In our representation thus far, we have followed a path of investigation rigidly dictated by analytic practice. Proceeding from the question of the economic principle of analytic therapy, we approached the character-analytic problems which cluster around the "narcissistic barrier." We were able to solve some of the technical problems and found ourselves, in the process, faced with new theoretical questions. The one prominent fact about our case histories was that, however much it may differ from case to case, the narcissistic armor is connected in a typical way with the sexual conflicts of childhood. This, to be sure, was entirely in keeping with our analytic expectations. Now, however we had the task of investigating these connections in detail. Nor did it escape our attention that the changes which take place in the pathological character attitudes in the course of the treatment follow a definite logic. It is the development from a neurotic character structure to a structure whose nature is determined by the attainment of genital primacy. For this reason, we call it "genital character." And finally we shall have to describe a number of character differentiations, among which that of masochism will lead us to a critique of a more recent analytic theory of the instincts.

CHAPTER VII
THE CHARACTEROLOGICAL RESOLUTION OF THE INFANTILE SEXUAL CONFLICT

Psychoanalytic knowledge is in a position to provide the theory of character with fundamentally new points of view and to arrive at new findings based on them. Three characteristics of that investigation which make this possible are:

1. Its theory of unconscious mechanisms.
2. Its historical approach.
3. Its comprehension of the dynamics and economics of psychic processes.

Insofar as psychoanalytic research proceeds from the investigation of phenomena to their nature and development and comprehends the processes of "depth personality" in both cross section and longitudinal section, it automatically opens the way to the ideal of character research, a "genetic theory of types." This theory, in turn, could provide us not only with the natural scientific understanding of human modes of reaction but also with the history of their specific development. The advantage of shifting character research from the humanistic field, in Klages's sense of the word, to the sphere of natural scientific psychology should not be underestimated. But the clinical investigation of this field is not simple. It is first necessary to clarify the facts which are to be discussed.

1. CONTENT AND FORM OF PSYCHIC REACTIONS

From the very beginning, psychoanalytic methods provided a fresh approach to the investigation of the character. Freud's

1 First presented at the Congress of the German Psychoanalytic Society in Dresden, September 28, 1930.
2 Freud: "Charakter und Analerotik," Ges. Schr., Bd. V.
discovery was pioneer work in this field. He demonstrated that certain character traits can be explained historically as the permanent transmutations of primitive instinctual impulses by environmental influences. He indicated, for example, that stinginess, pedantry, and orderliness are derivatives of anal erotic instinctual forces. Later, both Jones⁴ and Abraham⁴ made important contributions to the theory of character by showing the relation between character traits and infantile instinctual forces, e.g., between envy and ambition and urethral eroticism. In these first attempts, it was a matter of explaining the instinctual basis of typical individual character traits. However, the problems resulting from the demands of everyday therapy are more extensive. We see ourselves faced with the alternatives of (1) understanding, historically and dynamically-economic, the character as an integral formation both generally and in terms of typological transmutations, or (2) foregoing the possibility of curing a large number of cases in which the character-neurotic reaction basis has to be eliminated.

Since the patient's character, in its typical mode of reaction, becomes the resistance against the uncovering of the unconscious (character resistance), it can be proven that during the treatment this function of the character mirrors its origin. The causes of a person's typical reactions in everyday life and in the treatment are the same as those which not only determined the formation of the character in the first place but consolidated and preserved the mode of reaction once it had been established and shaped into an automatic mechanism independent of the conscious will.

In the constellation of this problem, therefore, what is important is not the content and nature of this or that character trait but the mechanism and genesis of the typical mode of reaction. Whereas, until now, we were able to understand and explain genetically the contents of the experiences and the neurotic symptoms and character traits, we are now in a position to give an explanation of the formal problem, the way in which one experiences and the way neurotic symptoms are produced. It is my firm conviction that we are paving the way to an understanding of what might be called the basic feature of a personality.

In the vernacular, we speak of hard and soft, noble and base, proud and servile, cold and warm people. The psychoanalysis of these various characteristics proves that they are merely various forms of an armoring of the ego against the dangers of the outside world and the repressed instinctual demands of the id. Etio-logically, there is just as much anxiety behind the excessive politeness of one person as there is behind the gruff and occasionally brutal reaction of another. A difference in circumstances causes one person to deal or try to deal with his anxiety in one way and another person to deal with it in a different way. With such terms as passive-feminine, paranoic-aggressive, compulsive-neurotic, hysterical, genital-narcissistic, and others, psychoanalysis has merely differentiated types of reaction according to a rough scheme. What is important now is to comprehend what pertains in a general way to "character formation" and to say something about the basic conditions which lead to such a differentiation of types.

2. THE FUNCTION OF CHARACTER FORMATION

The next question we have to deal with concerns the factors that cause the character to assume the definite form in which it is operative. In this connection, it is necessary to call to mind some attributes of every character reaction. The character consists in a chronic change of the ego which one might describe as a hardening. This hardening is the actual basis for the becoming chronic of the characteristic mode of reaction; its purpose is to protect the ego from external and internal dangers. As a protective formation that has become chronic, it merits the designation "armoring," for it clearly constitutes a restriction of the psychic mobility of the personality as a whole. This restriction is mitigated by the noncharacterological, i.e., atypical, relations to the outside world that seem to be open communications in an otherwise closed system. They are "breaches" in the "armor" through which, depending upon the situation, libidinal and other interests are sent out and pulled in again like pseudopodia. The armor itself, however, is to be thought of as flexible. Its mode of reaction always proceeds according to the pleasure-unpleasure principle.

⁴ Abraham: Psychoanalytische Studien zur Charakterbildung, Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1924.
In unpleasurable situations the armoring contracts; in pleasurable situations it expands. The degree of character flexibility, the ability to open oneself to the outside world or to close oneself to it, depending upon the situation, constitutes the difference between a reality-oriented and a neurotic character structure. Extreme prototypes of pathologically rigid armoring are the affect-blocked compulsive characters and schizophrenic autism, both of which tend toward catatonic rigidity.

The character armor is formed as a chronic result of the clash between instinctual demands and an outer world which frustrates those demands. Its strength and continued raison d'être are derived from the current conflicts between instinct and outer world. The expression and the sum total of those impingements of the outer world on instinctual life, through accumulation and qualitative homogeneity, constitute a historical whole. This will be immediately clear when we think of known character types such as "the bourgeois," "the official," "the proletarian," "the butcher," etc. It is around the ego that this armoring is formed, around precisely that part of the personality which lies at the boundary between biophysiological instinctive life and the outer world. Hence we designate it as the character of the ego.

At the core of the armor's definitive formation, we regularly find, in the course of analysis, the conflict between genital incest desires and the actual frustration of their gratification. The formation of the character commences as a definite form of the overcoming of the Oedipus complex. The conditions which lead precisely to this kind of resolution are special, i.e., they relate specifically to the character. (These conditions correspond to the prevailing social circumstances to which childhood sexuality is subject. If these circumstances are changed, both the conditions of the character formation and the structures of the character will be changed.) For there are other ways of resolving the conflict, naturally not so important or so determinative in terms of the future development of the total personality, e.g., simple repression or the formation of an infantile neurosis. If we consider what is common to these conditions, we find, on the one hand, extremely intense genital desires and, on the other hand, a relatively weak ego which, out of fear of being punished, seeks to protect itself by repressions. The repression leads to a damming up of the impulses, which in turn threatens that simple repression with a breakthrough of the repressed impulses. The result is a transformation of the ego, e.g., the development of attitudes designed to ward off fear, attitudes which can be summarized by the term "shyness." Although this is merely the first intimation of a character, there are decisive consequences for its formation. Shyness or a related attitude of the ego constitutes a restriction of the ego. But in warding off dangerous situations which could provoke what is repressed such an attitude also strengthens the ego.

It turns out, however, that this first transformation of the ego, e.g., the shyness, does not suffice to master the instinct. On the contrary, it easily leads to the development of anxiety and always becomes the behavioral basis of childhood phobia. In order to maintain the repression, an additional transformation of the ego becomes necessary: the repressions have to be cemented together, the ego has to harden, the defense has to take on a chronically operative, automatic character. And, since the simultaneously developed childhood anxiety constitutes a continual threat to the repressions; since the repressed material is expressed in the anxiety; since, moreover, the anxiety itself threatens to weaken the ego, a protective formation against the anxiety also has to be created. The driving force behind all these measures taken by the ego is, in the final analysis, conscious or unconscious fear of punishment, kept alive by the prevailing behavior of parents and teachers. Thus, we have the seeming paradox, namely that fear causes the child to want to resolve his fear.

Essentially, the libido-economically necessitated hardening of the ego takes place on the basis of three processes:
1. It identifies with the frustrating reality as personified in the figure of the main suppressive person.
2. It turns against itself the aggression which it mobilized against the suppressive person and which also produced the anxiety.
3. It develops reactive attitudes toward the sexual strivings, i.e., it utilizes the energy of these strivings to serve its own purposes, namely to ward them off.

The first process gives the armoring its meaningful contents. (The affect-block of a compulsive patient has the meaning "I
have to control myself as my father always said I should”; but it also has the meaning “I have to preserve my pleasure and make myself indifferent to my father’s prohibitions.”

The second process probably binds the most essential element of aggressive energy, shuts off a part of the mode of motion, and thereby creates the inhibiting factor of the character.

The third process withdraws a certain quantity of libido from the repressed libidinal drives so that their urgency is weakened. Later this transformation is not only eliminated; it is made superfluous by the intensification of the remaining energy cathexis as a result of the restriction of the mode of motion, gratification, and general productivity.

Thus, the armoring of the ego takes place as a result of the fear of punishment, at the expense of id energy, and contains the prohibitions and standards of parents and teachers. Only in this way can the character formation fulfill its economic functions of alleviating the pressure of repression and, over and above this, of strengthening the ego. This, however, is not the whole story. If, on the one hand, this armoring is at least temporarily successful in warding off impulses from within, it constitutes, on the other hand, a far-reaching block not only against stimuli from the outside but also against further educational influences. Except in cases where there is a strong development of stubbornness, this block need not preclude an external docility. We should also bear in mind that external docility, as, for example, in passive-feminine characters, can be combined with the most tenacious inner resistance. At this point, we must also stress that in one person the armoring takes place on the surface of the personality, while in another person it takes place in the depth of the personality. In the latter case, the external and obvious appearance of the personality is not its real but only its ostensible expression. The affect-blocked compulsive character and the paranoid-aggressive character are examples of armoring on the surface; the hysterical character is an example of a deep armoring of the personality. The depth of the armoring depends on the conditions of regression and fixation and constitutes a minor aspect of the problem of character differentiation.

If, on the one hand, the character armor is the result of the sexual conflict of childhood and the definite way in which this conflict has been managed, it becomes, under the conditions to which character formation is subject in our cultural circles, the basis of later neurotic conflicts and symptom neuroses in the majority of cases; it becomes the reaction basis of the neurotic character. A more detailed discussion of this will follow later. At this point I will limit myself to a brief summary:

A personality whose character structure precludes the establishment of a sex-economic regulation of energy is the precondition of a later neurotic illness. Thus, the basic conditions of falling ill are not the sexual conflict of childhood and the Oedipus complex as such but the way in which they are handled. Since, however, the way these conflicts are handled is largely determined by the nature of the family conflict itself (intensity of the fear of punishment, latitude of instinctual gratification, character of the parents, etc.), the development of the small child’s ego up to and including the Oedipus phase determines, finally, whether a person becomes neurotic or achieves a regulated sexual economy as the basis of social and sexual potency.

