

RESIGNATION: THE APPEAL OF FREEDOM

THE THIRD major solution of the intrapsychic conflicts consists essentially in the neurotic's withdrawing from the inner battlefield and declaring himself uninterested. If he can muster and maintain an attitude of "don't care," he feels less bothered by his inner conflicts and can attain a semblance of inner peace. Since he can do this only by resigning from active living, "resignation" seems a proper name for this solution. It is in a way the most radical of all solutions and, perhaps for this very reason, most often produces conditions that allow for a fairly smooth functioning. And, since our sense of what is healthy is generally blunted, resigned people often pass for "normal."

Resignation may have a constructive meaning. We can think of many older people who have recognized the intrinsic futility of ambition and success, who have mellowed by expecting and demanding less, and who through renunciation of nonessentials have become wiser. In many forms of religion or philosophy renunciation of nonessentials is advocated as one of the conditions for greater spiritual growth and fulfillment: give up the expres-

sion of personal will, sexual desires, and cravings for worldly goods for the sake of being closer to God. Give up cravings for things transitory for the sake of life eternal. Give up personal strivings and satisfactions for the sake of attaining the spiritual power which exists potentially in human beings.

For the neurotic solution we are discussing here, however, resignation implies settling for a peace which is merely the absence of conflicts. In religious practice the pursuit of peace does not involve giving up struggle and striving but rather directing them toward higher goals. For the neurotic it means giving up struggle and striving and settling for less. His resignation therefore is a process of shrinking, of restricting, of curtailing life and growth.

As we shall see later on, the distinction between healthy and neurotic resignation is not as neat as I have just presented it. Even in the latter there is a positive value involved. But what meets the eye are certain negative qualities resulting from the process. This is clearer if we think back to the other two major solutions. In them we see a more turbulent picture, one of reaching out for something, going after something, becoming passionately engaged in some pursuit—no matter whether this concerns mastery or love. In them we see hope, anger, despair. Even the arrogant-vindictive type, although cold as a result of having stifled his emotions, still ardently wants—or is driven to want—success, power, triumph. By contrast the picture of resignation, when maintained consistently, is one of life at a constantly low ebb—of a life without pain or friction but also without zest.

No wonder then that the *basic characteristics* of neurotic resignation are distinguished by an aura of restriction, of something that is avoided, that is *not* wanted or *not* done. There is some resignation in every neurotic. What I shall describe here is a cross section of those for whom it has become the major solution.

The direct expression of the neurotic having removed himself from the inner battlefield is his being an *onlooker at himself and his life*. I have described this attitude as one of the gen-

eral measures to relieve inner tension. Since detachment is a ubiquitous and prominent attitude of his, he is also an on-looker at others. He lives as if he were sitting in the orchestra and observing a drama acted on the stage, and a drama which is most of the time not too exciting at that. Though he is not necessarily a good observer, he may be most astute. Even in the very first consultation he may, with the help of some pertinent questions, develop a picture of himself replete with a wealth of candid observation. But he will usually add that all this knowledge has not changed anything. Of course it has not—for none of his findings has been an experience for him. Being an on-looker at himself means just that: not actively participating in living and unconsciously refusing to do so. In analysis he tries to maintain the same attitude. He may be immensely interested, yet that interest may stay for quite a while at the level of a fascinating entertainment—and nothing changes.

One thing, however, which he avoids even intellectually is the risk of seeing any of his conflicts. If he is taken by surprise and, as it were, stumbles into one, he may suffer from severe panic. But mostly he is too much on his guard to allow anything to touch him. As soon as he comes close to a conflict his interest in the whole subject will peter out. Or he may argue himself out of it, proving that the conflict is no conflict. When the analyst perceives his "avoidance" tactics and tells him, "Look here, this is *your* life that is at stake," the patient does not quite know what he is talking about. For him it is not his life but a life which he observes, and in which he has no active part.

A second characteristic, intimately connected with nonparticipation, is the *absence of any serious striving for achievement and the aversion to effort*. I put the two attitudes together because their combination is typical for the resigned person. Many neurotics set their hearts on achieving something and chafe under the inhibitions preventing them from attaining it. Not so the resigned person. He unconsciously rejects both achievement and effort. He minimizes or flatly denies his assets, and settles for less. Pointing out evidence to the contrary does not budge him. He may become rather annoyed. Does the analyst want to push him into some ambition? Does he want

him to become president of the United States? If, finally, he cannot help realizing the existence of some gifts, he may become frightened.

Again he may compose beautiful music, paint pictures, write books—in his imagination. This is an alternative means of doing away with both aspiration and effort. He may actually have good and original ideas on some subject, but the writing of a paper would require initiative and the arduous work of thinking the ideas through and organizing them. So the paper remains unwritten. He may have a vague desire to write a novel or a play, but waits for the inspiration to come. Then the plot would be clear and everything would flow from his pen.

Also he is most ingenious at finding reasons for *not* doing things. How much good would a book be that had to be sweated out in hard labor! And are not too many uninspired books written anyhow? Would not the concentration on one pursuit curtail other interests and thus narrow his horizon? Does not going into politics, or into any competitive field, spoil the character?

This aversion to effort may extend *to* all activities. It then brings about a complete inertia, to which we shall return later. He may then procrastinate over doing such simple things as writing a letter, reading a book, shopping. Or he may do them against inner resistance, slowly, listlessly, ineffectively. The mere prospect of unavoidable larger activities, such as moving or handling accumulated tasks in his job, may make him tired before he begins.

Concomitantly there is an absence of *goal-direction and planning*, which may concern major and minor issues. What does he actually want to do with his life? The question has never occurred to him and is easily discarded, as if it were none of his concern. In this respect there is a remarkable contrast to the arrogant-vindictive type, with the latter's elaborate planning in long-range terms.

In analysis it appears that his goals are limited and again negative. Analysis he feels should rid him of disturbing symptoms, such as awkwardness with strangers, fear of blushing or of fainting in the street. Or perhaps analysis should remove one or another aspect of his inertia, such as his difficulty in reading.

He may also have a broader vision of a goal which, in characteristically vague terms, he may call "serenity." This, however, means for him simply the absence of all troubles, irritations, or upsets. And naturally whatever he hopes for should come easily, without pain or strain. The analyst should do the work. After all, is he not the expert? Analysis should be like going to a dentist who pulls a tooth, or to a doctor who gives an injection: he is willing to wait patiently for the analyst to present the clue that will solve everything. It would be better though if the patient didn't have to talk so much. The analyst should have some sort of X ray which would reveal the patient's thoughts. Or perhaps hypnosis would bring things out more quickly—that is, without any effort on the part of the patient. When a new problem crystallizes, his first response may be exasperation at the prospect of so much more work to be done. As indicated before, he may not mind observing things in himself. What he always minds is the effort of changing.

