# FREUD TEACHES PSYCHOTHERAPY

# AGGRESSION
## AND
# DESTRUCTION

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Schur (1972) points out the remarkable change that occurred in Freud's attitude between *The Future of an Illusion* (1927C;21:3ff) and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930A;21:59ff). In *The Future of an Illusion* there is a sense of optimism and a hope that reason and the ego can overcome illusions, human weakness, and stupidity. *Civilization and Its Discontents* is marked by an undercurrent of deep pessimism. Schur speculates that this change reflects the milieu of the Western world around Freud at the time he wrote the book in 1929 at the age of 73. In fact, the original title of the latter monograph was "Unhappiness in Civilization." In this work Freud finds religion noxious and philosophy useless; art does have a beneficial effect by allowing an indirect gratification of the pleasure principle. Human life rests on a never-ending conflict between the attempt to obtain the freedom for personal gratification and the opposing demands of society. It is this inevitable conflict, so Freud maintained, that leads to the discontents and widespread neuroses and suffering of civilized men.

Culture has to call up every possible reinforcement to erect barriers against the aggressive instincts of men; this powerful, instinctually aggressive tendency is the main obstacle to culture. The characteristic way of dealing with human aggression is to internalize it into the superego and to direct the harsh aggressions against the ego, resulting in internal tension and a sense of

guilt. Thus, in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, the role of outwardly directed aggression, even though postulated to be based on the death instinct, gains a central and major emphasis parallel to Freud's earlier emphasis on the sexual drive in the etiology of the neuroses. Furthermore, renunciation of outwardly directed aggression gives rise to conscience of a harsh nature, which then demands further renunciation. For Freud, the sense of guilt is the key problem in the evolution of civilization; the price of progress in civilization is paid in the forfeit of happiness in exchange for a heightened sense of guilt. Schur speculates that Freud's physical suffering from his cancer was also depleting his capacity to enjoy life when he wrote this.

In his later years Freud became increasingly concerned with the problem of aggression. As his great contemporary Einstein recognized in 1946, "The real problem is in the minds and hearts of men. It is easier to denature plutonium than to denature the evil spirit of man." Almost in desperation, Einstein (Freud 1933B;22:199-202) wrote a letter to Freud that remains one of the clearest statements of the problem ever written. Composed in 1932, it is usually entitled "Why War?" It states: "Thus I am led to my first axiom: the quest of international security involves the unconditional surrender by every nation, in a certain measure, of its liberty of action, its sovereignty that is to say, and it is clear beyond all doubt that no other road can lead to such security." Einstein then lists the factors that have led to the failure of all efforts to reach this goal. First, all governments seem to

show a "political power-hunger," which of course is hostile to any limitation of national sovereignty. Second, a group of people (now called the military-industrial complex) "encourages this political power-hunger…that small but determined group, active in every nation, composed of individuals who, indifferent to social considerations and restraints, regard warfare, the manufacture and sale of arms, simply as an occasion to advance their personal interests and enlarge their personal authority." However, focus on the military-industrial complex leads to more basic considerations. How is it possible for this small group to bend the will of the majority, who stand to lose and suffer by war, to the service of its ambitions? We see this happening again and again, even in the supposedly most advanced and civilized of nations.

This significant question cannot be answered, argues Einstein, simply by explaining that the military-industrial complex has control of the schools, of the press and communications media, and of the usual alliance of the churches, in all reactionary and warlike causes. Although these small groups have had amazing success in arousing wild and unbounded enthusiasm of men for killing and destruction on an increasingly massive scale as our technology improves; and although historical and rational knowledge indicates that the masses of men who want to kill so much stand inevitably to lose the most by wars that settle absolutely nothing—the situation clearly indicates a third factor at work. "Man has within him a lust for hatred and

destruction," writes Einstein. He asks Freud, "Is it possible to control man's mental evolution so as to make him proof against the psychoses of hate and destructiveness?"

