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 Why Culture? A Psychoanalytic Speculation

I was recently asked to contribute to a book of collected essays on psychoanalysis and violence – a topic that Sigmund Freud rarely addressed. I began as I always do, by looking back at what I knew of Freud’s work, and noted that the one text in which he addressed the question at some length was his response to Albert Einstein’s earnest request for him to devise some way to control man’s violent tendencies. Specifically, Einstein had asked, with a view to preventing future wars, »Is it possible to control man’s mental evolution so as to make him proof against the psychoses of hate and destructiveness?«¹ Freud’s answer was quite startling. After a lengthy discussion of the violent origins of human society, and the subsequent moderation of this violence by a society of laws (whose ideals of law and justice are metamorphoses, not total displacements, of society’s founding violence), Freud moved the question entirely away from the level of individual psychology to that of the *human social order* and its *cultural transformation*. For Freud, the only potential path forward lay in the »cultural transformations of the members of the community«.² He looked not to the reshaping of each individual’s mentality, à la Einstein, but to the gradual redefinition of civilization’s »ethical and aesthetic standards« to the point where violence and war would be »organically« reviled.³ In short, it was *cultural revolution* that Freud called for; and he made it clear that its transformations would have to apply to all members of the community, not just an enlightened few.

What happened to my essay next illustrates the ongoing perplexity addressed by the current volume on the relation of cultural to psychoanalytic studies. I had begun discussing the new alt-right’s theoretical embrace of violence, which did not remain theoretical once a fanatic adherent of white supremacy purposely ran down a young woman who was protesting the alt-right marchers in Charlottesville, killing her instantly. I then used the fact that there was a massive outpouring across the United States of expressions

Kyung-hwa Choi-ahoi ➤ BIPOLAR: Der Begriff des Bipolaren entstammt

of abhorrence for the alt-right in general and for its member's actions, to illustrate Freud's point about the need for the organic condemnation of and revulsion against violence by the whole culture.

That essay was accepted for publication with no major editorial interventions and went to print very quickly. However, when I read what the editors wrote about my contribution in the introduction to the volume, I was stunned. They claimed I had concluded that *curing violence could only be done on an individual basis, through psychoanalyzing individuals, one at a time*.

Such a misreading is understandable on the part of those who practice psychoanalysis and clinical psychology: one of the field's major tenets being that analysis can only be done on a case-by-case basis. Indeed, on one occasion when I was the Invited Professor at the Nordic Summer University (held in Finland that year), I presented several plenary papers on cultural phenomena including the fad for sadism and perversion then in vogue in literature and film.⁴ My listeners – a mix of academics and practitioners – were highly receptive, with some of the analysts and psychotherapists even thanking me for clarifying why their patients were acting in puzzling ways that made them resistant to treatment. But at that point, a Parisian psychoanalyst felt compelled to rise up from the audience and proclaim in stentorian tones: »What you have done is wonderful work in clearing the ground for psychoanalysis. But it is *not* psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis can only be done one by one by one.«

Culture and the Drives

Though not a practicing analyst, I have devoted myself to long and close study of all of Freud's writings, and a great deal of Jacques Lacan's, having accessed the latter's work earlier than many Americans because of my ability to read French. Both are therefore always with me as I attempt to evaluate contemporary phenomena that, for me, contrast with or carry on the spirit of the great literary, artistic and philosophical works of our past. I am par-

ursprünglich der politischen Sphäre. Mit ihm wird in diesem Zusammen-

ticularly concerned by those »new« things that purport to be »revolutionary« cultural happenings, but that nonetheless seem to strike at the very heart of what culture is and wonder if they are ultimately impeding the evolution of human culture. Freud's and Lacan's insights remain special guides here.

