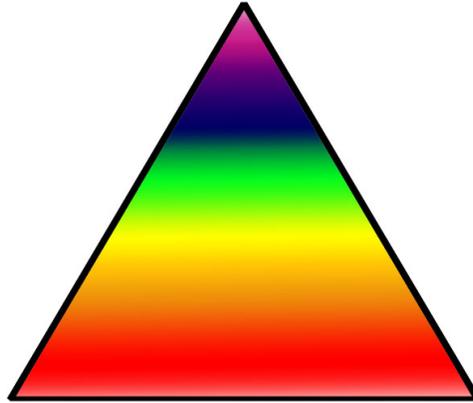


Toward a Psychology of Being

A PSYCHOLOGY CLASSIC

Abraham H. Maslow



**TOWARD A
PSYCHOLOGY
OF BEING**

ABRAHAM H. MASLOW

This book
is dedicated to
KURT GOLDSTEIN

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Preface

I have had a great deal of trouble choosing a title for this book. The concept “psychological health,” though still necessary, has various intrinsic shortcomings for scientific purposes which are discussed at various appropriate places in the book. So also does “psychological illness” as Szasz (160a) and the existential psychologists (110, 111) have recently stressed. We can still use these normative terms, and, as a matter of fact, for heuristic reasons we *must* use them at this time; and yet I am convinced that they will be obsolete within a decade.

A much better term is “self actualization” as I have used it. It stresses “full-humanness,” the development of the biologically based nature of man, and therefore is (empirically) normative for the whole species rather than for particular times and places, i.e., it is less culturally relative. It conforms to biological destiny, rather than to historically-arbitrary, culturally-local value-models as the terms “health” and “illness” often do. It also has empirical content and operational meaning.

However, besides being clumsy from a literary point of view, this term has proven to have the unforeseen shortcomings of appearing a) to imply selfishness rather than altruism, b) to slur the aspect of duty and of dedication to life tasks, c) to neglect the ties to other people and to society, and the dependence of individual fulfillment upon a “good society,” d) to neglect the demand-character of non-human reality, and its intrinsic fascination and interest, e) to neglect egolessness and self-transcendence, and f) to stress, by implication, activity rather than passivity or receptivity. This has turned out to be so in spite of my careful efforts to describe the empirical *fact* that self-actualizing people are altruistic, dedicated, self-transcending, social, etc. (97, Chapter 14).

The word “self” seems to put people off, and my redefinitions and empirical description are often helpless before the powerful linguistic habit of identifying “self” with “selfish” and with pure autonomy. Also I have found to my dismay that some intelligent and capable psychologists (70,

134, 157a) persist in treating my empirical description of the characteristics of self-actualizing people as if I had arbitrarily invented these characteristics instead of discovering them.

“Full-humanness” seems to me to avoid some of these misunderstandings. And also “human diminution or stunting” serves as a better substitute for “illness” and even perhaps also for neurosis, psychosis, and psychopathy. At least these terms are more useful for general psychological and social theory if not for psychotherapeutic practice.

The terms “Being” and “Becoming” as I use them throughout this book are even better, even though they are not yet widely enough used to serve as common coin. This is a pity because the Being-psychology is certainly very different from the Becoming-psychology and the deficiency-psychology, as we shall see. I am convinced that psychologists must move in this direction of reconciling the B-psychology with the D-psychology, i.e., the perfect with the imperfect, the ideal with the actual, the eupsychian with the extant, the timeless with the temporal, end-psychology with means-psychology.

This book is a continuation of my *Motivation and Personality*, published in 1954. It was constructed in about the same way, that is, by doing one piece at a time of the larger theoretical structure. It is a predecessor to work yet to be done toward the construction of a comprehensive, systematic and empirically based general psychology and philosophy which includes both the depths and the heights of human nature. The last chapter is to some extent a program for this future work, and serves as a bridge to it. It is a first attempt to integrate the “health-and-growth psychology” with psychopathology and psychoanalytic dynamics, the dynamic with the holistic, Becoming with Being, good with evil, positive with negative. Phrased in another way, it is an effort to build on the general psychoanalytic base and on the scientific-positivistic base of experimental psychology, the Eupsychian, B-psychological and metamotivational superstructure which these two systems lack, going beyond their limits.

