

## SOCIAL PROCURATION

Socio-psychological delegation of feeling and fictive identification play a role in the life of society, a role which indicates that they are a constitutive structural element of any healthy social organism. To be sure, in this case we are concerned with a special form of delegation or identification which is characterized by its positive, serious, and purposeful tone. This particular form presupposes a firm, lasting relationship between the partners of the interrelation, has as an objective the attainment of very definite purposes, and is based upon a more or less intensive cooperation of the "delegating" component. This conviction was expressed recently among others by Roger Caillois in regard to games, and its importance was especially emphasized.<sup>1</sup>

On account of the similarity with juridical representation, as it is laid down in *matrimonium per procuratorem* in canonical law, I term this unique

Translated by Margaret Arent.

1. Roger Caillois, "Les jeux dans le monde moderne," *Profils*, No. 13, 1955; cf. also "The Structure and Classification of Games," *Diogenes*, No. 12, 1955. One of the most interesting conclusions of the author concerns the isolation of former spectators of, and up to a certain extent participants in, races ("agôn"), games of chance ("alea"), and dramatic performances ("mimicry")—an isolation which is closely connected with the development of the technique of transferring; and it concerns also the increasing passivity of the masses who now no longer participate in any way, and also the increasing significance of that which Caillois terms "délégation," which goes hand in hand with this passivity. Such "delegation" is the transference of feeling from the passive spectator to the active hero. Caillois has felicitously set forth a phenomenon here which is of special significance, particularly within the framework of a diagnosis of socio-psychological disintegration, as well as for any general cultural pathology. Caillois points out the regression of initiative, which is apparent in this increasing tend-

type of social correlation social procuration, the significance of which is far more encompassing than is suspected at first glance. Delegation or identification, about which Caillois speaks, is the more inclusive concept in contrast to the former, for it contains a plus in determinants. It approaches the general psychological phenomenon of transference of feeling in general, just as it determines for example among other things the animistic developmental stage of individuals and social orders and represents possibly an aberration, a degenerate or reverted form of true procuration, if not a stage preliminary to regression into the animistic stage. Nevertheless, one can assert that the transitions are fluid and that Caillois presents various examples which can also be interpreted as instances of social procuration.

Social procuration is to be understood as encompassing any relation between two or more members of a society (*societas*), in which situation the one component transfers aspirations of one type or another to the other component, with the expectation (usually confirmed) of bringing them in this way to fruition. We are concerned here with a kind of cession, save that the object of abdication is not a legal object, but rather a wish, a hope, a striving, in a word, a psychical radius vector, and that the abdication is seldom conscious but in most cases takes place unconsciously and indeed as much on the part of the one abdicating as on the part of the recipient. The relation is thereby a consentient one and has a given direction; it proceeds always from a weaker to a stronger component, so that one can generally speak of an ascending gradient in procuration, and it is never vice versa. Only whenever and wherever that is the case can one speak of procuration; as soon as reversibility or reciprocity exists, it is then no longer a matter of procuration but of symbiosis or *koinosis*.

Social procuration would not have the significance it does, if the emphasis of the relationship were to lie on the relinquishing side and on the expectations nurtured by this side. Indeed, the receiving component is by far the more important one, since it is usual, to be sure, that the ceded aspirations are also reciprocated, and the transferred hopes are actually completely or at least partially fulfilled; in which case the existence of the phenomenon of cession is essentially involved, in that it creates decisive

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ency toward delegation—"une défaillance grave des ressources de chacun en initiative, en ambition et en imagination désintéressées" (p. 40)—and is rightly inclined to see in this a symptom of illness in a society which is no longer at the peak of flourishing. It will be rewarding to pursue this train of thought and these thought-provoking insights further in the direction indicated and especially in connection with the socio-psychological function of games, for here virgin territory lies before us.

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postulates. In this way much is achieved which would have been unattainable for not only the ceding component but also, usually, for the receiving component, if each is considered separately. And this achievement has the relation of procuration alone to thank for its coming about at all.

One can already speak with confidence of social procuration in this sense in the case of animal societies. The relationship of the worker-bees to the queen-bee corresponds absolutely to the above definition of the concept. In reference to a teleological point of view one could even speak of social procuration in the case of fundamental biological relations, without thereby broadening the concept inadmissibly, for as soon as in the cellular combination of four-celled organisms cells appear which have a specialized function and correspondingly are especially equipped for this function (which is only possible in that the proclivities of the other cells in the cellular combination having corresponding functions and accoutrements are transferred to the cells with specialized function, which in turn are relieved in every other respect by the other cells)—then one can speak of social procuration. The first and most simple apparatuses of sense perception, considered in this light, are already the result of such a procuration; indeed, their appearance is utterly inexplicable without the impelling force of such a principle. Likewise, just to name a very apparent example, the blossoms or fruits of a blossoming or fruit-bearing tree are the results of procuration. Speaking freely and poetically one might say: even roots, trunk, boughs, twigs, and leaves would like to be blossoms and fruit, were it possible, and only by virtue of the fact that they relinquish the right to be so and at the same time dedicate themselves in their ancillary function to the production of blossoms, can those outermost, last shoots become blossoms.