The reaction basis of the neurotic character means that it went too far and allowed the ego to become rigid in a way which precluded attainment of a regulated sexual life and sexual experience. The unconscious instinctual forces are thus deprived of any energetic release, and the sexual stasis not only remains permanent but continually increases. Next, we note a steady development of the character reaction formations (e.g., ascetic ideology, etc.) against the sexual demands built up in connection with contemporary conflicts in important life situations. Thus, a cycle is set up: the stasis is increased and leads to new reaction formations in the very same way as their phobic predecessors. However, the stasis always increases more rapidly than the armoring until, in the end, the reaction formation is no longer adequate to keep the psychic tension in check. It is at this point that the repressed sexual desires break through and are immediately warded off by symptom formations (formation of a phobia or its equivalent).

In this neurotic process, the various defense positions of the ego overlap and interfuse. Thus, in the cross section of the personality, we find side by side character reactions which, in terms of development and time, belong to different periods. In the phase of the final breakdown of the ego, the cross section of the
personality resembles a tract of land following a volcanic eruption that throws together masses of rocks belonging to various geological strata. However, it is not especially difficult to pick out from this jumble the cardinal meaning and mechanism of all character reactions. Once discerned and understood, they lead directly to the central infantile conflict.

3. CONDITIONS OF CHARACTER DIFFERENTIATION

What conditions, presently recognizable, enable us to understand what constitutes the difference between a healthy and a pathological armor? Our investigation of character formation remains sterile theorizing as long as we do not answer this question with some degree of concreteness and thereby offer guidelines in the field of education. In view of the prevailing sexual morality, however, the conclusions which follow from our investigation will put the educator who wants to raise healthy men and women in a very difficult position.

To begin with, it must be stressed once again that the formation of the character depends not merely upon the fact that instinct and frustration clash with one another but also upon the way in which this happens; the stage of development during which the character-forming conflicts occur; and which instincts are involved.

To gain a better understanding of the situation, let us attempt to form a schema from the wealth of conditions bearing upon character formation. Such a schema reveals the following fundamental possibilities. The result of character formation is dependent upon the:

- phase in which the impulse is frustrated;
- frequency and intensity of the frustrations;
- impulses against which the frustration is chiefly directed;
- ratio between indulgence and frustration;
- sex of the person chiefly responsible for the frustrations;
- contradictions in the frustrations themselves.

All these conditions are determined by the prevailing social order with respect to education, morality, and the gratification of needs; in the final analysis, by the prevailing economic structure of the society.

The goal of a future prophylaxis of neuroses is the formation of characters which not only give the ego sufficient support against the inner and outer world but also allow the sexual and social freedom of movement necessary for psychic economy. So, to begin with, we must understand the fundamental consequences of every frustration of the gratification of a child's instincts.

Every frustration of the kind entailed by present-day methods of education causes a withdrawal of the libido into the ego and, consequently, a strengthening of secondary narcissism. This in itself constitutes a character transformation of the ego inasmuch as there is an increase in the ego's sensitiveness, which is expressed as shyness and a heightened sense of anxiety. If, as is usually the case, the person responsible for the frustration is loved, an ambivalent attitude, later an identification, is developed toward that person. In addition to the suppression, the child internalizes certain character traits of this person—as a matter of fact, precisely those traits directed against his own instinct. What happens, then, is essentially that the instinct is repressed or coped with in some other way.

However, the effect of the frustration on the character is largely dependent upon when the impulse is frustrated. If it is frustrated in its initial stages of development, the repression succeeds only too well. Although the victory is complete, the impulse can be neither sublimated nor consciously gratified. For example, the premature repression of anal eroticism impedes the development of anal sublimations and prepares the way for severe anal reaction formations. What is more important in terms of the character is the fact that shutting out the impulses from the structure of the personality impairs its activity as a whole. This can be seen, for example, in children whose aggression and motor pleasure were prematurely inhibited; their later capacity for work will consequently be reduced.

At the height of its development, an impulse cannot be completely repressed. A frustration at this point is much more likely to create an indissoluble conflict between prohibition and im-

*Footnote, 1945: In the language of orgone biophysics: the continual frustration of primary natural needs leads to chronic contraction of the biosystem (muscular armor, sympathicotonia, etc.). The conflict between inhibited primary drives and the armor gives rise to secondary, antisocial drives (sadism, etc.); in the process of breaking through the armor, primary biological impulses are transformed into destructive sadistic impulses.
pulse. If the fully developed impulse encounters a sudden, unanticipated frustration, it lays the groundwork for the development of an impulsive personality.6 In this case, the child does not fully accept the prohibition. Nonetheless, he develops guilt feelings, which in turn intensify the impulsive actions until they become compulsive impulses. So we find, in impulsive psychopaths, an unformed character structure that is the opposite of the demand for sufficient armoring against the outer and inner world. It is characteristic of the impulsive type that the reaction formation is not employed against the impulses; rather the impulses themselves (predominantly sadistic impulses) are enlisted as a defense against imaginary situations of danger, as well as the danger arising from the impulses. Since, as a result of the disordered genital structure, the libido economy is in a wretched state, the sexual stasis occasionally increases the anxiety and, with it, the character reactions, often leading to excesses of all kinds.

The opposite of the impulsive is the instinct-inhibited character. Just as the impulsive type is characterized by the cleavage between fully developed instinct and sudden frustration, the instinct-inhibited type is characterized by an accumulation of frustrations and other instinct-inhibiting educational measures from the beginning to the end of his instinctual development. The character armoring which corresponds to it tends to be rigid, considerably constrains the individual's psychic flexibility, and forms the reaction basis for depressive states and compulsive symptoms (inhibited aggression). But it also turns human beings into docile, undiscriminating citizens. Herein lies its sociological significance.

The sex and the character of the person mainly responsible for one's upbringing are of the greatest importance for the nature of one's later sexual life.

We shall reduce the very complicated influence exercised by an authoritarian society on the child to the fact that, in a system of education built upon family units, the parents function as the main executors of social influence. Because of the usually unconscious sexual attitude of the parents toward their children, it happens that the father has a stronger liking for and is less prone to restrict and educate the daughter, while the mother has a stronger liking for and is less prone to restrict and educate the son. Thus, the sexual relationship determines, in most cases, that the parent of the same sex becomes most responsible for the child’s upbringing. With the qualification that, in the child's first years of life and among the large majority of the working population, the mother assumes the main responsibility for the child’s upbringing, it can be said that identification with the parent of the same sex prevails, i.e., the daughter develops a maternal and the son a paternal ego and superego. But because of the special constellation of some families or the character of some parents, there are frequent deviations. We shall mention some of the typical backgrounds of these atypical identifications.

Let us begin by considering the relationships in the case of boys. Under usual circumstances, namely when the boy has developed the simple Oedipus complex, when the mother has a stronger liking for him and frustrates him less than the father does, he will identify with the father and—provided the father has an active and manly nature—will continue to develop in a masculine way. If, on the other hand, the mother has a strict, “masculine” personality, if the essential frustrations proceed from her, the boy will identify predominantly with her and, depending upon the erogenic stage in which the main maternal restrictions are imposed upon him, will develop a mother identification on a phallic or anal basis. Given the background of a phallic mother identification, a phallic-narcissistic character usually develops, whose narcissism and sadism are directed chiefly against women (revenge against the strict mother). This attitude is the character defense against the deeply repressed original love of the mother, a love which could not continue to exist beside her frustrating influence and the identification with her, but ended rather in a disappointment. To be more specific: this love was transformed into the character attitude itself, from which, however, it can be released through analysis.

In the mother identification on an anal basis, the character has become passive and feminine—toward women, but not toward men. Such identifications often constitute the basis of a masochistic perversion with the fantasy of a strict woman. This character formation usually serves as a defense against phallic desires which, for a short time, were intensely directed toward

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6 Cf. Reich: DertriebhafterCharakter, Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1925.
the mother in childhood. The fear of castration by the mother lends support to the anal identification with her. Anality is the specific erogenic basis of this character formation.

A passive-feminine character in a male is always based on an identification with the mother. Since the mother is the frustrating parent in this type, she is also the object of the fear that engenders this attitude. There is, however, another type of passive-feminine character which is brought about by an excessive strictness on the part of the father. This takes place in the following way: fearing the realization of his genital desires, the boy shrinks from the masculine-phallic position to the feminine-anal position, identifies here with his mother, and adopts a passive-feminine attitude toward his father and later toward all persons in authority. Exaggerated politeness and compliance, softness and a tendency toward underhanded conduct are characteristic of this type. He uses his attitude to ward off the active masculine strivings, to ward off, above all, his repressed hatred of the father. Side by side with his de facto feminine-passive nature (mother identification in the ego), he has identified with his father in his ego-ideal (father identification in superego and ego-ideal). However, he is not able to realize this identification because he lacks a phallic position. He will always be feminine and want to be masculine. A severe inferiority complex, the result of this tension between feminine ego and masculine ego-ideal, will always set the stamp of oppression (sometimes of humbleness) upon his personality. The severe potency disturbance which is always present in such cases gives the whole situation a rational justification.

If we compare this type with the one who identifies with the mother on a phallic basis, we see that the phallic-narcissistic character successfully wards off an inferiority complex which betrays itself only to the eye of the expert. The inferiority complex of the passive-feminine character, on the other hand, is transparent. The difference lies in the basic erogenic structure. The phallic libido permits a complete compensation of all attitudes which are not in keeping with the masculine ego-ideal, whereas the anal libido, when it holds the central position in the male's sexual structure, precludes such a compensation.

The reverse is true of a girl: an indulgent father is more likely to contribute to the establishment of a feminine character than a father who is strict or brutal. Large numbers of clinical comparisons reveal that a girl will usually react to a brutal father with the formation of a hard male character. The ever-present penis envy is activated and is molded into a masculinity complex through character changes of the ego. In this case the hard, masculine-aggressive nature serves as an armoring against the infantile feminine attitude toward the father which had to be repressed because of his coldness and hardness. If, on the other hand, the father is kind and loving, the little girl can retain and, with the exception of the sensuous components, even develop her object-love to a large extent. It is not necessary for her to identify with the father. True, she too will usually have developed penis envy. What is important is how it affects the character and whether it produces symptoms. What is decisive for this type is that a maternal identification takes place in the ego; it finds expression in character traits which we call "feminine."

The preservation of this character structure is dependent upon the condition that vaginal eroticism becomes a permanent part of femininity in puberty. At this age, severe disappointments in the father or father-prototypes can arouse the masculine identification which did not take place in childhood, activate the dormant penis envy, and, at this late stage, lead to a transformation of the character toward the masculine. We very often observe this in girls who repress their heterosexual desires for moral reasons (identification with the authoritarian, moralistic mother) and thus bring about their own disappointment in men. In the majority of such cases, these otherwise feminine women tend to develop a hysterical nature. There is a continuous genital urge toward the object (coquettishness) and a shrinking back, accompanied by the development of genital anxiety, when the situation threatens to become serious (hysterical genital anxiety). The hysterical character in a woman functions as protection against her own genital desires and against the masculine aggression of the object. This shall be discussed in greater detail later.

