

La ética del psicoanálisis

(1959-1960)

Artículos psicoanalíticos citados por Lacan en su seminario

Nota bene: esta recopilación es una transcripción de los artículos originales, su objetivo es ser un apoyo en la lectura de los seminarios de Jacques Lacan. Se ha tratado de realizarla con la máxima fidelidad posible, sin embargo, dado que es una transcripción puede incluir errores involuntarios, por lo cual urgimos a los lectores que quieran citar estos textos a consultar directamente la fuente original, ya sea en las revistas en papel o a través del CD-ROM generado para ese propósito por la Asociación Psicoanalítica Americana, y que puede ser consultado y/o adquirido a través de su sitio de internet.

Dado que el sitio de e-diciones de la École lacanienne de psychanalyse es gratuito, no pretende lucrar de ninguna manera con estas transcripciones; su finalidad es únicamente contribuir al estudio crítico y documentado del psicoanálisis, en particular de la enseñanza de Jacques Lacan.

INDICE

DEUTSCH, H. (1942) Some forms of emotional disturbance and their relationship with squizofrenia. *Psychoanal, Q.* 11:301

SHARPE, E. (1930) Certain aspects of sublimation and delusion. *Int. J. Psycho-anal.*, 11:12

SHARPE, E. (1935) Similar and divergent unconscious determinants underlying the sublimations of pure art and pure science. *Int. I. Psycho-anal.*, 16:186

GLOVER, E. (1931) Sublimation, substitution and social anxiety. *Int. J. Psycho-anal.*, 12:263

SPITZ, R. (1955) The primal cavity—a contribution to the genesis of perception and its role for psychoanalytic theory. *Psychoanal. St. Child*, 10:215

KRIS, E. (1955) Neutralization and sublimation—observations on young children. *Psychoanal. St. Child*, 10:30

BERNFELD, S. ET AL (1931) The principle of entropy and the death instinct. *Int. J. Psycho-anal.*, 12:61

FLÜGEL, J. (1929) Clothes symbolism and clothes ambivalence. *Int. J. Psycho-anal.*, 10:205

JONES, E. (1929) Fear, guilt and hate. *Int. J. Psycho-anal.*, 10:383

(1942) SOME FORMS OF EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO SCHIZOPHRENIA. PSYCHOANAL. Q., 11:301 (PAQ)

**SOME FORMS OF EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE AND THEIR
RELATIONSHIP TO SCHIZOPHRENIA**

HELENE DEUTSCH

Psychoanalytic observations of a few types of emotional disturbances are presented in this paper, and a series of cases reported in which the individual's emotional relationship to the outside world and to his own ego appears impoverished or absent. Such disturbances of the emotional life take various forms. For example, there are the individuals who are not aware of their lack of normal affective bonds and responses, but whose emotional disturbance is perceived either only by those around them or is first detected in analytic treatment; and there are those who complain of their emotional defect and are keenly distressed by the disturbance in their inner experiences. Among the latter, the disturbance may be transitory and fleeting; it may recur from time to time but only in connection with certain specific situations and experiences; or it may persist and form a continuous, distressing symptom. In addition, the emotional disturbance may be perceived as existing in the personality or it may be projected onto the outside world. In the one case the patient says, 'I am changed. I feel nothing. Everything seems unreal to me.' In the other, he complains that the world seems strange, objects shadowy, human beings and events theatrical and unreal. Those forms of the disturbance in which the individual himself is conscious of his defect and complains of it belong to the picture of 'depersonalization'. This disturbance has been described by many authors. In the analytic literature

This publication is a combination of a paper published in the *Int. Ztschr. f. Psa.* XX, 1934, under the title, *Über einen Typus der Pseudoaffektivität ('Als ob')*, and of a lecture given at the Chicago meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Society, 1938.

1Oberndorf, C. P.: *Depersonalization in Relation to Erotization of Thought.* *Int. J. Psa.*, XV, 1934, pp. 271–295; *Genesis of Feeling of Unreality.* *Int. J. Psa.*, XVI, 1935, pp. 296–306.

2Schilder, P.: *Treatment of Depersonalization.* *Bull. N. Y. Acad. Med.*, XV, 1939, pp. 258–272.

3Bergler, E., and Eidelberg, L.: *Der Mechanismus der Depersonalization.* *Int. Ztschr. f. Psa.*, XXI, 1935, pp. 258–285.

- 301 -

the reader is especially referred to the studies of Oberndorf,¹ Schilder,² and Bergler and Eidelberg.³

Most of the psychoanalytic observations in this paper deal with conditions bearing a close relationship to depersonalization but differing from it in that they were not perceived as disturbances by the patient himself. To this special type of personality I have given the name, 'as if'. I must emphasize that this name has nothing to do with Vaihinger's system of 'fictions' and the philosophy of 'As-If'. My only reason for using so unoriginal a label for the type of person I wish to present is that every attempt to understand the way of feeling and manner of life of this type forces on the observer the inescapable impression that the individual's whole relationship to life has something about it which is lacking in genuineness and yet outwardly runs along 'as if' it were complete. Even the layman sooner or later inquires, after meeting such an 'as if' patient: what is wrong with him, or her? Outwardly the person seems normal. There is nothing to suggest any kind of disorder, behavior is not unusual, intellectual abilities appear unimpaired, emotional expressions are well ordered and appropriate. But despite all this, something intangible and indefinable obtrudes between the person and his fellows and invariably gives rise to the question, 'What is wrong?'

A clever and experienced man, a patient of mine, met another of my patients, a girl of the 'as if' type, at a social gathering. He spent part of his next analytic hour telling me how stimulating, amusing, attractive, and interesting she was, but ended his eulogy with, 'But something is wrong with her'. He could not explain what he meant.

When I submitted the paintings of the same girl to an authority for his criticism and evaluation, I was told that the

- 302 -

drawings showed much skill and talent but there was also something disturbing in them which this man attributed to an inner restraint, an inhibition which he thought could surely be removed. Towards the end of the patient's not too successful analysis, she entered this critic's school for further instruction in painting and, after a time, I received a report in which her teacher spoke in glowing terms of her talent. Several months later I received a less enthusiastic report. Yes, the girl was talented, her teacher had been impressed by the speed with which she had adopted his technique and manner of artistic perception, but, he had frankly to admit, there was an intangible something about her which he had never before encountered, and he ended with the usual question, 'What is wrong?' He added that the girl had gone to another teacher, who used a quite different teaching approach, and that she had oriented herself to the new theory and technique with striking ease and speed.

The first impression these people make is of complete normality. They are intellectually intact, gifted, and bring great understanding to intellectual and emotional problems; but when they pursue their not infrequent impulses to creative work they construct, in form, a good piece of work but it is always a spasmodic, if skilled, repetition of a prototype without the slightest trace of originality. On closer observation, the same thing is seen in their affective relationships to the environment. These relationships are usually intense and bear all the earmarks of friendship, love, sympathy, and understanding; but even the layman soon perceives something strange

and raises the question he cannot answer. To the analyst it is soon clear that all these relationships are devoid of any trace of warmth, that all the expressions of emotion are formal, that all inner experience is completely excluded. It is like the performance of an actor who is technically well trained but who lacks the necessary spark to make his impersonations true to life.

Thus the essential characteristic of the person I wish to describe is that outwardly he conducts his life as if he possessed

- 303 -

a complete and sensitive emotional capacity. To him there is no difference between his empty forms and what others actually experience. Without going deeper into the matter I wish at this point to state that this condition is not identical with the coldness of repressed individuals in whom there is usually a highly differentiated emotional life hidden behind a wall, the loss of affect being either manifest or cloaked by overcompensations. In the one there is flight from reality or a defense against the realization of forbidden instinctual drives; in the other, a seeking of external reality in an effort to avoid an anxietyladen fantasy. Psychoanalysis discloses that in the 'as if' individual it is no longer an act of repression but a real loss of object cathexis. The apparently normal relationship to the world corresponds to a child's imitativeness and is the expression of identification with the environment, a mimicry which results in an ostensibly good adaptation to the world of reality despite the absence of object cathexis.

Further consequences of such a relation to life are a completely passive attitude to the environment with a highly plastic readiness to pick up signals from the outer world and to mold oneself and one's behavior accordingly. The identification with what other people are thinking and feeling, is the expression of this passive plasticity and renders the person capable of the greatest fidelity and the basest perfidy. Any object will do as a bridge for identification. At first the love, friendship, and attachment of an 'as if' person have something very rewarding for the partner. If it is a woman, she seems to be the quintessence of feminine devotion, an impression which is particularly imparted by her passivity and readiness for identification. Soon, however, the lack of real warmth brings such an emptiness and dullness to the emotional atmosphere that the man as a rule precipitously breaks off the relationship. In spite of the adhesiveness which the 'as if' person brings to every relationship, when he is thus abandoned he displays either a rush of affective reactions which are 'as if' and thus spurious, or a frank absence of affectivity. At the very first opportunity the

- 304 -

former object is exchanged for a new one and the process is repeated.

The same emptiness and the same lack of individuality which are so evident in the emotional life appear also in the moral structure. Completely without character, wholly unprincipled, in the literal meaning of the term, the morals of the 'as if' individuals, their ideals, their convictions are simply reflections of another person, good or bad. Attaching themselves with great ease to social, ethical, and religious groups, they seek,

by adhering to a group, to give content and reality to their inner emptiness and establish the validity of their existence by identification. Overenthusiastic adherence to one philosophy can be quickly and completely replaced by another contradictory one without the slightest trace of inward transformation—simply as a result of some accidental regrouping of the circle of acquaintances or the like.

A second characteristic of such patients is their suggestibility, quite understandable from what has already been said. Like the capacity for identification, this suggestibility, too, is unlike that of the hysteric for whom object cathexis is a necessary condition; in the 'as if' individual the suggestibility must be ascribed to passivity and automaton-like identification. Many initial criminal acts, attributed to an erotic bondage, are due instead to a passive readiness to be influenced.

Another characteristic of the 'as if' personality is that aggressive tendencies are almost completely masked by passivity, lending an air of negative goodness, of mild amiability which, however, is readily convertible to evil.

One of these patients, a woman, and the only child of one of the oldest noble families in Europe, had been brought up in an unusual atmosphere. With the excuse of official duties, and quite in accordance with tradition, the parents delegated the care and training of their child to strangers. On certain specified days of the week she was brought before her parents for 'control'. At these meetings there was a formal check of her educational achievements, and the new program and other

- 305 -

directions were given her preceptors. Then after a cool, ceremonious dismissal, the child was returned to her quarters. She received no warmth and no tenderness from her parents, nor did punishment come directly from them. This virtual separation from her parents had come soon after her birth. Perhaps the most inauspicious component of her parents' conduct, which granted the child only a very niggardly bit of warmth, was the fact—and this was reinforced by the whole program of her education—that their sheer existence was strongly emphasized, and the patient was drilled in love, honor, and obedience towards them without ever feeling these emotions directly and realistically.

In this atmosphere, so lacking in feeling on the part of the parents, the development of a satisfactory emotional life could scarcely be expected in the child. One would expect, however, that other persons in the environment would take the place of the parents. Her situation would then have been that of a child brought up in a foster home. In such children we find that the emotional ties to their own parents are transferred to the parent substitutes in relationship to whom the œdipus develops with greater difficulty perhaps but with no significant modifications.