This line of thought can undoubtedly be carried into the cosmic sphere, as long as it is pertinent to explain by the procuration principle the tendency to aspire to ever higher forms of sublimation by means of a step-by-step substitutional representation, a tendency that permeates the whole organic realm and perhaps not merely the organic sphere alone. All of this will be ignored, however, in the following, and social procuration in the anthropological realm alone will be considered more closely.

The most elementary and simplest example of anthropological social procuration appears to exist in the relationship between mother and daughter or father and son, which we shall designate here as parental procuration. Parents of normal emotional disposition who are not members of a station at either extreme of the social ladder see in their children not only a desirable and simple continuation of their own status quo, but over and above

this a possibility of reaching in them—indirectly *per procuratorem!*—social, economic, or intellectual goals which for themselves would remain unattainable, whether because of the shortness of life or due to insufficient capabilities or to external circumstances. A family can seldom be found whose history would not offer examples of the self-denial and personal sacrifice of which parents are capable, whenever it is a question of making their transferred life-long aims attainable to that degree for their children.<sup>2</sup>

A related, although much more uncommon form of this, is amical procuration; the subordination under and possibly the sacrificing of a weaker friend for a stronger comrade more likely to succeed; it can pertain to children of the same parentage (sometimes to children of opposite sex). The painter Vincent van Gogh and his brother would be an example.<sup>3</sup> Friendships between especially ugly and especially pretty women are common. They lose much of their unusualness and even disrepute, if one considers them *sub specie procurationis*: the ugly, unpretentious, unnoticed, and ineffectual feminine partner feels a unique compensation in the attention which her more fortunate companion arouses, in the admiration which she elicits, and in the social successes which she extorts; and not infrequently she participates directly in bringing about these successes by dint of her own toil and sacrifice.<sup>4</sup> What appears in many respects to be a perversion, and basically is just that—the transforming in this case of natural, negative feelings of envy, jealousy, and hate into the positive ones of selflessness, altruism, and willingness to sacrifice—becomes from the viewpoint of procuration a natural occurrence, from which vantage point a light also falls on the sublimatory function of the procuratory phenomenon.

The highly important relation in heterosexual procuration—the vicarious experience between man and woman—can be considered as a distinct instance of amical procuration (normally a relation between members of

2. It is already evident here that individuation is only a foreground and that behind it there stand numerous (polymere) super-individual configurations reaching out both spatially and temporally—configurations with their own proclivities and specific formative forces (*nisus formativi* according to Blumenbach), which are actualized only in single individuals and are effectual only through them; so-called “concealed heredity” (*verdeckter Erbgang*) is also closely connected with it. From this a new light also falls on the problematical phases of comprehensive socio-cultural totalities, such as modern culture-morphology has as its object of study. More detailed information concerning this is to be brought out in the book *Kulturmorphologie—das Problem einer ganzheitlich-gestalthaften Geschichtsbetrachtung*, which is now in preparation.

3. Cf. also the two brothers Jean-François (the decipherer of the Rosetta Stone) and Jacques-Joseph Champollion; cf. H. Hartleben, *Champollion*, 2 vols. (Berlin, Weidmann, 1906).

4. The effect of background (*Folienwirkung*) also plays a role here (*Figur-Grund* relation of the *Gestalt*-theory)—often a role purposely striven after, but this does not belong to the phenomenon of procuration as such.

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the same sex). The field touched upon here is a broad one, scarcely investigated as yet, and we shall let it suffice to call attention to a few main points which are worthy of consideration.