Both Freud and Lacan concluded the individual psyche was shaped by language, speech, and the signifier. Culture – a creature of language – challenges those of us who deal with its relation to psychoanalysis to figure out how it, too, subjects the individual psyche to the social order, while at the same time offering both material and phantasmatic means of resistance to it. Culture seems always to be torn by opposed impulses: to keep engaging creatively on behalf of the whole society's progress, versus permitting a few to take control of cultural innovation, with the ulterior motive of maintaining the status quo in power relations, and/or of hoarding the benefits culture produces for the profit of a small group. What is most interesting to me about this second option, this counterforce to cultural advancement, is that it usually takes the form of an implicit assertion that our culture is so developed that it can readily »satisfy all drives«, i. e., meet all our desires and fulfill them.⁵ Consider, for example, postmodernism's claim that nothing new need ever be introduced to satisfy us. Of course, without the essential element of creativity and innovation, culture itself stagnates; the death drive prevails. How, then, did it become the hallmark of our postmodern era that we (as Lacan put it) may now simply relax, bathing in an aura of complete satisfaction, as though all our drives can be accommodated culturally without effort on our part, either as individuals or as whole societies?⁶

Psychoanalytically, what requires clarification is the mechanism by which culture impacts the formation of the subject. Lacan lucidly formulated how the psychological impact of speech works as the deepest source of the *drives*, and therefore of the exertion of mental effort and creativity to resist those drives.⁷ Indeed, Lacan referred to *drive* as the echo of speech in the body⁸, the residue of the signifier, the repressed silent side of which provides drive's fuel. And, as Freud made us aware, the presence of drive – the unconscious demand for full and complete satisfaction – is the cause of our mental life

hang die nationale Spannung zwischen > SÜDPOLEN und > NORDPOLEN

and the spur to our creative efforts.⁹ I think it is imperative to look at contemporary culture through the Lacanian/Freudian lens; to consider where it exhibits aspects of any or all of Freud's unconscious drives; and to assess whether it resists or fails to resist their power.

Culture: Genuine and Spurious

Freud understood how overt linguistic expression masks repressed wishes that cannot be spoken.¹⁰ He linked such repression to the principal unconscious drives that impel the psyche: the ego or self-preservative drive, which eschews relations with others; the erotic drive, to preserve and unite with others; and the death drive, which ultimately blunts the other two. In »Instincts and their Vicissitudes«,¹¹ Freud hypothesized that the »conflict between the claims of sexuality and those of the ego« are at the root of all psychoneurotic disorders.¹² What distinguishes Freud's »sex drives« from »ego drives« is that the former must link to someone or something *other* to seek out their satisfaction.¹³ The sex drive not only makes one a link in a longer reproductive chain, tied to forebears and progeny; it also means that one needs to be connected to another, a partner. I propose that something similar to this »linkage« is at the very foundation of culture.¹⁴

To me, thinking this through right now is of capital importance: for *it seems that we have now largely set aside the sex or erotic, unifying drive in favor of the ego drives* – both culturally and in our psychoanalytic practice.¹⁵ Consider the many apocalyptic alarms raised these days by the discourse of techno-capitalism, its takeover of creativity (and, I would claim, the drives), and the resignation most thinkers feel before it. Current faddish claims that we are in a post-human society that will be given over to Artificial Intelligence stem largely from the fact that we now relate to our cultural heritage and our society at the level of the image, not the level of the symbol, which would require coming to a pact or agreement as to its meaning.¹⁶ We need to focus on those widespread cultural phenomena that purport to be revolutionary, new-and-improved contributions to culture, but which instead

(weniger: die zwischen West- und Ost-Polen) beschrieben. Im Volksmund

are pseudo-objects eliciting libidinal investments in *them* rather than in our fellow human beings.