This patient, in accordance with ceremonial tradition, always had three nurses, each of whom wanted to stand first in the eyes of the parents and each of whom continually sought the favor of the child. They were, moreover, frequently changed. Throughout her whole childhood there was no one person who loved her and who could have served as a significant love object for her.

As soon as she was able to conceptualize, the patient immersed herself intensively in fantasies about the parents. She attributed to them divine powers through which she was provided with things unattainable to ordinary mortals. Everything she absorbed from stories and legends she elaborated into the myth about her parents. No longing for love was ever expressed in these fantasies; they all had the aim of providing a

- 306 -

narcissistic gain. Every meeting with the real parents separated them further from the heroes of her imagination. In this manner there was formed in the child a parental myth, a fantasmic shadow of an œdipus situation which remained an empty form so far as real persons and emotions were concerned. Not only did reality which denied her parent relationships lead to narcissistic regression into fantasy, but this process gained further impetus from the absence of any substitutive object-libidinous relationships. The frequent change of nurses and governesses and the fact that these persons were themselves subjected to strict discipline, acted on orders, and used all available measures to make the child conform to the demands of reality, measures in which a pseudo tenderness was consciously used as a means to attain didactic ends, precluded this possibility. The child was trained very early to cleanliness and strict table manners, and the violent outbreaks of anger and rage to which she was subject in early childhood were successfully brought under control, giving way to an absolutely pliant obedience. Much of this disciplinary control was attained by appeal to the parents so that everything the child did which was obedient and proper she referred to the wish or command of the mythical father and mother.

When she entered a convent school at the age of eight, she was completely fixed in the 'as if' state in which she entered analysis. Superficially, there was no difference between her life and that of the average convent pupil. She had the customary attachment to a nun in imitation of her group of girls. She had the most tender friendships which were wholly without significance to her. She went devoutly through the forms of religion without the slightest trace of belief, and underwent seduction into masturbation with quasi feelings of guilt—simply to be like her comrades.

In time, the myth of the parents faded and disappeared without new fantasies to take its place. It disappeared as her parents became clearer to her as real persons and she devaluated them. Narcissistic

- 307 -

fantasies gave way to real experiences in which, however, she could participate only through identification.

Analysis disclosed that the success of her early training in suppressing instinctual drives was only apparent. It had something of the 'trained act' in it and, like the performance of the circus animal, was bound to the presence of a ringmaster. If denial of an instinct was demanded, the patient complied, but when an otherwise inclined object gave permission for the satisfaction of a drive, she could respond quite without inhibition, though with little gratification. The only result of the training was that the drive never

came into conflict with the external world. In this respect she behaved like a child in that stage of development in which its instinctual drives are curbed only by immediate external authority. Thus it happened that for a time the patient fell into bad company, in unbelievable contrast to her home environment and early training. She got drunk in low dives, participated in all kinds of sexual perversions, and felt just as comfortable in this underworld as in the pietistic sect, the artistic group, or the political movement in which she was later successively a participant.

She never had occasion to complain of lack of affect for she was never conscious of it. The patient's relationship to her parents was strong enough to enable her to make them heroes of her fantasy, but for the creation of a warm dynamic oedipus constellation capable of shaping a healthy future psychic life in both a positive and a negative sense the necessary conditions were obviously lacking. It is not enough that the parents are simply there and provide food for fantasy. The child must really be seduced to a certain extent by the libidinous activity of the parents in order to develop a normal emotional life, must experience the warmth of a mother's body as well as all those unconscious seductive acts of the loving mother as she cares for its bodily needs. It must play with the father and have sufficient intimacy with him to sense the father's masculinity in order that instinctual impulses enter the stream of the oedipus constellation.

This patient's myth bore some similarity to the fantasy which

4Freud designates as the 'family romance', fantasies which have in common the fact that they all relate to the ancestry of the person creating them. The typical version of the 'family romance' is 'I am not my parents' child. Whose child am I then?' The usual answer is, 'I come of a more exalted family'.

Cf. Deutsch, Helene: Zur Genese des 'Familienromans'. *Int. Ztschr. f. Psa.*, XVI, 1930, pp. 249–253.

- 308 -

Freud called the 'family romance'⁴ in which, however, the libidinal relation to the parents though repressed is very powerful. By repudiating the real parents, it is possible partly to avoid strong emotional conflicts from forbidden wishes, feelings of guilt, etc. The real objects have been repressed but in analysis they can be uncovered with their full libidinal cathexis.

But for our patient there was never a living warm emotional relationship to the parents or to anyone else. Whether after weak attempts at object cathexis the child returned to narcissism by a process of regression or never succeeded in establishing a real object relation as the result of being unloved is, for all practical purposes, irrelevant.

The same deficiency which interfered with the development of the emotional life was also operative in the formation of the superego. The shadowy structure of the oedipus complex was gradually given up without ever having come to an integrated and unified

superego formation. One gains the impression that the prerequisites for such a development also lie in strong œdipal object cathexes.

It is not to be denied that at a very early age some inner prohibitions are present which are the precursors of the superego and are intimately dependent on external objects. Identification with the parents in the resolution of the œdipus complex brings about the integration of these elements. Where this is absent, as it was in our patient, the identifications remain vacillating and transitory. The representatives which go to make up the conscience remain in the external world and instead of the development of inner morals there appears a persistent identification with external objects. In childhood, educational influences exerted an inhibitory effect on the instinctual life, particularly on the aggressions. In later life, in the absence of an adequate superego, she shifts the responsibility

- 309 -

for her behavior to objects in the external world with whom she identifies herself. The passivity of this patient as the expression of her submission to the will of another seems to be the final transformation of her aggressive tendencies.

As the result of this weak superego structure, there is little contact between the ego and the superego, and the scene of all conflicts remains external, like the child for whom everything can proceed without friction if it but obey. Both the persistent identification and the passive submission are expressions of the patient's complete adaptation to the current environment, and impart the shadowy quality to the patient's personality. The value of this link to reality is questionable because the identification always takes place with only a part of the environment. If this part of the environment comes into conflict with the rest, naturally the patient is involved. Thus it can come about that the individual can be seduced into asocial or criminal acts by a change in his identifications, and it may well be that some of the asocial are recruited from the group of 'as if' personalities who are adapted to reality in this restricted way.

Analysis of this patient revealed a genuine infantilism, that is, an arrest at a definite stage in the development of the emotional life and character formation. In addition to particularly unfavorable environmental influences it should be noted that the patient came from a very old family overrun with psychotics and invalid psychopaths.

Another woman patient had a father who had a mental illness and a mother who was neurotic. She remembered her father only as 'a man with a black beard', and she tried to explain as something very fascinating and wonderful, his absences as he was moved to and from a sanatorium and an isolated room at home, always under nursing care. Thus she built a myth around her father, replacing him in fantasy by a mysterious man, whom she later called an 'Indian' and with whom she had all sorts of experiences, each of which served to make her a superhuman being. The prototype for the Indian was the father's male nurse, whom the little girl saw mysteriously

- 310 -

disappearing into her father's room. The education and upbringing of the child were relegated to nurses, but despite this she succeeded in establishing a strongly libidinous attachment to the very abnormal mother. Her later relationships had elements of object-libidinous attitudes, sometimes warmer, especially in homosexual directions, but never sufficiently to change their 'as if' quality. The failure to develop an adequate object cathexis was, in this patient, related to the birth of her brother towards whom she developed an unusually aggressive envy. Comparisons of genitalia led the little girl to scrutinize her body for hours on end in a mirror. Later this narcissistic activity was gradually sublimated. At first she tried to model parts of her body in clay in order to facilitate her mirror studies. In the course of years she developed great skill in modeling and was for a brief time under the tutelage of a sculptress. Unconsciously, it was the fantasy of displaying repeatedly her body to the world. In later years she created only large, very voluptuous, matronly female figures. These proved to be weak attempts to recreate the mother she had lost in childhood to her brother. Ultimately she abandoned sculpture for music simply because she believed her teacher failed to appreciate her sufficiently.

Most conspicuous in her childhood was a monkey-like imitation of her brother with whom she was for years completely identified, not in fantasy but by acting out. Disastrously for both, the brother quite early betrayed unmistakable signs of a psychosis which culminated in a catatonic excitement. The sister imitated all her brother's bizarre activities and lived with him in a world of fantasy. Only her partial object-libidinous cathexis and a displacement of the process from the brother and identification with more normal objects saved her from being institutionalized. I was inclined at first to regard her condition as the result of an identification with her psychotic brother; only later did I recognize that the etiology of her condition lay deeper.

I believe this patient is similar to the first despite the differences in their development. In the second, it seems that a

- 311 -

disappointment shattered the strong relationship with the mother, that the mysterious absence of the father made it impossible for the little girl to find in him a substitute when her relationship to her mother was shaken, and that further relationships to objects remained at the stage of identification. By such identification she averted her intense hatred of her brother and transformed her aggression towards him into an obedient passivity in which she submissively identified herself with him. She developed no other object relationships. Her superego suffered the same fate as that of the first patient. The myth of the father and the very early devaluation of the mother prevented integration of her superego and left her dependent on persons in the external world.

A third patient, a pretty, temperamental woman of thirty-five with many intellectual and artistic talents, came to analysis because she was 'tired' after a long series of adventures. It soon became clear that, as the result of a certain combination of circumstances, her interest in psychoanalysis was actually an interest in the analyst, especially in her profession. While she frequently spoke of her tremendous interest in child psychology

and in Freud's theory and read widely on these subjects, her understanding of them was extraordinarily superficial and her interest entirely unreal. More careful observation disclosed that this was true not only for all her intellectual interests but for everything she did or had ever done. It was surprising to recognize in this woman, who was so indefatigably active, a condition so closely related to the pseudoaffectivity of the 'as if' patient. All her experiences too were based on identifications, though her identifications were not so straightforward as were those of the other type of patient which is, one might say, more monogamous and adheres to but one person or one group at a time, while this patient had so many concurrent identifications—or symbolic representations of identifications—that her conduct appeared erratic. She was, in fact, considered 'crazy' by those who knew her. Her friends however had no notion that her apparently rich life concealed a severe lack of affect. She

- 312 -

had come to me because of a wish to change her character, that is, to create more peace and harmony in her life by identifying herself with a 'particularly solid' professional personality.

After six months the analysis appeared to be unusually successful. The patient learned to understand many things about herself and lost her eccentricities. She determined to become an analyst and when this was denied her, she collapsed. She was completely lacking in affect and complained, 'I am so empty! My God, I am so empty! I have no feelings.' It transpired that prior to analysis she had got into serious financial difficulties by breaking off various friendships and love relationships and had realized that she would soon have to work. It was with this intention that she came to analysis. Her plan was to become an analyst by identification with her analyst. When this proved impossible, this seemingly very able and active woman changed into a completely passive person. From time to time she had extraordinarily violent fits of childish weeping or outbursts of rage, flung herself on the floor and kicked and screamed. Gradually, she developed a progressive lack of affect. She became completely negativistic and met all interpretations with, 'I don't understand what you mean by that'.