We sometimes meet with a special case in our practice, namely a strict and hard mother who raises a daughter whose
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character is neither masculine nor feminine but remains childish or reverts to childishness later. Such a mother did not give her child sufficient love. The ambivalent conflict with respect to the mother is considerably stronger on the side of hate, in fear of which the child withdraws to the oral stage of sexual development. The girl will hate the mother at a genital level, will repress her hatred, and, after having assumed an oral attitude, transform it into reactive love and a crippling dependency upon the mother. Such women develop a peculiarly sticky attitude toward older or married women, become attached to them in a masochistic way, have a tendency to become passively homosexual (cunnilingus in the case of perverse formations), have themselves looked after by older women, develop but a small interest in men, and, in their whole bearing, exhibit “babyish behavior.” This attitude, like any other character attitude, is an armoring against repressed desires and a defense against stimuli from the outside world. Here the character serves as an oral defense against intense hate tendencies directed against the mother, behind which the equally warded-off normal feminine attitude toward the male is found only with difficulty.

Until now, we have focused our attention merely upon the fact that the sex of the person mainly responsible for frustrating the child’s sexual desires plays an essential role in the molding of the character. In this connection, we touched upon the adult’s character only insofar as we spoke of “strict” and “mild” influencing. However, the formation of the child’s character is, in another decisive respect, dependent upon the natures of the parents, which, in their time, were determined by general and particular social influences. Much of what official psychiatry looks upon as inherited (which, incidentally, it cannot account for) turns out, upon sufficiently deep analysis, to be the result of early conflicting identifications.

We do not deny the role played by heredity in determining the modes of reaction. The new-born child has its “character”—that much is clear. It is our contention, however, that the environment exercises the decisive influence and determines whether an existing inclination will be developed and strengthened or will not be allowed to unfold at all. The strongest argument against the view that the character is innate is provided by patients in whom analysis demonstrates that a definite mode of reaction existed until a certain age and then a completely different character developed. For example, at first they might have been easily excitable and enthusiastic and later depressive; or stubbornly active and then quiet and inhibited. Although it seems quite probable that a certain basic personality is innate and hardly changeable, the overemphasis of the hereditary factor stems undoubtedly from an unconscious dread of the consequences of a correct appraisal of the influence exercised by education.

This controversy will not be finally settled until an important institute decides to carry out a mass experiment, e.g., isolates some one hundred children of psychopathic parents right after birth, brings them up in a uniform educational environment, and later compares the results with those of a hundred other children who were raised in a psychopathic milieu.

If we once again briefly review the basic character structures sketched above, we see that they all have one thing in common: they are all stimulated by the conflict arising from the child-parent relationship. They are an attempt to resolve this conflict in a special way and to perpetuate this resolution. At one time, Freud stated that the Oedipus complex is submerged by the castration anxiety. We can now add that it is indeed submerged but it re-surfaces in a different form. The Oedipus complex is transformed into character reactions which, on the one hand, extend its main features in a distorted way and, on the other hand, constitute reaction formations against its basic elements.

Summing up, we can also say that the neurotic character, both in its contents and in its form, is made up entirely of compromises, just as the symptom is. It contains the infantile instinctual demand and the defense, which belongs to the same or different states of development. The basic infantile conflict continues to exist, transformed into attitudes which emerge in a definite form, as automatic modes of reaction which have become chronic and from which, later, they have to be distilled through analysis.

By virtue of this insight into a phase of human development, we are in a position to answer a question raised by Freud: are repressed elements retained as double entries, as memory traces, or otherwise? We may now cautiously conclude that those elements of infantile experience which are not worked into the character are
retained as emotionally charged memory traces; whereas those elements which are absorbed into and made a part of the character are retained as the contemporary mode of reaction. As obscure as this process may be, there can be no doubt about the "functional continuum," for in analytic therapy we succeed in reducing such character formations to their original components. It is not so much a question of again bringing to the surface what has been submerged, as, for example, in the case of hysterical amnesia; rather, the process is comparable to the recovery of an element from a chemical compound. We are also in a better position now to understand why, in some acute cases of character neuroses, we cannot succeed in eliminating the Oedipus conflict when we analyze only the content. The reason is that the Oedipus conflict no longer exists in the present but can be arrived at only by the analytic breakdown of the formal modes of reaction.

The following categorization of principal types, based on isolation of the specifically pathogenic from specifically reality-oriented psychic dynamisms, is anything but a theoretical pastime. Using these differentiation as our point of departure, we shall attempt to arrive at a theory of psychic economy which could be of practical use in the field of education. Naturally, society must make possible and encourage (or reject) the practical application of such a theory of psychic economy. Contemporary society, with its sex-negating morality and its incapacity to guarantee the masses of its members even a bare economic existence, is as far removed from the recognition of such possibilities as it is from their practical application. This will be immediately clear when, by way of anticipation, we state that the parental tie, the suppression of masturbation in early childhood, the demand for abstinence in puberty, and the forcing of sexual interest into the (today sociologically justified) institution of marriage represent the antithesis of the conditions necessary to establish and carry through a sex-economic psychic economy. The prevailing sexual morality cannot but create the groundwork of neuroses in the character. Sexual and psychic economy is impossible with the morals which are so vehemently defended today. This is one of the inexorable social consequences of the psychoanalytic investigation of neuroses.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GENITAL CHARACTER AND THE NEUROTIC CHARACTER
(The Sex-Economic Function of the Character Armor)

1. CHARACTER AND SEXUAL STASIS

We now turn our attention to the reasons why a character is formed and to the economic function of the character.

The study of the dynamic function of the character reactions and of their purposeful mode of operation paves the way to the answer to the first question: in the main, the character proves to be a narcissistic defense mechanism.1 Thus, it would seem cor-

1 At this point it is necessary to make a fundamental distinction between our concepts and those of Alfred Adler concerning character and "security."

a) Adler began to move away from psychoanalysis and the libido theory with the thesis that what is important is not the analysis of the libido but the analysis of the nervous character. His postulating libido and character as opposites and completely excluding the former from consideration are in complete contradiction to the theory of psychoanalysis. While we do take the same problem as our point of departure, namely the purposeful mode of operation of what one calls the "total personality and character," we nonetheless make use of a fundamentally different theory and method. In asking what prompts the psychic organism to form a character, we conceive of the character as a causative entity and arrive only secondarily at a purpose which we deduce from the cause (cause: unpleasure; purpose: defense against unpleasure). Adler, in dealing with the same problem, uses a finalistic point of view.

b) We endeavor to explain character formation in terms of libido economy and arrive, therefore, at completely different results from Adler, who chooses the principle of the "will to power" as an absolute explanation, thus overlooking the dependency of the "will to power," which is only a partial narcissistic striving, upon the vicissitudes of narcissism as a whole and of the object libido.

c) Adler's formulations on the mode of action of the inferiority complex and its compensations are correct. This has never been denied. But here, too, the connection is missing to the libido processes which lie deeper, especially the phallic libido. It is precisely in our libido-theoretical dissolution of the inferiority complex itself and its ramifications in the ego that we part company with Adler. Our problem begins precisely where Adler leaves off.
rect to assume that if the character serves essentially as a protection of the ego, e.g., in the analytic situation, it must have originated as an apparatus intended to ward off danger. And the character analysis of each individual case shows, when the analyst succeeds in penetrating to the character’s final stage of development, i.e., the Oedipus stage, that the character was molded under the influence of the dangers threatening from the outside world on the one hand and the pressing demands of the id on the other.

Building upon Lamarck’s theory, Freud and particularly Ferenczi differentiated an autoplastic and an alloplastic adaptation in psychic life. Alloplastically, the organism changes the environment (technology and civilization); autoplastically, the organism changes itself—in both instances in order to survive. In biological terms, character formation is an autoplastic function initiated by the disturbing and unpleasurable stimuli from the outer world (structure of the family). Because of the clash between the id and the outer world (which limits or wholly frustrates libido gratification), and prompted by the real anxiety generated by this conflict, the psychic apparatus erects a protective barrier between itself and the outer world. To comprehend this process, which has been but crudely sketched here, we have to turn our attention momentarily from the dynamic and economic points of view to the topographical.

Freud taught us to conceive of the ego, i.e., that part of the psychic mechanism directed toward the outer world and therefore exposed, as an apparatus intended to ward off stimuli. Here the formation of the character takes place. Freud, in a very clear and illuminating way, described the struggle which the ego, as a buffer between id and outer world (or id and superego), has to engage in. What is most important about this struggle is that the ego, in its efforts to mediate between the inimical parties for the purpose of survival, introjects the suppressive objects of the outer world, as a matter of fact precisely those objects which frustrate the id’s pleasure principle, and retains them as moral arbiters, as the superego. Hence, the morality of the ego is a component which does not originate in the id, i.e., does not develop in the narcissistic-libidinal organism; rather, it is an alien component borrowed from the intruding and menacing outer world.

The psychoanalytic theory of instincts views the inchoate psychic organism as a hodgepodge of primitive needs which originate in somatic conditions of excitation. As the psychic organism develops, the ego emerges as a special part of it and intervenes between these primitive needs on the one hand and the outer world on the other hand. To illustrate this, let us consider the protozoa. Among these we have, for example, the rhizopods, which protect themselves from the raw outer world with an armor of inorganic material held together by chemical eliminations of the protoplasm. Some of these protozoa produce a shell coiled like that of a snail; others, a circular shell equipped with prickles. As compared with the amoeba, the motility of these armored protozoa is considerably limited; contact with the outer world is confined to the pseudopodia, which, for the purpose of locomotion and nourishment, can be stretched out and pulled in again through tiny holes in the armor. We shall often have occasion to make use of this comparison.

We can conceive of the character of the ego—perhaps the Freudian ego in general—as an armor protecting the id against the stimuli of the outer world. In the Freudian sense, the ego is a structural agent. By character, we mean here not only the outward form of this agent but also the sum total of all that the ego shapes in the way of typical modes of reaction, i.e., modes of reaction characteristic of one specific personality. By character, in short, we mean an essentially dynamically determined factor manifest in a person’s characteristic demeanor: walk, facial expression, stance, manner of speech, and other modes of behavior. This character of the ego is molded from elements of the outer world, from prohibitions, instinctual inhibitions, and the most varied forms of identifications. Thus, the material elements of the character armor have their origin in the outer world, in society. Before we enter into the question of what constitutes the mortar of these elements, i.e., what dynamic process welds this armor together, we have to point out that protection against the outer world, the central motive behind the formation of the character, definitely does not constitute the chief function of the character later. Civilized man has abundant means of protecting himself against the real dangers of the outer world, namely social institutions in all their forms. Moreover, being a highly developed organism, he has a muscular apparatus which enables him to take flight or to fight and an intellect which
enables him to foresee and avoid dangers. The protective mechanisms of the character begin to function in a particular way when anxiety makes itself felt within, whether because of an inner condition of irritation or because of an external stimulus relating to the instinctual apparatus. When this happens, character has to master the actual (stasis) anxiety which results from the energy of the thwarted drive.