Heterosexual procuration generally proceeds from the woman to the man, since the woman is the passive component when biologically regarded as the preserver of life; the man, however, is the active component, seen biologically as the creator of life and the stronger of the two in all things pertaining to the mastery of external reality. The rudimentary, bisexual, physically and psychically inherent tendency of all normal human beings has the concomitant aspect that even for the woman typically masculine aims are not unheard of, that is to say, aims which are directed toward the mastery of life's external challenges, toward the contest and victory, the power and triumph of the masculine world. Since the fulfillment of these aspirations is normally denied a woman, or at least possible only with difficulty, she manages to procure the same end for herself *per procuratorem*—on the indirect road through the man. In the man the woman is that which she in the most secret corner of her soul would also like to be man, that is to say, the active creator of life, the doer, the hero. To this extent then the successes, victories, triumphs of the man are also the successes and triumphs of his sexual partner and his failures are also hers. It is well known what an important role success plays in the relationship of the sexes (on the primitive level in palpable settlement and on the civilized level in social and professional life) and how success, as it were, has the effect of aphrodisiac and failure that of an erotic palliative. Formerly this has been explained solely on grounds of discriminatory selection, possibly also as a result of the security-needs of the woman, who wants to assure herself and her children of the most efficient protector and food-provider. Nevertheless the procuratory relationship certainly plays a considerable role even in this instance. The woman wants to be able to esteem the man, she wants him to succeed, she wants to see him recognized; if he is not successful to a satisfactory degree, then the esteem offered often at first merely as a mortgage is transformed into disdain and the love, founded more or less upon exaggerated hopes, into hate. In addition to the many other motives which underlie the so extremely complex phenomenon of sexual love, procuratory desire is in the light of the above an integrally participative constituent of it—a factor which has been overlooked in most of the pertinent analyses.

Heterosexual procuration is directed, as stated, from the feminine to the masculine partner, thus essentially and normally conforming to other in-

stances of the procreation gradient. A more or less clearly defined counter-tendency is, however, also often recognizable, which proceeds from the man to the woman. Just as the woman takes part in the triumphs of the man and experiences them as her own, so too the specifically feminine successes of the wife—being admired, being desired, being sought after—offer satisfaction to the man, which again can only be explained satisfactorily by reference to procuratory tendencies. Just as the woman exerts herself in apparent selflessness for the goals of the man and gives of herself for them, so too there are cases in the opposite direction, where the man subordinates himself to the aims of the woman and makes every thinkable sacrifice in order to have them realizable. Needless to say, this is a perversion in the face of the natural biological procuratory ascending gradient, but nature tolerates perversions also, as if by so doing she can make her own propensities apparent and carry them to the extreme *ad absurdum*.<sup>5</sup>

The significance which the participative endeavor of the woman has for the capabilities of the man—even if one excludes the extreme cases such as Elisabeth Lensing and Friedrich Hebbel treat—is of such magnitude that it can scarcely be stated in simple terms. The importance of this doesn't always come to the man's full consciousness; instinctively and in the subconscious, however, it is almost always felt and recognized. His sensing of it is intrinsically combined with a feeling of erotic attraction, human sympathy, and cosmic dependency and by virtue of this is one of the strongest bonds in a heterosexual relationship. It is an essential factor, if one is to have the feeling of being settled and domiciled, of being rooted and sustained; for the motherly woman is experienced as the fruitful earth, out of which nutritive, succulent fluids flow into all organic growth, thereby dispensing energy and vitality. Thus she represents the deepest, most noble, most secure, and lasting foundation of the marriage relation.

From this dependency of the life-forming and thereby culture-creating capacity of man upon the productive commission and willingness of the woman to put forth all her supporting energy ensues the whole special significance which is ascribed to heterosexual procreation in the cultural life of human society. It is not fair to say that the totality or even the major portion of that which is termed the culture of a society is the creation of a masculine being—a creation in which the woman has but unconventionally a share, and from which she is usually excluded due to masculine pre-

5. Let it be noted here that heterosexual procreation in both directions (reciprocal), even in the specifically sexual complex of feelings and sensitivities, can be and perhaps always is an accompanying factor basically. Possibly a new approach to the difficult and complex problem of homosexuality could be gleaned from this perspective.

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sumption and egotism and into which she can or is supposed to gain admittance only by dint of sheer struggle. All culture, or in other words all formal structures of human life, are, to the contrary, mutual achievements of both sexes, whereby the masculine partner is merely the one who does the executing and is thereby the perceptible one, whereas the feminine component enters into these achievements imperceptibly, i.e. indirectly, through the masculine medium.<sup>6</sup>

This insight into the essence and significance of heterosexual procuration paves the way for a broad field of similar relations, for one can speak of social procuration in all cases where a weaker component transfers his hopes and aspirations to a stronger one, subserviently works together for their fulfillment, and senses an ungrudging satisfaction whenever his procurator's endeavor is successful, although he personally is deprived of the achievement as such. Thus social procuration is the governing principle in the relation of the constituents of every hierarchically ordered, that is to say, of every working community which is composed of individuals weaker or stronger in respect to capability or rank, and organized for the attainment of specific goals, whether the organization be of short or long duration. Social procuration determines the successful functioning of a mountain-climbing group, which has as its objective the assault of a certain mountain peak, or of a soccer team and its conquest of the opponent, or of a research team and its solution of a scientific or technical problem; social procuration, however, also stands behind the personnel of a farm establishment or a master craftsman and behind the company of men in the management of a factory, as long as such operations are imbued with a patriarchal spirit, about which we will have more to say. In all these cases the accomplishment of the procurator serving at that time is felt to be the accomplishment of all, and indeed rightly, for it belongs to the very es-

