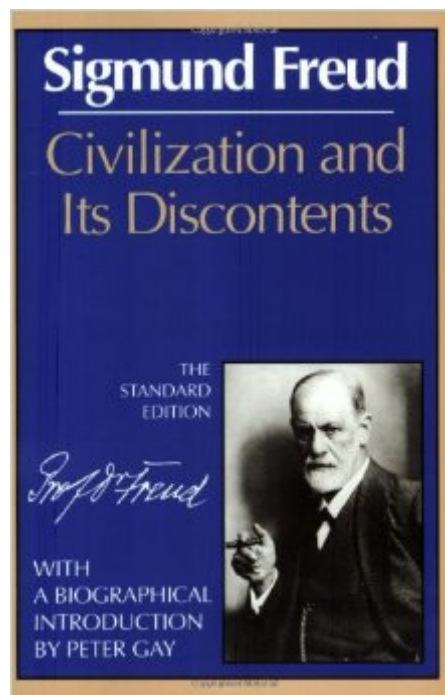


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Civilization And Its Discontents (The Standard Edition) (Complete Psychological Works Of Sigmund Freud)



Synopsis

During the summer of 1929, Freud worked on what became this seminal volume of twentieth-century thought. It stands as a brilliant summary of the views on culture from a psychoanalytic perspective that he had been developing since the turn of the century. It is both witness and tribute to the late theory of mind—the so-called structural theory, with its stress on aggression, indeed the death drive, as the pitiless adversary of eros. *Civilization and Its Discontents* is one of the last of Freud's books, written in the decade before his death and first published in German in 1929. In it he states his views on the broad question of man's place in the world, a place Freud defines in terms of ceaseless conflict between the individual's quest for freedom and society's demand for conformity. Freud's theme is that what works for civilization doesn't necessarily work for man. Man, by nature aggressive and egotistical, seeks self-satisfaction. But culture inhibits his instinctual drives. The result is a pervasive and familiar guilt. Of the various English translations of Freud's major works to appear in his lifetime, only one was authorized by Freud himself: The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud under the general editorship of James Strachey. Freud approved the overall editorial plan, specific renderings of key words and phrases, and the addition of valuable notes, from bibliographical and explanatory. Many of the translations were done by Strachey himself; the rest were prepared under his supervision. The result was to place the Standard Edition in a position of unquestioned supremacy over all other existing versions.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Many people today believe that Sigmund Freud was obsessed with sex. However, most of these assumptions are based upon what another person said of Freud and almost never upon a careful reading of Freud's work. These people do not see the fact that Freud writes on more than sexuality, he also analyzes and researches the study of mankind. Sigmund Freud attacks the question why we do things the way we do head on and answers to the best of his reason. Therefore, Sigmund Freud was truly a man of his time and his debate on mankind was a very innovative method to answer mankind's most serious issues. Man is an aggressive being and civilization is the means which humanity withholds its primal urges in check. At least Freud believes so and shows support for this thesis by referring to mankind's constant need to restrain its inherent passions despite all of the controls placed by society. I believe that Freud was definitely on to something with this point. He is right when he states that man is essentially an anti-social, anti-cultural being. One could look down through the pages of history and see war after war, violent act after violent primarily as a result of the inherent greed for power and a passionate thirst for more than one's own. This is one of the many reasons why communism is impossible, man is a selfish being and always desires more than he possesses. He will do what is necessary to increase his holding at the expense of his fellows. I believe that Nietzsche and Freud are in agreement at this point. However, Nietzsche believes that the masses attempt to quell this passion and label that as noble. I believe that Freud does not think it is possible to restrain this aggressiveness and mankind is only able to cover it up in a semblance of control which we label civilization.

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