Einstein must have been disappointed in Freud's rather unexciting answer to his letter. This answer, in addition to an earlier paper (1915B;14:274ff), contains Freud's views on war. In the 1915 paper Freud states flatly that human aggressiveness as a primary need inevitably entails war. In fact, "Our unconscious will murder even for trifles." War is the vicarious expression sanctioned by the state, of this unconscious wish to murder. In the 1932 answer to Einstein he revises the view that war is inevitable and suggests that the answer lies in a kind of social engineering, a diversion of human aggressive impulses "to such an extent that they need not find expression in war." As Roazen (1968) points out, the search for a "moral equivalent" of war was also William James's (1967) solution to what he called "pugnacity."

Freud (1933B;22:203-215) also suggests that anything that encourages the growth of emotional ties between men must operate against war. Thus, whatever leads men to share important interests produces a community of feeling, an identification with the whole of humanity. Above all, whatever fosters the growth of civilization works at the same time against war. The reason for this is that the two most important psychological characteristics

fostered by civilization are "a strengthening of the intellect, which is beginning to govern instinctual life, and an internalization of the aggressive impulses, with all its consequent advantages and perils" (pp. 214-215). Freud expresses his profound hope that the evolution of civilization and the reasoned dread of the consequences of war may put an end to the waging of war before mankind is destroyed. The slow progress of this procedure greatly worries him, and he cannot help but wish that an upper stratum of men with independent minds could be educated—perhaps like Plato's philosopher-kings—to give direction to the dependent masses. Thus, he presents what he admits is a utopian expectation that a community of men could develop "who had subordinated their instinctual life to the dictatorship of reason" (p. 213).

The basic axiom is that man contains in his personality a powerful drive toward hatred and total destructiveness. The best thorough psychoanalytic discussion of the aggressive drive is by Hartmann et al. (1949). We must face squarely the fact that the aim of the aggressive drives is "total destruction of objects, animate or inanimate, and that all attempts to be satisfied with less, with battle with or domination of the object, or with its disappearance imply restrictions of the original aims" (p. 18). The aims of aggression are modified by a simultaneous cathexis of the object with libido, by displacement of the aggression to other objects—"the problem of man in search of a target"—by restriction of the aims of aggressive drives, and by sublimation of aggressive energy, for example in the building of civilization. The authors point out how

de-aggressivized psychic energy is a necessity for ego development and function, and that the capacity to neutralize large quantities of aggression is an important sign of ego strength. Clearly, both the self and others are endangered by instinctual aggression, and the capacity to form lasting relationships with others rests on the capacity to neutralize aggression.

As an example, Barrett (1958) gives Dostoyevsky credit for a remarkable portrayal of "the center of man's nature: contradiction, ambivalence, irrationality." Perhaps man is not the rational but the demoniacal animal. A rationalist who loses sight of the demoniacal cannot understand human beings." The concept of the demoniacal in man as dramatically presented by Dostoyevsky, Nietzsche, and others represents a crucial issue that must be solved if there is to be peace. It represents what Barrett calls a shadow that surrounds all human enlightenment.

Is human aggression a product of social training? Does it arise from frustration of narcissistic needs in infancy (Kohut), or from other sources of frustration that society constantly provides at all stages of life (Marx)? Is it an inherited evolutionary drive (Hartmann) developing over millions of years, or does it represent a death drive, present in all protoplasm, turned outward (Freud)? There is no agreement on these questions. It is apparent that the entire subject is in its scientific infancy. The need for research is overwhelming, not only on the subject of man's evolution and ethological factors,

but in finding alternatives to violence. A series of twenty-one essays (Ng l968) includes disagreements on many aspects of the alternatives to violence, but emphasizes over and over again the need for research; the authors propose an enormous variety of hypotheses and ideas that are fertile for scientific study. Shaw (1978) presents a fine review of current thinking on man's aggression.

This demoniacal aspect of man can be approached in at least five ways, and all of them are valuable and important to understand if we are to deal with our proclivity for hatred and aggression; (1) evolution and ethology, (2) group psychology, (3) psychoanalysis, (4) rational, conscious psychology, and (5) existentialism. Many of the disagreements among adherents of these points of view are analogous to the blind men each feeling a different part of an elephant and disagreeing about what an elephant is like. All the approaches have a valid contribution to make, and therefore all must be reviewed here, to place Freud in perspective.