6. A celibate culture sustained only by men is therefore always a one-sided and consequently a defective culture; this is also true of cultures in which the feminine element is tremendously masculinized; cf. the ingenious remarks of Prince Karl Rohan in his book, *Moskau*, concerning the sociological effects of the artificial exclusion of the erotic element from the life of society in Bolshevik Russia in the twenties and early thirties! Defective, in some instances pathological, are also the "schistose cultures" in which the natural relation of heterosexual procuration is dissolved because of an all-encompassing emancipation of women. In such cultures not only the relation of the two sexes to one another but also the specified function of each (i.e. based on a division of labor) is disrupted. The result is a depreciation in the total productiveness of the society in question, a depreciation which has a more and more ominous effect in the progressive stages, but which by virtue of this alone must not necessarily lead to ruin, but assuredly belongs to those factors which do bring it about. Thus viewed, heterosexual schism is a mark of illness or a symptom of disintegration, as has been described by A. J. Toynbee among others in his *A Study of History* (3rd ed., London, Oxford University Press, 1945), V, 35 f., 376 f., under the heading "Schism in the Body Social" and "Schism in the Soul," and by Pitirim A. Sorokin in *S.O.S.: The Meaning of Our Crisis* (Boston, 1951), pp. 83 ff.

sence of every true kind of teamwork that it comes into being only through the selfless and frictionless working together of several or many persons. The accomplishment of the individual person, be it ever so subordinate, enters constitutively and essentially into the achievement of the total as it proceeds from the hands of the procurator. The fame and honor which is afforded the one who actually gains the peak, or the one who makes the goal, or the director of a research institute, means fame and honor for all who have participated; and likewise in all patriarchal relations the prosperity and reputation of a farm, or of the craftsman, or of a factory is the concern of all who belong in any way to the social and economic structure in question.

In the case of these extensive social structures a new feature of the procurator relation which deserves special attention comes to light. It is the symbolic character of the procurator and his achievement. The procurator in the procuratory relation substitutes for the relinquisher, who transfers to him (the procurator) his hopes and wishes. Since these hopes and wishes, however, are fulfilled by the procurator, he symbolically stands in the stead of the one or several transferors, and the concept of the symbol makes it possible for each one of the latter to identify himself with the procurator psychologically, i.e. in the experience of success, and to feel some compensation, as though he himself had directly completed the task, which nonetheless is the direct achievement of the procurator and *de facto* of the commune in question. The close relationship that exists between symbol and representation in general has already been frequently the object of discussions.<sup>7</sup>

The symbolism here becomes especially apparent, for since procuratory achievement replaces one's own which is unattainable to that degree, or, more precisely expressed, since it sublimates one's own achievement to a point unattainable by direct means, it becomes an instrument of an indirect and symbolic mastery of life. The mountain climber who does not reach the aspired peak himself but has done everything he could within the team to make victory possible for the comrade who is most likely to succeed finds himself symbolically in the victor, and it is this sphere of symbolism in which the victory of the other one is also his. Not only the forward who scores, but also the team-mate who has played the ball to him has in the language of this symbolism "made the goal." The farmhand finds himself

7. Cf. E. Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, tr. by Ralph Manheim, Vol. III (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1953); H. Friedmann, *Die Welt der Formen* (Berlin, 1925); Weinhandl, "Die Symbolik der Ganzheit" in *Blätter für deutsche Philosophie* VI/ 1-2 (1932).



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emphatically in the farmer, the journeyman in the master; in the farmer and the master there is symbolized what the farmhand and the journeyman would also like to be, perhaps could be, if a world order were conceivable in which there were only farmers and masters and no farmhands and journeymen. And this is true of every procuratory relation: the procuratory achievement stands as a symbol; it is posited psychologically as a symbol for an achievement which *pro persona* and *in extenso* is not attainable—or stated otherwise: social procuration serves the purpose of mastering reality symbolically, it is a means of symbolic existential dominion.