Consider this example of a woman reporter who writes a column about what young people are doing with technology today. She details her own tech habits in a *New York Times* article titled »What Are Young People Doing? Don't Ask«. ¹⁷ She says that she subscribes to various platforms to gain access to the »memes«, the »user behaviors«, »the celebrities«, and the »influencers« of today's cultural trends: »I spend a lot of time on Twitter pretty consistently throughout the day to keep up with breaking news and what people are talking about«. Crucially, they are not talking *with* her. She is a visual spectator of their »talking«, not a participant; and in reality, they too are largely »talking« *about*, and not *with* anyone in particular. On Instagram, she went on, »I create tons of boards of different things I come across on the Explore tab [...] I have several Instagram accounts just for lurking«. It need hardly be said that »lurking« is generally frowned upon in everyday social life. »On YouTube I watch a lot of YouTuber vlogs, recap shows [...] to keep up with the stuff people are talking about«. In other words, it has become possible to inhabit a seemingly endless thicket of ultra-brief summaries and reviews of actual cultural productions, which themselves get short shrift. »I'm in a lot of Telegram groups and Discord servers for different meme pages and influencers«. »I also spend time in Facebook groups about celebrity news and pop culture«.

Finally, the reporter answers her interviewer's question »What tech are you most obsessed with?« by saying that her own apartment is »largely devoid of tech«, and that she prefers to spend her time »outdoors« or watching horror movies on Shudder, which is »like a horror-only Netflix«, i. e., a subscription service that packages horror movies from which she can make her film selections.

What unifies the reporter's account of her work is how technological innovations afford people virtual spaces in which they can talk without ever being in the presence of anyone else. She listens in to – or, really, *watches* – what they are talking about, seemingly without ever needing or wanting to

hat das Konzept der Bipolarität in der > IRONISCH gemeinten Aussage ihren

ask the basic Lacanian question, »Who is speaking and to whom?« The »talk« she follows is probably the emptiest speech that we have ever experienced culturally, and has virtually nothing in common with what Ferdinand de Saussure and Jean-Jacques Rousseau understood speech to be: the principal means of *responding* to whatever happens around us, of sharing that response *with* others, and responding *to* those others.¹⁸ One might argue that these young people are, indeed, »responding« to people and events around them. But, even if she failed to recognize this herself, the reporter's narrative made it apparent that the mass, immersive use of these platforms manufactures »what is happening«, rather than the other way around: It is only the fact of their appearance as images on these platforms that lends these non-events any air of reality or substantiality and significance. I would therefore claim that this new cultural moment is not really cultural at all, if we take culture to mean original sharing among people in response to new or urgent needs (as the need to reform our civil rights laws in the USA in the 1960s in order to equalize the terrible disparities suffered here by the children and grandchildren of slaves, for example. Or the need now to deal with the rapidly changing climate). My work proceeds from the insight that, from the beginning of our life-in-common, culture has been a shared practice of defense: the safeguarding of a group's survival in the face of both the awesome powers of Nature *and* equally overwhelming human powers that, even now, hark back to the forces that first forged human society – and that continue to exert pressure on group life in both overt and subtle ways.

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Why does culture even exist at all? What is its function and purpose?¹⁹

Culture appeared in the wake of our first social formations, our earliest dispositions as human societies. In Freud's imaginative reconstruction, the feat of turning an animal herd into a »horde« of human beings was accomplished by a singularly powerful Leader who, by virtue of superior strength and insight, was able to impose his will on those of lesser capability.²⁰ He

Niederschlag gefunden, dass alles ein Ende habe, die Wurst aber zwei. (PS)

forged a primal grouping that refashioned individuals as *social* creatures, galvanizing their transition onto a new plane of collective existence. The Leader was the principal beneficiary of this first organization, as all were required to obey and execute his commands. And the main conscious aim of these commands was to cause the horde's members to *work* together to achieve the conquest of Nature, thus creating a surplus of food, goods, and ultimately, wealth.

Such a crude hierarchal arrangement did not last, of course – or so we have long imagined this to be the case. Societies ultimately evolved away from this primitive structure (which Lacan later termed »the Discourse of the Master«), albeit without ever leaving it completely behind: but why? Freud noted in *Why War?*²¹ that at some point, those under the Master's thumb realized that as a group they were more powerful than he – and that if they united they might be able to overthrow him. Freud further claimed that this occurred only after the weaker, subjugated people recognized the possibility of concerted action. Yet, Freud never addressed how it was that these exploited ones were able to make such a pact with one another.