It is very difficult, I have found, to communicate to others my simultaneous respect for and impatience with these two comprehensive psychologies. So many people insist on being *either* pro-Freudian *or* anti-Freudian, pro-scientific-psychology *or* anti-scientific-psychology, etc. In

my opinion all such loyalty-positions are silly. Our job is to integrate these various truths into the *whole* truth, which should be our only loyalty.

It is quite clear to me that scientific methods (broadly conceived) are our only ultimate ways of being sure that we *do* have truth. But here also it is too easy to misunderstand and to fall into a pro-science or anti-science dichotomy. I have already written on this subject (97, Chapters 1, 2, and 3). These are criticisms of orthodox, 19th Century scientism and I intend to continue with this enterprise, of enlarging the methods and the jurisdiction of science so as to make it more capable of taking up the tasks of the new, personal, experiential psychologies (104).

Science, as it is customarily conceived by the orthodox, is quite inadequate to these tasks. But I am certain that it need not limit itself to these orthodox ways. It need not abdicate from the problems of love, creativeness, value, beauty, imagination, ethics and joy, leaving these altogether to “non-scientists,” to poets, prophets, priests, dramatists, artists, or diplomats. All of these people may have wonderful insights, ask the questions that need to be asked, put forth challenging hypotheses, and may even be correct and true much of the time. But however sure *they* may be, they can never make mankind sure. They can convince only those who already agree with them, and a few more. Science is the only way we have of shoving truth down the reluctant throat. Only science can overcome characterological differences in seeing and believing. Only science can progress.

The fact remains however that it *has* come into a kind of dead end, and (in some of its forms) *can* be seen as a threat and a danger to mankind, or at least to the highest and noblest qualities and aspirations of mankind. Many sensitive people, especially artists, are afraid that science besmirches and depresses, that it tears things apart rather than integrating them, thereby killing rather than creating.

None of this I feel is necessary. All that is needed for science to be a help in positive human fulfillment is an enlarging and deepening of the conception of its nature, its goals and its methods.

I hope the reader will not feel this credo to be inconsistent with the rather literary and philosophical tone of this book and my previous one. At any rate, I don't. The broad sketching out of a general theory requires this kind of treatment, for the time being at least. Partly also it is due to the fact that most of the chapters in this book were prepared first as lectures.

This book, like my previous one, is full of affirmations which are based on pilot researches, bits of evidence, on personal observation, on theoretical deduction and on sheer hunch. These are generally phrased so that they can be proven true or false. That is, they are hypotheses, i.e., presented for testing rather than for final belief. They are also obviously relevant and pertinent, i.e., their possible correctness or incorrectness is important to other branches of psychology. They matter. They should therefore generate research and I expect they will. For these reasons, I consider this book to be in the realm of science, or pre-science, rather than of exhortation, or of personal philosophy, or literary expression.

A word about contemporary intellectual currents in psychology may help to locate this book in its proper place. The two comprehensive theories of human nature most influencing psychology until recently have been the Freudian and the experimental-positivistic-behavioristic. All other theories were less comprehensive and their adherents formed many splinter groups. In the last few years, however, these various groups have rapidly been coalescing into a third, increasingly comprehensive theory of human nature, into what might be called a "Third Force." This group includes the Adlerians, Rankians, and Jungians, as well as all the neo-Freudians (or neo-Adlerians) and the post-Freudians (psychoanalytic ego-psychologists as well as writers like Marcuse, Wheelis, Marmor, Szasz, N. Brown, H. Lynd, and Schachtel, who are taking over from the Talmudic psychoanalysts). In addition, the influence of Kurt Goldstein and his organismic-psychology is steadily growing. So also is that of Gestalt therapy, of the Gestalt and Lewinian psychologists, of the general-semanticists, and of such personality-psychologists as G. Allport, G. Murphy, J. Moreno and H. A. Murray. A new and powerful influence is existential psychology and psychiatry. Dozens of other major contributors can be grouped as Self-psychologists, phenomenological psychologists, growth-psychologists, Rogerian psychologists, humanistic psychologists, and so on and so on and

so on. A full list is impossible. A simpler way of grouping these is available in the five journals in which this group is most apt to publish, all relatively new. These are the *Journal of Individual Psychology* (University of Vermont, Burlington, Vt.), the *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* (220 W. 98th St., New York 25, N.Y.), the *Journal of Existential Psychiatry* (679 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago 11, Ill.), the *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry* (Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pa.), and the newest one, the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* (2637 Marshall Drive, Palo Alto, Calif). In addition, the journal *Manas* (P.O. Box 32,112, El Sereno Station, Los Angeles 32, Calif.) applies this point of view to the personal and social philosophy of the intelligent layman. The bibliography at the back of this book, though not complete, is a fair sampling of the writings of this group. The present book belongs in this stream of thought.