The relation between character and repression can be observed in the following process: the necessity of repressing instinctual demands initiates the formation of the character. Once the character has been molded, however, it economizes upon repression by absorbing instinctual energies—which are free-floating in the case of ordinary repressions—into the character formation itself. The formation of a character trait, therefore, indicates that a conflict involving repression has been resolved: either the repressive process itself is rendered unnecessary or an inchoate repression is transformed into a relatively rigid, ego-justified formation. Hence, the processes of the character formation are wholly in keeping with the tendency of the ego to unify the strivings of the psychic organism. These facts explain why repressions that have led to rigid character traits are so much more difficult to eliminate than those, for example, which produce a symptom.

There is a definite connection between the initial impetus to the formation of the character, i.e., protection against concrete dangers, and its final function, i.e., protection against instinctual dangers, stasis anxiety, and the absorption of instinctual energies. Social arrangements, especially the development from primitive social organizations to civilization, have entailed many restrictions upon libidinal and other gratifications. The development of mankind thus far has been characterized by increasing sexual restrictions. In particular, the development of patriarchal civilization and present-day society has gone hand in hand with increasing fragmentation and suppression of genitality. The longer this process continues, the more remote the causes of real anxiety become. On a social level, however, the real dangers to the life of the individual have increased. Imperialistic wars and the class struggle outweigh the dangers of primitive times. It cannot be denied that civilization has brought about the advantage of security in individual situations. But this benefit is not without its drawbacks. To avoid real anxiety, man had to restrict his instincts. One must not give vent to one's aggression even if one is starving as a result of economic crisis and the sexual drive is fettered by social norms and prejudices. A transgression of the norms would immediately entail a real danger, e.g., punishment for "larceny" and for childhood masturbation, and imprisonment for incest and homosexuality. To the extent that real anxiety is avoided, the stasis of libido is increased and, with it, stasis anxiety. Thus, actual anxiety and real anxiety have a complementary relation to one another: the more real anxiety is avoided, the stronger stasis anxiety becomes, and vice versa. The man who is without fear gratifies his strong libidinal needs even at the risk of social ostracism. Animals are more exposed to the conditions of real anxiety because of their deficient social organization. However, unless they fall under the pressures of domestication—and even then only under special circumstances—animals rarely suffer from instinctual stasis.

We have stressed here the avoidance of (real) anxiety and the binding of (stasis) anxiety as two economic principles of character formation; we must not neglect a third principle, which is also instrumental in shaping the character, i.e., the pleasure principle. True, the formation of the character originates in and is caused by the need to ward off the dangers entailed by the gratification of instincts. Once the armor has been formed, however, the pleasure principle continues to operate inasmuch as the character, just as the symptom, serves not only to ward off drives and to bind anxiety but also to gratify distorted instincts. For example, the genital-narcissistic character has protected himself against external influences; he also gratifies a good portion of libido in the narcissistic relationship of his ego to his ego-ideal. There are two kinds of instinctual gratification. On the one hand, the energy of the warded-off instinctual impulses themselves, particularly the pregenital and sadistic impulses, is largely consumed in the establishment and perpetuation of the defense mechanism. While this, to be sure, does not constitute the gratification of an instinct in the sense of a direct, undisguised attainment of pleasure, it does constitute a reduction of the instinctual tension comparable
Although this reduction is phenomenologically different from direct gratification, it is nonetheless almost on a par with it to that derived from the disguised “gratification” in a symptom. The instinct’s energy is expended in the binding and solidifying of the character’s contents (identifications, reaction formations, etc.). In the affect-block of some compulsive characters, for example, sadism mainly is consumed in the formation and perpetuation of the wall between id and outer world, whereas anal homosexuality is consumed in the exaggerated politeness and passivity of some passive-feminine characters.

The instinctual impulses which are not absorbed into the character strive to achieve direct gratification unless they are repressed. The nature of this gratification depends upon the structure of the character. And which instinctual forces are employed to establish the character and which are allowed direct gratification decides the difference not only between health and sickness but among the individual character types.

Great importance also devolves on the quantity of the character armor as well as on its quality. When the armoring of the character against the outer world and against the biological part of the personality has reached a degree commensurate with the libido development, there are still “breaches” in it which provide the contact with the outer world. Through these breaches, the unbound libido and the other instinctual impulses are turned toward or withdrawn from the outer world. But the armoring of the ego can be so complete that the breaches become “too narrow,” i.e., the communication lines with the outer world are no longer adequate to guarantee a regulated libido economy and social adaptation. Catatonic stupor is an example of a total insulation, while the impulsive character is a prime example of a wholly inadequate armoring of the character structure. It is likely that every permanent conversion of object libido into narcissistic libido goes hand in hand with a strengthening and hardening of the ego armor. The affect-blocked compulsive character has a rigid armor and but meager possibilities of establishing affective relationships with the outer world. Everything recoils from his smooth, hard surface. The garrulous aggressive character, on the other hand, has, it is true, a flexible armor, but it is always “bristling.” His relationships to the outer world are limited to paranoic-aggressive reactions. The passive-feminine character is an example of a third type of armoring. On the surface, he appears to have an acquiescent and mild disposition, but in analysis we get to know it as an armoring that is difficult to dissolve.

It is indicative of every character formation not only what it wards off but what instinctual forces it uses to accomplish this. In general, the ego molds its character by taking possession of a certain instinctual impulse, itself subject to repression at one time, in order to ward off, with its help, another instinctual impulse. Thus, for example, the phallic-sadistic character’s ego will use exaggerated masculine aggression to ward off feminine, passive, and anal strivings. By resorting to such measures, however, it changes itself, i.e., assumes chronically aggressive modes of reaction. Others frequently ward off their repressed aggression by “insinuating”—as one such patient once put it—theyinsinuate themselves into the favor of any person capable of rousing their aggression. They become as “slippery” as eels, evade every straightforward reaction, can never be held fast. Usually, this “slipperiness” is also expressed in the intonation of their voice; they speak in a soft, modulated, cautious, and flattering way. In taking over anal interests for the purpose of warding off the aggressive impulses, the ego itself becomes “greasy” and “slimy,” and conceives of itself in this way. This causes the loss of self-confidence (one such patient felt himself to be “stinky”). Such people are driven to make renewed efforts to adapt themselves to the world, to gain possession of objects in any way possible. However, since they do not possess any genuine ability to adapt themselves and usually experience one frustration and rejection after the other, their aggression builds up and this, in turn, necessitates intensified anal-passive defense. In such cases, character-analytic work not only attacks the function of the defense but also exposes the means employed to accomplish this defense, i.e., anality in this case.

The final quality of the character—true of the typical as well as the particular—is determined by two factors: first, qualitatively, by those stages of libido development in which the process of character formation was most permanently influenced by inner conflicts, i.e., by the specific position of the libido fixation.
Qualitatively, therefore, we can differentiate between depressive (oral), masochistic, genital-narcissistic (phallic), hysterical (genital-incestuous) characters and compulsive (anal-sadistic fixation) characters; second, quantitatively, by the libido economy which is dependent upon the qualitative factor. The former could also be called the historical, the latter the contemporary motive of the character form.

2. THE LIBIDO-ECONOMIC DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GENITAL CHARACTER AND THE NEUROTIC CHARACTER

If the armoring of the character exceeds a certain degree; if it has utilized chiefly those instinctual impulses that under normal circumstances serve to establish contact with reality; if the capacity for sexual gratification has thereby been too severely restricted, then all the conditions exist for the formation of the neurotic character. If, now, the character formation and character structure of neurotic men and women are compared with those of individuals capable of work and love, we arrive at a qualitative difference between the ways the character binds the dammed-up libido. It is found that there are adequate and inadequate means of binding anxiety. Genital orgastic gratification of the libido and sublimation prove to be prototypes of adequate means; all kinds of pregenital gratification and reaction formations prove to be inadequate. This qualitative difference is also expressed quantitatively: the neurotic character suffers a continuously increasing stasis of the libido precisely because his means of gratification are not adequate to the needs of the instinctual apparatus; whereas the genital character is governed by a steady alternation between libido tension and adequate libido gratification. In short, the genital character is in possession of a regulated libido economy. The term "genital character" is justified by the fact that, with the possible exception of highly unusual cases, only genital primacy and orgasmic potency (itself determined by a special character structure), as opposed to all other libido structures, guarantee a regulated libido economy.

The historically determined quality of the character-forming forces and contents determines the contemporary quantitative regulation of the libido economy and therefore, at a certain point, the difference between "health" and "sickness." In terms of their qualitative differences, the genital and neurotic characters are to be understood as principal types. The actual characters represent a mixture, and whether or not the libido economy is vouchsafed depends solely upon how far the actual character approximates the one or the other principal type. In terms of the quantity of the possible direct libido gratification, the genital and neurotic characters are to be understood as average types: either the libido gratification is such that it is capable of disposing of the stasis of the unused libido or it is not. In the latter case, symptoms or neurotic character traits develop which impair social and sexual capacity.

We shall attempt now to represent the qualitative differences between the two ideal types. To this end, we shall contrast the structure of the id, the superego, and finally the characteristics of the ego which are dependent upon the id and superego.

a) Structure of the id

The genital character has fully attained the post-ambivalent genital stage; the incest desire and the desire to get rid of the father (the mother) have been abandoned and genital strivings have been projected upon a heterosexual object which does not, as in the case of the neurotic character, actually represent the incest object. The heterosexual object has completely taken over the role—more specifically, the place—of the incest object. The Oedipus complex is no longer a contemporary factor; it has been resolved. It is not repressed; rather, it is free of cathexis. The pregenital tendencies (analinity, oral eroticism, and voyeurism) are not repressed. In part, they are anchored in the character as cultural sublimations; in part, they have a share in the pleasures preceding direct gratification. They are, in any case, subordinated to the genital strivings. The sexual act remains the highest and most pleasurable sexual goal. Aggression has also to a large extent been sublimated in social achievements; to a lesser extent, it contributes directly to genital sexuality, without, however, demanding exclusive gratification. This distribution of the instinctual drives assures

the capacity for corresponding orgastic gratification, which can be achieved only by way of the genital system, although it is not confined to it since it also provides gratification to the pregenital and aggressive tendencies. The less pregenital demands are repressed, i.e., the better the systems of pregenitality and genitality communicate, the more complete is the gratification and the fewer possibilities there are for pathogenic stasis of the libido.