*Evolution and ethology.* The evolutionary and ethological viewpoint states that the evolution of man's mind has not kept pace with the development of his technological capacity. The most important protagonist of this viewpoint is Konrad Lorenz, but there are many others. Lorenz (1952, 1966) defines ethology as the comparative study of behavior. He conceives of behavior in all species, including humans, as essentially having evolved as

equipment for survival and constituting at base certain innate patterns which are released or triggered by various appropriate stimuli. Lorenz follows the hydraulic model (Nisbett 1976) in his belief that the energies of these behaviors accumulate, and if no triggers for release are found in the environment the innate patterns will appear eventually anyway.

The first prehuman primates (for example, *Ramapithecus*) appeared in Africa and Asia in the Miocene geologic epoch—between twelve and thirty million years ago—in a fertile and abundant time. Over the harsher and drought-ridden Pliocene epoch—between ten and two million years ago—a variety of prehuman forms evolved from the variety of prehuman primates. Under the harsh conditions of the many millions of years of the Pliocene, the prehuman (hominid) form became a carnivore: this period saw the basic making of man as we know him. Since the fossil record of the period is extremely poor because the dry conditions did not provide enough water for lime to turn bone into stone, our knowledge of this critical period in man's evolution is deficient, and interpretations are controversial (Leakey 1978).

From this distant and unimaginably long evolutionary past, three possibly instinctual forms of behavior—besides the obvious instinctual species-preserving drives for survival, care of the young, and sexual gratification—may or may not have been installed within us. The least controversial of these forms is known as imprinting, in which during a six-week to six- month

optimal period in human infants there takes place a permanent identification of the parent object as a refuge in time of anxiety. This is well reviewed by Vaughan (1966). Disturbances such as being overwhelmed by anxiety during the critical imprinting period, or lacking a consistent mother figure, would obviously lead to profound and lasting damage to the entire personality structure; even damage to the perceptual apparatus of the ego itself.

Another possible instinctual form of behavior is what Ardrey (1966) superficially calls the "territorial imperative" i.e., man's imperative to hold and defend territory, a force as strong as the "almighty forces" of sex or the maternal instinct or the will to survive. His evidence is a hodgepodge of debatable observations, and leads him to conclusions about modern countries that are not even remotely supportable. However, Ardrey forces us to remember the importance of the many million years of formative influence of the harsh Pliocene environment, and emphasizes the major changes in man during that period, from a vegetative prehuman primate to a carnivorous hominid form that banded together for survival. Thus, the "nation" psychology, the tendency to form what Erikson (Evans 1967) calls "pseudo-species," is deep within us.

Lorenz (1966) turns to the more general subject of intraspecies aggression, which he sees as species-preserving in evolution, assuring balanced distribution of animals of the same species over the available environment,

selection of the strongest by rival fights, and defense of the young. Thus, because it has species-preserving functions, intraspecies aggression has not been eliminated even in species requiring close social aggregation for survival. In order to permit social aggregation in the face of intraspecies aggression, certain inhibitor mechanisms obviously have to evolve, such as ritual and symbolic aggression and submission behavior. (The classic example of this, incorporating both aggression and territoriality, is the American football game, which stubbornly remains a national institution in spite of the serious danger of brain damage to the players.)

Furthermore, in those species capable of vicious destruction, such as the wolf, these inhibitory rituals and symbolic gestures—which literally stop murder at the last minute—are reliable and well developed; while in man, who in his natural state is not so endowed with murderous ability, such inhibitors to intraspecies aggression did not have to evolve. Man resembles not the wolf but the rat, for rats, exceptionally among carnivores, do sometimes kill other rats.