A step deeper and we come to the very essence of resignation: the *restriction of wishes*. We have seen checks on wishes in other types. But then the lid was put on certain categories of wishes, such as those for human closeness or for triumph. We are also familiar with uncertainty about wishes, mainly resulting from a person's wishes being determined by what he should wish. All of these trends operate here too. Here, too, one area is usually more affected than another. Here, too, spontaneous wishes are blurred by inner dictates. But over and beyond these the resigned person believes, consciously or unconsciously, that it is *better* not to wish or to expect anything. Sometimes this goes with a conscious pessimistic outlook on life, a sense of its being futile anyhow and of nothing being sufficiently desirable to make an effort for it. More often many things appear desirable in a vague, idle way but fail to arouse a concrete, alive wish. If a wish or interest has enough zest to penetrate through the "don't care" attitude, it fades out soon after and the smooth surface of "nothing matters" or "nothing should matter" is re-established. Such "wishlessness" may concern both professional and personal life—the wish for a different job or an advancement as well as for a marriage, a house, a car, or other possessions. The fulfillment of these wishes may loom primarily as a

burden, and in fact would sabotage the one wish he does have—that of not being bothered. The retraction of wishes is closely interlinked with the three basic characteristics mentioned before. He can be an onlooker at his life only if he has no strong wishes of any kind. He can hardly have aspirations or purposeful goals if he has not the motive power of wishes. And, finally, no wish is strong enough to warrant effort. Hence the two outstanding neurotic claims are that life should be easy, painless, and effortless and that he should not be bothered.

He is particularly anxious not to get attached to anything to the extent of really needing it. Nothing should be so important for him that he could not do without it. It is all right to like a woman, a place in the country, or certain drinks, but one should not become dependent upon them. As soon as he becomes aware that a place, a person, or a group of people means so much to him that its loss would be painful he tends to retract his feelings. No other person should ever have the feeling of being necessary to him or take the relationship for granted. If he suspects the existence of either attitude he tends to withdraw.

The principle of nonparticipation, as it is expressed in his being an onlooker at life as well as in his retraction of wishes, also operates in his human relations. They are characterized by *detachment*, i.e., his emotional distance from others. He can enjoy distant or transitory relationships but he should not become emotionally involved. He should not become so attached to a person as to need his company, his help, or sexual relations with him. The detachment is all the easier to maintain since, in contrast to other neurotic types, he does not expect much, either good or bad—if anything—from others. Even in emergencies it may not occur to him to ask for help. On the other hand he may be quite willing to help others, provided again that it does not involve him emotionally. He does not want, or even expect, gratitude.¹

The role of sex varies considerably. Sometimes sex is for him the only bridge to others. He may then have plenty of transient sexual relations, backing out of them sooner or later. They should not, as it were, degenerate into love. He may be entirely

¹ For more details on the nature of detachment see Karen Horney, *Our Inner Conflicts*, Chapter 5, *Moving away from People*.

aware of his need not to become involved with anybody. Or he may give satisfied curiosity as the reason for terminating a relationship. He will point out then that it is the curiosity for a new experience that drives him toward this or that woman, and that now that he has had this new experience she does not intrigue him any more. In these instances he may respond to women exactly as he does to a new landscape or to a new circle of people. Now that he knows them they no longer elicit his curiosity, and so he turns to something else. This is more than mere rationalization for his detachment. He has carried through his attitude of being an onlooker at life more consciously and more consistently than others, and this sometimes may give the deceptive appearance of a zest for living.

In some instances, on the other hand, he excludes the whole area of sex from his life—to the extent of stifling all wishes in this regard. He may then not even have erotic fantasies or, if he does, a few abortive fantasies may be all that his sex life consists of. His actual contacts with others will then stay on the level of distant friendly interest.

When he does have lasting relationships he must of course maintain his distance in them too. In this respect he is at the opposite pole from the self-effacing type, with the latter's need to merge with a partner. The way in which he maintains distance varies greatly. He may exclude sex as being too intimate for a permanent relationship, and instead satisfy his sexual needs with a stranger. Conversely he may more or less restrict a relationship to merely sexual contacts and not share other experiences with the partner.³ In marriage he may be attentive to the partner but never talk intimately about himself. He may insist on having a good deal of time strictly to himself or on taking a trip alone. He may restrict a relationship to occasional week ends or trips.

I want to add here a comment, the significance of which we shall understand later. Being afraid of emotional involvement with others is not the same as an absence of positive feelings.

³ Freud has observed this particular phenomenon; he thought it was a peculiarity in love life occurring in men only, and tried to explain it on the grounds of a divided attitude toward their mothers. Sigmund Freud, "Contributions to the Psychology of Love," *Collected Papers*, IV.

On the contrary, he would not have to be on his guard so vigilantly if he had put a general check on tender feelings. He may have his own deep feelings, but these should stay in his inner sanctum. They are his private affair and nobody else's business. In this respect he is different from the arrogant-vindictive type, who is also detached but has unconsciously trained himself not to have positive feelings. He is also different in that he does not want to be involved with others in friction or anger any more than in any other way, whereas the arrogant type is quick to anger and finds in battle his natural element.

Another characteristic of a resigned person is his *hypersensitivity to influence, pressure, coercion or ties* of any kind. This is a relevant factor too in his detachment. Even before he enters into a personal relationship or a group activity the fear of a lasting tie may be aroused. And the question as to how he can extricate himself may be present from the very beginning. Before marriage this fear may grow into a panic.

Exactly what he resents as coercion varies. It may be any contract, such as signing a lease or any long-term engagement. It may be any physical pressure, even collars, girdles, shoes. It may be an obstructed view. He may resent anything that others expect, or might possibly expect, from him—like Christmas presents, letters, or paying his *bills* at *certain* times. It may extend to institutions, traffic regulations, conventions, government interference. He does not fight all of this because he is no fighter; but he rebels inwardly and may consciously or unconsciously frustrate others in his own passive way by not responding or by forgetting.

His sensitivity to coercion is connected with his inertia and with the retraction of wishes. Since he does not want to budge, he may feel any expectation of his doing something as a coercion, even if it is obviously in his own interest. The connection with the retraction of wishes is more complex. He is afraid, and has reason to be so, that anybody with stronger wishes might easily impose upon him and push him into something by dint of his greater determination. But there is also externalization operating. Not experiencing his own wishes or preferences, he will easily feel that he yields to the wishes of another person

when he actually follows his own preferences. To illustrate with a simple example from daily life: a person was invited to a party to be held on a night on which he had a date with his girl. However, this was not the way he experienced the situation at the time. He went to see the girl, feeling that he had "complied" with her wishes and resenting the "coercion" she had exerted. A very intelligent patient characterized the whole process with these words: "Nature abhors a vacuum. When your own wishes are silent, those of others rush in." We could add: either their existing wishes, their alleged wishes, or those he has externalized to them.