Acknowledgments

I shall not repeat here the acknowledgments already made in the preface to my *Motivation and Personality*. I wish now only to add the following.

I have been unusually fortunate in my departmental colleagues, Eugenia Hanfmann, Richard Held, Richard Jones, James Klee, Ricardo Morant, Ulric Neisser, Harry Rand, and Walter Toman, all of whom have been collaborators, sounding boards and debating partners for various parts of this book. I wish to tell them here of my affection and respect for them and to thank them for their help.

It has been my privilege for ten years to have continuing discussions with a learned, brilliant, and skeptical colleague, Dr. Frank Manuel of the Department of History at Brandeis University. I have not only enjoyed this friendship but have also been taught a great deal.

I have had a similar relationship with another friend and colleague, Dr. Harry Rand, a practicing psychoanalyst. For ten years we have continuously pursued together the deeper meanings of the Freudian theories, and one product of this collaboration has already been published (103). Neither Dr. Manuel nor Dr. Rand agrees with my general slant nor does Walter Toman, also a psychoanalyst, with whom I have also had many discussions and

debates. Perhaps for that very reason they have helped me to sharpen my own conclusions.

Dr. Ricardo Morant and I collaborated in seminars, experiments, and in various writings. This has helped to keep me closer to the mainstream of experimental psychology. My Chapters 3 and 6 especially owe much to the help of Dr. James Klee.

The sharp but amicable debates in the Graduate Colloquium of our Department of Psychology with these and my other colleagues, and with our graduate students, have been continuously instructive. So also have I learned much from daily formal and informal contacts with many members of the Brandeis faculty and staff, as learned, sophisticated and argumentative a group of intellectuals as exists any place.

I learned much from my colleagues of the Values Symposium held at MIT (102) especially Frank Bowditch, Robert Hartman, Gyorgy Kepes, Dorothy Lee, and Walter Weisskopf. Adrian van Kaam, Rollo May, and James Klee introduced me to the literature of existentialism. Frances Wilson Schwartz (179, 180) taught me first about creative art education and its many implications for growth-psychology. Aldous Huxley (68a) was among the first to convince me that I had better be serious about the psychology of religion and mysticism. Felix Deutsch helped me to learn about psychoanalysis from the inside, by experiencing it. My intellectual indebtedness to Kurt Goldstein is so great that I have dedicated this book to him.

Much of this book was written during a sabbatical year which I owe to enlightened administrative policy at my University. I wish also to thank the Ella Lyman Cabot Trust for a grant that helped free me from thinking about money during this year of writing. It is very difficult to do sustained theoretical work during the ordinary academic year.

Miss Verna Collette has done most of the typing for this book. I wish to thank her for her unusual helpfulness, patience, and hard work for which I am extremely grateful. I owe thanks for secretarial help also to Gwen Whately, Lorraine Kaufman and Sandy Mazer.

Chapter 1 is a revised version of a portion of a lecture given at the Cooper Union, New York City, October 18, 1954. The full text was published in *Self*, edited by Clark Moustakas, Harper & Bros., 1956, and is used here with the permission of the publisher. It has also been reprinted in J. Coleman, F. Libaw, and W. Martinson, *Success in College*. Scott, Foresman, 1961.

Chapter 2 is a revised version of a paper read before a Symposium on Existential Psychology, at the 1959 Convention of The American Psychological Association. It was first published in *Existentialist Inquiries*, 1960, 1, 1-5, and is used here with the permission of the editor. It has since been reprinted in *Existential Psychology*, Rollo May (ed.), Random House, 1961, and in *Religious Inquiry*, 1960, No. 28, 4-7.