The paradox, of course, is that man has now become capable of instant, vicious destruction, thanks to science, and he lacks the automatic inhibitor mechanisms to stop spontaneously carrying out such destruction. Lorenz's solution, again similar to that proposed by Freud and James, is for us to develop our own set of ritualistic thought to be nonlethal and symbolic forms

of aggression, such as unfortunately the football game or boxing, using Kant's categorical imperative to form the stopping point. This solution, to say the least, seems utopian and loses sight of the enormous difficulty involved in making people behave rationally in their own best interests, which they rarely do.

Koestler (1969) reviewed carefully the possibility that man is actually one of evolution's mistakes. Evidence indicates this to be probably true, although the views of all the writers in the field of evolution and ethology are far from established and have been attacked from many sides (Montague 1968). For example, Berkowitz (1969), besides opposing the work of Ardrey, Lorenz, and others as oversimplified, points out that Lorenz's solution of providing aggression in symbolic forms could actually lead to an increase, rather than a decrease, in man's aggressive drives. The current debate about whether the obsessive and never ending portrayal of violence on television and in movies increases violent acting-out is surely relevant to this possibility.

On the other hand, there is no doubt in Clark's (1966) conclusion to his *History of the Primates*:

> If Man has gained his intellectual dominance over his fellow creatures by concentrating his evolutionary energies on the development of his brain, it remains to be seen whether he can now maintain his position by contriving a method of living in orderly relations with members of his own

species. If he fails to do so, he may yet follow the example of many other groups of animals which have achieved a temporary ascendancy by an exaggerated development of some particular structural mechanism. He may become extinct (p. 121).

*Freud on Groups.* The second approach to the problem, the study of group psychology, begins with Freud's (1921C;18:67ff) important treatise *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego.* This work was inspired by the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of 1918 and by the panic and distress that followed. It proposes the rudiments of a sociology that rejects the concept of an autonomous social instinct and is based instead on Freud's libido theory and his emerging notion of the ego ideal. In the latter sense it is a transitional work to be more completely realized in *The Ego and the Id* (1923B;19:3ff).

Freud starts by accepting and recapitulating the theories of LeBon and McDougall on the group mind, so far as these theories go. The behavior of groups is like that of a primitive savage or child; emotions become extraordinarily labile and intensified, and intellect is reduced. Freud writes, "A group is impulsive, changeable and irritable. It is led almost exclusively by the unconscious ...Though it may desire things passionately, yet this is never so for long, for it is incapable of perseverance. It has a sense of omnipotence ... A group is extraordinarily credulous and open to influence ... It goes directly to extremes; if a suspicion is expressed, it is instantly changed into an incontrovertible certainty; a trace of antipathy is turned into furious hatred"

(pp. 77-78).

As far as leadership is concerned, exaggeration and repetition affect the group far more than logic; it respects force and demands strength or even violence from its heroes. LeBon believed that a group wants to be ruled and oppressed and to fear its masters, and Freud seems to be in agreement. They also believe that the group seeks a strong-willed leader who has a fanatical belief in his ideas.

It is clear, then, that groups tend always and naturally to behave toward each other as children or primitive savages. There is a collective lowering of intellectual ability of the group just by virtue of its being a group. This *barbarizing tendency,* as I shall call it (Freud calls it a regressive tendency), is inherent in the psychological nature of all groups, and it calls out con-tinuously for a particular type of leader.

Freud then raises the question of how to procure for the group precisely those features that were characteristic of the individual and that are ex-tinguished in him by the formation of the group. That is, how can we develop a *civilizing tendency* for the group and work against its inherent barbarizing tendency?

Unfortunately, Freud has little to say on this problem either in this trea-tise or elsewhere. He points out the importance of a group leader, but he is

most interested in delineating the psychodynamics of group formation rather than addressing himself to the question of how to civilize a group and keep it civilized. Kris (1943) explains that this work ...was not written as a treatise in social psychology ... (but) to clarify further the structural model of the personality which he was developing at the time."

Freud is more interested in the "primary group," one in which there has not been very much civilization, or organization, as McDougall terms it. In the primary group, each member has put the leader in the place of his ego-ideal and has consequently identified himself with the group in his ego. This leads to one of Freud's favorite concepts, that man is an individual creature in a horde led by a chief. He continues with a discussion of the so-called primal horde, an anthropological theory not widely accepted (discussed in chapter 19).