The sensitivity to coercion constitutes a real difficulty in analysis—the more difficult the more the patient is not only negative but negativistic. He may harbor an everlasting suspicion that the analyst wants to influence and mold him into a preconceived pattern. This suspicion is all the less accessible the more the patient's inertia prevents him from testing out any suggestion offered, as he is repeatedly asked to do. On the grounds of the analyst's exerting undue influence, he may refute any question, statement, or interpretation that implicitly or explicitly attacks some neurotic position of his. What renders progress in this respect still more difficult is the fact that he will not express his suspicion for a long time, because he dislikes friction. He may simply feel that this or that is the analyst's personal prejudice or hobby. Hence he need not bother with it, and discards it as negligible. The analyst may suggest for instance that the patient's relations with people would be worth examining. He is immediately on his guard while secretly thinking that the analyst wants to make him gregarious.

Lastly, an *aversion to change*, to anything new, goes with resignation. This too varies in intensity and form. The more prominent the inertia, the more he dreads the risk and the effort of any change. He would much rather put up with the *status quo*—whether this is a job, his living quarters, an employee, or a marriage partner—than change. Nor does it occur to him that he might be able to improve his situation. He might for instance rearrange his furniture, make more time for leisure, be more helpful to his wife in her difficulties. Suggestions of this sort are met with polite indifference. Two factors enter into this

attitude besides his inertia. Since he does not expect much from any situation, his incentive to change it is small anyhow. And he is inclined to regard things as unalterable. People are just so: this is their constitution. Life is just so—it is fate. Although he does not complain about situations which would be unbearable for most people, his putting up with things often looks like the martyrdom of the self-effacing person. But the resemblance is only a superficial one: they spring from different sources.

The examples of the aversion to change which I have mentioned so far all concern external matters. This is not the reason, however, that I list it among the basic characteristics of resignation. The hesitation to change something in the environment is conspicuous in some instances but in other resigned people the opposite impression prevails—that of restlessness. But in all cases there is a marked aversion to *inner* changes. This applies in a way to all neuroses,³ but the aversion is usually one to the tackling and changing of special factors—mostly those pertaining to the particular main solution. This is equally true for the resigned type but, because of the static concept of self rooted in the nature of his solution, he is averse to the very idea of change itself. The very essence of this solution is withdrawing from active living, from active wishing, striving, planning, from efforts and doing. His accepting others as unalterable is a reflection of his view of himself, no matter how much he may talk about evolution—or even intellectually appreciate the idea of it. Analysis, in his mind, should be a one-time revelation which, once received, settles things for good and all. It is at the beginning alien to him to realize that it is a process, in which we tackle a problem from ever-new angles, see ever-new connections, discover ever-new meanings until we get to the root of it and something can change from within.

The whole attitude of resignation may be conscious; in that case the person regards it as the better part of wisdom. Much more often, in my experience, a person is unaware of it but knows about some of the aspects mentioned here—although, as we shall see presently, he may think of them in other terms be-

³ Karen Horney, *Self-Analysis*. Chapter 10, *Dealing with Resistance*, W. W. Norton, 1942.

cause he sees them in a different light. Most frequently he is aware only of his detachment and of his sensitivity to coercion. But, as always where neurotic needs are concerned, we can recognize the nature of the resigned individual's needs by observing *when* he reacts to frustration, when he becomes listless or fatigued, exasperated, panicky, or resentful.

For the analyst a knowledge of the basic characteristics is of great help in sizing up the whole picture quickly. When one or another of them strikes our attention we must look for the others; and we are reasonably sure to find them. As I have been careful to point out, they are not a series of unrelated peculiarities but a closely interknit structure. It is, at least in its basic composition, a picture of great consistency and unity, looking as if it had been painted in one hue.

We shall now try to arrive at an understanding of the dynamics of this picture, its meaning and its history. All we have pointed out as yet is that resignation represents a major solution of the intrapsychic conflicts by way of withdrawing from them. At first glance we get the impression that the resigned person primarily gives up his ambition. This is the aspect which he himself often emphasizes and tends to regard as a clue to the whole development. His history too sometimes seems to confirm this impression, in so far as he may have changed conspicuously in terms of ambition. In or around adolescence he often does things which show remarkable energies and gifts. He may be resourceful, surmount economic handicaps, and make a place for himself. He may be ambitious at school, first in his class, excel in debating or some progressive political movement. At least there often is a period in which he is comparatively alive and interested in many things, in which he rebels against the tradition in which he has grown up and thinks of accomplishing something in the future.

Subsequently there is often a period of distress: of anxiety, of depression, of despair about some failure or about some unfortunate life situation in which he has become involved through his very rebellious streak. After that the curve of his life seems to flatten out. People say that he got "adjusted" and settled down. They remark that he had his youthful flight to-

ward the sun and came back down to earth. That, they say, is the "normal" course. But others, more thoughtful, are worried about him. For he also seems to have lost his zest for living, his interest in many things, and seems to have settled for much less than his gifts or opportunities warrant. What has happened to him? Certainly a person's wings can be clipped through a series of disasters or deprivations. But in the instances we have in mind circumstances were not sufficiently unfavorable to be entirely responsible. Hence some psychic distress must have been the determining factor. This answer, however, is not satisfactory either, because we can remember others who likewise experienced inner turmoil and emerged from it differently. Actually the change is not the result either of the existence of conflicts or of their magnitude but rather of the way in which he has made peace with himself. What has happened is that he got a taste of his inner conflicts and solved them by withdrawing. Why he tried to solve them this way, why he could do it this way only is a matter of his previous history, about which more later. First we need to have a clearer picture of the nature of the withdrawing.

Let us look first at the major inner conflict between expansive and self-effacing drives. In the two types discussed in the previous three chapters one of these drives is in the foreground and the other one is suppressed. But if resignation prevails, the typical picture we get in relation to this conflict is different. Neither expansive nor self-effacing trends seem to be suppressed. Provided we are familiar with their manifestations and implications, it is not difficult to observe them nor—up to a point—to bring them to awareness. In fact, if we insisted upon classifying all neuroses as either expansive or self-effacing, we would be at a loss to decide in which category to place the resigned type. We could only state that as a rule one or the other trend prevails, either in the sense of being closer to awareness or of being stronger. Individual differences within this whole group depend in part upon such a prevalence. Sometimes, however, there seems to be a fairly even balance.