What is meant by this and what is gleaned thereby will be perhaps even clearer if for illustration one draws on the procuratory experience in art—especially in representative art—and in the pseudo-artistic amusement and entertainment industries, and in sports events. That self-creativity is a primordial form of art has long since been demonstrated.<sup>8</sup> As soon as art, already a symbolic, concentrated form and an example of mastery over reality, raises itself to levels technically higher and no longer accessible to all members of a society, artistic experience replaces artistic creativity. The essence of artistic experience is, however, as the famous catharsis theory of Aristotle already expresses, the experience of procuration: in the structures and configurations, the solemnizations and expressive forms of the art, the experiencing appreciator relives himself symbolically intensified, ennobled, and in concentrated form—now and then also in the opposite, negative direction—and reaches thereby once again the sublimity of mastery over reality. On the negative side it is, however, merely “experience.” Whoever reads Goethe’s *Faust* or experiences the stage production of it *is* Faust or Gretchen or Wagner for a time, or alternately all of them together. Standing in front of Michelangelo’s “Pietà” one *is* the grieving madonna for the space of time that it takes to draw a few breaths. To him whose soul is moved at all by the tones of a musical composition, they seem in this state of emotional intensity like sounds out of the very depths of himself. As Theodor Storm’s *Immensee* says of folksongs: “We find in them our own doings and sufferings, it is as though we all had contributed to their creation.” That is true of all art, and perhaps we all really do help to bring art works into being, even though it be merely the fact that we give them the consciousness of resonance and therewith the pathos and dignity of a procuratory accomplishment. What slumbers in the souls of thousands and remains unsaid for lack of an organ of expression, the artist expresses, the work of art reveals. Highest joy, deepest sor-

8. E.g. Leo Frobenius, *Paideuma* (1921).

row, thoughts at the borderline of the thinkable become thus the common goods of expression for innumerable people who otherwise would have to continue in their state of hollow and fearful silence, impotent to become master of that which is paramount. For even the very expressing is itself a form of mastery over reality. Among magical exorcisms the magic power contained in names is one of the most primitive and important.<sup>9</sup>

Not according to the essence but only according to the degree of concentratedness does a genuine experiencing of art differ from the experiencing of the pseudo-art of the entertainment and amusement industries with its gradated scale from boulevard comedy down to obscene bourgeois farce, from light operetta to popular jazz hits, from serious film to wild-westerns, from good, entertaining, light reading down to “yellow” literature, gangster thrillers, and comic books. Indeed, even the circus, the variety show, and the cabaret belong here, for in all these forms society, which has partially sunk to their level and has partially been conditioned to them, acquires procuratory experiences, i.e. experiences which are not open to it at all, at least not in this form, abundance, and concentration, or if at all, then only rarely. In the film-star the most homely girl is beautiful, bewitching, and sought after; men lie at her feet, she gives herself up to the heroine completely, enjoys in her the exhilaration of standing at the sunny pinnacles of life. In the gangster the honest youth is a hero, tussles, stabs, and shoots, rapes women, and enjoys the triumphs of murder and killing. What creeps shyly back into the farthest corner of the soul in broad daylight, now ventures forth in the half-light of the movie theater and boldly and defiantly takes on form in the figures on the dazzling screen. That too is social procuration, even though on a very low level. For those figures *live* at the concession of the public; they would not be there at all or at least would not be so tremendously important if millions were not standing by evening after evening to soak them up with the heart blood of their more or less perverse appetites, their repressed complexes, and their unsatisfied instincts. Neither representation, nor the readiness to transfer or delegate, nor the given situation suitable for procuration is lacking—the heroes and heroines of the amusement industry are always exaggeratedly beautiful, powerful, clever, sexually attractive, kind or brutal, noble or criminal—nor is the feeling of satisfaction lacking,<sup>10</sup> nor the symbolism; for here too

9. Cf. L. Lévy-Bruhl, *La Mentalité primitive* (Paris, Alcan, 1922); cf. also H. Weinert, *Der geistige Aufstieg der Menschheit* (Stuttgart, Enke, 1950).

10. [A satisfaction], which by virtue of the fact that it springs from an artistic stimulus is illusory, i.e. without a tangible object, evaporates into a vacuum, is totally fleeting, stands in no relation to the preceding nerve stimuli, and is dreadfully similar to onanism; and it is also

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the *pars* of procuratory fulfillment stands symbolically for the unattainable *totum* of personal fulfillment aspired to or dreamed of—be it rogue, hero, lover, sexy heroine, perverse libertine, noble human being, or any other character.

