understanding of the phenomenon to which he paid so much attention: sex. According to his whole definition of pleasure Freud saw in sex only the element of physiological compulsion and in sexual satisfaction the relief from painful tension. The sexual drive as a phenomenon of abundance, and sexual pleasure as spontaneous joy—the essence of which is not negative relief from tension—had no place in his psychology.

What is the principle of interpretation that this book has applied to the understanding of the human basis of culture? Before answering this question it may be useful to recall the main trends of interpretation with which our own differs.

1. The "psychologistic" approach which characterizes Freud's thinking, according to which cultural phenomena are rooted in psychological factors that result from instinctual drives which in themselves are influenced by society only through some measure of suppression. Following this

line of interpretation Freudian authors have explained capitalism as the outcome of anal eroticism and the development of early Christianity as the result of the ambivalence toward the father image.²

2. The "economistic" approach, as it is presented in the misapplication of Marx's interpretation of history. According to this view, subjective economic interests are the cause of cultural phenomena, such as religion and political ideas. From such a pseudo-Marxian viewpoint,³ one might try to explain Protestantism as no more than the answer to certain economic needs of the bourgeoisie.

3. Finally there is the "idealistic" position, which is represented by Max Weber's analysis, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. He holds that new religious ideas are responsible for the development of a new type of economic behavior and a new spirit of culture, although he emphasizes that this behavior is never exclusively determined by religious doctrines.

In contrast to these explanations, we have assumed that ideologies and culture in general are rooted in the social character; that the social character itself is molded by the mode of existence of a given society; and that in their turn

² For a fuller discussion of this method cf. E. Fromm, *Zur Entstehung des Christendogmas*, Psychoanalytischer Verlag, Wien, 1931.

³ I call this viewpoint pseudo-Marxian because it interprets Marx's theory as meaning that history is determined by economic motives in terms of the striving for material gain, and not as Marx really meant, in terms of objective conditions which can result in different economic attitudes, of which the intense desire for the gain of material wealth is only one. (This was pointed out in Chapter I.) A detailed discussion of this problem can be found in E. Fromm's "Über Methode und Aufgabe einer analytischen Sozialpsychologie," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, Vol. I, 1932. P. 28 ff. Cf. also the discussion in Robert S. Lynd's *Knowledge for What?*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1939. Chap. II.

the dominant character traits become productive forces shaping the social process. With regard to the problem of the spirit of Protestantism and capitalism, I have tried to show that the collapse of medieval society threatened the middle class; that this threat resulted in a feeling of powerless isolation and doubt; that this psychological change was responsible for the appeal of Luther's and Calvin's doctrines; that these doctrines intensified and stabilized the characterological changes; and that the character traits that thus developed then became productive forces in the development of capitalism which in itself resulted from economic and political changes.

With regard to Fascism the same principle of explanation was applied: the lower middle class reacted to certain economic changes, such as the growing power of monopolies and postwar inflation, with an intensification of certain character traits, namely, sadistic and masochistic strivings; the Nazi ideology appealed to and intensified these traits; and the new character traits then became effective forces in supporting the expansion of German imperialism. In both instances we see that when a certain class is threatened by new economic tendencies it reacts to this threat psychologically and ideologically; and that the psychological changes brought about by this reaction further the development of economic forces even if those forces contradict the economic interests of that class. We see that economic, psychological, and ideological forces operate in the social process in this way: that man reacts to changing external situations by changes in himself, and that these psychological factors in their turn help in mold-

ing the economic and social process. Economic forces are effective, but they must be understood not as psychological motivations but as objective conditions: psychological forces are effective, but they must be understood as historically conditioned themselves; ideas are effective, but they must be understood as being rooted in the whole of the character structure of members of a social group. In spite of this interdependence of economic, psychological, and ideological forces, however, each of them has also a certain independence. This is particularly true of the economic development which, being dependent on objective factors, such as the natural productive forces, technique, geographical factors, takes place according to its own laws. As to the psychological forces, we have indicated that the same holds true; they are molded by the external conditions of life, but they also have a dynamism of their own; that is, they are the expression of human needs which, although they can be molded, cannot be uprooted. In the ideological sphere we find a similar autonomy rooted in logical laws and in the tradition of the body of knowledge acquired in the course of history.

We can restate the principle in terms of social character: The social character results from the dynamic adaptation of human nature to the structure of society. Changing social conditions result in changes of the social character, that is, in new needs and anxieties. These new needs give rise to new ideas and, as it were, make men susceptible to them; these new ideas in their turn tend to stabilize and intensify the new social character and to determine man's actions. In other words, social conditions influence ideological phenomena through the medium of character;

character, on the other hand, is not the result of passive adaptation to social conditions but of a dynamic adaptation on the basis of elements that either are biologically inherent in human nature or have become inherent as the result of historic evolution.

From the Logic of Limitless:

"Individual human life is a single unified process involving both physical and non-physical aspects of being. The subconscious personality of Socrates regulates and is regulated by bodily functions. The homeostatic personality and the homeostatic bodily processes corresponding to it maintain the balances necessary to his physical and psychological life. On the conscious level Socrates experiences the universe as an individual human being moving bodily through time and space. He is shaped by this experience which is also in many ways shaped by him."