Expansive trends may show in his having rather grandiose fantasies about the great things he could do in his imagination,

or about his general attributes. Furthermore he often feels consciously superior to others, and may show this in his behavior by an exaggerated dignity. In his feelings about himself he may tend to be his proud self. The attributes, though, of which he is proud—in contrast to the expansive type—are in the service of resignation. He is proud of his detachment, his "stoicism," his self-sufficiency, his independence, his dislike of coercion, his being above competition. He may also be quite aware of his claims and able to assert them effectively. Their content, however, is different because they arise from the need to protect his ivory tower. He feels entitled to having others not intrude upon his privacy, to having them not expect anything of him nor bother him, to be exempt from having to make a living and from responsibilities. Lastly, expansive trends may show in some secondary developments evolving from the basic resignation, such as his cherishing prestige or being openly rebellious.

But these expansive trends no longer constitute an active force, because he has relinquished his ambition in the sense of *giving up any active pursuit of ambitious goals* and active strivings toward them. He is determined not to want them, and not even to try to attain them. Even if he is able to do some productive work, he may do it with a supreme disdain for, or in defiance of, what the world around him wants or appreciates. This is characteristic of the rebellious group. Nor does he want to do anything active or aggressive for the sake of revenge or vindictive triumph; he has abandoned the drive for actual mastery. Indeed, in a way consistent with his detachment, the idea of being a leader, of influencing or manipulating people, is rather distasteful to him.

On the other hand, if self-effacing trends are in the foreground, resigned people tend to have a low estimate of themselves. They may be timid and feel that they do not amount to much. They may also show certain attitudes which we would hardly recognize as self-effacing, if it were not for our knowledge of the full-fledged self-effacing solution. They are frequently keenly sensitive to the needs of other people, and may actually spend a good deal of their lives in helping others or serving a cause. They often are defenseless toward impositions and attacks and would rather put the blame on themselves than

accuse others. They may be overanxious never to hurt others' feelings. They also tend to be compliant. This latter tendency, however, is not determined by a need for affection, as it is in the self-effacing type, but by the need to avoid friction. And there are undercurrents of fear, indicating that they are afraid of the potential force of self-effacing trends. They may for instance express an alarmed conviction that if it were not for their aloofness others would run all over them.

Similarly to what we have seen in regard to expansive trends, the self-effacing ones are more attitudes than active, powerful drives. The appeal of love, which gives these drives a passionate character, is lacking because the resigned type is determined not to want or expect anything of others and not to become emotionally involved with them.

We understand now the meaning of withdrawing from the inner conflict between the expansive and the self-effacing drives. When the active elements in both are eliminated they cease to be opposing forces; hence they no longer constitute a conflict. Comparing the three major attempts, a person hopes to reach integration by trying to *exclude* one of the conflicting forces; in the resigned solution he tries to *immobilize* both of them. And he can do so because he has given up an active pursuit of glory. He still must be his idealized self, which means that the pride system with its shoulds keeps operating, but he has given up the active drive for its actualization—i.e., to make it real in action.

A similar immobilizing tendency operates also with regard to his real self. He still wants to be himself but, with his checks on initiative, effort, alive wishes, and strivings, he also puts a check on his natural drive toward self-realization. Both in terms of his idealized and his real self he lays an emphasis on *being*, not on attaining or growing. But the fact that he still wants to be himself allows him to retain some spontaneity in his emotional life, and in this regard he may be less alienated from himself than any other neurotic type. He can have strong personal feelings for religion, art, nature—i.e., for something impersonal. And often, although he does not allow his feelings to involve him with other people, he can emotionally experience

others and their peculiar needs. This retained capacity comes into clear relief when we compare him with the self-effacing type. The latter likewise does not stifle positive feelings, but on the contrary cultivates them. But they become dramatized and falsified, because they are all put to the service of love—that is, surrender. He wants to lose himself with his feelings, and ultimately to find a unity in merging with others. The resigned person wants to keep his feelings strictly in the privacy of his own heart. The very idea of merging is obnoxious to him. He wants to be "himself," although he has but a vague notion of what that means and in fact, without realizing it, is confused about it.

It is this very process of immobilization that gives resignation its negative or static character. But here we must raise an important question. This impression of a static condition, characterized by negative qualities, is constantly reinforced by new observations. Yet does it do justice to the whole phenomenon? After all, nobody can live by negation alone. Is there not something missing in our understanding of the meaning of resignation? Is not the resigned person out for something positive too? Peace at any price? Certainly, but that still has a negative quality. In the other two solutions there is a motivating force in addition to the need for integration—a powerful appeal of something positive that gives meaning to life: the appeal of mastery in the one case, that of love in the other. Is there not perhaps an equivalent appeal of some more positive aim in the resigned solution?

When questions like these arise during analytic work it is usually helpful to listen attentively to what the patient himself has to say about it. There is usually something he has told us which we have not taken seriously enough. Let us do the same thing here, and examine more closely how our type looks at himself. We have seen that, like anybody else, he rationalizes and embellishes his needs so that they all appear as superior attitudes. But in this regard we have to make a distinction. Sometimes he obviously makes a virtue out of a need, such as presenting his lack of striving in terms of being above competition or accounting for his inertia by his scorn of the sweat of hard work. And as the analysis proceeds, these glorifications usually

drop out without much talk about them. But there are others which are not discarded as easily because they apparently have a real meaning for him. And these concern all that he says about independence and *freedom*. In fact most of the basic characteristics which we have regarded from the viewpoint of resignation also make sense when seen from the viewpoint of freedom. Any stronger attachment would curtail his freedom. So would needs. He would be dependent upon such needs and they would easily make him dependent upon others too. If he devoted his energies to one pursuit, he would not be free to do many other things in which he might be interested. Particularly, his sensitivity to coercion appears in a new light. He wants to be free and hence will not tolerate pressure.

Accordingly, when in analysis this subject comes up for discussion, the patient goes into a vigorous defense. Is it not natural for man to want freedom? Does not anybody become listless when he does things under pressure? Did not his aunt or his friend become colorless, or lifeless, because they always did what was expected of them? Does the analyst want to domesticate him, to force him into a pattern, so that he will be like one house in a row of settlement houses, each indistinguishable from the others? He hates regimentation. He never goes to the Zoo because he simply cannot stand seeing animals in a cage. He wants to do what he pleases when he pleases.

Let us look at some of his arguments, leaving others for later. We learn from them that freedom means to him doing what he likes. The analyst observes here an obvious flaw. Since the patient has done his best to freeze his wishes, he simply does not know what he wants. And as a result he often does nothing, or nothing that amounts to anything. This, however, does not disturb him because he seems to see freedom primarily in terms of no interference by others—whether people or institutions. Whatever makes this attitude so important, he means to defend it to the last ditch. Granted that his idea of freedom seems again to be a negative one—freedom *from* and not freedom *for*—it does have an appeal for him which (to this degree) is absent in the other solutions. The self-effacing person is rather afraid of freedom, because of his needs for attachment and dependence.