Exactly the same thing applies to sports, from the minor games of local soccer teams, to swimming meets and ski runs, up to the sensational spectacles of boxing matches, motorcycle and auto races, international contests, and the Olympic Games. The participation of the masses and the frenzied passion which thereby comes to light would be inexplicable if nothing could be drawn upon for an explanation other than the need for sensationalism and tickling of the nerves. Here too it is much more a question of social procuration and representation, for that which attracts the ordinary onlooker at sports events (intensified by the suggestive mass-exhilaration and the whole outlay, and by the attractiveness of experiencing oneself as a member of a festively excited crowd) is the possibility of transforming oneself imaginatively into the sports heroes of the day, of ceding to them one's own sports ambitions, perhaps only attainable to a meager degree, if at all, of letting them fight and win in one's stead, and finally of acclaiming oneself and letting oneself be acclaimed (since one acclaims those in the arena into whom one has transformed himself). Just look at the faces, the gestures of a crowd of sports enthusiasts, listen to their shouts, above all observe yourself: whether one wants to or not the muscles fall into the rhythmical pattern of the jockey on the galloping horse, fists become clenched around an imaginary steering wheel, the leg jerks out toward a ball that isn't there, the eye squints, as though it were focusing upon the opponent, something in the body draws together, poises for a strike, lunges forward with propelling force, almost outside the limits of the physical person—exactly as if one were oneself the boxer or the fighter who is supposed to carry out the heave and thrust. All this is once again true procuration and more closely related to the experience we have in art than one imagines.

From all these examples it is already clearly evident how extremely extensive the realm of social procuration is and what a highly significant role the phenomenon of procuration plays in the life of society. Even so its sociologically most important function has not been mentioned at all until

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closely related to the latter in its adverse results. The whole experiencing-complex in modern society can thus be described in reference to the amusement industry (and especially to the film industry) as a kind of spiritual onanism, as an artificial rousing of the passions of an impotent society void of experience, and as an artificial sham gratification of the appetites thus aroused.

this point—its function as a chain between the different classes of society.

That social procuration exercises, among other things, a structural function follows readily from what was stated previously and from the cited examples. It establishes, to be sure, a psychical and social relationship between the procuration transferee and the procuration recipient, a relation which under certain conditions can be very stable and also sociologically very significant—one only has to think of the marital relationship in heterosexual procuration. Much more consequential than all of this, however, is certainly the fact that not only separate individuals but whole sectors of a population (classes, social stations, groups) stand in a procuratory relation to one another. This is perhaps not so clearly evident in the disintegrated social order of the present-day European and American scene, but when one recalls the conditions which prevailed about one hundred to one hundred and fifty years ago in European society in the many rural areas and also in the province of the various professions, even up to the time of the first World War. All one has to do is envision the sharply accentuated divisions of the social structure into peasant, burgher, nobility, together with their extension into the manifold gradations within the burgher and nobility social stations themselves, to say nothing of the differentiations expressed in dress, language, etiquette, legal and economic position, professional opportunities, political influence, etc., and of the chasmal proportions to which in many cases these cleavages deepened, and of the mutual inapproachability between the nobility and the bourgeoisie, and between the bourgeoisie and the peasant. From the standpoint of the popular bias of our democratic age concerning the classless society, one would think that such a striated society must have been from its inception a breeding place for social resentments and a powder-keg for social revolutions. Source material does not substantiate this, aside from the occasional exceptions restricted as to time and place, such as the Peasants' Revolt of the 16th and 17th centuries and the fermentation which preceded the French Revolution in France. To the contrary: whoever observes more closely will draw comparisons between then and now and ask himself wherein the differences lie between the harmony of the stratal society and the disharmony of the classless society, and upon what these differences are based and what has really brought about the change, inquiring less into the historical reasons than into the socio-psychological ones. Then he will find himself straightway on the road to the phenomenon of social procuration. We can take for an example the case of the farmer-farmhand or the master-journeyman relation as found in patriarchal social structures. A procura-

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tory relation exists between the two components (if one assumes this patriarchal, natural, undisrupted relation); that is to say, the farmhand and the journeyman come to terms with the fact that they are the weaker ones in every respect (socially, economically, juridically, and capability-wise); they cede their unfulfillable aspirations to the farm-owner, to the master, who functions as a procurator with more comprehensive mastery over reality and the ordering of life; they subordinate themselves to him in a servile relation, thereby furthering his achievement, nay, even making it possible at all; and they find full, unenvious satisfaction in the symbolic fulfillment of their aspirations *per procuratorem*. Such is the case in those social orders which we term "patriarchal," i.e. natural, organic, and integrated with a kind of undertone of unavoidable longing and regret; but these latter societies are integrated and whole, indeed, patriarchal and harmonious, for the very fact that they are governed by the procuration principle, which has been demonstrated here to be a very decisive element of social structure. The farmhand of an establishment at that time, the journeyman of a craftguild of the pre-industrial era, the sailor of a sailing vessel, they all were conscious of being "only" a farmhand, a journeyman, a sailor; they were aware that farm-owner, master craftsman, and captain were something "better and higher," to whom they might transfer their covetous yearnings, at best limited to many years of hard labor, and they were cognizant of the fact that the farm-owner belonged to a completely different sphere of life which was separated from theirs by a deep gulf. For all that, they were not filled with social resentment, for the psychological predisposition for the latter was lacking, namely the social demand for equality, which is the same as an annulment of the procuratory relation. For them the inequality of the social stations (apart from the trivial equality of human beings as zoological individuals—a fact which at that time could not have made any impression) was a fact given along with the structure of reality; one would have said that it was a "God-ordained" given, to be accepted as such. They were proud of their farm-owner, of their master and captain if he was conscientious, rich, and esteemed; they were proud of him if he went or drove to church in a befitting manner; they were proud of his stately house or ship; they were proud of his fields or workshops, of his barns and stores, of his produce and products; they were proud of belonging to his household and lastly, far from envying the owner his position and scorning their own, they were thus proud of being bondsmen, journeymen, or sailors, for they instinctively felt that there had to be not only masters but also servants, "because not everyone can be