»There was a path that led from violence to right or law. What was that path? It is my belief that there was only one: the path which led by way of the fact that the superior strength of a single individual could be rivaled by the union of several weak ones. *L'union fait la force.*«²²

Freud elides the moment when the united group came to this conclusion about their collective strength: how could it have come about without the intervention of language? How could it have been anything other than the birth of language, and thus of culture, that allowed these early people to come to a consensus? Without an exchange of ideas about overturning the existing order, that order – based as it was solely on strength and menace – need never have changed. The new pact could only have emerged out of conversation among the subjects of its power, whether via words or gestures,

➤ BORDERLINE: Vorsicht, Absturzgefahr! (OK) ➤ COMPLIANCE: Archaische

that permitted these subjects who had long labored for the profit of the Master to transform themselves into a new counter-force.

Culture as such must therefore be understood as a *response* to whatever may jeopardize life-in-common:²³ whether natural catastrophes, or arbitrary commands imposed by unchecked coercive rulers.²⁴ Culture in this view is one of the main ways of mediating, modulating, enforcing, or resisting (and perhaps overturning) regimes of coercive power; it constitutes a group's protection of its cultural achievements against infringements, despite such achievements' constantly evolving and meeting new challenges. Whenever ruling powers have sought to block ways of escape from their grasp by impeding new strategies for living, culture has responded – and usually, resisted. As such, culture has for the most part effectively evaded those imperatives that would stifle its development (in order to maintain the status quo in power relations). Discontent *in der Kultur* should not obscure its crucial function of constructing means of dealing with societal commands: complying, resisting, or inventing new responses that speak to and for the whole group.

Culture and the Social Order

The new order that resulted from the Leader's overthrow was bound to be riven by contradictions. On the one hand, regret for the clarity of the prior order creates a certain longing for the security of the past;²⁵ and on the other, the realization that the overthrow of a prevailing order might someday recur leads to both hopefulness and, at the same time, to conservative wariness. What happened after, in this retroactive imagination, the first humans liberated themselves from the Leader's absolute command, from the Master's Discourse, is instructive. Their first engagement had to have been around the task of communally organizing to sustain life in common. That is, having acquired their freedom from excessive constraints, they had to work out collective practices for survival. More importantly, however, those committed to belonging to the group soon found that they also had to work out that

Naturgewalt lässt sich verstehen, wenn man ihre Gesetz-Mäßigkeit erkennt.

freedom from excessive constraints meant *unfreeing* themselves – giving part of themselves over to the *new constraints* of social life – and assenting to be governed by the group's rules. Even though every individual might be »discontent« in culture à la Freud, and unconsciously wish to do without other people, this inward revolt cannot preponderate over the group's need to persist.²⁶

Today, we tend to take culture as a given (it is a given but in a very fragile status), defining it principally as a repository of historic, collective solutions to perplexities, dilemmas and stumbling blocks to life-in-common that have been preserved reflexively, through re-enactments or rituals, and as traditions and customs characteristic of that life.²⁷ But how did these traditions and customs begin, and why? *Innovation* has to have stood at the head of everything now deemed »traditional«; there had to have been an initial break with what was already known or considered useful; there had to have been a sharing among peoples before there could even be any such thing as the current dictionary definition of culture as »features of everyday existence«. ²⁸ Thus, the dialectic of culture is that what was once revolutionary, innovative and new becomes customary and traditional – and opens the way for revolution and innovation to go on disrupting the status quo.