The neurotic character, on the other hand, even if he does not have a feeble potency from the outset or does not live abstinently (which is true of the overwhelming majority of cases), is not capable of discharging his free, unsublimated libido in a satisfactory orgasm. Orgastically, he is always relatively impotent. The following configuration is responsible for this: the incest objects have a contemporary cathexis, or the libidinal cathexis pertaining to these objects is put forth in reaction formations. If there is any sexuality at all, its infantile nature is readily discernible. The woman who is loved merely represents the mother (sister, etc.) and the love relationship is burdened with all the anxieties, inhibitions, and neurotic whims of the infantile incest relationship (spurious transference). Genital primacy either is not present at all or has no cathexis or, as in the case of the hysterical character, the genital function is disturbed because of the incest fixation. Sexuality—this is especially true of the transference neuroses—moves along the paths of forepleasure, if the patient is not abstinent or inhibited. Thus, we have a kind of chain reaction: the infantile sexual fixation disturbs the orgastic function; this disturbance, in turn, creates a stasis of libido; the dammed-up libido intensifies the pregenital fixations, and so on and so forth. Because of this over-cathexis of the pregenital system, libidinal impulses creep into every cultural and social activity. This, of course, can only result in a disturbance because the action becomes associated with repressed and forbidden material. Occasionally, indeed, the activity becomes undisguised sexual activity in a distorted form, e.g., the cramp of a violinist. The libidinal surplus is not always available for social action; it is intertwined in the repression of infantile instinctual goals.

b) Structure of the superego

The superego of the genital character is chiefly distinguished by its important sexually affirmative elements. A high degree of harmony therefore exists between id and superego. Since the Oedipus complex has lost its cathexis, the counter-cathexis in the basic element of the superego has also become superfluous. Thus, to all intents and purposes, there are no superego prohibitions of a sexual nature. The superego is not sadistically laden not only for the above reasons but also because there is no stasis of the libido which could stir up sadism and make the superego vicious. The genital libido, since it is gratified directly, is not concealed in the strivings of the ego-ideal. Hence, social accomplishments are not, as in the case of the neurotic character, proofs of potency; rather they provide a natural, noncompensatory narcissistic gratification. Since there are no potency disturbances, an inferiority complex does not exist. There is a close correlation between ego-ideal and real ego, and no insurmountable tension exists between the two.

In the neurotic character, on the other hand, the superego is essentially characterized by sexual negation. This automatically sets up the familiar conflict and antipathy between id and superego. Since the Oedipus complex has not been mastered, the central element of the superego, the incest prohibition, is still wholly operative and interferes with every form of sexual relationship. The powerful sexual repression of the ego and the attendant libido stasis intensify the sadistic impulses which are expressed, among other ways, in a brutal code of morality. We would do well to remember in this connection that, as Freud pointed out, repression creates morality and not vice versa. Since a more or less conscious feeling of impotence is always present, many so-
cial accomplishments are primarily compensatory proofs of potency. These accomplishments, however, do not diminish the feelings of inferiority. On the contrary: since social accomplishments are often attestations of potency which cannot in any way replace the feeling of genital potency, the neurotic character never rids himself of the feeling of inner emptiness and incapacity, no matter how arduously he tries to compensate for it. Thus, the positive demands of the ego-ideal are raised higher and higher, while the ego, powerless and doubly paralyzed by feelings of inferiority (impotence and high ego-ideal), becomes less and less efficient.

c) Structure of the ego

Now let us consider the influences on the ego of the genital character. The periodic orgastic discharges of the id's libidinal tension considerably reduces the pressure of the id's instinctual claims on the ego. Because the id is basically satisfied, the superego has no cause to be sadistic and therefore does not exert any particular pressure on the ego. Free of guilt feelings, the ego takes possession of and gratifies the genital libido and certain pregenital strivings of the id and sublimates the natural aggression as well as parts of the pregenital libido in social accomplishments. As far as genital strivings are concerned, the ego is not opposed to the id and can impose certain inhibitions upon it much more easily since the id gives in to the ego in the main, i.e., the gratification of the libido. This appears to be the only condition under which the id allows itself to be held in check by the ego without the use of repression. A strong homosexual striving will express itself in one way when the ego fails to gratify the heterosexual striving and in an entirely different way when no libido stasis exists. Economically, this is easy to understand, for in heterosexual gratification—provided the homosexuality is not repressed, i.e., is not shut out of the communication system of the libido—energy is taken away from the homosexual strivings.

Since the ego is under only a small amount of pressure from both the id and the superego—largely because of sexual gratification—it does not have to defend itself against the id as does the ego of the neurotic character. It requires only small amounts of counter-cathexis and has, consequently, ample energy free for experiencing and acting in the outside world; acting and experiencing are intense and free-flowing. Thus the ego is highly accessible to pleasure (Lust) as well as unpleasure (Unlust). The genital character's ego also has an armor, but it is in control of the armor, not at its mercy. The armor is flexible enough to adapt itself to the most diverse experiences. The genital character can be joyous, but angry when necessary. He reacts to an object-loss with a commensurable degree of sadness; he is not subdued by his loss. He is capable of loving intensely and enthusiastically and of hating passionately. In a particular situation, he can behave in a childlike way, but he will never appear infantile. His seriousness is natural, not stiff in a compensatory way, for he does not have to appear grownup at all costs. His courage is not proof of potency, it is objectively motivated. So under certain conditions, e.g., a war he believes unjust, he will not be afraid to have himself labeled a coward but will stand up for his conviction. Since the infantile ideals have lost their cathexis, his hate as well as his love are rationally motivated. The flexibility and strength of his armor are shown by the fact that, in one case, he can open himself to the world just as intensely as, in another case, he can close himself to it. His ability to give himself is mainly demonstrated in his sexual experience: in the sexual act with the loved object, the ego almost ceases to exist, with the exception of its function of perception. For the moment, the armor has been almost entirely dissolved. The entire personality is immersed in the experience of pleasure, without fear of getting lost in it, for the ego has a solid narcissistic foundation, which does not compensate but sublimates. His self-esteem draws its best energies from the sexual experience. The very way he solves his contemporary conflicts shows that they are of a rational nature; they are not clogged with infantile and irrational elements. Once again, the reason for this is a rational libido economy that precludes the possibility of an over-cathexis of infantile experiences and desires.

In the forms of his sexuality, as in all other respects, the genital character is flexible and unconstrained. Since he is capable of gratification, he is also capable of monogamy without compulsion or repression; when rationally motivated, however, he is fully capable of changing the object of his love or of polygamy.
He does not cling to his sexual object because of feelings of guilt or moralistic considerations. Rather, he maintains the relationship on the basis of his healthy demand for pleasure, because it gratifies him. He can conquer polygamous desires without repression when they are incompatible with his relationship to the beloved object, but he can indeed give in to them if they become too urgent. He solves the actual conflicts arising from this in a realistic way.

Neurotic feelings of guilt are practically nonexistent. His sociality is based not on repressed but on sublimated aggression and on his orientation in reality. This does not mean, however, that he always submits to social reality. On the contrary, the genital character, whose structure is wholly at odds with our contemporary moralistically anti-sexual culture, is capable of criticizing and changing the social situation. His almost complete absence of fear enables him to take an uncompromising stand toward an environment that runs counter to his convictions.

If the primacy of the intellect is the goal of social development, it is inconceivable without genital primacy. The hegemony of the intellect not only puts an end to irrational sexuality but has as its precondition a regulated libido economy. Genital and intellectual primacy belong together, i.e., interdetermine one another, as do libido stasis and neurosis, superego (guilt feeling) and religion, hysteria and superstition, pregenital libido gratification and the contemporary sexual morality, sadism and ethics, sexual repression and committees for the rehabilitation of fallen women.

In the genital character, the regulated libido economy and the capacity for full sexual gratification are the foundation of the above character traits. In the same way, everything the neurotic character is and does is determined, in the final analysis, by his inadequate libido economy.

The ego of the neurotic character is either ascetic or achieves sexual gratification accompanied by guilt feelings. It is under pressure from two sides: (1) the constantly ungratified id with its dammed-up libido and (2) the brutal superego. The neurotic character's ego is inimical toward the id and fawning toward the superego. At the same time, however, it flirts with the id and secretly rebels against the superego. Insofar as the ego has not completely repressed its sexuality, it is predominantly pregenital; because of the prevailing sexual mores, genitality is tinged with anal and sadistic elements. The sexual act is conceived of as something dirty and beastly. Since aggressiveness is incorporated into or, more specifically, anchored partially in the character armor and partially in the superego, social achievements are impaired. The ego is either closed to both pleasure and unpleasure (affect-block) or accessible solely to unpleasure; or every pleasure is quickly transformed into unpleasure. The armor of the ego is rigid; communications with the outer world, constantly under the control of the narcissistic censor, are poor with respect to both object-libido and aggression. The armor functions chiefly as a protection against inner life; the result is a pronounced weakening of the ego's reality function. The relationships to the outer world are unnatural, myopic, or contradictory; the whole personality cannot become a harmonious and enthusiastic part of things because it lacks the capacity for complete experience. Whereas the genital character can change, strengthen, or weaken his defense mechanisms, the ego of the neurotic character is completely at the mercy of his unconscious repressed mechanisms. He cannot behave any differently even if he wants to. He would like to be joyous or angry but is capable of neither. He cannot love intensely because essential elements of his sexuality are repressed. Nor can he hate rationally because his ego does not feel equal to his hatred, which has become inordinate as a result of the libido stasis, and therefore has to repress it. And when he feels love or hate, the reaction is hardly in keeping with the facts. In the unconscious, the infantile experiences come into play and determine the extent and the nature of the reactions. The rigidity of his armor makes him unable either to open himself to some particular experience or to shut himself off completely from other experiences where he would be rationally justified in doing so. Usually, he is sexually inhibited or disturbed in the forepleasures of the sexual act. Even if this is not the case, however, he does not receive any gratification. Or, because of his inability to give himself, he is disturbed to such an extent that the libido economy is not regulated. A thorough analysis of the feelings one has during the sexual act allows the differentiation of various types: the narcissistic person whose attention is concentrated not on the sensation of pleasure but on the idea of
making a very potent impression; the hyperaesthetic person who is very much concerned not to touch any part of the body that might offend his aesthetic feelings; the person with repressed sadism who cannot rid himself of the compulsive thought that he might hurt the woman or is tormented by guilt feelings that he is abusing the woman; the sadistic character for whom the act means the martyring of the object. The list could be extended indefinitely. Where such disturbances are not fully manifested, the inhibitions corresponding to them are found in the total attitude toward sexuality. Since the superego of the neurotic character does not contain any sexually affirmative elements, it shuns sexual experience (H. Deutsch mistakenly held this to be true of the healthy character as well). This means, however, that only half of the personality takes part in the experience.

The genital character has a solid narcissistic foundation. In the neurotic character, on the other hand, the feeling of impotence forces the ego to make compensations of a narcissistic nature. The contemporary conflicts, permeated with irrational motives, make it impossible for the neurotic character to reach rational decisions. The infantile attitude and desires always have a negative effect.

Sexually unsatisfied and incapable of being satisfied, the neurotic character is finally forced either into asceticism or into rigid monogamy. The latter he will justify on moral grounds or as deference to his sexual partner, but in reality he is afraid of sexuality and unable to regulate it. Since sadism is not sublimated, the superego is extremely harsh; the id is relentless in its demands for the gratification of its needs, the ego develops feelings of guilt, which it calls social conscience, and a need for punishment, in which it tends to inflict on itself what it really wishes to do to others.