master.” In other words, they recognized the fact that a society which consists only of masters is unthinkable and one reduced to the servant level is not worthy of existence—a bit of wisdom which has since been lost for many who feel they tower high above a farmhand.

Precisely that socio-psychological attitude, which is found today in rudimentary form only in remote “backward” areas and at that less and less frequently, was the controlling factor at that time over the relation of the strata of society to one another in their whole width and breadth. Although the differences between the social stations and even between their individual borderlines were of great magnitude and appeared most ostensibly due to their whole make-up, and although the barriers which separated the individual rungs of the social ladder were almost insurmountable in practice, and relegation to a certain station in society was the same as a lifetime sentence and carried with it consequences which were passed on to the children and the children’s children; and although a member of a lower social class was cuttingly made conscious every step he took of his hopeless inferiority, although these things were true, class-envy and class-hate (aside from those exceptions cited, which were partly effected artificially) were unknown sentiments in Europe until well into the Revolution of 1848. Similarly, the subordinate today in remote agrarian social orders organized hierarchically still accepts the social distance between himself and his master as God-ordained, unquestionable, and doesn’t dream of coveting his master’s estate, or his authoritative power, or his seat at the table of distinguished personages, but rather is proud of him. Formerly this was the case with the lower classes too: they were proud of their superiors, of their special privileges, of their conspicuous consumption, of their ostentatious pomp, of their distinguished position, of the splendor in which they moved and lived. They were proud of them, because they themselves were the ones who made this elevated form of existence feasible at all, by virtue of their own humble and renunciatory servitude. They saw fulfilled in their superiors all that had been unachievable throughout their lives and would have to remain so.<sup>11</sup> “Would have to remain so,” for no revolution in the world order can do away with the peasant or the bourgeoisie and convert

11. In a discussion one can put up for debate the question whether the social forms such as the one that developed for example under the Ancien régime in France were desirable or necessary—theoretically one can naturally deny this, but this will not alter the situation, namely that such forms are forever created in practice. One cannot deny, however, that according to their very nature they can only be the property of a narrow and exclusive social crust. Social forms, such as those of the American TV-civilization, can naturally be made common property for the broad masses—but the one is nevertheless Ancien régime and Rococo and the other 20th century and TV.

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all of them into noblemen. Of course revolutions can level out and equalize, and they do just that, but the equalizing can only at best be the result of an arithmetical or geometric operation, which is the same in any case as a reduction to the lowest common denominator. No revolution or economic and social reform in the world is capable of transporting all members of a society equally into a status of that kind of leisure and luxury which is the presupposition for the development of higher and higher cultural forms.<sup>12</sup> If metaphorically speaking a “being-served” is the prerequisite for the development of a higher culture, then this “being-served” ceases as soon as there is no longer anybody there to do the serving.<sup>13</sup>

The era of which we here speak was well aware of all this, or rather was instinctively certain of it. The contrasts between the individual strata of the social structure were therefore not nearly so great as they appear to our democratic eyes, that tend to level out such differences; more precisely seen, there were no contrasts at all, but only differences of structural localization. By virtue of social procuration a member of a lower station in the social scale didn't only consider himself to be the sustainer and supporter of the higher stratum, but he also felt that he himself was incorporated in it. Whenever the splendid carriage of the high-born aristocrat pulled by six horses rolled through the narrow streets of the town, rattling and throwing up swirls of dust, then everyone who watched the spectacle from the sidewalk felt as a matter of course that not all the ten or hundred thousands of inhabitants in the city could drive with six horses, and the one who can and does stands for hundreds and thousands who can't—and each found his own satisfaction and compensation therein.