At two points in this patient's development she had suffered severe trauma. Her father was an alcoholic, and the patient often witnessed his brutal mistreatment of the mother. She sided vehemently with the latter and, when she was only seven, had fantasies in which she rescued her mother from her misery and built a little white cottage for her. She saved every penny and worked hard in school to attain this aim, only to discover that her mother was not merely a passive victim of her husband but took pleasure in being brutalized. The consequent devaluation of her mother not only deprived her of her only object of love but also arrested the development of a feminine ego ideal of an independent, adequate personality. She spent the rest of her life trying to make up for this lack by creating a whole series of identifications, in the same way as the 'as if' patients.

Deprived of tenderness and affection in her childhood, her

instincts remained crudely primitive. She vacillated between giving these instincts free rein and holding them in check. She acted out prostitution fantasies, indulged in a variety of sexual perversions, often giving the impression of hypomania. She emerged from these debauches by identification with some conventional person and achieved by this means a kind of sublimation, the form dependent on the particular object. This resulted in a frequent shifting of her occupation and interests. So long as it was possible for her either to retain such a relationship or to allow herself the gratification of very primitive drives she was not aware of her lack of affect.

The following cases of emotional disturbance bear close similarity with the 'as if' group but differ in certain respects.

A seventeen-year-old boy of unusual intellectual ability, came for analysis because of manifest homosexuality and a conscious lack of feeling. This lack of emotion included his homosexual objects, about whom he created all sorts of perverse fantasies. He was obsessively scrupulous, modest, exact, and reliable. He was passively oral and anal in his homosexuality. The analysis was extremely rich in material but progressed in an emotional vacuum. While the transference was frequently represented in his dreams and fantasies, it never became a conscious, emotional experience.

One day I gave him a ticket to a series of lectures in which I was taking part. He went to my lecture and had severe anxiety on the stairs leading to the lecture hall. By thus mobilizing his anxiety in the transference, the analysis began to progress.

An only child from a highly cultured environment, with a father who was strict and ambitious and a mother who dedicated her life to this handsome and talented son, he nevertheless suffered the fate of affective deficiency. The fact that he grew up in an atmosphere in which he never needed to seek for love, that he was overwhelmed with tenderness without having to make any effort to obtain it paralyzed his own active strivings for tenderness. He remained bound to primitive instinctual impulses, and because there were few infantile anxieties which

were not warded off with scrupulous care, there was no motive in him to build up defense mechanisms.

He underwent the trauma of the depreciation of his ego-ideal when he discovered that his admired father was uncultivated and limited. This realization threatened to depreciate his own value, for he was like his father, bore his name, and heard his resemblance to him repeatedly stressed by his mother. Through rigidity and strictness, in ethical and intellectual demands, he strove to become better than the self which was identified with the father. In contrast to the previous patients, he did not identify himself with a series of objects. Instead of having emotional relationships to people, he was split into two identifications: one with his beloved mother and the other with his father. The first was feminine and sexualized; the second was overcompensatory, rigid, and narcissistic.

Unlike the 'as if' patients, he complained of lack of feeling. He completely lacked the tender emotions which would have given warmth to his emotional life. He had no relation to any woman, and his friendships with men were either purely intellectual or crudely sexual. The feelings he had were of a character he would not let himself express. These were very primitive aggressions, the wildest, most infantile sexual drives, which were rejected with the declaration, 'I feel nothing at all'. In one way he told the truth; he was really lacking in any permissible feelings, that is, in the tender, sublimated emotions.

The tendency to identification is characteristic also of this type of affective disturbance. Even though this patient did not completely sink his personality in a series of identifications, the strongest section of his ego, his intellect, lacked originality. Everything he wrote and said in scientific matters showed great formal talent but when he tried to produce something original it usually turned out to be a repetition of ideas which he had once grasped with particular clarity. The tendency to multiple identifications occurred on the intellectual level.

Another patient of this group, a thirty-year-old married woman who came from a family in which there were many psychotics, complained about lack of emotion. In spite of good

- 315 -

intelligence and perfect reality testing, she led a sham existence and she was always just what was suggested to her by the environment. It became clear that she could experience nothing except a completely passive readiness to split into an endless number of identifications. This condition had set in acutely after an operation in her childhood for which she had been given no psychological preparation. On recovery from the anæsthesia she asked if she were really herself, and then developed a state of depersonalization which lasted a year and turned into passive suggestibility which concealed a crippling anxiety.

Common to all these cases is a deep disturbance of the process of sublimation which results both in a failure to synthesize the various infantile identifications into a single, integrated personality, and in an imperfect, one-sided, purely intellectual sublimation of the instinctual strivings. While critical judgment and the intellectual powers may be excellent, the emotional and moral part of the personality is lacking.

The etiology of such conditions is related first, to a devaluation of the object serving as a model for the development of the child's personality. This devaluation may have a firm foundation in reality or be traceable, for example, to shock at discovery of parental coitus at a period of development when the child is engaged in its last struggles against masturbation and needs support in its efforts towards sublimation. Or, as in the case of the boy described above, the successful sublimation may be interfered with by a sexualization of the relationship to an object who should serve the child as a model for its ego ideal, in this instance, a grossly sexual identification with his mother.

Another cause of this kind of emotional disturbance is insufficient stimulus for the sublimation of the emotions, as the result either of being given too little tenderness, or too much.

Infantile anxiety may suffer a similar fate. Too harsh or too indulgent treatment may contribute to failure in the economic formation of defense mechanisms resulting in remarkable passivity of the ego. It will be recalled that in the case

- 316 -

of the boy reported, an attack of anxiety not only mobilized the transference but also opened the way to his recovery.

The question must be raised as to how the tendency of 'as if' personalities to identification with current love objects differs from the same tendency in hysteria. The great difference between the latter and the 'as if' disturbance lies in the fact that the objects with which the hysterics identify themselves are the objects of powerful libidinous cathexes. Hysterical repression of affect brings freedom from anxiety and so represents a way out of the conflict. In 'as if' patients, an early deficiency in the development of affect reduces the inner conflict, the effect of which is an impoverishment of the total personality which does not occur in hysteria.

The patients described here might make one suspect that we are dealing with something like the blocking of affect seen especially in narcissistic individuals who have developed loss of feeling through repression. The great fundamental difference, however, is that the 'as if' personality tries to simulate affective experience, whereas the individual with a blocking of affect does not. In the analysis of the latter it can always be shown that the once developed object relationships and aggressive feelings have undergone repression and are not at the disposal of the conscious personality. The repressed, affectively toned segment of the personality is gradually uncovered during the analysis, and it is sometimes possible to make the buried part of the emotional life available to the ego.

For example, one patient had completely repressed the memory of his mother who died when he was four, and with whom, it was clear, the greater part of his emotions had been involved. Under the influence of a very weak but none the less effective transference, isolated memories gradually emerged. At first these had a negative character and denied all tenderness. During analysis this patient showed also another form of emotional disturbance, namely, depersonalization. Before analysis his self-satisfaction had been unshaken. He defended himself against the transference with all his power. In the analytic

- 317 -

hours, when clear signs of a transference in statu nascendi were perceptible, the patient would complain of sudden feelings of strangeness. It was clear that in him the depersonalization corresponded to the perception of a change in cathexis. It remained a question whether this was due to a new libidinal stream emerging from repression, or to a suppression of feelings connected with transference. The inner conflict in such an

instance of repression of affect has little similarity to that of an 'as if' patient. The analogy rests only on the affective impoverishment in both.

The narcissism and the poverty of object relationships so characteristic for an 'as if' person bring to consideration the relationship of this defect to a psychosis. The fact that reality testing is fully maintained removes this condition from our conception of psychosis.

Narcissistic identification as a preliminary stage to object cathexis, and introjection of the object after its loss, are among the most important discoveries of Freud and Abraham. The psychological structure of melancholia offers us the classical example of this process. In melancholia, the object of identification has been psychologically internalized, and a tyrannical superego carries on the conflict with the incorporated object in complete independence of the external world. In 'as if' patients, the objects are kept external and all conflicts are acted out in relation to them. Conflict with the superego is thus avoided because in every gesture and in every act the 'as if' ego subordinates itself through identification to the wishes and commands of an authority which has never been introjected.

From the beginning, both the personal impression given by the patients themselves and the psychotic disposition in the family, especially in the first two analytically observed cases, make one suspect a schizophrenic process. The tracing of the severe psychic disturbance directly back to the developments of early childhood seems to me completely justified, and whether this speaks against the diagnosis of a schizophrenic process must, for the time being, be left undecided. My observations

- 318 -

of schizophrenic patients have given me the impression that the schizophrenic process goes through an 'as if' phase before it builds up the delusional form. A twenty-two-year-old schizophrenic girl came to me after a catatonic attack, oriented for time and place but full of delusional ideas. Until the onset of the confusional state she had led an existence almost indistinguishable from 'as if' patients. Her bond to objects with whom she identified herself, and who were always outstanding women, was extremely intense. As a result of rapid shifting of these relationships, she changed her place of residence, her studies, and her interests in an almost manic fashion. Her last identification had led her from the home of a well-established American family to a communistic cell in Berlin. A sudden desertion by her object led her from Berlin to Paris where she was manifestly paranoid and gradually developed a severe confusion. Treatment restored her to her original state, but despite warnings, her family decided to break off the analysis. The girl was not able to summon enough affect to protest. One day she bought a dog and told me that now everything would be all right; she would imitate the dog and then she would know how she should act. Identification was retained but was no longer limited to human objects; it included animals, inanimate objects, concepts, and symbols, and it was this lack of selectivity which gave the process its delusional character. It was the loss of the capacity for identification with human objects which made possible the erection of a new, delusional world.

Another schizophrenic patient for years had had a recurrent dream in which in great pain and torment she sought her mother but could not find her because she was always faced with an endless crowd of women, each of whom looked like her mother, and she could not tell the right one. This dream reminded me of the stereotyped, recurrent mother figures in the sculpture of the second 'as if' patient.

Freud⁵ speaks of 'multiple personality' as the result of a process in which numerous identifications lead to a disruption

⁵Freud: The Ego and the Id. London: Institute of Psycho-Analysis and Hogarth Press, 1927.

- 319 -

of the ego. This may result in manifest psychopathology, or the conflicts between the different identifications can assume a form which need not necessarily be designated as pathological. Freud refers to a purely inner process of ego formation, and this does not apply to the 'as if' identifications with objects in the outer world. However, the same psychological process will also in the 'as if' personality on one occasion have a more 'normal' resolution and on another a pathological outcome which may be more or less severe.

Anna Freud⁶ points out that the type of pseudoaffectivity observed in 'as if' patients is often found in puberty. I believe that the depreciation of the primary objects (also typical of puberty) who served as models for the ego ideal, plays an important rôle in both. Anna Freud describes this type of behavior in puberty as incurring the suspicion of psychosis. I believe that the reflections which I have presented here will also serve for puberty. At one time the process will lie within the bounds of the 'normal' and at another it bears the seeds of a pathological condition. The type justifies the designation 'schizoid', whether or not schizophrenia later develops.

Whether the emotional disturbances described in this paper imply a 'schizophrenic disposition' or constitute rudimentary symptoms of schizophrenia is not clear to me. These patients represent variants in the series of abnormal distorted personalities. They do not belong among the commonly accepted forms of neurosis, and they are too well adjusted to reality to be called psychotic. While psychoanalysis seldom succeeds, the practical results of treatment can be very far-reaching, particularly if a strong identification with the analyst can be utilized as an active and constructive influence. In so far as they are accessible to analysis, one may be able to learn much in the field of ego psychology, especially with regard to disturbances of affect, and, perhaps, make contributions to the problem of the 'schizoid' which is still so obscure.