All this confirms culture's status as the mirror or analogue of language, of the system of symbolic exchanges that was, as Saussure noted, coeval with the birth of society. There is no society without language, and no language without society. Language is often viewed as a storehouse of established signifiers, a treasury of accumulated words and meanings; but we must realize that for it to remain a *living* language, it must constantly add new signifiers – be renewed and redefined by the introduction of a »next« signifier that retroactively grants meaning, and then fresh meaning, to what went before. Without this »next« signifier, as Lacan noted, it becomes a dead language. For me, this is the model for how culture functions as well:²⁹ A non-developing culture would be like a dead culture (and thereby, in the view presented here, not a culture in a narrow sense at all). Both Freud and Lacan found that language, speech, and the signifier shape the individual

Legislative Gewalt macht verständliche Gesetze, die sich befolgen lassen.

psyche. As I mentioned above, culture – a creature of language – therefore challenges those of us who deal with culture and psychoanalysis to figure out if and how culture, too, subjects the individual psyche to the social order while offering both material and phantasmatic means of resistance to it. Alongside the ever-recurring permutations of the social order, often including radical changes to it, our »civilization« or »culture« has of course also changed and evolved. Indeed, its changes may ultimately prove the key factor in inducing changes not only in the social order, but in our individual psychologies.

Freud's essay *Why War?* is often overlooked or underrated. And yet, if we read it closely enough, we can see that Freud rejected Einstein's heartfelt plea not because human violence is inherent in our makeup and thus incurable, but because violence is never exclusively an individual-level phenomenon. This late essay, along with *Civilization and its Discontents*, »Civilized« *Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness*, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, and *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death*,³⁰ has been among the most important inspirations for my own work linking culture to psychoanalysis.

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- 1) Sigmund Freud (1933b [1932]): »Why War?«, in: *Standard Edition*, Vol. XXII. London 1964, pp. 203–215, here: p. 201
- 2) *Ibid.*, p. 206
- 3) »We are pacifists because we are obliged to be so for organic reasons« (Freud 1933b [as note 1], p. 206) and »[...] we pacifists have a constitutional intolerance of war« (*ibid.* p. 214)
- 4) »Perversion in Public Places« was the title of my talk, which was first published as an essay (in: *New Formations*, 35 1998, pp. 67–79) and then became a chapter in my book *The Hysteric's Guide to the Future Female Subject*. Minneapolis 2000, pp. 37–56

Anarchistische Bewegungen setzen sich über unverständliche Gesetze

- 5) In his *Seminar XVII*, Lacan called this »jouir en toc«, fake enjoyment or pseudo-fulfillments. I wrote about »jouissance en toc« in my essay »More Thoughts for the Time on War and Death: The Discourse of Capitalism in Seminar XVII«, in Justin Clemens, Russell Grigg (ed.): *Jacques Lacan and the Other Side of Psychoanalysis: Reflections on Seminar XVII*. Durham/ London 2006, pp. 194–215. My argument there was that Lacan's »Discourse of the University« is essentially the discourse of capitalism.
- 6) This is entirely consonant with the direction I have been detailing in the discourse of capitalism: its claim that there is no unconscious, no drive that it cannot satisfy – and above all, that »society doesn't exist«, as Margaret Thatcher famously claimed.
- 7) Freud says that drive is a »demand made on the mind for work«. Sigmund Freud (1905d): *Three Essays on Sexuality*. In *Standard Edition*, Vol. VII, pp. 135–243, here: p. 168
- 8) »Drive is the echo in the body of the fact that there is speech«: Jacques Lacan: *Le Séminaire XXIII: Le Sinthome*, trans. Luke Thurston (PDF 2010, p. 4). But Freud said before Lacan in his »Three Essays on Sexuality« that when drive reaches the mind, it is »as a measure of the demand made upon the mind for work in consequence of its connection to the body« (Freud 1905d [as note 7], p.168); reiterated in Sigmund Freud (1915c): »Instincts and Their Vicissitudes«, in: *Standard Edition*, Vol. XIV, pp. 109–140, here: pp. 212–222
- 9) Sigmund Freud (1911b): »The Two Principles of Mental Functioning«, in: *Standard Edition*, Vol. XII, pp. 218–226, here: pp. 218–226
- 10) The signifier is the repression that produces the unconscious because of the body's response to speech. Every positive speech act implies carving: an opening-up that models the original physical exit and entry points of pleasure. The orifices of the natural body are simulated by the after-effect of the signifier, as fake openings to be »filled in« with fantasies of enjoying the unspeakable Real Thing that the signifier had tried to reduce to »no-thing«, to a mere symbol. When the signifier banishes that thing, it unwittingly births another, ghostly Thing, a phantom animated by the excess of the energy expended by the signifier. The cuts made by the signifier supercharge the libidinal passion for the »thing« lost to the signifier, and which returns to the body in fantasy form.
- 11) Freud 1915c (as note 8). I here translate *instinct* as *drive* just as the French translate it as *pulsion*, which is a more dynamic term than the static-seeming *instinct*.
- 12) Freud 1915c (as note 8), p. 124. Freud proposed that »two groups of [...] primal drives should be distinguished: the ego or self-preservative drives and the sexual drives« (ibid., p. 124). Likewise, in »Why War«? he wrote that »human instincts are of only two kinds: those which seek to preserve and unite – which we call »erotic«, exactly in the sense in which Plato used the word »Eros« in his *Symposium*, or »sexual«, with a deliberate extension of the popular conception of »sexuality« – and those which seek to destroy and kill and which we group together as the aggressive or destructive instinct.« (Freud 1933b, as note 1, p. 209)
- Jacques Lacan incorporated Freud's two drives into his view of the ego as the site of aggressivity and added that all drives are part of death drive.