Upon brief reflection, we see that the empirical discovery of the above mechanisms becomes the basis for a revolutionary critique of all theoretically based systems of morals. Without, at this point, going into the details of this question so decisive for the social formation of culture, we can briefly state that to the extent that society makes possible the gratification of needs and the transformation of the corresponding human structures, the moral regulation of social life will fall away. The final decision lies not in the sphere of psychology but in the sphere of the sociological processes. As far as our clinical practice is concerned, there can no longer be any doubt that every successful analytic treatment, i.e., one which succeeds in transforming the neurotic character structure into a genital character structure, demolishes the moralistic arbiters and replaces them with the self-regulation of action based on a sound libido economy. Since some analysts speak of the “demolishing of the superego” by the analytic treatment, we have to point out that this is a matter of withdrawing energy from the system of moral arbitration and replacing it with libido-economic regulation. The fact that this process is at variance with the present-day interests of the state, moral philosophy, and religion is of decisive importance in another connection. More simply expressed, what this all means is that the man whose sexual as well as primitive biological and cultural needs are satisfied does not require any morality to maintain self-control. But the unsatisfied man, suppressed in all respects, suffers from mounting inner excitation that would cause him to tear everything to pieces if his energy were not partially held in check and partially consumed by moralistic inhibitions. The extent and intensity of a society’s ascetic and moralistic ideologies are the best yardstick for the extent and intensity of the unresolved tension, created by unsatisfied needs, in the average individual of that society. Both are determined by the relationship of the productive forces and the mode of production on the one hand and the needs which have to be satisfied on the other.

The discussion of the broader consequences of sex-economy and the analytic theory of character will not be able to evade these questions unless, at the sacrifice of its natural scientific prestige, it prefers to pull in the reins at the artificially erected boundary between what is and what should be.

3. SUBLIMATION, REACTION FORMATION, AND NEUROTIC REACTION BASIS

We now turn our attention to the existing differences between the social achievements of the genital character and the neurotic character.

We pointed out earlier that the orgastic gratification of the li-
bido and sublimation are the adequate means of removing the libido stasis or, more specifically, of mastering the stasis anxiety. The pregenital gratification of the libido and the reaction formation are the inadequate means. Sublimation is, like orgastic gratification, a specific accomplishment of the genital character; reaction formation is the mode of the neurotic character. This of course does not mean that the neurotic character does not sublimate and that the healthy character does not have any reaction formations.

To begin with, let us endeavor to give, on the basis of our clinical experiences, a theoretical description of the relationship between sublimation and sexual gratification. According to Freud, sublimation is the result of the deflection of a libidinal striving from its original goal and its rechanneling to a “higher,” socially valuable goal. The drive which receives a sublimated gratification must have relinquished its original object and goal. This first formulation by Freud eventually led to the misunderstanding that sublimation and instinctual gratification are altogether antithetical. However, if we consider the relation between sublimation and libido-economy in general, we learn from everyday experience that no antithesis exists here. We learn, indeed, that a regulated libido economy is the precondition of successful and lasting sublimation. The really important factor is that those drives which form the basis of our social achievements do not receive direct gratification; this does not mean that the libido is not at all gratified. The psychoanalysis of disturbances in work teaches us that the greater the stasis of the libido as a whole, the more difficult it is to sublimate pregenital libido. Sexual fantasies absorb the psychic interests and distract from work: or the cultural achievements themselves are sexualized and in this way are caught up in the sphere of repression. The observation of the genital character’s sublimations shows that they are continu-

—“People say, to be sure, that the struggle against such a powerful instinct, and the strengthening of all the ethical and aesthetic forces which are necessary for this struggle, ‘steel’ the character; and this is true for a few specially favorably organized natures. It must also be admitted that the differentiation of individual character, which is so marked in our day, has only become possible with the existence of sexual restriction. But in the vast majority of cases the struggle against sexuality eats up the energy available in a character and this at the very time when a young man is in need of all his forces in order to win his share and place in society. The relationship between the amount usually reinforced by the orgastic gratification of the libido. Releasing the sexual tensions liberates energy for higher achievements because, for a certain time, sexual fantasies do not draw any libidinal cathexis to themselves. In successful analyses, moreover, we observe that the patient’s productive power reaches a high level only after he has succeeded in achieving full sexual gratification. The durability of the sublimations is also dependent upon the regulation of the libido economy. Patients who rid themselves of their neurosis solely by means of sublimation exhibit a far less stable condition and have a far greater tendency to relapse than those patients who not only sublimate but also achieve direct sexual gratification. Just as incomplete, i.e., primarily pregenital, libido gratification interferes with sublimation, so orgastic genital gratification promotes it.

Now let us compare—to begin with, from a purely descriptive point of view—sublimation with reaction formation. What strikes us about these phenomena is that the reaction formation is spasmodic and compulsive, whereas the sublimation flows freely. In the latter case, the id, in harmony with the ego and ego-ideal, seems to have a direct contact with reality; in the former case, all achievements seem to be imposed upon a rebelling id by a strict superego. In sublimation, the effect of the action is important, even if the action itself has a libidinal accent. In the reaction formation, on the other hand, the act is important; the effect is of secondary importance. The action does not have a libidinal accent; it is negatively motivated. It is compulsive. The man who sublimes can suspend his work for a considerable period of time—rest is just as important to him as work. When a
reactive performance is disrupted, however, an inner restlessness ensues sooner or later. And if the disruption continues, the restlessness can mount to irritability and even anxiety. The man who sublimates is, on occasion, irritated or tense, not because he is not accomplishing anything but because he is absorbed in giving birth, so to speak, to his accomplishment. The man who sublimates *wants* to accomplish things and derives pleasure from his work. The man whose work is of a reactive nature has, as a patient once aptly expressed it, “to robot.” And as soon as he finishes one piece of work, he must immediately begin another. For him, work is an escape from rest. Occasionally, the effect of reactively performed work will be the same as that of work based on sublimation. Usually, however, reactive achievements turn out to be less successful socially than sublimated achievements. In any event, the same man will accomplish much more under conditions of sublimation than under those of a reaction formation.

From the structure of each achievement that entails the absolute use of a certain amount of energy, the correlation between individual achievement and individual capacity for work can be measured with some degree of accuracy. The gap between work capacity (latent capacity for work) and absolute achievement is not nearly as great in the case of sublimation as in the case of reaction formation. This means that the man who sublimates approximates his capabilities more closely than the man who works reactively. Feelings of inferiority often correspond to the secret awareness of this discrepancy. Clinically, we recognize the difference between these two types of accomplishment in that, when their unconscious relations are uncovered, sublimated accomplishments undergo relatively little change; reactive performances, on the other hand, if they do not break down altogether, often show tremendous improvements in the transformation into sublimations.

The activities of the average worker in our cultural milieu are characterized far more frequently by reaction formations than by sublimations. Moreover, the prevailing formation of the educational structure (in addition to the social conditions of work) permits the realization of the individual's capacity for work in effective achievements to only a very small degree.

In the case of sublimation, there is no inversion of the drive's direction: the drive is simply taken over by the ego and diverted to another goal. In the case of reaction formation, on the other hand, an inversion of the drive's direction does take place. The drive is turned against the self and is taken over by the ego only insofar as this inversion takes place. In the process of this inversion, the drive's cathexis is turned into a counter-cathexis against the drive's unconscious goal. The process described by Freud in the case of aversion is a perfect illustration of this. In the reaction formation, the original goal retains its cathexis in the unconscious. The original object of the drive is not relinquished but merely repressed. Retention and repression of the drive, inversion of the drive's direction accompanied by the formation of a counter-cathexis characterize reaction formation. Abjuration (not repression) and substitution of the drive's original goal and object, retention of the drive's direction without the formation of a counter-cathexis, are the characteristics of sublimation.

Let us further examine the process involved in the reaction formation. The most important economic feature in this process is the necessity of a counter-cathexis. Since the original goal of the drive is retained, it is continuously flooded with libido and, just as continuously, the ego has to transform this cathexis into a counter-cathexis, e.g., deduce the reaction of aversion from the anal libido, etc., to keep the drive in check. The reaction formation is not a process that takes place once, but is a continuous one and, as we shall presently see, one which spreads.

In the reaction formation, the ego is continually occupied with itself; it is its own strict monitor. In sublimation, the ego's energies are free for achievement. Simple reaction formations such as aversion and shame are part of the character formation of every individual. These are not detrimental to the development of the genital character and remain within physiological limits because there is no libido stasis to reinforce pregenital strivings. If, however, the sexual repression goes too far, if it is directed against the genital libido in particular, so that a stasis of libido takes place, the reaction formations receive an excess of libidinal energy and, consequently, demonstrate a characteristic known to the clinician as a phobic diffusion.

Let us cite as an example the case of an official. As is usual for a typical compulsive character, he performed his duties most
Conscientiously. In the course of time, despite the fact that he derived not the slightest pleasure from his work, he devoted himself to it more and more. At the time he entered analysis, it was not unusual for him to work until midnight or even, on occasion, until three o’clock in the morning. The analysis quickly brought out that (1) sexual fantasies disturbed his work (he needed more time to do his work for this very reason, i.e., he “dilly-dallied” and (2) he could not allow himself a single quiet moment, especially not in the evenings, for then the supercharged fantasies relentlessly invaded his conscious mind. By working at nights, he discharged a certain amount of libido, but the greater part of his libido, which could not be released in such a way, increased more and more until he could no longer deny the disturbance in his work.

Hence, the proliferation of both the reaction formations and the reactive performances corresponds to a continually mounting libido stasis. When, finally, the reaction formations are no longer capable of mastering the libido stasis; when the process of decompensation sets in; when, in short, the character of the ego fails in the consumption of the libido, either unconcealed neurotic anxiety appears or neurotic symptoms emerge which dispose of the excess of free-floating anxiety.

Reactive work is always rationalized. Thus, our patient attempted to excuse his long hours by complaining about his excessive work load. In actual fact, however, his perfunctory activity served the economic purpose of a release and a diversion from sexual fantasies. On the other hand, it fulfilled the function of a reaction formation against the repressed hatred of his boss (father). The analysis showed that the patient’s efforts to be especially useful to his boss represented the opposite of his unconscious intentions. When all is said and done, such “roboting” cannot be interpreted as self-punishment, only one of many meaningful elements of the symptom. Basically, he certainly did not want to punish himself but to protect himself against punishment. Fear of the consequences of his sexual fantasies lay at the root of the reaction formation.

Neither work performed as a compulsive neurotic duty nor any other reaction formation is capable of binding the entire stasis anxiety. Consider, for example, the excessive motor activity of the female hysterical character or the hyper-agility and restlessness of the neurotic mountain climber. Both have a muscular system overcharged with unsatiated libido; both are continually striving toward the object: the hysterical girl in an unconcealed way, the mountain climber in a symbolic way (mountain = woman = mother). Their motility, it is true, works off a certain amount of libido; at the same time, however, it increases the tension inasmuch as it does not afford a final gratification. Inevitably, therefore, the girl has attacks of hysteria, while the neurotic mountain climber must undertake more and more strenuous and dangerous mountain tours to master his stasis. However, since there is a natural limit to this, a symptom neurosis finally breaks through if he does not, as often happens, meet with a misfortune in the mountains.