⁶Freud, A.: The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence. London: Hogarth Press, 1937.

- 320 -

In the great delusional formations of the psychoses we see primitive and archaic drives returning from the depths of the unconscious in a dramatic manner. Regression takes place because the ego has failed. We speak of this as a 'weakness of the ego' and assume that the reasons for this failure are psychological, constitutional, or organic. Psychoanalysis can investigate the first of these, especially in prepsychotic conditions to which these cases belong.

- 321 -

DEUTSCH, H. (1942) Some forms of emotional disturbance and their relationship with squizofrenia. *Psychoanal, Q.* 11:301

SHARPE, E. (1930) CERTAIN ASPECTS OF SUBLIMATION AND DELUSION.
INT. J. PSYCHO-ANAL., 11:12 (IJP)

CERTAIN ASPECTS OF SUBLIMATION AND DELUSION¹

ELLA SHARPE

In 1879, a Spaniard, interested in problems of the evolution of culture, was exploring a cave on his estate at Altamira, in Northern Spain. He was searching for new examples of flint and carved bone of which he had already found specimens. His little daughter was with him. The cave was dark and he worked by the light of an oil lamp. The child was scrambling over the rocks and suddenly called out 'Bulls, Bulls!' She pointed to the ceiling, so low that he could touch it with his hand. He lifted the lamp and saw on the uneven surface numbers of bison and other animals drawn with great realism and painted in bright colours. These drawings are now accepted as the work of the Hunter Artists of the Reindeer Age, computed to be 17, 000 years ago.

To execute these drawings, paleolithic man penetrated to the cave and must have burned animal fat in a stone lamp in order to see. It was a purposeful act and a purposeful journey, for the people actually lived at the entrance to the cave or under shelving rocks near the entrance.

Seventeen thousand years later a man by the aid of a lamp penetrates to those recesses. A child sees the animals first and points them out to her father.

At that dramatic moment of recognition in the bowel of the cave a common impulse unites the ancient hunter artist and modern man. Between them lies the whole evolution of civilization, but the evolution that separates them springs from the impulse that unites them. By which I mean that the Spaniard is driven to the far recesses of the caves by the same inner necessity that sent the hunter artist there. The hunter-artist goes to make life-like representations. The Spaniard goes to find flints and carved bones, in order to piece together evidence of the life of primitive peoples. In other words to reconstruct, to make a representation of, life that has passed away.

My intention in this short paper is to deal with certain aspects of this many-sided complicated subject of sublimation, viz. in dancing, singing, painting and historical research, since my clinical experience

¹Read at the Eleventh International Congress of Psycho-Analysis, Oxford, July 31, 1929.

has enabled me to see that these sublimations have a common root, an inner necessity that is in essence in no wise different from the necessity that animated the first artists. The dawn of civilization is the dawn of art. The two are inseparable. From the moment man began to carve his flints and make drawings on the walls of his cave, there begins recorded history and civilization has started on its intricate development.

Behind that first appearance of man with whom we claim our kinship, that is when man appears as Hunter Artists, there is conjecture and dispute. Mousterian Man, it is computed, says Falaize in *Origins of Civilisation*, lived 50, 000 years B.C. He says evidences of cannibalism practised by Mousterian Man are afforded by human remains found in Croatia. Behind the appearance of the mummification rites of ancient Egypt, Flinders Petrie has deduced the age of cannibalism. From dismemberment of bodies which accompanies cannibalism we pass to the age of mummification in Egypt, to the building of tombs and to ceremonies for the dead. Eliot Smith sees in the tombs of the Egyptians the beginnings of architecture in stone, and the beginnings of overseas trade in the search for wood and spices for embalming purposes. The death mask in ancient Egypt was followed by the making of the statue.

Sublimation and civilization are mutually inclusive terms: cannibalism and civilization mutually exclusive. Civilization begins with the first art forms, and these first art forms are inseparable from the problems of food (life) and death.

The first drawings were those of the animals that primitive hunters killed for food. The explanation given is that it was a magical way of producing and ensuring the food supply. Draw a bison and bison will be plentiful. But this does not explain why the first artists crept to the recesses of the cave to draw their pictures. Other hunter artists followed, driven by the same necessity, and superimposed their drawings over the ones they found in these hidden places. We see here an inner compulsion first to make a vividly realistic drawing, secondly to place that drawing within the bowels of a cave. The problems of food and of death are implicit in these cave drawings, for the animals drawn were the food supply of the hunters. The drawings are life-like representations.

I would next recall to your memory the fact that the figure of man appearing in these cave drawings of paleolithic times often wears an animal mask. Behind the animal we have the man. So I see in the

drawings of primitive man, in the animals, and men with animal masks, the first attempt in art to resolve a conflict raging around the problem of food and of death.

The first dancer in Europe, perhaps in the world, was the cave dweller. The cave drawings of paleolithic man illustrate dancers. In the earliest rock drawing of a ritual dance, the figures appear in processional formation in connection with a slain bison.

Dancing, like drawing, was a magical performance. Like drawing it is, from its origin, associated with the same problems of food (or life) and death. The dance was part of

ancient Egyptian funerary rites. The cave dweller wearing an animal mask imitated the movements of the creature he had slain. The impersonation of ghosts, the enacting of the resurrection of the dead person by the dancer, point to the same motivations in the origin of dancing as in the origin of drawing. The dead are made alive again by magical acts.

From the dramatic dances, which the world over are connected with ceremonies for the dead, arose the beginnings of drama. Ridgeway contends that wherever they are found tragedy and serious drama have their roots in the world-wide belief in the continued existence of the soul after the death of the body. Drama began, not as entertainment, but as ceremony. This aspect is voiced in modern times by Bernard Shaw, who considers art as a department of social hygiene.

'The swaddling clothes of drama are the winding-sheets of the hero king' (Ivor Brown). The masks worn by early actors were for the purpose of portraying the dead. The persons who wore the masks were for the time being the incarnations of the spirits of the dead.

A modern writer has said, 'At least we need not relate our play-going to our food supply or regard our actor as the most likely guarantor of our survival after death'. I believe that art rises to its supreme height only when it performs the service—first for the artist, and unconsciously for ourselves—that it did in ancient times. That service is a magical re-assurance. Great art is a self-preservative functioning. A vital communication is made to us in picture, statue, drama, novel. It is life that is danced, a world that is built in music. When these things are supreme, are perfection, we rest satisfied in contemplation. From a world of apprehension and anxiety, a world of temporal things, of vicissitudes and death, we temporarily escape. In those few moments of conviction, immortality is ours. 'Because I live, ye shall live also'.

The word 'drama' is derived from the Greek, 'a thing done'.

- 14 -

'To do' is the characteristic of the artist in distinction to the philosopher, whose necessity is 'to think'. In ancient days these 'doings' were vital to the prosperity of the community. More complicated, more subtly interwoven in our lives, they remain as vital to-day. The great artist must 'do'—driven by an inner need. It is the actual painting, the actual doing, that is the vital thing for him.

An analysis which removed an inhibition against dancing revealed the following: The patient knew within herself how to dance. She knew how to have control over her muscles. To see new steps, a new dance, was to receive a picture through her eyes. She could then practise 'in her head'. Like a negative she had taken the image. Then it could be re-produced as a picture taken from a negative. She was the negative and she re-produced the picture. Sounds of music suggested dance. Sound and movement went together naturally. The body bent this way and that, swayed and moved as though it were one thing—all one thing—as a bird in flying is all one thing. She was like a bird, was a bird. She was it and it was herself. That is, she was the magical phallus. The

dancing was in her. She had become the thing she once saw through eyes of desire, love and hate. She had incorporated it and after the manner of cannibalistic beliefs she had become endued with the power of the thing incorporated.

The ancient dancer became the dead of whom he was afraid. He imitated the movements of the thing he had slain and eaten. The mourner at the ceremonial funeral in Rome imitated the dead. The white face of the clown even yet testifies to the ghost he once impersonated of intent.

A delusion of omnipotence finds a reality channel. Eyes have seen and ears heard and body felt, and the ego in some cases uses its functioning and says 'I can do that'. In the stress of anxiety this 'can' becomes 'must'. The phallic personification in dancing is a 'must be, ' 'am' as powerful as the father, psychically 'I am the father'—a delusion and yet an ego-functioning result.

One has to search further to understand why this magical personification was for my patient a talisman for prosperity, a talisman against an evil fate, for herself, even as dancing was in ancient times for the community. I found that men's admiration and approval were a support for her, but it was clearly not to secure it that her dancing was unconsciously a necessity. It secured no release from anxiety. She needed their support and admiration for precisely the same reason that she needed to identify herself with the father's phallus.

- 15 -

Perfect dancing released her; reaching a standard that satisfied an inexorable demand within her gave her security. In reaching this standard, she had then gone beyond anything expected of her; that is, she had more than satisfied her ballet mistress. At that moment she felt care-free, could snap her fingers at one of whom she was in constant dread, until she left that mistress in a state of ecstatic approval. I came thus to a certainty that the person of whom she stood in terror was unconsciously the mother. On to the mother had been projected those wishes that were inimical to life itself. As she would have taken those things from her mother she desired and envied, from milk to children and the father's penis, so there had been projected on to the mother intents as destructive to herself.

From this terrifying situation she is saved by perfect dancing. She becomes the magical phallus. She restores in herself what her hostility wished to take away, to destroy. It is an omnipotent restitution, an assurance of life. You will remember the bison were drawn in the recesses of a cave. The father is restored to the mother; the penis, the child, are back again magically in the womb.

Dancing is a magical control of the parents by becoming the father. The need for it is anxiety due to hostility which itself derives from frustration. By this delusion of omnipotence, the dancer is the father, and dancing is an atonement, a restitution. It is life that is being danced, and the evil that the hostile wishes to the mother would bring is averted.

A singer revealed this. Analysis enabled her to get rid of bad habits in her voice that she had contracted through trying to follow the instructions of various singing teachers. She is now able to say 'But I knew how to produce it quite naturally myself, all the time, ever since I was a child. Their instruction has made me go wrong always. I knew instinctively, but teachers assume you don't know; they alone know; you know nothing—as if it were wrong to know. When they said, "Your voice is so big, we must be careful nothing spoils it", I thought, "How big? How can it be spoiled? Is it so big it can't get through"?'

Now that she has lost her voice-tricks she says: 'The voice is inside you. All you need to do is to relax. Breathing takes care of itself if you let your diaphragm work in and out, up and down. The voice pours out like water, like cream. You remember you are not really reaching up higher and higher, only pretending to do so, for the notes are all in one place. You put them where you like, control them. You

- 16 -

are a bird flying up in your voice. It draws people to you. They feel as you feel, sad or gay. The Pied Piper drew children from their homes by music. Orpheus drew stocks and stones. The Sirens drew men to destruction'.

She is, in singing then, the powerful parents. Her very body is the breast and the penis. The voice is the milk, the water, the fructifying semen. She has identified by incorporating the power of both parents. By the magical singing she is reproducing, externalising again what is incorporated. It is a delusion of control over those whom she feared. As they made her feel sorrow and joy, now she has the power to make others feel these emotions.