Group formation, argues Freud, is always a regressive phenomenon in itself, because it takes place through identification and thus is based on a more primitive level of human functioning than individual object-choice. Similarly, there is a tendency to pick the leader of the group not through intellectual or mature object-choice but through what would now be called a consensus process, described by LeBon according to Freud as follows: The leader need often only possess the typical qualities of the individuals in the group in a particularly clearly marked and pure form, and need only give an

impression of greater force and of more freedom of libido; and in that case the need for a strong chief will often meet him half-way and invest in him a predominance to which he would otherwise have had no claim.

The grave implications of this material for a group that is trying to establish and maintain itself as a democracy should be apparent. Freud was aware of the danger, but did not address himself to these implications. Certainly he had nothing but scorn for America, which he considered a "gigantic mistake." In the American struggle, from a historical point of view, we can most clearly see the interplay of factors in the group that tend to barbarize and to civilize; and in America's choice of leaders and more especially its candidates for leadership over the years, one sees the emergence at various historical junctures of demagogues, mediocrities, and idealists very much in accordance with Freud's descriptions. Those who wish a full exposition of Freud's political and social thought are referred to Roazen (1968).

The first profound discussion of what to do about the inherent barbarity of groups appears in Machiavelli (Chessick 1969a). Machiavelli's thought is pertinent and contemporary, whether or not we agree with his conclusions. Furthermore, his approach, developed in the early part of the sixteenth century, has some amazing similarities to that of Freud. His basic conclusion is that *nothing* can be done directly to combat the barbarizing tendency of the

group. If a leader, or prince, as Machiavelli calls him, attempts to go against this tendency, he will be put out. Therefore the leader should play at all times to the barbarizing tendency in order to remain in power. Any changes in the group must be imposed by force by the leader, but since remaining in power is always the principle task of the leader, such changes must be within the context of the need for rule and oppression characteristic of the barbaric group.

One might be hard-pressed to quarrel directly with the cynical precepts of Machiavelli; in many ways his pessimistic description of men resembles that of Freud. Yet in both of their descriptions it is clear that something vital concerning the nature of man has been left out.

In his description of the mind of the individual man, Freud saw the ego as substantially immersed in defensive operations dealing with its "three harsh masters"—the id, the super-ego, and external reality. Hartmann(1958) and his coworkers proposed that the ego was capable of more than simply defensive operations; that a creative and autonomous "conflict-free sphere of the ego" also existed to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the individual, and therefore made possible a less pessimistic view of what the individual could create and accomplish.

Similarly, men are often wicked as individuals and usually wicked in

groups, but that is not the whole story. Cannot the group mind at least from time to time also manifest a "conflict-free sphere" that varies from group to group depending on (1) the inborn autonomous capacities of the individuals in the groups, and (2) the amount of internal and external stress that ties up the group's capacities?

If so, we should have to speak to two kinds of states or political groups. The first of these, adequately described by Machiavelli and Freud, is immersed in defensive operations due to internal or external stress and has little capacity for autonomous function or for displaying civilized behavior. Such a group would tend to cry out for a leader who would reflect its mediocrity at best and oppress it at worst; the leader would then simply perpetuate the existing state of affairs and be utterly unable to civilize the group even if he should want to. Unfortunately, this is the state of most nations in the world today.

On the other hand, a second type of group is possible, which contains considerable potential to be civilized. Perhaps the most common example of such a group is the thirteen original American colonies, which saw its leader voluntarily renounce being crowned a king, and the formation of the Constitution of the United States. Since a group that has temporarily over-come its inherent barbarizing tendencies is clearly possible, the crucial question is how such a group could come to be and how it could maintain

itself.

