

Theory must account for the therapeutic action of psychoanalysis. If that requires serious reflection on the necessity of coherence in our field and on the need for a common understanding of what fundamentally drives human actions.

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FUNDAMENTALS OF MIND AND BODY

THE STRANGE ORDER OF THINGS: LIFE, FEELING, AND THE MAKING OF CULTURES. By Antonio Damasio. New York: Pantheon Books, 2018, xii + 310 pp., \$28.95 hardcover.

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Anyone who thinks that psychoanalysis is old hat and that it has been eclipsed by modern neuroscience should read Antonio Damasio's latest book, *The Strange Order of Things*, and think again. If something deeply true about an aspect of nature is discovered from the viewpoint of one discipline, then it should perhaps not surprise us if—given time—the same truth should be stumbled upon afresh by another discipline. This is what seems to have happened with our understanding of the biological underpinnings of human culture.

The Strange Order of Things reads as a neuroscientific vindication of Freud's views on the topic, as set out in his *Civilization and Its Discontents* (Freud 1930) and "Why War?" (Einstein and Freud 1933)—albeit with many revisions and updated details, and slightly less pessimism about the implications for humanity. Damasio even goes so far as to conclude, in effect, that our one hope for overcoming the destructive influence of the drives upon human culture is something akin to psychoanalysis. "Feelings," he writes, "freed humans to attempt homeostasis by cultural means, instead of remaining captive to their basic biological devices. . . . Their job was never finished. A life not felt would need no cure. A life felt but not examined would not have been curable" (pp. 232-233).

In short, in this book, Damasio (like Freud before him) arrives at the view that civilization and culture are at bottom elaborations of a deeply conservative biological force. Whereas Damasio calls this force *homeostasis*,

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¹Contrary to the views of Bruno Bettelheim (1983), Freud wrote: "I seem to distinguish between culture and civilization" (Freud 1927, p. 6).