The ego secures release from the anxiety of the incorporated hostile parents by a power of externalising it into an art form, and this art form is an omnipotent life-giving, a restoration, milk, water, semen, a child.

The way in which an artist worked revealed this: She said in effect: 'It is strange people have to learn perspective, rules for foreshortening. If you see a flower looking as if it were coming towards you, you draw it as you see it. That is all. The eyes take it in just as it is. The pictures in my mind, I see on the blank paper, or canvas, and I just put outlines round them and paint'. That is, the pictures were outer realities once, the images of infancy. They are incorporated. Then they are projected on to a blank sheet, like the bison in the cave.

Thus the hostility of the incorporated object no longer menaces the ego, for the omnipotence has become an adjunct to the ego. Eye and hand deal with it. Every stroke of the brush is a power over the parents. To paint a picture, no less than to have a piece of toe-nail, is to have the real person magically in one's power. Yet painting is a restitution too. The blank space is filled. All those things which the child would wrest from the mother are restored, the food eaten, the children, the father's penis. The first drawing at the age of three this patient did was intended to represent a mother holding a baby under a bower of roses.

I would gather up these arguments briefly:

A patient bordering on a delusion of persecution is obsessed by a prophecy of a woman palmist that she will have a child who will die. The patient cannot rid herself of this fearful future. She harbours and plans revenge on the palmist. Analysis speedily transferred thoughts of the palmist to the analyst. The analyst, she thought, was doing

- 17 -

magical evil against her. Further analysis revealed that she believed her voice had been spoiled by a singing mistress. The patient had previously given up painting because she thought her originality was being taken from her. Dancing had been abandoned in late childhood. Out of twelve months' brooding she emerged into high states of excitement, and activity gradually became a necessity. Anxiety broke out, and with it bursts of hostility which became most marked against a mistress on whom was projected her own hostility to the mother-imago. The repressed hostility to her mother in childhood has become quite accessible. Meanwhile, her voice has broken loose from all the tricks she acquired. The delusion of persecution has disappeared, and anxiety has become more manageable. It disappears entirely when she sings. Then she is care-free. That is, a delusion of being persecuted is resolved when sublimation goes forward. The sublimation springs from the same root as the delusion of persecution. It is worked out from inside into a form of art. This form of art is a bringing back of life, a reparation, an atonement, a nullification of anxiety. It is an omnipotent phantasy of control, of security from evil, in a world of reality, because it finds expression in ego functioning.

The delusion serves the purposes of the super-ego. The hostility is felt as emanating from another. The patient feels persecuted. It is the other person who is wrong, not herself who is to blame. Analysis brings to consciousness the repressed hostility to the mother. The super-ego is modified to the degree that the repressed hostility (and its causes) becomes conscious. The delusion disintegrates. In its place sublimation occurs. The hostility is worked out from inside, externalised into a form of art.

A state of unstable equilibrium was reached and maintained for a period of years by a psychotic patient under the following system:—

1. The crystallization of a fixed delusion.
2. The operation of an intense super-ego severity in the rest of her psychic life.
3. The carrying on of routine work which was clearly punitive. It called for diligence and loyalty. It was a 'making good' for childhood misdemeanours and offered psychically as a propitiation to the mother-imago.
4. The last stabilizing factor in this system was the possession of a doll. The period from twenty to twenty-nine years of age in her life was covered by the power of this doll. It was a lady doll, holding a baby. During these years the doll was reverently treated. Every week it was

- 18 -

taken out and looked at to see that it was intact, without harm or blemish, and then gently laid by again, wrapped up and put in a drawer.

The fixed delusion was in essence the Œdipus fulfilment, a belief that a doctor had made sexual overtures. There was no affect, no feeling of guilt. The super-ego was served because the overtures were projected on to the doctor delusionally. Anxiety was held in check and controllable through the doll, for since the Œdipus wishes are inseparable from hostility to the mother and the desire to get rid of her and to have the father's child, the patient had provided for the projected menace of the mother by a magical assurance. The doll was the uninjured, unbereft mother.

It has taken seven years to disintegrate the delusion and reach the embedded memory traces and childhood wishes. It has taken seven years for the doll to shrink down to the proportion of a real doll. This doll was the magical talisman, the mask, the statue of primitive times.

The slow disintegrating of the delusion, the shrinking of the doll, the loss of interest in routine work, the lessening of super-ego severity went on simultaneously with the emergence of hidden interests that had been latent since childhood. The major of these was a confession of interest in history. This became the main avenue of the subsequent analysis. The first figures elaborated were those which in the closest way were representative of her unconscious phantasies concerning her father and mother and herself. She began to dramatise, to project her own identification on to figures that represented the mother and father in the world of history. These figures became extraordinarily real. She lived their lives and no searching out of detail was too fatiguing in order that they might be completed.

The pursuit of this led eventually to the patient leaving routine work and becoming a university student in history.

The interest here lies in what happened during analysis. I do not think there was any diminution of omnipotent phantasy, but a different disposal of it. Briefly I would track the path in this way;—

1. An extremity of anxiety in childhood due to real frustration. An actual trauma that exacerbated anxiety.
2. This led to violent aggressiveness. Analysis showed that owing to her own hostility in frustration her safety lay in being omnipotent over her parents. This was delusionally accompanied by a male identification and played out by being a warrior. She massacred her dolls and so symbolically she had power of life and death over her parents.

- 19 -

3. At puberty the super-ego reinforcement brought a complete change of behaviour, complete suppression and condemnation of her former misdemeanour. This was another form of omnipotent control. 'Honour thy father and mother that thy days may be long in the land'. The good behaviour achieved the same end omnipotently as the

previous violence, viz., self-preservation. At the same time there was a postponement, not a relinquishing, of id wishes—one day, if not now, there, if not here, in Heaven, if not on earth.

4. The Œdipus wishes then emerged in a delusion of fulfilment. This delusion fulfilled demands of both id and super-ego, for it was projected on to the doctor, whose guilt it now was. The delusion of the doll went alongside, a magical restoration of the mother and therefore a guarantee of her own safety.

The disintegration of the delusion laid bare the Œdipus wishes and brought back memories of her violent childhood. This brought about a diminution of the super-ego severity, and a corresponding strengthening of the ego. This ego-strengthening led to increase of social contacts, and self-confidence. This was accompanied by giving up of routine work and a sublimation in the study of history. The omnipotence that found a pathway to a delusion and expressed itself in a magic doll now found a pathway in terms of reality, a sublimation vested in the ego. The first figures in history were parent imagos. From them interest passed to the period of time in which they were set and gradually, as anxiety lessened, the historical interest broadened and deepened in its range.

In history the people are all dead. They are brought to life again by the vital interest put into them. Their lives are re-lived, reconstructed. Their lives are first absorbed by the student. There is an imbibing of knowledge, symbolically no separation from the parents. In the essays and theses written there is an externalising of what has been incorporated, a re-creation, and therefore a nullification of anxiety.

The sublimation has at its roots the same phantasy of omnipotence as the delusion, it has become an ego-adjunct, has found a pathway into reality.

Behind the ego-ideal, says Freud, 'there lies hidden the first and most important identification of all, the identification with the father'. Perhaps it would be safer to say 'with the parents'. Later he says, 'At the beginning, in the primitive oral phase of the individual's existence, object cathexis and identification are hardly to be distinguished'.
Mrs.

2This JOURNAL, Vol. X.

- 20 -

Isaacs² pertinently says in her paper on 'Privation and Guilt' 'that Freud's primary identification may perhaps play in the total drama a greater part than was originally thought'.

Freud says the relation of super-ego to ego is not exhausted by the precept, 'You ought to be such and such' (like your father): it also comprises the prohibition 'You must not be such and such (like your father), that is, you may not do all that he does'. Many things are his prerogative. One form of this prohibition, 'Thou shalt not' is embodied in Mosiac law. 'Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, nor any likeness of

anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God'. The artist has clearly not succumbed to this prohibition. I think the reason for this is to be found in the primal identification with the parents, where Freud says object cathexis is hardly distinguishable from identification. These parents are the active sexual parents. They are very human beings, permitting themselves much in the infant's presence, because of its infancy.

In the stress of anxiety caused by super-ego severity and the claims of the id I see three extreme contingencies.

1. The ego may be rent from reality and overwhelmed by the id.
2. The ego may remain true to reality, but its functioning impaired by severity of the super-ego. Sublimation will be curtailed by a 'Thou shalt not'.
3. We have the artist. Hanns Sachs has said, 'in spite of his specially developed sense of guilt, the artist has found an unusual way, closed to most men, of reconciling himself to his super-ego'. He suggests that this escape from super-ego severity is through the mediation of his work.

Art, I suggest, is a sublimation rooted in the primal identification with the parents. That identification is a magical incorporation of the parents, a psychical happening which runs parallel to what has been for long ages repressed, i.e. actual cannibalism. After the manner of cannibalistic belief psychically the same magical thing results, viz. an omnipotent control over the incorporated objects, and a magical endowment with the powers of the incorporated.

- 21 -

The safety of the ego will depend upon its ability to deal with the incorporated imagos. We know from the mechanism of melancholia that when the ego itself becomes identified with the reproached love object, super-ego sadism, reinforced by id sadism, may destroy the ego.

At the oral level the ego must magically control the seemingly hostile parent, because of the infant's inadequate knowledge of reality.

Then everything depends upon the ability of the ego to eject this hostile incorporation from itself. This means in effect an ego control, in the outer world, of something which can represent the primarily introjected hostile imago.

The artist externalizes that hostility into a work of art. In that work of art he is making, controlling, having power over—in an external form—an introjected image or images. During creative periods omnipotence is vested in the ego, not in the super-ego. At the same time that he is externalizing the introjected hostile image, controlling it in a definite form, moulding, shaping it, he is re-creating symbolically the very image that hostility has destroyed.

Should we find, if we looked deep enough, that all sublimation depends upon the power of the ego to externalize the incorporated imagos into some form, concrete or abstract, which is made, moulded, and controlled by the ego in a reality world?

If for us the idea of the dead is freed from the cruder superstitions and fears of past ages, it is because we are phalanxed right and left, behind and before, by a magical nullification of fear in sublimation that is the very woof and weft of civilization. The past lives in our consciousness, in history, which is the living past, in anthropology, in archæology. Music, art, drama, creative literature, perform their age-long service. Of all arts, the last, the moving picture, is destined for the widest human appeal. The resources of science and art here converge in answer to man's deepest necessity and will consummate the most satisfying illusion the world has known. Future generations will be able to see the past as it really was. The great figures will move and live before them as they did even in life. They will speak with their authentic voices. There, in that darkened theatre, with all our knowledge and enlightenments we will not hesitate to reach out a hand through time to the first artist painting his bison in the dim recesses of the cave.

- 22 -

'If the red slayer think he slay,
If the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.'

or as the English magician puts it:—

'Graves, at my command,
Have waked their sleepers, op'd and let them forth
By my so potent art.'