The expansive type, with his craving for mastery of this or that sort, tends to scorn this idea of freedom.

How can we account for this appeal of freedom? Which are the inner necessities from which it arises? What is its meaning? In order to arrive at some understanding we must go back to the early history of those people who later on solve their problems by resignation. There were often cramping influences against which the child could not rebel openly, either because they were too strong or too intangible. There may have been so tight a family atmosphere, so closed an emotional corporation that it did not leave room for his individual ways and threatened to crush him. On the other hand he may have received affection, but in a way that more repelled than warmed him. There may have been for instance a parent who was too ego-centric to have any understanding of the child's needs yet made great demands for the child to understand him or give him emotional support. Or he may have had a parent so erratic in his mood-swings that he gave effusive demonstrative affection at one time and at others could scold or beat him in a fit of temper without any reason that the child could understand. In short there was an environment which made explicit and implicit demands for him to fit in this way or that way and threatened to engulf him without sufficient regard for his individuality, not to speak of encouraging his personal growth.

So the child is torn for a longer or shorter time between futile attempts to get affection and interest and resenting the bonds put around him. He solves this early conflict by withdrawing from others. By putting an emotional distance between himself and others, he sets his conflict out of operation.⁴ He no longer wants others' affection nor does he want to fight them. Hence he is no longer torn by contradictory feelings toward them and manages to get along with them on a fairly even keel. Moreover, by withdrawing into a world of his own, he saves his individuality from being altogether cramped and engulfed. *His early detachment thus not only serves his integration, but has a most significant positive meaning: the keeping intact of his inner life.* The freedom from bondage gives him

⁴ Cf. Karen Horney, *Our Inner Conflicts*, Chapter 5, Moving away from People.

the possibility of inner independence. But he must do more than put a check on his feelings for or against others. He must also retract all those wishes and needs which would require others for their fulfillment: his natural needs for understanding, for sharing experiences, for affection, sympathy, protection. This, however, has far-reaching implications. It means that he must keep his joys, his pains, his sorrows, his fears to himself. He often makes, for instance, pathetic and desperate efforts to conquer his fears—of the dark, of dogs, etc.—without letting anybody know about them. He trains himself (automatically) not only not to show suffering but also not to feel it. He does not want sympathy or help, not only because he has reasons to suspect their genuineness but because even if they are temporarily given they have become alarm signals for threatening bondage. Over and beyond putting a lid on these needs, he feels it safer not to let anybody know that anything matters to him lest his wishes either be frustrated or used as a means to make him dependent. And so the general retraction of all wishes, so characteristic of the process of resignation, begins. He still knows that he would like a garment, a kitten, or some toy, but he does not say so. But gradually, just as with his fears, here too he comes to feel it safer not to have wishes at all. The fewer wishes he actually has, the safer he is in his retreat, the more difficult it will be for anybody to have a hold on him.

The resulting picture so far is not yet resignation, but it contains the germs from which it may develop. Even if the condition remained unchanged, it involves grave dangers for future growth. We cannot grow in a vacuum, without closeness to and friction with other human beings. But the condition can hardly remain static. Unless favorable circumstances change it for the better, the process grows by its own momentum, in vicious circles—as we have seen in other neurotic developments. We have already mentioned one of these circles. To maintain detachment, it is necessary for a person to put a check on wishes and strivings. The retraction of wishes, however, is double edged in its effect. It does make him more independent of others but it also weakens him. It saps his vitality and maims his sense of direction. He has less to set against the wishes and expectations of others. He must be doubly vigilant against any influence

or interference. To use a good expression of Harry Stack Sullivan's, he must "elaborate his distance machinery."

The main reinforcements of the early development come from the intrapsychic processes. The very needs which drive others on the search for glory operate here too. His early detachment removes his conflicts with others, if he can carry it through consistently. But the reliability of his solution depends upon the retraction of wishes, and at an early age this process is fluctuating; it has not yet matured into a determined attitude. He still wants more things from life than is good for his peace of mind. When sufficiently tempted, he may for instance be drawn into a close relationship. Hence his conflicts are easily mobilized and he needs more integration. But the early development leaves him not only divided but also alienated from himself, lacking in self-confidence and feeling unequipped for actual life. He can deal with others only when at a safe emotional distance; thrown into closer contact, he is inhibited in addition to being handicapped by his recoil from fighting. Hence he too is driven to find an answer to all these needs, in self-idealization. He may try to realize ambitions in actuality, but for many reasons in himself tends to give up the pursuit in the face of difficulties. His idealized image, chiefly, is a glorification of the needs which have developed. It is a composite of self-sufficiency, independence, self-contained serenity, freedom from desires and passions, stoicism, and fairness. Fairness for him is less a glorification of vindictiveness (as is the "justice" of the aggressive type) than an idealization of noncommitment and of not infringing upon anybody's rights.

The shoulds corresponding to such an image bring him into a new danger. While originally he had to protect his inner self against the outside world, he now must protect it against this much more formidable inner tyranny. The outcome depends on the degree of inner aliveness he has safeguarded so far. If it is strong and he is, as it were, unconsciously determined to preserve it come hell or high water, he can still maintain some of it, although only at the price of enforcing the restrictions we discussed at the beginning—only at the cost of resigning from active living, of checking his drives toward self-realization.

There is no clinical evidence pointing to the inner dictates being more stringent here than in other types of neurosis. The difference lies rather in his chafing more under them because of his very need for freedom. He tries to cope with them in part by externalizing them. Because of his taboos on aggression, he can do so only in a passive way—which means that the expectations of others, or what he feels as such, acquire the character of commands to be obeyed without question. Moreover he is convinced that people would coldly turn against him if he did not comply with their expectations. In essence this means that he has not only externalized his shoulds but also his self-hate. Others would turn as sharply against him as he would himself for not measuring up to his shoulds. And because this anticipation of hostility is an externalization it cannot be remedied by experiences to the contrary. A patient for instance may have had a long experience with the analyst's patience and understanding and yet, under duress, may feel that the analyst would drop him at a moment's notice in case of open opposition.

Hence his original sensitivity to outside pressure is greatly reinforced. We understand now why he keeps experiencing external coercion, even though the latter environment may exert very little pressure. In addition the externalization of his shoulds, while relieving inner tension, brings a new conflict into his life. He should comply with the expectations of others; he should not hurt their feelings; he must appease their anticipated hostility—but he also should maintain his independence. This conflict is reflected in his ambivalent way of responding to others. In many variations it is a curious mixture of compliance and defiance. He may for instance politely comply with a request but forget about it or procrastinate in doing it. The forgetting may reach such disturbing proportions that he can keep a fair order in his life only by the help of a notebook in which he jots down appointments or jobs to be done. Or he may go through the motions of complying with the wishes of others but sabotage them in spirit, without in the least being aware of doing so. In analysis for instance he may comply with the obvious rules, such as being on time or saying what is on his mind, but assimilate so little of what is discussed that the work is rendered futile.