Chapter 3 is a condensed version of a lecture presented before the University of Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, January 13, 1955, and printed in the *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*, 1955. M. R. Jones (ed.), University of Nebraska Press, 1955. It is used here with the permission of the publisher. It has also been reprinted in the *General Semantics Bulletin*, 1956, Nos. 18 and 19, 32-42, and in J. Coleman, *Personality Dynamics and Effective Behavior*, Scott, Foresman, 1960.

Chapter 4 was originally a lecture given before the Merrill-Palmer School Conference on Growth, May 10, 1956. It was published in the *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 1956, 3, 36-47, and is used here with the permission of the editor.

Chapter 5 is a revision of the second portion of a lecture delivered at Tufts University which will be published in toto in *The Journal of General Psychology* in 1963. It is used here with the permission of the editor. The first half of the lecture summarizes all the evidence available to justify postulating an instinctoid need to know.

Chapter 6 is a revised version of a presidential address before the Division of Personality and Social Psychology, American Psychological Association, September 1, 1956. It was published in the *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 1959, 94, 43-66, and is used here with the permission of the

editor. It was reprinted in *International Journal of Parapsychology*, 1960, 2, 23-54.

Chapter 7 is a revised version of a lecture first read before a Karen Horney Memorial Meeting on Identity and Alienation, Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis, New York City, October 5, 1960. Published in *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1961, 21, 254. It is used here with the permission of the editors.

Chapter 8 was first published in the Kurt Goldstein number of the *Journal of Individual Psychology*, 1959, 15, 24-32, and is reprinted here with the permission of the editors.

Chapter 9 is a revised version of a paper first published in *Perspectives in Psychological Theory*. B. Kaplan and S. Wapner (eds.), International Universities Press, 1960, a collection of essays in honor of Heinz Werner. It is used here with the permission of the editors and the publisher.

Chapter 10 is a revised version of a lecture delivered February 28, 1959, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, as one of a series on Creativeness. This series has been published as *Creativity and Its Cultivation*, H. H. Anderson (ed.), Harper & Bros., 1959. The lecture is used here with the permission of the editor and the publishers. It has been reprinted in *Electro-Mechanical Design*, 1959 (Jan. and Aug. numbers), and in *General Semantics Bulletin*, 1959-60, Nos. 23 and 24, 45-50.

Chapter 11 is a revision and expansion of a lecture given before the Conference on New Knowledge in Human Values, October 4, 1957, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass. Printed in *New Knowledge in Human Values*, A. H. Maslow (ed.), Harper & Bros., 1958, and used here by permission of the publishers.

Chapter 12 is a revised and expanded version of a lecture read before a Symposium on Values, Academy of Psychoanalysis, New York City, December 10, 1960.

Chapter 13 was a lecture before a Symposium on Research Implications of Positive Mental Health, Eastern Psychological Association, April 15,

1960. Printed in *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 1961, 1, 1-7, and used here with the permission of the editor.

Chapter 14 is a revised and enlarged version of a paper written in 1958 for ASCD, *Perceiving, Behaving, Becoming: A New Focus for Education*, A. Combs (ed.), 1962 Yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Washington, D.C., 1962. In part, these propositions are a summary of the whole of this book and my previous one (97). Partly also it is a programmatic extrapolation into the future.

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Contents

Preface

I. A Larger Jurisdiction for Psychology.

1.INTRODUCTION: TOWARD A PSYCHOLOGY OF HEALTH

2.WHAT PSYCHOLOGY CAN LEARN FROM THE EXISTENTIALISTS

II. Growth and Motivation

3. DEFICIENCY MOTIVATION AND GROWTH

4.DEFENSE AND GROWTH

5.THE NEED TO KNOW AND THE FEAR OF KNOWING

III. Growth and Cognition

6.COGNITION OF BEING IN THE PEAK-EXPERIENCES

7.PEAK-EXPERIENCES AS ACUTE IDENTITY-EXPERIENCES

8.SOME DANGERS OF BEING-COGNITION

9.RESISTANCE TO BEING RUBRICIZED

IV. Creativeness

10.CREATIVITY IN SELF-ACTUALIZING PEOPLE

V. Values

11.PSYCHOLOGICAL DATA AND HUMAN VALUES

12.VALUES, GROWTH, AND HEALTH

13.HEALTH AS TRANSCENDENCE OF ENVIRONMENT

VI. Future Tasks

14.SOME BASIC PROPOSITIONS OF A GROWTH AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION PSYCHOLOGY

APPENDIX A – ARE OUR PUBLICATIONS AND CONVENTIONS SUITABLE FOR THE PERSONAL PSYCHOLOGIES?