- 23 -

SHARPE, E. (1935) SIMILAR AND DIVERGENT UNCONSCIOUS DETERMINANTS UNDERLYING THE SUBLIMATIONS OF PURE ART AND PURE SCIENCE. INT. J. PSYCHO-ANAL., 16:186

**SIMILAR AND DIVERGENT UNCONSCIOUS DETERMINANTS
UNDERLYING THE SUBLIMATIONS OF PURE ART AND PURE SCIENCE¹**

ELLA FREEMAN SHARPE

The sublimations of art and science in all their multifarious aspects, pure and applied, make up roughly what we mean by civilization. They represent an infinite range of subtle combinations and transformations of psychical energies. We find these sublimations compatible with a well-developed reality-sense and adaptation to adult life. My concern in this paper is an inquiry into the determinants that underlie 'pure' art and 'pure' science. 'Pure' art and 'pure' science represent limited psychological phenomena, and in them we see on a massive scale the mechanisms which are more modified, more fused, or more partial in the scientific and artistic activities which are inseparable from civilized life.

By pure art I mean those products of creative genius which have been dictated only by the inner laws and urges of the creator. They serve no practical end and bow to no public criterion. The public bows to them. The pure artist of whom I speak will, if a section of the public acclaim and follow him, become a wealthy man—he for whom wealth has least worldly reality. Epstein is now affluent, but his practical life is virtually the same round of intense industry as when he was unknown. The goal of endeavour is neither worldly wealth nor ease. The pure artist who is not acclaimed by a section of the public, nevertheless, owing to the urgency of his inner nature can be nothing else but an artist. In the last extremity, the 'pure' artist will starve unless provided for by friends and patrons. He has no conscience in the matter of earning a livelihood in the generally accepted sense. As a contrast and companion picture to Epstein, one thinks of Van Gogh, who lived on the verge of starvation during his life. Van Gogh once said he understood that his paintings brought in no money, but he did not understand the charge of idleness made against him. The pinnacles of genius, I would hazard, are only attained

¹Read before the Thirteenth International Psycho-Analytical Congress, Lucerne, 1934.

- 186 -

by those who, if circumstances so fell out, would pursue their unconsciously determined goal to the verge of starvation.

The 'pure' scientist is as detached from the exigencies of practical life as the 'pure' artist. He is as unconcerned with the practical purposes to which his discoveries may lead as the artist whose works serve no utilitarian end. They are in that respect alike. Certain

aspects of practical reality, that is, do not claim either of them. The 'pure' scientist is as possessed by the direct necessity to know, to find out, as the artist is possessed by the necessity to make. He will not 'use' his knowledge to practical ends, any more than the pure artist will make a useful thing. The 'pure' scientist is not as likely to reach the starvation level as the 'pure' artist. The applied scientist is at his elbow, and commerce and war utilize his discoveries. Moreover, he can find an honourable place in seats of learning, where in return for exposition he can carry on his researches, as well as find a simple life sufficient for his needs.

I have, in explaining what I mean by 'pure' artist and 'pure' scientist, given one similarity between them, namely, that neither of them pursue their calling for the purpose of material ends in reality, that is, doing or making in the service of practical reality.

No two sublimations could well seem more dissimilar, and yet in their dissimilarity no two sublimations reveal more characteristics in common. In outward manifestation the man of pure science is concerned with the dispassionate investigation of the external universe, with objective unemotional fact. The artist creates everything through a personal medium, that is through a sensuous contact; and yet the greater the artist, the more does his work become objective, freed from personal partial bias, and exhibit universal truth. Hamlet and *Œdipus Rex* are stories of everyman, not the personal life of Shakespeare or Sophocles. Here again 'pure' science and 'pure' art in their dissimilarity are fundamentally alike. The objectivity of the scientist in his formulation and correlation of facts with the emergence of natural laws is a parallel to the emergence of universal psychological representation in a work of art freed from the personal and particular bias of the artist. Shakespeare, perhaps, in one medium of art is the outstanding example of this objectivity.

The great divergence between science and art is that science concerns itself with external phenomena; while in art, however external phenomena may be a stimulus, the actual product is attained through the internal experience of the artist. Science is knowing; art is doing.

- 187 -

The following is a short summary of the similarities and divergencies, before investigation into the unconscious determinants is made: Art is an ordering of emotional experience. The submission of emotional experience to a rhythmic order results in a unity of which the parts are fused in a harmonious sequence. The work of art is pre-ordained, complete from beginning to end. Chance is eliminated, because cause and effect stand revealed in a work of art. Science is the observation and classification of external facts. The result of this is an ordering of facts into a unified body of knowledge from which emerge natural laws. Chance is eliminated by the discovery of cause and effect.

I will turn to a more detailed consideration of the pure artist. The major mechanisms involved are introjection and projection, creative art representing the projection of the artist's introjection in some form to be perceived by the senses. This sensuous

projection, if it is to be acknowledged as art, must exhibit certain characteristics such as I have detailed, harmonious order, design and unity.

The means by which the artist achieves this projection of his introjections are bodily ones, just as the appeal of his art to his audience is through ear and eye. It is a bodily knowledge, a manipulation of bodily muscles to a point of finest and rarest accuracy, that is exhibited by the great singer, dancer, instrumentalist, painter, sculptor. Knowledge of, control over, use of the whole body, or parts of it, is accomplished, we know not how, by the creative genius. Seeing, hearing, bodily sensation are the sense-organs by which we first learn to know external reality and first introject what we see and hear and feel. By bodily sensation we first experience internal reality, pleasurable and painful sensation. By the same sensory organs that first apprehend external and internal reality, by means of which the first introjections are made, the artist's projections are accomplished later. The first actual bodily introjection and incorporation in body-substance is milk; the first bodily projections are urine and soft faeces. Both the introjection of a good imago and the projection of a good valuable product from the body will be allied with these experiences when they synchronize with pleasurable sucking at the breast and pleasurable relief through evacuation. Similarly, the introjection of a bad imago, the production from within of bad and dangerous things, identified with this internalized bad object, will first synchronize with experiences of frustration and the arousal of anxiety due to aggression. These frustrations may be caused by external agencies or by internal tensions

- 188 -

due to bodily hunger, pain or libidinal deprivation. In the case of the artist, the sensory organs retain a great degree of their original method of apprehending the external world, and associated with them to a maximum degree are the original psychical feelings and phantasies concerning what is good and bad. The artist's moral code, his range of values, is in terms of good and bad form, line, colour, sound, and movement. His ethics are in these things, because of the intensity of feelings, good and bad, associated with sight, sound, intake and output, during infancy. He retains and maintains the vivid sense-perception of infancy, associated with good and bad feelings. The original methods of apprehending the external world—how to a baby in course of development the world gradually becomes as the adult knows it—is obscure. One thing is clear to me. The artist who instinctively draws an object in perspective without learning the laws of perspective has the ability to make a 'pure' perception without the interposition of other knowledge—an ability which has its beginnings in early infancy. I remember an artist patient telling me that when she was a girl she attended an art class at school. On an early occasion the art teacher gave her laborious reasons in her instructions on fore-shortening. The pupil remarked, 'But you draw it as you see it, don't you?' The teacher was angry and said that if the pupil drew it as she saw it, instead of following the rules given, she would draw it wrongly. The pupil was an artist and to the annoyance of her teacher drew what she saw correctly, without troubling about the application of rules. When a child draws a chair with four legs when only three can be seen, the fourth leg may be introduced for more reasons than are at first apparent; but at

any rate we can say one type of knowledge interferes with another. When a child draws three legs only, because it only sees three, it is seeing the appearance rightly. The capacity to do that and to correlate and co-ordinate parts results in a picture which is right in perspective. Now the sense of reality will develop, however obscurely, upon the capacity to make 'pure' perceptions. The ability to see things in perspective is a touchstone, not only of right seeing in the external world, but in the internal one. It is in emotional and anxiety states that we do not see either ourselves or others 'in perspective'. The link here with infancy is that a 'pure' perception will belong to the times when feeling is that of security and assurance, the times of good experience when anxiety is absent. Pure perception is not only the capability of seeing the appearances of things without the intervention of other knowledge; but of far greater

- 189 -

importance is the non-intervention of desire due to anxiety. Newton hit on the law of gravity while watching an apple fall to the ground; one infers that he was not hungry. Another process of supreme importance is the gradual extension of the child's awareness of and introjection of the external environment, alongside his growing awareness of his own body-ego, of the building up of himself, so to speak, of his realization of his feet and hands as his own. The production of a picture is inseparable from specific psychical mechanisms; but the bodily manipulations themselves, the manner in which creative art is achieved, are inseparable from physio-psychical processes in infancy. That is, while the painting of a picture represents the mechanisms of introjection and projection, the restoration of an introjected object, taken in piecemeal and restored piecemeal to an organic whole, yet behind it is the actual fundamental primitive pattern of this piecemeal method by which the external environment was learned and put together by sight and sound. A patient who is undergoing analysis will sometimes give one a fascinating glimpse of this 'building up' and integrating 'process'. 'I never noticed that before' is not always to be regarded as an emotional blocking-out. It can sometimes represent a repetition of the order of awareness, a speculation or building up of the external world in a way analogous to that of infancy. 'I never noticed that little table before. It has legs just like the big one. How absurd.' 'I never noticed how that switch fits into the floor plug before.' Now, whatever phantasy these represent, they are themselves realities, representing during analysis the way the patient became aware of a fact at some moment of time when an infant. There was some moment when awareness crystallized into the realization that he had two legs like his parents.

Accurate seeing and co-ordination goes to the production of any picture or sculpture that conveys a sense of reality. The external world is apprehended bit by bit in looking: it is seen massively and details are fitted in. Upon such groundwork only, in terms of the senses, can we begin to understand two major problems in the successful artist. The first is his vivid sensuous response and 'body-knowledge', his actual bodily manipulation and muscle control, so that he can reproduce life-like representation in any sensuous medium. This is real knowledge, and one that in ordinary men and women is

lost or attenuated. The second is that at the same time the artist lacks in other ways another type of reality-sense that others possess.

The sublimation of art arises, I believe, from the stages of infancy

- 190 -

before the acquisition of speech. In the case of poetry, the words themselves have an objective sensuous significance such as they had when first they became a medium of communication. They communicate an experience which did not occur in words. The arts communicate emotional experience which is dynamically in touch with emotions that the child could not express in words. The child communicated it by crooning, gurgling, crying, screaming, by gesture, urinating, defæcating. The artist, the 'pure' artist, communicates his emotional experience by manipulation of sound, gesture, water, paint, words. The same bodily powers are used as in babyhood but infinitely developed, the same substances, symbolically (as in water and oils), are used; but with one immense difference, namely, the submission of these to extraordinary control and manipulation, but a control that is a utilization of these same things to the end of a creation of harmony and design.

I have said that I believe the criterion of a genius would be his consistent inability to do anything else but follow his drive to produce art even if on the verge of starvation. He would starve as a young child would who was not supported. He has no conscience in earning a livelihood in the generally accepted sense, any more than a very young child. He can produce nothing useful any more than an infant could produce things of extrinsic usefulness. A boy violinist who is a genius can keep his parents and family in affluence, but it is by giving pleasure, not by doing useful things. The child persists in the artist. The infantile methods of communicating feeling and phantasy, in terms of the body before language was acquired, are sublimated and it seems as if, just as the child takes food and shelter for granted, so the artist assumes these will be forthcoming. Tommy Tucker in the nursery rhyme got his supper by singing, and no less does the artist assume he will get his by producing something that will give pleasure.