A tyrannical, mediocre, or cynical leader also tends to barbarize the group, using the inherent barbarizing tendency for his or her own ends. The leader's approach to human nature seems to be a vital factor: as Freud recognized, he or she can temporarily bring out the best or the worst in the group; the more powerful the leader is, the more this is true. Shaw's play *Caesar and Cleopatra* portrayed this with deadly accuracy even before World War I. Shaw's Caesar is in conflict with his mediocre advisors, who justify by sanctimonious arguments their wish to destroy those who stand in their way.

Galbraith (1967) speaks of the need for an "emancipation" from the "monolithic" goals of the new industrial state—the production of goods and incomes—to prevent our lives from being completely at the service of these barbaric goals. The vehicle of emancipation is to be the scientific and academic community, who are obligated to scrutinize continually these goals with "skepticism which insures that there will be systematic questioning of the beliefs impressed by the industrial system." Galbraith insists that such scrutiny of images or false goals impressed on us by the "technostructure" is the obligation of the scientific community, and, he declares, "nothing in our time is more important."

*Recent Psychoanalytic Contributions.* Alexander (1951) straddles the

second (group psychology) and third (psychoanalysis) approaches to the problem mentioned above in his lengthy discussion of the psychological aspects of war and peace. He sees the giving up of nationalism as an "advance in the extension of unselfishness," a further step analogous to such past historical steps as in primitive times the brother's renunciation of violence against the father so that a clan could form. As the clan was the great obstacle to the formation of a nation, so the nation is the great obstacle to the formation of a world community. Such renunciation of selfish interest always involves a conflict.

Alexander's answer to Einstein is that one of the two superpowers will have to conquer by force most of the smaller countries and become the "point of crystallization" of a world community; the rest of the countries will then gravitate toward it. This is a rather disconcerting, even horrifying, idea, since even "small" wars are becoming increasingly dangerous. What guarantee do we have that when one of the two superpowers sees its hegemony falling apart, it may not in desperation touch off the final war? We have no guarantee, but that does not invalidate Alexander's theory; for it is not inconceivable that world government will come about not by reasonable agreement but by world conquest by one power. Such an event is technologically much more feasible than it was in the days of Alexander the Great or Caesar. But what a horrible cost in human carnage this will take! If Alexander is correct, however, this is a stage in evolution, and nature traditionally has

been indifferent to massive slaughter as evolution proceeds, as Russell (1962) points out.

McNeill (1964) comes independently as a historian to a similarly pessimistic view. It is quite instructive that his "apocalyptic fears" in the first edition of his book *Past and Future*, written in 1952, had to be revised for its second edition, published in 1954; the author of the encyclopedic *The Rise of the West* (1963) has to conclude that there is still hope for a peaceful solution of these problems. One statement of McNeill's remains impossible to challenge: "Human irrationality is as real and powerful as ever. We face our contemporary difficulties with a psychological nature little if at all different from that with which men have faced the world since the beginning of history" (1964, p. 68).

Turning more directly to the psychodynamic approach, not much has been added since Freud's emphasis on the aggressive instinct in man, although many question whether such an "instinct" exists. An important step forward has come from our psychoanalytic understanding of the psychoses, especially paranoia (also see chapter 8). Just how murderous and brutal our aggressive proclivities are has been elucidated by clinical study and historical research. Paranoia is now understood as an attempt to deal with murderous rage by attributing the rage and hatred to others rather than oneself. A far deeper understanding of paranoid projection and its roots has been

developed, but this is not of as great a significance to the present discussion as is the recognition that we all contain latent psychosis, and that the proclivity to brutality and paranoid projection is constantly present in the unconscious of everyone.

The psychoanalytic point of view is summed up by Storr (1968), beginning with a crucial quotation from the psychoanalyst Winnicott: "If society is in danger, it is not because of man's aggressiveness, but because of the repression of personal aggressiveness in individuals." Storr continues, "Control of the destructive aspects of hostility between human beings can be approached from two different, yet complementary angles. One is to consider in what way it is possible to reduce the paranoid element in hostility, that is, to prevent aggression from turning into hate. The other is to see how to encourage the expression of the more positive aspects of the aggressive drive" (p. 109).