hinweg, folgen aber bestimmten Regeln. Compliance regelt sich in der

- 13) Even in sadomasochism, scopophilia, exhibitionism, and taking oneself as another («turning round upon the subject's own self»), Freud demonstrates that it is the link to someone else that is key to the definition of the erotic drives, the preservative and uniting drive. Freud 1915c, as note 8, p. 127
- 14) I recently had occasion to hear case presentations for a psychoanalytic society. Questions of sex were not merely overlooked; when I brought this issue up, the analysts resisted the idea that sex had any relevance to their patients.
- 15) »À l'exclusion du bon gros jouir, le jouir simple, le jouir qui se réalise dans la copulation toute nue«: Jacques Lacan: *Le Séminaire XVII: L'envers de la psychanalyse*. Paris 1991, pp. 111–112.
- 16) In recent writings, I have proposed that we have transitioned to an Imaginary from a Symbolic version of society, an Imaginary that has yet to develop the necessary metaphoric distinctions that language can. See Juliet Flower MacCannell: »Lacan's Imaginary: A Practical Guide«, in Samo Tomšič, Andreja Zevnik (eds.): *Jacques Lacan. Between Psychoanalysis and Politics*. London 2015, pp. 72–85
- 17) Taylor Lorenz: »What Are Young People Doing? Don't Ask«, in: *The New York Times*, 12/12/19, p. B4
- 18) Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his *Essay on the Origin of Languages* (published posthumously in 1781) developed arguments he began making in his *Second Discourse: On the Origin of Inequality Among Men*. (Jean-Jacques Rousseau: *The First and Second Discourses, and Essay on the Origin of Languages*. New York 1986), argued that words were created to respond to whomever and whatever we encountered; to cope with the distance (physical or social) between us and them – or it. In Saussure's account, if there is to be any sign, it is only by virtue of being addressed to an other who responds; and it is only their concurrence about its meaning (or signified) that makes a sound into a sign. In fact, it is this agreement (or social contract) alone that makes the sign into a symbol, symbolic of the social tie that establishes it. This is also why it is language that socializes the infant: when addressed, the infant is called on to respond. See Juliet Flower MacCannell: »The Echo of the Signifier in the Body. On Drives Today«, in Lilian Munk Rösing, Henrik Jøker Bjerre, Brian Benjamin Hansen, Kirsten Hyltdgaard, Jakob Rosendal (eds.): *Analyzing the Cultural Unconscious. The Science of the Signifier*. New York/Oxford 2020, pp. 27–46
- 19) The two largest-scale efforts in the past to undertake cultural critique – the Frankfurt School and British Cultural Studies – both tied mass culture to politics, largely of the conservative or right-wing sort. But to my knowledge, neither school of thought ever addressed the basic matter of why culture exists, or how it, like language, came to define our essential humanity.
- 20) Freud first delineated this structure in his early work *Totem and Taboo* (Sigmund Freud (1912–13a): *Standard Edition*, Vol. XIII. London 1964), where he focused on the patriarchy initially installed, and then perpetuated, by the sons' revolt against the Leader/Father. Freud never abandoned this basic model, but he modified it in his last works, to enable him to trace the lineage of law-based society from its earliest beginnings in imposition by force.
- 21) Freud 1933b (as note 1)
- 22) Freud 1933b (as note 1), p. 205