There are deep levels of phantasy to which I will refer directly, but I would here remind you of an infant's actual experiences of milk received and fæces given in non-anxiety periods. There are pleasurable bodily states of rhythmic functioning when what was taken and incorporated was good, bodily and psychically, and what the child produced was pleasing and acceptable. This is a pattern of infantile bodily and psychical well-being in reality; I believe that creative art is at least one way of re-experiencing those experiences which are the basis of normal physical and psychical health. Frustration and subsequent anxiety due to aggression bring the phantasies of

- 191 -

hostile attack. M. Klein's researches have enabled us to realize to the full the hostile sucking and biting phantasies, of grinding into pieces and swallowing, the muscular attack on the frustrating parent, and attack by urine, fæces, wind, consequent upon arousal of aggression and increases of tension that become unbearable. The hostile

incorporation may be of parts of the frustrating parent's body. We know too the omnipotent phantasies of responsibility for making the parents engage in sadistic intercourse by reason of the child's projection into the parents of its own biting and attacking phantasies, and in consequence the internalized attacking parent-figures. I need not pursue these mechanisms further, which in certain psychic constellations result in melancholia. My interest is in the artist who maintains contact with reality. When Van Gogh neared the crisis of his life which ended in death, his pictures became wild and chaotic. That is, he maintained reality contacts while sublimation remained possible. An attack on Gauguin, the act of cutting off his own ear, and finally his own destruction were the actual outbreaks of his aggression, while the disruption was being manifested in pictures which had lost rhythm and design. Hate and aggression, chaos, loss of rhythm, are seen here associated with a loss of reality-sense. The artist who through sublimation maintains contact with reality does so by his libidinal and self-preservative impulses. His creative work is possible through these. It is not inherent in aggression as such. It is the triumph over aggression that creative art represents. This is achieved not by repression or reaction-formation, but by making a control rhythm, which means ultimately the production of the rise and fall of tensions that are rhythmical and pleasurable. Music illustrates this massively. When tensions are too great, unbearable, there is disruption, anxiety, rage, hate, which if too great or too prolonged means a loss of reality-sense. For it would seem to me that the essential nucleus of stable reality must lie in rhythmic order, sequence and co-ordination. Any serious prolonged break in this would shatter all reality, the solar system, the physical body, and the psyche. The only stable reality, physical and psychical, is evolved from rhythmic movement, rhythmic change, balanced intake and output which is the very basis of order and design.

Now the artist deals with his aggression by the utilization of his libidinal impulses. He finds a way in reality of phantastically saving, preserving, restoring the loved objects threatened by hostility with whom he too is bound. The melancholic and the suicide, losing reality-sense, attempt this preservation by death, which is very often the

- 192 -

phantasy of reunion and starting a new life, beginning again, beginning, that is, at the breast—a re-finding of this rhythm, an escape from intolerable tensions. The artist has the power of identifying himself with the introjected creative parent-*imago*. One finds on analysis the omnipotent phantasy of the introjected good penis, and the introjected mother's womb.

The unconscious omnipotent good control of the parental *imagos* results in the projection of a harmonious rhythmic re-presentation in a symbolical way in reality. This in terms of actual experience means a recapture of periods in infancy when primal identification and object-love were united, when self-preservation and libidinal gratification were inseparable. Self-preservative instincts and libidinal drives seem undifferentiated. Periods of sucking in infancy, when free from anxiety, are experiences of rhythm. There is the pleasurable need for milk, the gratification before anticipation

becomes painful, the rhythm of intake of milk, of breath, rhythm of heart-beat and pleasurable relief in evacuation. Physical rhythm and co-ordination is the nucleus from which reality-sense evolves, and psychical health ensues as it approximates to this pattern. The artist, I believe, maintains his contact with reality by the power he has of making this experience dominate in a form acceptable in reality over the severity of infantile frustration which brings aggression and disruption. His work exhibits or is achieved by those instincts which when rhythmic have inherent in them self-preservation and all libidinal unfoldment.

I will give two quite simple examples of the way the artist must work on a massive scale. The painter deals externally with substances symbolical of bodily products, which in infancy can be in phantasy either good gifts or poisonous hostile substances, the 'advance-copy', as one patient's dream stated it, of either creation or destruction.

A patient of mine was once distemping the walls of her own room. On analysis, the room at the time proved to be symbolically the phantasy of the inside of her own body identified with her mother's; but it was a mother's body made smaller, so that she could deal with it. The walls she told me looked lovely. She had put on the distemper evenly and had not got nasty edges; the colour was adorable. But she said to her horror she found, in spite of the precaution of newspapers put on the floor (and here I quote her words) 'I must have dropped splashes of the distemper as I worked, for there they were seeping through from the paper on to the floor in an insinuating, menacing way'. The next day she lay on the couch with her knees

- 193 -

cocked up and for twenty minutes arranged a scarf over them, and then tied and untied the ends round them, making the shape when finished of a baby's buttocks covered by a napkin. The artist creates pictures with the symbolical substances which, when disordered and unrhythmical, mean for the unconscious mind menace and destruction.

Anxiety brought a young singer's art well-nigh to an end. A year or two before she came to me she had become very hostile to her woman teacher. One event in that previous period was this. The young girl expressed a wish to learn how to trill on a high note. Her teacher said it would be one of the last things she could be taught. However, one day in her bath she began to laugh and, while laughing, suddenly thought of the trill and straightway found the production of it easy. The next day she informed her teacher of her triumph. Her mistress told her she was not ready to do this trill, it was not the right way to do it, and finally that her voice would be injured by doing it. After the patient had done much analysis of her terror of her mother-imago, allied with her own aggressive phantasies, she brought this dream. 'I was screaming in my dream and terrified, and then I went through with the scream by gradual stages, so modifying it, getting it into cadences and harmonizing them that when I woke I was singing a tune'. A scream is unrhythmical and aggressive; a tune is sound put into a living order. Shortly after this she tried the trill again while laughing in her bath, and re-found her power. Fortunately she then had a different music teacher.

The artist retains the child's first vivid sense-perceptions and sensuous responses. He continues to deal with these massively, as in childhood, in terms of projection of an introjection. Upwelling instinctual urges that are associated with excessive frustration in infancy are dealt with in such a way as to keep him in touch with reality, namely, by the control of them in terms of libidinal rhythm. This, psychologically, is the incorporation of a good imago and an identification with the good imago omnipotently. Physically the good experience meant life for the infant and life for the mother. Psychically, it means a repeated assurance of the ability to restore the good introjected object, which is a restoration of the good experience, threatened by hate and fear.

I would think that massive infantile rage and fear is associated with the phantasy of an immense thing inside in countless pieces. The unmanageable rage and anxiety, associated with unbearable tensions bringing loss of rhythm and co-ordination, is identified with the

- 194 -

unmanageable frustrating object outside. We may think of this rage and aggression as the attempt to master the frustrating object in order to regain pleasure. This attempt to master can be so great as to bring about efforts on the part of the body-ego for which that body is not sufficiently developed or organized, as, for example, when a baby is brought to its feet for the first time by excessive anxiety in an attempt to stop the parents in intercourse. When an attempt of this kind is made before it can be sustained by the body-ego the whole rhythm of development is disturbed, and integration and stability of ego-development is rendered a difficult problem.

There must be some correlation in the excessive anxiety in oral stages, which is associated with the phantasy of a huge imago in pieces inside, and the fact that at this time there is as little co-ordination of the bodily as of the psychical ego.

'Keep my pictures together', said Van Gogh. 'Together they form a unity'. His whole work, he said, 'was a race for life'. This race for life that art can represent in extreme pathological cases is a desperate avoidance of destruction not only of the good object but also of the self. When the power to put together and create rhythmically falls too far behind, or is not equal to dealing with aggression, the sublimation breaks down.

The immense powers of the body-ego, the subtlety of accomplishment of sight, hearing, touch, allied with fine muscle-manipulation, must themselves proceed from self-preservation impulses, heightened by the threat of bodily destruction. Again this is a repetition; that bodily preservation itself is only possible when co-ordination of rhythmic movement is preserved.

The 'pure' artist creates 'pure' art. It is not useful and herein lies its psychological efficacy. Frustration and anxiety caused the hostile phantasies of using destructively, of spoiling and draining and exhausting the good imago. The picture, the statue, the poem, make a moment immortal, fixed for ever at rhythmic perfection, unspoiled and unused, and unusable. To illustrate the kind of matrix from which the artist can evolve, I give this recent example from analysis.

A young man was dealing with the anxiety stimulated by his wife's pregnancy. Associations linked this with the anger and frustrations felt at his mother's pregnancy when he was two years old, and then with anxiety connected with oral frustrations. He then described how the previous night, before he went to sleep, he had thought of the kind of room he desired to have. He had arranged everything in order,

- 195 -

detail by detail, and last of all he found himself in phantasy placing candles in candlesticks on his desk. The candles tapered to a point, but though they were burning he said he wanted them never to waste their substance nor to go out. On the desk, he thought, would be a blotter of soft leather, good to touch. It was embossed, he saw, and, to quote his words, 'Suddenly it seemed to be the Virgin and child who were in this embossed picture. I thought, even if I go blind, I shall be able to touch that leather and it would bring back to me all that I had once seen, the warm and comfortable room with the candles always burning.'

Art and civilization are co-terminous. Dame Laura Knight said last week in an interview: 'The artist is in the vanguard of civilization'. Applied arts and ordered civilization are only possible upon an initial achievement of the artist. I suppose it represents the first massive successful achievement of controlling aggression from within the immature psyche.

The 'pure' scientist directs his attention to some aspect of the external world. His impelling desire is to know, and in his case this is simply for the sake of the knowledge, as much as the art of an artist is for art's sake. Dr. John Baker of Oxford University in a broadcast talk last week said, 'The scientist who really finds out things—is he the applied scientist? did a dye chemist discover aniline dyes? or an illuminating engineer electric light? Fundamental discoveries are made by people interested in fundamentals. The more fundamental the discoveries, the more likely they are to have useful applications; but the person who is looking for application all the time does not discover much.'

Now the artist deals with his instinctual problems and the psychical phantasies allied with them in terms of his body. He uses a knowledge that is diffused in his body, a body intelligence and bodily experience in dealing with emotional states. He knows how to do things, not by consciously thinking them out and applying his knowledge, but by perfecting powers inherent in the body based upon physical rhythms. It is a method of knowing the universe, the macrocosm viâ the microcosm, in terms of ordering emotion.

The 'pure' scientist uses a different method of acquiring knowledge, and he acquires a different kind of knowledge. His intelligence is apparently all in his head, feeling not being an asset, and the knowledge he acquires is that of the external world. The mechanism of projection dominates in this sublimation, the complementary one to introjection,

- 196 -

outwards complementary to inwards, there being some fundamental basis from which these departures are made, the determining factors for the choice being obscure. The common problem for both 'pure' artist and 'pure' scientist, I would say, is this preservation of the self and the good imago from the destructive forces of aggression. The artist's triumph over aggression felt towards the loved object is that he can recapture the good experience, merely by looking, by sound, that is, by taking nothing actual. The 'pure' scientist, it seems, achieves victory by knowing, and in 'pure' knowledge, of which he will make no use, he finds the same kind of assurance as the artist does in doing. That is, he makes no use of his knowledge in adult life, since it still retains as pure knowledge the same psychical significance as when the mechanism of projection was initiated. That is, knowing became as much a substitute for mother's milk as looking and hearing for the artist.