It is unavoidable that these conflicts make for a strain in his associations with others. He may at times feel this strain consciously. But, whether or not he is aware of it, it does reinforce his tendency to withdraw from others.

The passive resistance which he sets against the expectations of others also operates in regard to those shoulds which are not externalized. The mere feeling that he *should* do something is often sufficient to make him listless. This unconscious sit-down strike would not be so important if it were restricted to activities which he at bottom dislikes, such as participating in social gatherings, writing certain letters, or paying his bills, as the ease may be. But the more radically he has eliminated personal wishes the more anything he does—good, bad, or indifferent—may register as something he *should* do: brushing his teeth, reading the newspaper, taking a walk, doing his work, eating his meals, or having sexual relations with a woman. Everything then meets with a silent resistance, resulting in a pervasive inertia. Activities therefore are restricted to a minimum or, more frequently, are performed under a strain. Hence he is unproductive, tires easily, or suffers from a chronic fatigue.

When in analysis this inner process becomes clear, two factors appear which tend to perpetuate it. As long as the patient has no recourse to his spontaneous energies he may fully realize that this way of living is wasteful and unsatisfactory but will see no possibility for change because—as he feels it—he would simply not do anything if it were not for his driving himself. The other factor resides in the important function his very inertia has assumed. His psychic paralysis may have turned in his mind into an unalterable affliction, and he uses it to stave off self-accusations and self-contempt.

The premium which is thus put on inactivity is also reinforced from another source. Just as his way of solving his conflicts was to immobilize them, so he also tries to set his shoulds out of operation. He does so by trying to avoid situations in which they would start harassing him. Here then is another reason that he avoids contacts with others as well as a serious pursuit of anything. He follows the unconscious motto that as long as he does not do anything he will not violate any shoulds and

taboos. Sometimes he rationalizes these avoidances by thinking that any pursuits of his would impinge on the rights of others.

In these many ways the intrapsychic processes keep reinforcing the original solution of detachment and gradually create the entanglements which constitute the picture of resignation. This condition would be inaccessible to therapy—because of the minimal incentive to change—if it were not for the positive elements in the appeal of freedom. Patients in whom these prevail often have a more immediate understanding of the harmful character of the inner dictates than do others. If conditions are favorable, they may quickly recognize them for the yoke they actually are and may take an unequivocal stand against them.⁵ Certainly such a conscious attitude does not in itself dispel them, but it is a considerable help in overcoming them gradually.

Looking back now at the total structure of resignation from the viewpoint of the preservation of integrity, certain observations fall in line and gain significance. To begin with, the integrity of truly detached people has always struck an alert observer. I for one have always been aware of it, but what I did not realize earlier was that it is an intrinsic and nuclear part of the structure. Detached, resigned people may be impractical, inert, inefficient, difficult to deal with because of their defiant wariness of influences and closer contact, but they possess—to a greater or lesser extent—an essential sincerity, an innocence in their innermost thoughts and feelings which are not to be bribed or corrupted by the lure of power, success, flattery, or "love."

Furthermore we recognize in the need to maintain inner integrity another determinant for the basic characteristics. We saw first that avoidances and restrictions were put to the service of integration. Then we saw them also being determined by a need for freedom, not yet knowing its meaning. Now we understand that they need freedom from involvement, influence, pressure, from the shackles of ambition and competition, for preserving their inner life unsoiled and untarnished.

We may feel puzzled that the patient does not talk about this

⁵ Cf. "Finding the Real Self," *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, vol. IX, 1949, A Letter, with a Foreword by Karen Horney.

crucial matter. Actually he has indicated in many indirect ways that he wants to remain "himself"; that he is afraid of "losing his individuality" through analysis; that analysis would make him like everybody else; that the analyst inadvertently might mold him according to his, the analyst's, pattern, etc. But the analyst often does not grasp the full implications of such utterances. The context in which they were made suggests the patient's wanting to remain either his actual neurotic self or his idealized grandiose self. And the patient meant indeed to defend his *status quo*. But his insistence on being himself also expresses an anxious concern about preserving the integrity of his real self, although he is not yet able to define it. Only through analytic work can he learn the old truth that he must lose himself (his neurotic glorified self) in order to find himself (his true self).

From this basic process three most different forms of living result. In a first group *persistent resignation*, resignation and all it entails, is carried through fairly consistently. In a second, the appeal of freedom turns the passive resistance into a more active rebellion: the *rebellious group*. In a third, deteriorating processes prevail and lead to *shallow living*.

Individual differences in the first group are related to the prevalence of expansive or self-effacing trends and to the degree of retiring from activities. In spite of a cultivated emotional distance from others, some are capable of doing things for their families, their friends, or for those with whom they come in contact through their work. And, perhaps because of being disinterested, they often are effective in the help they give. In contrast to both the expansive and the self-effacing types, they do not expect much in return. In contrast to the latter, it rather exasperates them if others mistake their willingness to help for personal affection, and want more of it in addition to the help given.

In spite of a restriction of activities, many such people are capable of doing their daily work. It is, though, usually felt as a strain because it is done against the inner odds of inertia. The inertia becomes more noticeable as soon as the work accumulates, requires initiative, or involves fighting for or against

something. The motivations for doing routine work usually are mixed. Besides economic necessity and the traditional shoulds, there also is often a need to be useful to others despite being themselves resigned. Besides, daily work may also be a means of getting away from the feeling of futility they possess when left to their own resources. They often do not know what to do with their leisure time. Contacts with others are too much of a strain to be enjoyable. They like being by themselves, but they are unproductive. Even reading a book may meet with inner resistance. So they dream, think, listen to music, or enjoy nature if it is available without effort. They are mostly unaware of the lurking fear of futility but may automatically arrange their work in a way that leaves little free time by themselves.

Finally, the inertia and the accompanying aversion to regular work may prevail. If they have no financial means they may take occasional jobs or else sink down to a parasitic existence. Or, if moderate means are available, they rather restrict their needs to the utmost in order to feel free to do as they please. The things they do, however, often have the character of hobbies. Or they may succumb to a more or less complete inertia. This outcome is presented in a masterly fashion in Goncharov's unforgettable *Oblomov*, who resents even having to put on his shoes. His friend invites him on a trip to some other countries and makes all the preparations for him, down to the last detail. *Oblomov* sees himself in his imagination in Paris and in the Swiss mountains, and we are kept in suspense: will he or won't he go? Of course he backs down. The prospect of what seems to him a turbulent moving around and ever-new impressions is too much.