Mäßigkeit einer Beziehung, in der beispielsweise Patient und Arzt verständ-

- 23) Since there are reactionary forms within culture that purport to »save« it but are actually antithetical to its continued development, culture can »turn against itself«; but what that produces are either stagnation or spurious forms that purport to be »traditional«.
- 24) In particular, Freud notes the unequal levels of strength and power inside the new group (e. g. women, children, minorities), and that the new social order needed to address and make it fairer and more just.
- 25) Most clearly formulated initially as the guilt of the sons for the overthrow of the Father in Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (Freud 1912–13a, as note 20). Later, in his »Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego«, Freud demonstrated a different kind of group/Leader relationship in which the Leader is loved and not overthrown. Sigmund Freud (1921c): »Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego«, in: *Standard Edition*, Vol XVIII, pp. 69–143
- 26) Once the original Master/Slave organization of social life was overcome, people had to have agreed on rules, and then laws, to maintain the transformed societal order. Freud points out that while the direct threat of violence on the part of rulers was overcome via the revolution (against the Totemic Father, the Leader, the Master), whatever laws were subsequently instituted would have no purchase, no possibility of implementation, unless they, too, contained at least a latent or potential menace of coercive violence.
- 27) Merriam-Webster's definition of culture is »the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; also: the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time.« Merriam-Webster: »culture«, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture> (last accessed on 31. 1. 2020).
- 28) See Dean MacCannell: »Tradition's Next Step«, in Scott Norris (ed.): *Discovered Country*. Albuquerque 1994, pp. 161–179. He cites Native American painter George Longfish, who complains that the American efforts to stylize and streamline and »expertly« codify Native American art (via the Santa Fe school run by Dorothea Dunn) not only produced only cartoonish versions of native art, it also made it so that, »There was no sense of the next step beyond the traditional form now expertly rendered. Tradition does not know how to take its own next step. Involvement with the Santa Fe school studio was a denial of the self and led to stagnation of cultural traditions. The students became victims of their own art.« (ibid. p. 168)
- 29) See my articles on Lacan and the *sinthome*, in particular, his discussion of Joyce's troubled relation to the English language that was imposed over Ireland by the English conquerors: Juliet Flower MacCannell: »The Real Imaginary (on Lacan's *Seminar XXIII*)«, in *S1 Journal of the Jan van Eyck Circle for Lacanian Ideology Critique*, 1 2008, pp. 46–57; Juliet Flower MacCannell: »The Open Ego: Joyce, Woolf and the »Mad« Subject«, in Patricia Gherovici (eds.): *Lacan on Madness. Madness, Yes You Can't*. New York 2015, pp. 205–218
- 30) Sigmund Freud (1930a): *Civilization and its Discontents*, in: *Standard Edition*, Vol. XXI, pp. 64–145; Sigmund Freud (1908d): »Civilized« Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness«, in: *Standard Edition*, Vol. VIV, pp. 181–204; Sigmund Freud 1921c, as note 25; Sigmund Freud (1915b): »Thoughts for the Times on War and Death«, in: *Standard Edition*, Vol. XIV, pp. 275–300

lichen Gesetzen einer Erkrankung folgen und versuchen, sich über unver-