APPENDIX B – BIBLIOGRAPHY

Part I: A Larger Jurisdiction for Psychology

1.

Introduction: Toward a Psychology of Health

There is now emerging over the horizon a new conception of human sickness and of human health, a psychology that I find so thrilling and so full of wonderful possibilities that I yield to the temptation to present it publicly even before it is checked and confirmed, and before it can be called reliable scientific knowledge.

The basic assumptions of this point of view are:

1. We have, each of us, an essential biologically based inner nature, which is to some degree “natural,” intrinsic, given, and, in a certain limited sense, unchangeable, or, at least, unchanging.
2. Each person’s inner nature is in part unique to himself and in part species-wide.
3. It is possible to study this inner nature scientifically and to discover what it is like—(not *invent—discover*).
4. This inner nature, as much as we know of it so far, seems not to be intrinsically evil, but rather either neutral or positively “good.” What we call evil behavior appears most often to be a secondary reaction to frustration of this intrinsic nature.

5. Since this inner nature is good or neutral rather than bad, it is best to bring it out and to encourage it rather than to suppress it. If it is permitted to guide our life, we grow healthy, fruitful, and happy.
6. If this essential core of the person is denied or suppressed, he gets sick sometimes in obvious ways, sometimes in subtle ways, sometimes immediately, sometimes later.
7. This inner nature is not strong and overpowering and unmistakable like the instincts of animals. It is weak and delicate and subtle and easily overcome by habit, cultural pressure, and wrong attitudes toward it.
8. Even though weak, it rarely disappears in the normal person—perhaps not even in the sick person. Even though denied, it persists underground forever pressing for actualization.
9. Somehow, these conclusions must all be articulated with the necessity of discipline, deprivation, frustration, pain, and tragedy. To the extent that these experiences reveal and foster and fulfill our inner nature, to that extent they are desirable experiences.

Observe that if these assumptions are proven true, they promise a scientific ethics, a natural value system, a court of ultimate appeal for the determination of good and bad, of right and wrong. The more we learn about man's natural tendencies, the easier it will be to tell him how to be good, how to be happy, how to be fruitful, how to respect himself, how to love, how to fulfill his highest potentialities. This amounts to automatic solution of many of the personality problems of the future. The thing to do seems to be to find out what you are *really* like inside, deep down, as a member of the human species and as a particular individual.

The study of such healthy people can teach us much about our own mistakes, our shortcomings, the proper directions in which to grow. Every age but ours has had its model, its ideal. All of these have been given up by our culture; the saint, the hero, the gentleman, the knight, the mystic. About all we have left is the well-adjusted man without problems, a very pale and

doubtful substitute. Perhaps we shall soon be able to use as our guide and model the fully growing and self-fulfilling human being, the one in whom all his potentialities are coming to full development, the one whose inner nature expresses itself freely, rather than being warped, suppressed, or denied.

The serious thing for each person to recognize vividly and poignantly, each for himself, is that every falling away from species-virtue, every crime against one's own nature, every evil act, *every one without exception records itself* in our unconscious and makes us despise ourselves. Karen Horney had a good word to describe this unconscious perceiving and remembering; she said it "registers." If we do something we are ashamed of, it "registers" to our discredit, and if we do something honest or fine or good, it "registers" to our credit. The net results ultimately are either one or the other—either we respect and accept ourselves or we despise ourselves and feel contemptible, worthless, and unlovable. Theologians used to use the word "*accidie*" to describe the sin of failing to do with one's life all that one knows one could do.

This point of view in no way denies the usual Freudian picture. But it does add to it and supplement it. To oversimplify the matter somewhat, it is as if Freud supplied to us the sick half of psychology and we must now fill it out with the healthy half. Perhaps this health psychology will give us more possibility for controlling and improving our lives and for making ourselves better people. Perhaps this will be more fruitful than asking "how to get *unsick*."