Reaction basis of the character is an appropriate term for all mechanisms which consume the dammed-up libido and bind the
neurotic anxiety in the character traits. If, as a result of inordinate sexual restrictions, it fails to perform its economic function, it becomes the neurotic reaction basis, which the analytic treatment aims to remove. The proliferating reaction formation is only one of the mechanisms of the neurotic reaction basis.

It does not make much difference when an exacerbation of the neurotic character occurs. The fact remains that the neurotic reaction basis has been present in the character from early childhood, from the conflict period of the Oedipus stage. The neurotic symptom usually exhibits a qualitative affinity to its neurotic reaction basis. To give a few examples: the compulsive-neurotic exaggerated sense of order will become, given certain conditions, a compulsive sense of order; the anal character will become constipated; self-consciousness will become pathological blushing; hysterical agility and coquetry will develop into hysterical attacks; character ambivalence will become the inability to make decisions; sexual inhibition will become vaginismus; aggression or overconscientiousness will become murder impulses.

However, the neurotic symptom does not always exhibit a qualitative homogeneity with its reaction basis. Sometimes the symptom constitutes a defense against surplus anxiety at a higher or lower libido stage. Thus, a hysterical character might develop a compulsion to wash; a compulsive character, a hysterical anxiety or a conversion symptom. Needless to say, in actual practice our patients represent mixtures, with the one or the other character form in the ascendency. However, the diagnosis should not be made according to the symptoms but according to the neurotic character which lies at the basis of the symptoms. Thus, even when a patient comes to us because of a conversion symptom, the diagnosis will be compulsion neurosis if the character exhibits predominantly compulsive neurotic traits.

Reviewing the results of this investigation, we see that the difference between the neurotic and the genital character types must be conceived of as elastically as possible. Since the distinction is based on quantitative criteria (the degree of direct sexual gratification or degree of libido stasis) the variety of actual character forms between the two principal types is endless. Yet, in terms of its heuristic value and the point of view it offers in practical work, a typological investigation seems not only justified but
CHAPTER XII

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE BASIC CONFLICT BETWEEN NEED AND OUTER WORLD

To appreciate the theoretical significance of what has been set forth in the preceding chapters, it is necessary to pursue our subject further and to make some observations on the theory of instincts in general. Clinical experience has afforded ample opportunity to verify Freud's basic assumption of the fundamental dualism of the psychic apparatus; at the same time, it provided opportunity to eliminate some contradictions in it. It would be misplaced in this clinical framework to attempt to investigate the connections between instinct and outer world as thoroughly as the material deserves. However, it is necessary, by way of anticipation, to say a few words about these relationships in order to give the explanations of this work a theoretical conclusion, as well as to provide a counterbalance to the over-biologization of analytic psychology.

In his theory of instincts, Freud postulates a number of opposing pairs of instincts, as well as tendencies in the psychic apparatus which counteract one another. With this consistently adhered-to dichotomization of psychic tendencies (which, though antithetical, are nonetheless interacting), Freud, even if unconsciously, established the foundation for a future functional psychology. Originally, the instinct of self-preservation (hunger) and the sexual instinct (eros) were postulated as opposites. Later the instinct of destruction or the death instinct came to represent the counter-tendency of sexuality. The original analytic psychology was based on the antithesis between ego and outer world. To this corresponded the antithesis between ego libido and object libido. The antithesis between sexuality and anxiety, while not regarded as a basic antithesis of the psychic apparatus, played a fundamental role in the explanation of neurotic anxiety. According to the original hypothesis, when libido is prevented from entering consciousness and attaining its object, it is converted into anxiety. Later, Freud no longer insisted on the close correlation between sexuality and anxiety, although in my opinion there was no clinical justification for the change in his concept. It can be demonstrated that there is more than an accidental relationship between these various antitheses; they are derived from one another dialectically. It is merely a matter of understanding which antithesis is the original one and how the development of subsequent antitheses takes place, i.e., what influences impinge upon the instinctual apparatus.

In our cases as well as in every other case which is analyzed deeply enough, we are able to discover that at the basis of all reactions exists not the antithesis between love and hate, and certainly not the antithesis between eros and the death instinct, but the antithesis between ego ("person"; id = pleasure ego) and outer world. On an elementary level, there is but one desire which issues from the biopsychic unity of the person, namely the desire to discharge inner tensions, whether they pertain to the sphere of hunger or of sexuality. This is impossible without contact with the outer world. Hence, the first impulse of every creature must be a desire to establish contact with the outer world. The psychoanalytic concept that hunger and libidinal need are opposites and nonetheless intertwined at the beginning of the infant's psychic development (since libidinal stimulation of the mouth—"sucking pleasure"—ensures the absorption of food) leads to strange and surprising consequences when pursued further, i.e., when Hartmann's views on the function of surface tensions on the unity of the organs are applied to our questions. If we assume that Hartmann's theory is correct (certain aspects of which were supplemented by the investigations of Kraus and Zondek), psychic energy must derive from simple physiological and mechanical surface tensions, grounded in the chemistry of the cells, tensions

Footnote, 1948: The discovery of the organismic orgone energy will force a reevaluation of our concepts of the "instincts." They are concrete physical energy functions.

Footnote, 1948: Hemmung, Symptom und Angst, Ges. Schr., Bd. XI.
which develop in the various tissues of the human body, most prominently in the vegetative system and the related organs (blood and lymph system). In this view, the disturbance of the physiochemical equilibrium which is brought about by these tensions turns out to be the motor force of action—in the final analysis, most likely also the motor force of thinking. Fundamentally, however, these disturbances, e.g., in the osmotic equilibrium of the organ tissues, are of a twofold nature. The one form is characterized by a shrinking of the tissues as a result of the loss of tissue fluid; the other, by an expansion of the organ tissues as a result of the increase of the fluid content. In both cases, unpleasure is experienced. In the former, the decrease of the surface tension produces a low pressure and a corresponding feeling of unpleasure, which can be eliminated only by the absorption of new substances. In the latter, on the other hand, there is a direct correlation between actual tension and the sensation of unpleasure. Hence, the tension can be eliminated only by a release, i.e., by the elimination of substances. Only the latter form is connected with specific pleasure; in the former, it is merely a matter of reducing the unpleasure.

An “instinct” is involved in both cases. In the first we recognize hunger and thirst; in the second we recognize the prototype of orgasmic discharge peculiar to all ergogenic, i.e., sexual, tensions. Biophysically, the primitive organism, e.g., a protozoon, discharges centrally and overcharges with plasma peripherally; it has to expand when it absorbs a particle of food, i.e., when it wants to eliminate an inner low pressure. Put into our language, it has to approach the outer world with the help of a libidinal mechanism to eliminate its “low pressure,” i.e., its hunger. Growth, copulation, and cell division, on the other hand, are entirely a part of the libidinal function, which is characterized by peripheral expansion followed by release, i.e., decrease in the surface tension. Hence, sexual energy is always in the service of the gratification of hunger, while the absorption of food, conversely, introduces those substances which, through a physiochemical process, eventually lead to libidinal tensions. Just as food absorption is the basis of existence and of libidinal functions, so the latter are the basis of productive achievements, including the most primitive one, locomotion. These biophysiological facts are completely confirmed in the higher organization of the psychic apparatus: it is not possible to sublimate hunger, whereas sexual energy is changeable and productive. This is based on the fact that, in the case of hunger, a negative condition is eliminated—no pleasure is produced. In the case of sexual need, on the other hand, there is a discharge, i.e., production in its simplest form. Over and above this, there is the pleasure afforded by release. This pleasure, according to a law which is in no way understood yet, impels a repetition of the action. It is quite possible that this repetition constitutes an essential aspect of the problem of memory. Thus, hunger is an indication of the loss of energy; the gratification of the need for food does not produce any energy which would appear concretely as an achievement (expenditure of energy). It is merely the elimination of a lack. As obscure as this fact still is, the empirical psychoanalytic thesis that work is a conversion of the libidinal energy process—that, furthermore, disturbances of one’s capacity for work are intimately related to disturbances of the libidinal economy—is based finally on the described difference of the two basic biological needs.

Now let us return to the question of the antithesis of the strivings. We see that originally they do not lie within the biopsychic unit, disregarding possible phylogenetic factors. One pole of the antithesis is represented by the outer world. Is this at variance with Freud’s hypothesis of an inner antithesis between the strivings? This is obviously not the case. It is merely a question of determining whether the inner antithesis, the inner dualism, is a primary biological factor or whether it results later from the clash between the apparatus governing physiological needs and the outer world. Moreover, it is a question of deciding whether the original antithesis within the personality is an instinctual one or something different. Let us begin by investigating the phenomenon of ambivalence.

The “ambivalence of feelings” in the sense of simultaneous re-
actions of love and hate is not a biological law. It is, rather, a socially determined product of development. In the anlage, there is only the ability of the biopsychic apparatus to react to stimuli of the outer world in a way that can—although not necessarily—develop into a chronic attitude which we designate as ambivalent. Ambivalence represents a vacillation between hate and love strivings only on the surface layer of the psychic apparatus. At a deeper level, corresponding to an earlier stage of development, vacillation, hesitation, indecision as well as other characteristics of ambivalence have a different explanation. They are the manifestations of a clash between a libidinal impulse ceaselessly striving for expression and fear of punishment which inhibits it and prevents it from being translated into action. Often (in the compulsive character, always) the love impulse is replaced by a hate impulse which, in the depth, pursues the goal of the love impulse but is also inhibited by the same anxiety as the sexual impulse. Thus, depending upon its genesis and the depth of its function, ambivalence has three meanings:

a) “I love you, but I am afraid of being punished for it” (love-fear).

b) “I hate you because I am not allowed to love you, but I am afraid of gratifying the hate” (hate-fear).

c) “I don’t know whether I love or hate you” (love-hate).

This yields the following picture of the genesis of the psychic contradictions. From the original antithesis between ego and outer world, which later appears as the antithesis between narcissism and object libido, there results the antithesis between libido (as a striving in the direction of the outer world) and anxiety (as the first and most basic expression of a narcissistic escape back into the ego from the unpleasure suffered at the hands of the outer world). This is the first contradiction within the person. The stretching forth and pulling in of the pseudopodia in the protozoon is, as we shall demonstrate thoroughly elsewhere, much more than a mere analogy for the “stretching forth” and “pulling in” of the libido. If, on the one hand, unpleasure experienced in the outer world causes the libido to be pulled back or to seek refuge “within” (narcissistic flight), it is, on the other hand, the unpleasurable tension created by ungratified needs that urges the person to seek contact with the outer world. If the outer world would bring only pleasure and gratification, there would be no phenomenon of anxiety. Since, however, unpleasurable and danger-producing stimuli originate in the outer world, the striving of the object libido has to be provided with a counterpart, namely the tendency to take refuge in narcissistic escape. The most primitive expression of this narcissistic escape is anxiety. Libidinal stretching forth toward the world and narcissistic escape from it are merely paraphrases of a very primitive function which is present without exception in all living organisms. Even in the protozoon, it is expressed as two opposite directions of plasma currents: the one flowing from the center toward the periphery and the other from the periphery toward the center.4 Turning pale with fright, trembling with fear (“hair standing on end”) correspond to a flight of the cathexis from the periphery of the body to the center of the body, brought about by the contraction of the peripheral vessels and the dilation of the central vessel system (anxiety brought about by stasis). The turgor of the peripheral skin tissues, the flushing of the skin, and the feeling of warmth in sexual excitation are the exact opposites of this and correspond to a physiological as well as psychic flow of the cathexes in the direction, center → body periphery → world. The erection of the penis and the moistening of the vagina are the manifestation of this direction of energy in a state of excitation; the shrinking of the penis and the becoming dry of the vagina, conversely, are nothing more than manifestations of the opposite direction of the cathexes and the body fluids from the periphery to the center. The first antithesis, sexual excitation-anxiety, is merely the intrapsychic reflection of the primal antithesis, ego-outer world, which then becomes the psychic reality of the inner contradiction: “I desire—I am afraid.”