Even if not carried to such extremes, a pervasive inertia bears within it the danger of deterioration, as is shown in *Oblomov's* and his servant's later fate. (Here then would be a transition to the shallow living of the third group.) It is also dangerous because it may extend beyond a resistance against doing to one against thinking and feeling as well. Both thinking and feeling may then become purely reactive. Some train of thought may be set in motion by a conversation or by the analyst's comments, but since no energies are mobilized by it, it peters out. Some feeling, positive or negative, may be stimulated by a visit or a

letter, but it likewise fades out soon after. A letter may evoke an impulse to answer it, but if not acted upon right away it may be forgotten. The inertia in thinking can be well observed in analysis and often is a great hindrance to work. Simple mental operations become difficult. Whatever is discussed during one hour may then be forgotten—not because of any specific "resistance" but because the patient lets the content lie in his brain like a foreign body. Sometimes he feels helpless and confused in analysis, as well as in reading or discussing somewhat difficult matters, because the strain of connecting data is too great. One patient expressed this aimless confusion in a dream, in which he found himself in various places all over the world. He had no intention of going to any of them; he did not know how he got there, or how he would go on from there.

The more the inertia spreads, the more the person's feelings are affected by it. He needs stronger stimuli to respond at all. A group of beautiful trees in a park no longer arouses any feelings; he requires a riotous sunset. Such an inertia of feelings entails a tragic element. As we have seen, the resigned type largely restricts his expansiveness in order to maintain intact the genuineness of his feelings. But if carried to extremes the process chokes off the very aliveness it was meant to preserve. Hence when his emotional life becomes paralyzed he suffers under the resulting deadness of his feelings more than other patients, and this may be the one thing which he does want to change. As the analysis proceeds he may at times have the experience of his feelings being more alive as soon as he is generally more active. Even so he hates to realize that his emotional deadness is but one expression of his pervasive inertia, and hence that it can change only as the latter is lessened.

If some activity is maintained and living conditions are fairly appropriate, this picture of persistent resignation may remain stationary. Many attributes of the resigned type combine to make it so: his check on strivings and expectations, his aversion to change and inner struggle, his capacity to put up with things. Against all of this, however, militates one disquieting element—the appeal freedom has for him. Actually the resigned person is a subdued rebel. So far in our study we have seen this quality

expressed in a passive resistance against internal and external pressure. But it might turn at any time into an *active rebelliousness*. Whether it actually does, depends on the relative strength of expansive and self-effacing trends and on the degree of inner aliveness a person has managed to salvage. The stronger his expansive tendencies and the more alive he is, the more easily will he become discontented with the restrictions of his life. The discontentment with the external situation may prevail; then it is primarily a "rebellion *against*." Or, if his discontent with himself prevails, it is primarily a "rebellion *for*."

The environmental situation—home, work—may become so unsatisfactory that the person finally stops putting up with it any longer and in some form or other rebels openly. He may leave his home or his job and become militantly aggressive toward everybody with whom he associates as well as toward conventions and institutions. His attitude is one of "I don't give a damn what you expect of me or think of me." This may be expressed in more or less urbane ways—or in more or less offensive forms. It is a development of great interest from the social point of view. If such a rebellion is directed mainly outward, it is in itself not a constructive step and may drive a person further away from himself, although it releases his energies.

However, the rebellion may be more an inward process and be directed primarily against the inner tyranny. Then, within limits, it can have a liberating effect. In this latter case it is more often a gradual development than a turbulent rebellion, more of an evolution than a revolution. A person then suffers increasingly under his shackles. He realizes how hemmed in he is, how little to his liking his way of living is, how much he does merely to conform with rules, how little he actually cares for the people around him, for their standards of living or their moral standards. He becomes more and more bent on "being himself" which, as we said before, is a curious mixture of protest, conceit, and genuine elements. Energies are liberated and he can become productive in whatever way he is gifted. In his *The Moon and Sixpence* Somerset Maugham has described such a process in the character of the painter Strickland. And it seems that Gauguin, after whom Strickland is roughly patterned, as well as other artists went through such an evolution.

Naturally the value of what is created depends on existing gifts and skills. Needless to say, this is not the only way to become productive. It is *one* way in which creative faculties, stifled before, can become free for expression.

The liberation in these instances nevertheless is a limited one. People who have achieved it still bear many earmarks of resignation. They still must carefully guard their detachment. Their whole attitude toward the world is still defensive or militant. They still are largely indifferent toward their personal lives, except in matters pertaining to their productivity, which hence may have a hectic character. All of this points to their not having solved their conflicts but to having found a workable compromise solution.

This process can also occur under analysis. And since it brings about, after all, a tangible liberation, some analysts⁶ regard it as a most desirable outcome. We must not forget, however, that it is a partial solution only. By working through the whole structure of resignation, not only may creative energies be freed but the person as a whole may find a better relation to himself and to others.

Theoretically the outcome of active rebellion demonstrates the crucial significance which the appeal of freedom has within the structure of resignation, and its connection with the preservation of an autonomous inner life. Conversely we shall see now that the more a person becomes alienated from himself—and in the degree to which he does—the more meaningless freedom becomes. Withdrawing from his inner conflicts, from active living, from an active interest in his own growth, the individual incurs the danger of moving away also from the depths of his feelings. The feeling of futility, already a problem in persistent resignation, then produces a dread of emptiness that calls for unceasing distractions. The check on strivings and goal-directed activity leads to a loss of direction, with a resultant drifting or floating with the stream. The insistence upon life being easy, without pain and friction, can become a corrupting

⁶ Cf. Daniel Schneider, "The Motion of the Neurotic Pattern; Its Distortion of Creative Mastery and Sexual Power," paper read before the New York Academy of Medicine, 1943.

factor, particularly when he succumbs to the temptation of money, success, and prestige. Persistent resignation means a restricted life, but it is not hopeless; people still have something to live by. But when they lose sight of the depth and autonomy of their own lives, the negative attributes of resignation remain while the positive values fade out. Only then does it become hopeless. They move to the periphery of life. This characterizes that last group, that of *shallow living*.

A person thus moving away from himself in a centrifugal way loses the depth and intensity of his feelings. In his attitude toward people he becomes indiscriminate. Anyone can be a "very good friend," "such a nice fellow," or "such a beautiful girl." But out of sight, out of mind. He may lose interest in them at the slightest provocation without even going to the trouble of examining what is happening. Detachment deteriorates into unrelatedness.

Similarly his enjoyments become shallow. Sexual affairs, eating, drinking, gossip about people, plays, or politics form a large content of his life. He loses the sense for essentials. Interests become superficial. He no longer forms his own judgment or convictions; instead he takes over current opinions. He generally is overawed by what "people" think. With all that, he loses faith in himself, in others, in any values. He becomes cynical.