How can we encourage free development? What are the best educational conditions for it? Sexual? Economic? Political? What kind of world do we need for such people to grow in? What kind of world will such people create? Sick people are made by a sick culture; healthy people are made possible by a healthy culture. But it is just as true that sick individuals make their culture more sick and that healthy individuals make their culture more healthy. Improving individual health is one approach to making a better world. To express it in another way, encouragement of personal growth is a real possibility; cure of actual neurotic symptoms is far less possible without outside help. It is relatively easy to try deliberately to make oneself

a more honest man; it is very difficult to try to cure one's own compulsions or obsessions.

The classical approach to personality problems considers them to be problems in an undesirable sense. Struggle, conflict, guilt, bad conscience, anxiety, depression, frustration, tension, shame, self-punishment, feeling of inferiority or unworthiness—they all cause psychic pain, they disturb efficiency of performance, and they are uncontrollable. They are therefore automatically regarded as sick and undesirable and they get “cured” away as soon as possible.

But all of these symptoms are found also in healthy people, or in people who are growing toward health. Supposing you *should* feel guilty and don't? Supposing you have attained a nice stabilization of forces and you *are* adjusted? Perhaps adjustment and stabilization, while good because it cuts your pain, is also bad because development toward a higher ideal ceases?

Erich Fromm, in a very important book (50), attacked the classical Freudian notion of a superego because this concept was entirely authoritarian and relativistic. That is to say, your superego or your conscience was supposed by Freud to be primarily the internalization of the wishes, demands, and ideals of the father and mother, whoever they happen to be. But supposing they are criminals? Then what kind of conscience do you have? Or supposing you have a rigid moralizing father who hates fun? Or a psychopath? This conscience exists—Freud was right. We do get our ideals largely from such early figures and not from Sunday School books read later in life. But there is also another element in conscience, or, if you like, another kind of conscience, which we all have either weakly or strongly. And this is the “intrinsic conscience.” This is based upon the unconscious and preconscious perception of our own nature, of our own destiny, or our own capacities, of our own “call” in life. It insists that we be true to our inner nature and that we do not deny it out of weakness or for advantage or for any other reason. He who belies his talent, the born painter who sells stockings instead, the intelligent man who lives a stupid life, the man who sees the truth and keeps his mouth shut, the coward who gives up his manliness, all these people perceive in a deep way that they have done

wrong to themselves and despise themselves for it. Out of this self-punishment may come only neurosis, but there may equally well come renewed courage, righteous indignation, increased self-respect, because of thereafter doing the right thing; in a word, growth and improvement can come through pain and conflict.

In essence I am deliberately rejecting our present easy distinction between sickness and health, at least as far as surface symptoms are concerned. Does sickness mean having symptoms? I maintain now that sickness might consist of *not* having symptoms when you should. Does health mean being symptom-free? I deny it. Which of the Nazis at Auschwitz or Dachau were healthy? Those with stricken conscience or those with a nice, clear, happy conscience? Was it possible for a profoundly human person not to feel conflict, suffering, depression, rage, etc?

In a word if you tell me you have a personality problem I am not certain until I know you better whether to say "Good!" or "I'm sorry." It depends on the reasons. And these, it seems, may be bad reasons, or they may be good reasons.

An example is the changing attitude of psychologists toward popularity, toward adjustment, even toward delinquency. Popular with whom? Perhaps it is better for a youngster to be *unpopular* with the neighboring snobs or with the local country club set. Adjusted to what? To a bad culture? To a dominating parent? What shall we think of a well-adjusted slave? A well-adjusted prisoner? Even the behavior problem boy is being looked upon with new tolerance. *Why* is he delinquent? Most often it is for sick reasons. But occasionally it is for good reasons and the boy is simply resisting exploitation, domination, neglect, contempt, and trampling upon.

Clearly what will be called personality problems depends on who is doing the calling. The slave owner? The dictator? The patriarchal father? The husband who wants his wife to remain a child? It seems quite clear that personality problems may sometimes be loud protests against the crushing of one's psychological bones, of one's true inner nature. What is sick then is *not* to protest while this crime is being committed. And I am sorry to report my impression that most people do not protest under such treatment. They take it and pay years later, in neurotic and psychosomatic symptoms of