The six-horse carriage is, however, only an example which serves to bring the principle involved here into sharper focus. For what has been said of this is also applicable to all higher social orders and thus for all higher cultural achievements. They all come into being by means of procuration; they are based upon a prevailing feeling of willing subordination in the

12. Not even 100 per cent technological perfection and mechanization of the world and the transformation of our culture into a robot-culture would remove this dilemma from the face of the earth, for as long as a modern robot cannot be invented who in perpetual motion begets by itself and sustains itself, there will always have to be social strata, which will be required to dedicate themselves to the construction, care, tending, and repairing of these machines, to the acquisition and preparation of the raw materials required for their construction, and to the acquisition and preparation of those energies indispensable for their operation, whether it be in the form of water power, coal, oil, solar or atomic energy.

13. Even Toynbee, who professes an outright socialistic standpoint (cf. *loc. cit.*, IV, 191 ff. and *passim*), almost involuntarily let slip the question so intimidating for him, whether a high culture is possible only through the enforced labor of the masses; it is significant that he doesn't venture to answer it.

procuratory relation, and they function finally as procuratory symbols. They are also recognized as such by the members of the society in question, as long as the latter remains intact. Nay, the fact of acceptance, the undisrupted functioning of procuration taken as a matter of course, is the very mark of a thriving society. Contrariwise, a disrupted procuration relation is precisely a sure symptom of illness, an infallible indication that the society concerned is in a state of disintegration.<sup>14</sup>

The highest achievements of a culture in technology, science, art, religion, law, economics, and in the construction of all of the external world are comparable to the blossoms and fruits of a tree, which we have likewise recognized as products of procuration. Just as these, so also the highest cultural achievements presuppose the whole organic structure of society. They live through and by this structure, and stand at the same time symbolically for the whole organism. The separate blossom does not bloom for and of itself, but the “tree” blooms—in the blossoms. Likewise a culture blossoms as a “total organism” in each one of its products; and whoever brings forth any one of the products, embodies or enjoys it, is only the procurator, the symbolic representative of a polynominal totality, which on the one hand can rise to such heights precisely because of this polynominal character, and on the other hand, however, can only do so by means of procuration on account of this polynominal character.<sup>15</sup>

Our considerations have herewith again arrived at the symbolic character of procuration. Looking back, we can now say that procuration in its biological and also broadest meanings appears in the final analysis to be an ingenious means of mastering reality, an artifice together with which cession of function, specializing, division of labor, and symbolic representation combine in a close relation and thereby effect achievements which are unfulfillable for the separate members of the community—even if this commune consisted only of man and wife. Procuration is a general biological phenomenon. The experiencing of symbols, to the contrary, is spe-

14. The Marxian class-struggle theory is also disposed of herewith and the ideal of a classless, or, more correctly expressed, of a one-class (proletariat!) society; each one of the above, seen from the point of view of procuration, is, to be sure, itself already the product of disintegration, just as the social resentment from which both have originated and on which they still feed is, too, a symptom of disintegration.

15. The idea of social procuration in this comprehensive meaning is also touched upon by Toynbee: “It is a universal condition of social life that the majority of the members of any given society should be perpetually extending the narrow radius of their personal lives by living *vicariously*—[*per procuratorem!*]—through the representative activities of a small number of their fellows” (*ibid.*, I, 191); nevertheless he didn’t pursue it any further; however, the idea seems to be implicitly suggested in his theory of the creative minorities and the mimesis of the non-creative masses in the social organism.



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cifically human. Symbolizing is another adroit way of gaining mastery over reality, for in the symbol reality becomes concentrated and comprehensible, like the spirit in the flask of the fisher in *A Thousand and One Nights*. Even biological procuration exhibits symbolic traits, and *is de facto* symbolization. In that the latter then becomes “experienceable” in the human realm, its significance is raised to a higher level and also, correspondingly, that of procuration, which now means a twofold mastering of reality, both intensively and extensively. It is not accidental that the great social structures of high cultures represent the towering pinnacle of procuratory achievements and in turn are understood above all as symbolic, concentrated forms of reality; for in them the creative energies of life exhibit their most comprehensive social form; nor is it accidental that they converge and crystallize in the most intensive and sublime manifestations to be found on our planet.<sup>16</sup>

With this perspective we have demonstrated what an unexpected field has been opened up for the application of the sociological theory of procuration; if it is permissible to make a justification for a point of view dependent upon a pragmatic criterion, then it might be rewarding to pursue the matter a bit further in the direction indicated. Sociological and cultural morphological research is, to be sure, still in its infancy, so that most of the paths which lie open for this field of study are also untrod; they are therefore all equally attractive and tempting and each one is pregnant with surprises.

16. Concerning the views on sublimation cf. above, p. 19; cf. also Toynbee, *ibid.*, III, 174 ff. (“Etherealization” as a psychological and socio-cultural phenomenon).