A text edited by Bychowski (1969) contains psychoanalytic thinking on the "evil in man." Bychowski (as well as the present author) was interested in borderline types of patients for many years and was concerned with what are technically known as "malevolent introjects." The point is that all hatred and aggression developed during infancy in man is not instinctual. Some arises from infantile deprivation and some from the introjection of the hatred of the parents. These aspects of the hatred and paranoia of man are amenable to

medical treatment, and are therefore extremely important to understand. Cycles of projection and reintrojection of rage and hatred may lead to a progressive self-perpetuating buildup of aggression (Kernberg 1976).

The most recent contribution is from the work of Kohut (1972, 1977) emphasizing the phenomena of narcissistic rage—the rage generated when narcissistic injuries, or blows to one's pride or self-esteem have been suffered. Whereas Freud thought that the untamed aggressive drive counteracts the rational attempt to achieve reasonable compromises, Kohut believed that it is not the drive-nature of man that is the major problem. In fact he believed the original drive in infancy is assertive in nature, and changes to hate and aggression only as a consequence of phase-inappropriate disappointments in empathic soothing. He preferred to focus on narcissistic aspirations and the subsequent fury at the thwarting of hidden grandiosity which produces a deadly, implacable rage that consumes the individual with a need for revenge, regardless of the personal cost.

Durkin and Bowlby (1968) outline certain aspects of aggression peculiar to humans. The first of these is called *animism*, the human tendency to attribute all events to somebody or some god's will. Evil is often attributed to minority groups or neighbors—the bad guys—who should then be destroyed. Secondly, humans tend readily to displace and project their aggression, as a function of human defense mechanisms. This leads to otherwise

apparently senseless destruction and war. Notice that generalizations from animal studies are not sufficient to explain these peculiarly human phenomena.

*The rational approach of Bertrand Russell*. The greatest hope for reducing man's proclivity to hatred and paranoia comes not only from medical treatment and understanding the psychodynamics involved but also from the amelioration of social conditions. This leads us to the fourth or rational, conscious approach to the problem, perhaps first emphasized by Marx and Engels.

Russell views the capacity to endure a more-or-less monotonous life as an important springboard to success, and a trait that must be developed in childhood. He sees the desire for superficial excitement, if tolerated by parents, as leading to a passive, drugged state of mind. Developing without too many distractions and dissipations—that is, a childhood with regularity and opportunity for true leisure—permits reflection on and adherence to distant achievement rather than preoccupation with immediate pleasure. Psychotherapists speak of this as "ego-span." But as so-called free time increases, the "love of excitement" (Russell 1951, 1962) in our culture has become a serious problem, to the point where excitement-seeking occupations have become a cornerstone of our economy; it has become almost unpatriotic, for example, to admit that one is ignorant of the current

TV shows and personalities in the excitement-infotainment-entertainment world (see also Lasch 1978).

One factor Russell does not mention has impressed itself on me from psychiatric practice—the disillusionment process of middle age. Middle-aged men make wars for young men to fight. What is the meaning of this?

The tight, machine-like quality of modern society and modern communication makes it impossible for most people to stay effectively out of the ruts of middle age. They become swept up by the drive toward material acquisition, envy, and routine; and as middle age descends they become dimly aware that it has not all been worthwhile. This leads to frustration, anger, and the classic psychiatric syndrome of middle-age depression. The paunchy senator insisting on the production of more armaments is related to the depressed middle-aged man who wishes he were young and virile again and is in a rage because he has had his turn.

Russell believes that the causes of malevolence in men are "partly social, partly physiological." Because of the "haunting fear of ruin" that most people have, anything "that increases the general security is likely to diminish cruelty." Obviously general security cannot be achieved by making one portion of mankind secure at the expense of another, since this only increases the dominant group's fear that the oppressed will rebel.

Russell hopes to increase courage through education—courage in facing poverty, courage in facing decisions, courage in facing the hostility of one's own herd and above all the courage to think calmly and rationally in the face of danger, and to control the impulse of panic fear or panic rage. Human malevolence will be reduced if we can improve the social, physical, and medical conditions of human life, essentially through applied science, he says. Russell feels that this reduction in malevolence will eventually come about "when men have acquired the same domination over their own passions that they already have over the physical forces of the external world." And when and how will that come about?