We can distinguish three forms of shallow living, each differing from the others merely in the emphasis upon certain aspects. In one, the emphasis is on *fun*, on having a good time. This may superficially look like a zest for living, in contrast to a basic characteristic of resignation—a not-wanting. But the motive force here is not a reaching out for enjoyment but the necessity to push down a gnawing feeling of futility by means of distracting pleasures. The following poem, entitled "Palm Springs," which I found in Harper's Magazine⁷ characterizes such fun-seeking in the leisure class:

Oh, give me a home
Where the millionaires roam

From the article "Palm Springs: Wind, Sand and Stars," by Cleveland Amory.

And the dear little glamour girls play.
Where never is heard
An intelligent word
And we round up the dollars all day.

It is, however, by no means restricted to the leisure class but goes far down the social scale to people with small incomes. It is after all merely a question of money whether "fun" is found in expensive night clubs and cocktail and theater parties or in getting together in homes for drinking, playing cards, and chatting. It may also be more localized through collecting stamps, becoming a gourmet, or going to the movies, all of which would be all right if they were not the only real content of life. It is not necessarily socialized, but may consist of reading mystery stories, listening to the radio, looking at television, or day-dreaming. If fun is socialized, two things are strictly avoided: being alone for any length of time and having serious talk. The latter is regarded as rather bad manners. The cynicism is thinly covered up by "tolerance" or "broad-mindedness."

In the second group the emphasis is on *prestige* or *opportunistic success*. The check on strivings and efforts which is characteristic for resignation is here undiminished. The motivations are mixed. It is in part the wish for a life made easier by the possession of money. In part it is a need to give an artificial lift to self-esteem, which in this whole group of shallow living sinks to zero. This however, with the loss of inner autonomy, can be done only by lifting oneself up in the eyes of others. One writes a book because it might be a best seller; one marries for money; one joins a political party which is likely to offer advantages. In social life there is less emphasis on fun and more on the prestige of belonging to certain circles or going to certain places. The only moral code is to be smart, to get by and to not be caught. George Eliot has given us in *Romola* an excellent picture of such an opportunistic person in the figure of Tito. We see in him the evasion of conflicts, the insistence on an easy life, the noncommitment, and the gradual moral deterioration. The latter is not accidental but is bound to happen with the moral fiber becoming weaker and weaker.

The third form is the "*well-adapted*" *automaton*. Here the loss of authentic thinking and feeling leads to a general flatten-

ing out of the personality, ably described by Marquand in many of his characters. Such a person then fits in with the others and takes over their codes and conventions. He feels, thinks, does, believes in what is expected or considered right in his environment. The emotional deadness here is not greater, but more obvious, than in the other two groups.

Erich Fromm^{*} has well described this overadaptation and has seen its social significance. If we include, as we must, the other two forms of shallow living, this significance is all the greater because of the frequency of such ways of living. Fromm saw correctly that the picture is different from the common run of neuroses. Here are people not obviously driven as the neurotic usually is, not obviously disturbed by conflicts. Also they often have no particular "symptoms" like anxiety and depression. The impression is in short that they do not suffer from disturbances but that they lack something. Fromm's conclusion is that these are conditions of defect rather than neuroses. He does not regard the defect as innate but as a result of being crushed by authority early in life. His speaking of defect and my speaking of shallow living may seem like mere difference in terminology. But, as so often, the difference in terminology results from significant differences as to the meaning of the phenomenon. Actually Fromm's contention raises two interesting questions: is shallow living a condition which has nothing to do with neurosis or is it the outcome of a neurotic process as I have presented it here? And: do people indulging in shallow living actually lack depth, moral fiber, and autonomy?

The questions are interrelated. Let us see what analytic observation has to say about them. Observations are available because people belonging to this group may come to be analyzed. If the process of shallow living is fully developed there is of course no incentive for therapy. But, when not far advanced, they may want it because they are disturbed either by psychosomatic disorders or by repeated failures, inhibitions in work, and an increasing feeling of futility. They may sense that they are going downhill and be disquieted about it. Our first impres-

^{*} Erich Fromm, "The Individual and Social Origin of Neurosis," *American Sociological Review*, 1944.

sion in analysis is that already described from the point of view of general curiosity. They stay on the surface, seem to lack psychological curiosity, are ready with glib explanations, are interested only in external matters connected with money or prestige. All that makes us think that there is more than meets the eye in their history. As described before in terms of the general movement toward resignation, there were periods earlier, in or after adolescence, in which they had active strivings and went through some emotional distress. This would not only put the onset of the conditions later than Fromm assumes but point to its being an outcome of a neurosis which at some time was manifest.

As the analysis proceeds, a baffling discrepancy appears between their waking lives and their dreams. Their dreams unequivocally show emotional depth and turbulence. These dreams, and often they only, reveal a deeply buried sadness, self-hate and hate for others, self-pity, despair, anxiety. In other words there *is* a world of conflicts and passionate feelings under the smooth surface. We try to awaken their interest in their dreams, but they tend to discard them. They seem to live in two worlds, entirely disconnected. More and more we realize that here is not a given superficiality but that they are anxious to stay away from their own depth. They get a fleeting glimpse of it and close up tightly as if nothing had happened. A little later feelings may suddenly emerge in their waking life from the abandoned depth: some memory may make them cry, some nostalgia or some religious feeling may appear—and vanish. These observations, confirmed by the later analytic work, contradict the concept of a defect and point to a determined flight from their inner personal life.

Considering shallow living as an unfortunate outcome of a neurotic process gives us a less pessimistic outlook, both for prophylaxis and therapy. The frequency of shallow living at the present time makes it highly desirable to recognize it as a disturbance and to prevent its development. Its prophylaxis coincides with preventive measures concerning neuroses in general. Much work is being done in this regard but much more is necessary and apparently can be done, particularly in schools.

For any therapeutic work with resigned patients the first req-

uisite is to recognize the condition as a neurotic disturbance and not to discard it as either a constitutional or a cultural peculiarity. The latter concepts imply that it is unalterable or that it does not belong in the range of problems to be tackled by a psychiatrist. As yet it is less well known than other neurotic problems. It has probably aroused less interest for two reasons. Many disturbances occurring in this process, although they may cramp a person's life, are rather inconspicuous and therefore call less urgently for therapy. On the other hand, gross disturbances that may arise from this background have not been connected with the basic process. The only factor in it with which psychiatrists are thoroughly familiar is the detachment. But resignation is a much more encompassing process, presenting specific problems and specific difficulties in therapy. These can be tackled successfully only with a full knowledge of its dynamics and its meaning.