Thus, anxiety is and always must be the first manifestation of an inner tension, whether this is brought about by an external frustration of the advance toward motility or the frustration of the gratification of a need, or whether it is brought about by a

4 According to Weber, sensations of Unlust go with a centripetal flow of blood, while sensations of pleasure go with a centrifugal flow of blood. See also Kraus and Zondek: Syzygiologie: Allgemeine und spezielle Pathologie der Person, Thieme, 1926.
flight of the energy cathexes into the center of the organism. In the 
first case, we are dealing with stasis or actual anxiety; in the 
second case, with real anxiety. In the latter, however, a condition 
of stasis results of necessity and consequently there is also anxi­
ety. Hence, both forms of anxiety (stasis anxiety and real anxi­
ety) can be traced back to one basic phenomenon, i.e., the cen­
tral stasis of the energy cathexes. Whereas, however, the stasis 
anxiety is the direct manifestation of anxiety, real anxiety is ini­
tially merely an anticipation of danger; it becomes affective anx­
etiy secondarily when the flight of cathexes toward the center 
creates a stasis in the central vegetative apparatus. The original 
flight reaction in the form of “crawling into oneself” later occurs 
in a phylogenetically younger form of flight, which consists in in­
creasing the distance from the source of danger. It is dependent 
upon the formation of an apparatus of locomotion (muscular 
flight).

In addition to the flight into the center of one’s body and the 
muscular flight, there is a second, more meaningful reaction on a 
higher level of biological organization: the removal of the source 
of danger. It can only appear as a destructive impulse. Its 
foundation is the avoidance of the stasis or anxiety which is brought 
on by narcissistic flight. Basically, therefore, it is merely a spe­
cial kind of avoidance or resolution of tension. At this stage of 
development, there are one of two motives for striving toward the 
world: (1) the gratification of a need (libido) or (2) the 
avoidance of a state of anxiety, i.e., by destroying the source of 
danger (destruction). A second antithesis between libido 
(“love”) and destruction (“hate”) is now developed upon the 
first inner antithesis between libido and anxiety. Every frustra­
tion of an instinctual gratification can either give rise to anxiety 

*One can, if one wants, perceive a destructive impulse even in the processes 
pertaining to the gratification of hunger, in the destruction and assimilation 
of foodstuffs. Thus viewed, the destructive instinct would be a primary bio­
logical tendency. However, one must not fail to take into account the dif­
fERENCE between destruction for the sake of annihilation and destruction for 
the purpose of the gratification of hunger. Only the former can be regarded 
as a primary instinctual drive, whereas the latter merely represents a device. 
In the former, destruction is subjectively desired; in the latter, it is merely 
objectively given. The motive of the action is hunger, not destruction. But 
in each case the destruction is at first directed toward an object outside of 
the person.

(i.e., the first counterpart of the libido) or, to avoid anxiety it 
can produce a destructive impulse (i.e., the genetically younger 
counterpart). Each of these modes of reaction corresponds to a 
character form whose reaction to danger is irrationally motivated 
and fixated. The hysterical character retreats in the face of dan­
ger; the compulsive character wants to destroy the source of dan­
ger. The masochistic character, since he is equipped neither with 
the capacity to approach the object in a genital-libidinal way nor 
with the destructive tendency to destroy the source of danger, 
has to endeavor to resolve his inner tensions through an indirect 
expression, through a disguised beseeching of the object to love 
him, i.e., to permit and make possible for him the libidinal re­
lease. Obviously, he can never succeed in this.

The function of the second antithetical pair, libido-destruc­
tion, undergoes a fresh change, for the outer world frustrates not 
only the libidinal gratification but also the gratification of the de­
structive impulse. This frustration of destructive intentions is 
again carried out with threats of punishment which, by imbuing 
every destructive impulse with anxiety, strengthen the narcissistic 
mechanism of flight. Hence, a fourth antithesis emerges, destruc­
tive impulse-anxiety. All new antithetical strivings are formed 
in the psychic apparatus from the clash between previous striv­
ings and the outer world. On the one hand, the destructive tend­
ency is strengthened by the person’s libidinal intentions. Every 
frustration of the libido provokes destructive intentions; these, in 
turn, can easily be transformed into sadism, for the latter embod­
ies the destructive and the libidinal impulse. On the other hand, 
the destructive tendency is strengthened by the propensity to anx­
ity and the desire to avoid or to resolve fear-inducing tensions 
in the usual destructive manner. However, since the emergence 
of each new impulse provokes the punitive attitude of the outer 
world, an unending chain ensues, the first link of which is the 
fear-inducing inhibition of the libidinal discharge. The inhibition 
of the aggressive impulse by the threat of punishment stemming 
from the outer world not only increases anxiety and obstructs the 
discharge of the libido far more than formerly; it also gives rise 

*In spite of the fact that this antithetical pair lies close to the surface of the 
personality structure, Adler’s entire individual psychology has never gone 
beyond it.
to a new antithesis. In part, it reverses the destructive impulse which is directed against the world and turns it against the ego, in this way adding counterparts to two impulses; i.e., the impulse to self-destruction becomes the counterpart of the destructive impulse, and masochism becomes the counterpart of sadism.

In this connection, the feeling of guilt is a late product—the result of a conflict between love and hate toward the same object. Dynamically, the feeling of guilt corresponds to the intensity of the inhibited aggression, which is the same as the intensity of the inhibiting anxiety.

In deriving a complete theoretical picture of psychic processes from the clinical study of neuroses, particularly masochism, we learn two things. (1) Masochism represents a very late product of development. (This is also confirmed by a direct observation of children.) It seldom emerges before the third or fourth year of life; for this very reason, therefore, it cannot be the manifestation of a primary biological instinct. (2) All the phenomena of the psychic apparatus, from which it is believed that a death instinct can be deduced, can be unmasked as indications and consequences of a narcissistic (not a muscular) flight from the world. Self-destructiveness is the manifestation of a destructive impulse turned upon itself. Physical deterioration because of chronic neurotic processes is the result of the chronic disturbance of the sexual economy, the chronic effect of unresolved inner tensions having a physiological basis. It is the result of chronic psychic suffering which has an objective basis but is not subjectively desired.

Conscious longing for death, peace, nothingness (“the nirvana principle”), occurs only under the condition of hopelessness and the absence of sexual, in particular genital, gratification. It is in short, the manifestation of complete resignation, a retreat from a reality which has become solely unpleasurable into nothingness. Because of the primacy of the libido, this nothingness figures merely as another form of libidinal goal, e.g., being at peace in the womb, being cared for and protected by the mother. Every libidinal impulse which is not directed toward the outer world, i.e., which corresponds to a withdrawal into one’s own ego—in short, every phenomenon of narcissistic regression—is brought forth as proof of existence of the death instinct. In reality, they are nothing but reactions to actual frustrations of the gratification of libidinal needs and the appeasing of hunger, frustrations caused by our social system or other worldly influences. If, even without concrete contemporary causes, this reaction is fully developed, we have in analysis a suitable instrument for demonstrating that early infantile frustrations of the libido necessitated the retreat from the world into one’s own ego and created a psychic structure which later renders the person incapable of using the given possibilities of pleasure in the world. Indeed, melancholia, so often held up as proof of the death instinct, demonstrates clearly that suicidal inclinations are secondary. They represent a grandiose superstructure on frustrated orality, which becomes an oral fixation because of the complete inhibition of the genital function. Moreover, it is based on a strongly developed destructive impulse corresponding to this early stage and magnified by the immense libido stasis. This impulse, inhibited and turned against itself, simply can find no other way out than self-destruction. Thus, one destroys oneself, not because one is urged to it biologically, not because one “wants” to, but because reality has created inner tensions which become unbearable and can be resolved only through self-annihilation.

Just as the outer world becomes an absolute unpleasurable external reality, one’s own instinctual apparatus becomes an absolute unpleasurable inner reality. However, since the ultimate motor force of life is tension with the promise of a possibility of release—i.e., the attainment of pleasure—a creature externally and internally deprived of these possibilities must want to cease to live. Self-annihilation becomes the only and final possibility of release, so we can say that, even in the will to die, the pleasure-unpleasure principle is expressed.

Every other concept passes over the deep clinical findings, avoids the confrontation with the question of the structure of our real world (a confrontation which leads to a critique of the social system), and gives up the best possibilities of helping the patient. For it is through analysis that the analyst enables him to overcome the fear of the punishment of this world and to resolve his inner tensions in the only way which is biologically, physiologically, and sex-economically sound—orgastic gratification and contingent sublimation.
The facts pertaining to masochism invalidate the assumption of a primary need for punishment. If it does not hold true for masochism, it will be difficult to find in other forms of illness. Suffering is real, objectively given but not subjectively desired. Self-abasement is a defense mechanism because of the danger of genital castration; self-injuries are anticipations of milder punishments as defense against those which are really feared; beating fantasies are the last possibilities of a guilt-free release. The original formula of neurosis is still valid: the neurosis originates in a conflict between instinctual sexual need and the threat of being punished by a patriarchal, authoritarian society for engaging in sexual activity. On the basis of this formula, however, even the conclusions we draw are fundamentally different. Suffering issues from society. Hence, we are fully justified in asking why society produces suffering, who has an interest in it.

It follows logically from Freud's original formula (i.e., frustration issues from the outer world) that one part of the psychic conflict, frustration, originates in the conditions of existence of our social system. To what extent, however, this formulation has been obliterated by the hypothesis of the death instinct is demonstrated by Benedek's line of reasoning: "If we accept the theory of the dualism of the instincts solely in the sense of the old theory, a gap ensues. Then the question remains unanswered why mechanisms have developed in man which operate antagonistically to the sexual instinct." We see, thus, how the hypothesis of a death instinct causes us to forget that those "inner mechanisms" which operate antagonistically toward the sexual instinct are moral inhibitions representing the prohibitions imposed by the outer world, by society. Hence, we are not "forcing an open door" when we contend that the death instinct is supposed to explain biologically facts which, by pursuing the former theory consistently, are derived from the structure of present-day society.

It remains to be demonstrated that the "uncontrollable destructive drives" which are held accountable for man's suffering are not biologically but sociologically determined; that the inhibition of sexuality by authoritarian upbringing transforms aggression into an uncontrollable demand, i.e., that inhibited sexual energy is converted into destructiveness. And the aspects of our cultural life which appear to be self-destructive are not manifestations of "instincts of self-annihilation"; they are manifestations of very real destructive intentions on the part of an authoritarian society interested in the suppression of sexuality.