*Existential anxiety.* It is most important to be aware of the problem of "existential anxiety," a factor to consider both in explaining the propensity of middle-aged men to create wars and eagerness of the masses to go to war. I (1969, 1974, 1977, 2011) have discussed the technical aspects of existential anxiety in several books.

Barrett (1958) reminds us of the concept "resentment," which builds up as society becomes increasingly organized and bureaucratized; on the edge of such a society pile up the "underground" men of Dostoyevsky and the "pale criminals" of Nietzsche. This resentment, says Barrett, becomes a "powerful and sometimes unaccountable motive in man."

Our time has seen the "encounter with nothingness." This has been brought about by (1) the decline of religion and belief in God and in an eternal moral order; (2) the collectivization of the state backed by a brutal police and based on the creation of either artificial consumer needs or dogmatic mythologies with subsequent depersonalization of the individual; and (3) the advance of science, which has destroyed all sense of certitude in nature and reduced our conception of our role in the universe to an irrelevant minimum. Nietzsche has been recognized as the original spokesman for the dangerous consequences of the first of these factors, Jaspers (1957) for the second, and Kierkegaard (1946) for the third.

There is a variety of solutions to what Kaufmann (1957) calls the "existentialist motifs." These motifs are the quest for an authentic existence and scorn of the inauthentic, the problem of how to meet death, and the experience of time, which brings us nearer to death. Some religious existentialists have recommended a "leap" into traditional religious faith, for example. Others have stressed the return by each individual man to his freedom of choice to make his life authentic. For example, Jaspers (1957) writes: "In the world *man* alone is the reality which is accessible to me. Here is presence, nearness, fullness, life. Man is the place at which and through which everything that is real exists for us at all. To fail to be human would mean to slip into nothingness. What man is and can become is a fundamental question for man."

Jung (1933) recognized that a yearning for life to make sense and for a way to face our impending death is present in us all, especially as we become older. Erikson (1959) argues that one will have either "ego integrity" or "despair" in the mature years of life, depending on what has gone before. Maturity, or wisdom, as Erikson calls it, can be in a sense thought of as the capacity to face calmly our own death.

These subjects are obviously extremely important and of intense interest to us all. Kierkegaard (1954) points out that all men are in despair, and that three categories of solution have been found: the religious, the unsuccessful, and the demoniacal. There is considerable psychological insight here, especially considering that he was writing in 1849. It is the "demoniacal" solution to existential anxiety—our anxiety over the irrelevance and brevity of our lives—that is of interest in the present context. Psychiatrists today speak of a counterphobic reaction as a common type of defense against anxiety. In such a defense the person wildly plunges into the extreme situation that he or she fears the most. For example, a teenager struggling with unresolved dependent feelings may quickly plunge into a premature marriage to "prove" his masculinity and independence, or may run away and join the armed services, which "makes a man" out of you.

There are of course other kinds of demoniacal solutions, some bordering on insanity, such as the wild personal inner turmoil of Nietzsche

and of the poets Rilke and Holderlin—but what interests us most for this discussion is the counterphobic solution to existential anxiety. This is the desire to place oneself in a situation where death is likely and to "cheat death," varieties of sky–diving.

There is a great need for cooperative exploration by psychologists, psychiatrists, and philosophers into the notion of a demoniacal and counterphobic solution to existential anxiety. Such solutions may represent an important factor in the propensity of middle-aged men to make wars and the enthusiasm of masses of people to follow them into war. Hitler's Germany certainly demonstrated how the demoniacal and the religious solutions could be cleverly combined to produce a pagan religion based on "racial purity" and the making of war. Nationalism is a regressive scourge, and our unwillingness to give it up represents an immaturity in us that must be studied and eradicated. Toynbee (1969) writes: "The quest for alternatives to violence ought to be given the first place on mankind's crowded current agenda. This item should come first because it is the most urgent of all and is also the most difficult."

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