The unconscious phantasies revealed by scientists during analysis do not differ in content from those revealed by artists or by those pursuing other vocations. For example, phantasies of hostile attack on the mother's body, of hurting her and draining her of her substance are not peculiar either to artist or scientist. Nor is the phantasy of being responsible for the father's imagined rape and destruction of the inside of the mother individual to any patient I have analysed. The interest lies in the psychical mechanisms employed to deal with the anxiety arising from the unconscious phantasies; and, in the case of the pure scientist, in the fact that he achieves sublimation and maintains reality-contacts mainly by the process of dealing with his problems symbolically in a world of reality external to himself. The pure scientist contents himself with knowledge, and in this way, by making no practical use of knowledge, anxiety is allayed. He thus effects in reality an anxiety-free situation, in contrast to those unconscious phantasy-situations of being responsible for a hostile using of the mother. The deeply unconscious anxiety-phantasy is nullified by reality. Investigation can be carried on, and knowledge accumulated in a reality-world where there is an assurance that such activities are not merely not dangerous, but of benefit to mankind.

'Mother earth' for the scientist becomes the external substitute for the mother-imago, and whatever phantasy concerning the imago there may be fraught with interest or anxiety, a parallel for it can be found in external nature. Wind and water operate on her externally, earthquake and volcano from within. She has external crust and

- 197 -

mysterious bowels. She gives forth fruits by which men live and poisons by which they die. She reveals order, sequence and design which mean life, and violence and chaos which mean death. The projection system for the scientist operates in maintaining reality-contacts. He is saved from phantastic delusions of persecution by mysterious agencies. Sun scorches, rain floods, earthquake and volcano spread devastation and the cosmic rays are proven. The terror of the aggressive impulses, as in the case of the artist, make the urgency of saving the mother-imago from destruction all the more dynamic. The immensity of that imago for the scientist is consonant with the whole universe, earth, stars, sun and moon. To understand that universe, the origins of the

heavenly bodies, their inter-relations, is the equivalent in terms of projection of the artist's task of putting together from pieces the disintegrated imago from within himself. Geographers play a jig-saw puzzle game with the land-masses of the globe, fitting the projecting countries into the great inlets of others, pursuing a theory that once there was an integral unity which was split up by water.

Whatever the determining forces may be that cause anxiety concerning aggression, threatening the good object and the self, to direct the psyche towards this massive projection, so that the sublimation is inseparable from anxiety, the actual power of the ego to discover and formulate truths of the external world does not proceed from aggression as such. A reality achievement must involve reality basic factors to which I have already referred. Intuition which 'works' is based upon experience.

I have heard of a scientist who said to a befogged student, 'Oh, but you are trying to understand, that's what is the matter.' He himself does not attempt subjects he has to learn in order to understand. A potential scientist or artist (it is not clear which yet, for he swings from massive projection to introjection), said to me only this week, 'Well, it's all right if I can do a thing straightaway. I prefer my accomplishments to be inherited rather than acquired characteristics.' That is, the scientist who understands without having to learn to understand is working with and not against intuitive powers in the same way as the artist. He projects intuition which, when it works in reality to the discovery of real facts, must be initially based upon his own real bodily and psychical experiences.

The ego's power of accurate seeing and of making accurate deduction is the basis of scientific sublimation. The non-impairment of

- 198 -

direct ego-powers by neurotic inhibition, in the face of terrifying unconscious phantasies, would seem to be in part due to the very fact that the 'seeing' in some way had become dissociated from the anxiety attendant upon the wish 'to make use of'. On the contrary the 'seeing, ' 'watching, ' 'finding out' in scientific research is often allied with restitutive and saving phantasies. For example, in calculations concerning the forces of wind and water upon the earth-surface there is an accompanying unconscious phantasy of controlling and ordering bodily products that are associated with destructive powers. The outcome of such scientific investigation is already being directed practically to life-saving, as in gale warnings given to shipping.

I would predicate that one factor in determining projection will be extreme bodily sensitiveness to external and internal stimuli, and that a reality achievement in terms of projection will have as its basic reality intense infantile experiences, bodily and psychical, both painful and pleasurable. The anal fixation seems more marked in the scientist than in the artist, the urgent need to control and make right what has been done and what is being done, rather than to make good by doing, which is the artist's course.

SUMMARY

1. The divergent mechanisms underlying science and art are those of introjection and projection. The scientist deals with his psychical problems in terms of the external universe, the artist in terms of himself. In one thought-processes predominate, in the other body-knowledge and bodily processes.

2. These divergent mechanisms are methods of dealing with a common problem, namely, the preservation of the good object and the self from the aggressive phantasies of infancy, due to internal and external frustration, this frustration being experienced at oral stages when self-preservative and libidinal desires were inseparable.

3. In both sublimations there is found the phantasy of a massive imago, which is introjected and projected respectively. This massive imago is the psychical equivalent to the massive emotional state too big to manage or understand when the rage of frustration possessed the infant. It is identified with the frustrating external object. The anxiety-state is an attempt to master this object in order that gratification and assurance may be gained.

4. The mechanisms of introjection and projection work in terms of reality. Science concerns itself with external reality, the choice

- 199 -

of aspect corresponding to internal phantasy. The artist produces works which are conditioned to a real medium.

5. The preservation of reality-sense and maintenance of reality-contacts is accomplished by the triumph of a fundamental good physical and psychical experience over the bad, or, put in another way, physical and psychical well-being are inseparable from rhythmic rise and fall of tension. Anxiety and aggression bring about disruption of these, for loss of rhythm is painful tension.

6. The artist, by producing a work which exhibits the characteristics of harmony and design, is identifying himself with this good experience which means physical and psychical life. He thereby orders aggression into rhythm again. In phantasy he magically controls the incorporated hostile imagos, his aggression and theirs, and masters the situation by making pleasure come again, the loss of which caused the original anxiety. Body-ego knowledge, bodily powers, are the means by which this creative pleasurable work is produced.

7. The scientist finds out facts based upon bodily experience, allied with observation of those in his external environment, experiences of pleasure and pain. The need to know, to investigate, is heightened by aggressive phantasy. The projection is made more massive because of fear of the responsibility of injury to the mother. Knowledge of reality is a bulwark against phantasy, but the fact of contact with reality, the actual power to find out causes and laws, is based not upon aggression, per se, but upon a fundamental experience of psychical and physical reality, namely, rhythmic order. This triumphs over aggression and in phantasy preserves the good imago.

8. Pure scientist and pure artist are alike in that neither of them are interested in their work for its utilitarian value. The massiveness of this necessity seems to impair their adult reality-adaptations. In any analysis of pure scientist and artist I have conducted, full genital primacy has not been attained. Childhood-positions have been dynamic for them. Their works are loving reparations, and, like children, it is as if they assumed that this alone would ensure them a livelihood. The 'purity' implies that the imagos were unharmed, unused and unspoiled by them. The capacity to 'see' purely, to know 'purely, ' is derived from infantile experiences of satisfactions and assurance, which alone are the conditions for anxiety-free looking and knowing. Artist and scientist fall back on these occasions.

9. Both alike retain spontaneity and a child-like wonder and admiration. This is in keeping with the fact that their work is a sublimation

- 200 -

of elemental powers, neither a repression nor reaction-formation. The child-like wonder and admiration they retain is due to a constant surprising renewal of a good experience and a good imago which, ever threatened, is yet ever found again to their surprise and joy.

10. While adaptation to adult reality, as we understand it, is faulty in the pure scientist and pure artist, one must also acknowledge that the 'fundamentals' in science and art have never been revealed by those who were bent first of all upon application, but by those who, to a lesser or greater degree, have been unconsciously occupied by the central problems of reality itself without which the applications of science and art would be impossible, namely, the problems of the mastery of aggression by the submission of it to living rhythm. Those engaged massively in the unconscious with problems of life and death and who yet retain contact with reality are those who reveal the 'fundamentals', the 'laws' of the universe, either externally or internally; and according to the measure of purity attained, which is the equivalent of objectivity, will be the measure of truth revealed.

11. Science and art represent two divergent methods of knowing the universe, external and internal. Thought-processes linked with unconscious phantasies of an aggressive and sexual type hinder 'pure' knowing. 'What is Freud getting at in this theory?' 'How can one make a short cut through the ego and reach the unconscious?' 'What is happening to libido-theory these days, it seems to be falling into the background?' These are some examples with which I am very familiar, indicating how advances in our own science are made difficult by the projection of 'bad' things into scientific theories, just as it may be true that different aspects of our science may be neglected or emphasized or lack co-ordination because of our own inner urgencies.

But even where 'pure' knowing is accomplished in science and 'pure' art by the artist, it is nevertheless the correlation of 'pure' knowledge with physical and psychical processes, and the correlation of 'pure' intuitive bodily knowledge with thought-processes, that will bring about unity of knowledge. Projection and introjection are

complementary processes, the inner and outer, the convex and concave surfaces of one truth.

REFERENCES

Benedetto Croce *Æsthetic Intuition and Art*

Freud 'Leonardo da Vinci' *Gesammelte Schriften* Bd. IX

- 201 -

Edward Glover 'A Psycho-analytical Approach to the Classification of Mental Disorders' *Journal of Mental Science* 1932 'Sublimation, Substitution and Social Anxiety' this JOURNAL, Vol. XII Part 3 1931

Vincent van Gogh *Letters to His Brother*

Ernest Jones *Papers on Psycho-Analysis* pp. 603–617

Melanie Klein *The Psycho-Analysis of Children* 1932 'A Contribution to the Psycho-genesis of Manic-Depressive States' this JOURNAL, p. 145

Melitta Schmideberg 'Psychotic Mechanisms in Cultural Development' this JOURNAL, Vol. XI Part 4

N. M. Searl 'The Psychology of Screaming' this JOURNAL, Vol. XIV Part 2 1933

- 202 -

GLOVER, E. (1931) SUBLIMATION, SUBSTITUTION AND SOCIAL ANXIETY. INT. J. PSYCHO-ANAL., 12:263 (IJP)

SUBLIMATION, SUBSTITUTION AND SOCIAL ANXIETY

EDWARD GLOVER

Historically the concept of Sublimation has passed through two phases of development. Up to the year 1923 interest in sublimation was largely phenomenological in order. A few generalizations had been advanced concerning the mechanism of sublimation, but pronouncements on dynamic aspects were practically restricted to the relation of sublimation to the 'return of the repressed', ultimately to symptom formation. From 1923 onwards interest became concentrated on the energies involved and the nature of their modification. It is generally agreed that prior to 1923 a good deal of confusion existed regarding the exact nature of sublimation. Since then it has increased rather than diminished. And there appears to be no doubt that this is due in part to the stress recently laid on dynamic factors. In other words, we are confused because in dealing with dynamic factors we are compelled to loosen our hold on the more familiar (and therefore psychologically more comfortable) descriptive aspects. To avoid this source of confusion, I propose treating the two phases separately.

Definitions. —Up to the year 1923 a brief definition of sublimation would run as follows: Sublimation is an unconscious psychic process whereby the aim of a sexual impulse is modified before gratification on an object.

In order to comprehend more fully the difficulties before us, compare this with a definition of wider scope: Sublimation (1) is the term applied to a group of unconscious processes which have this in common, that as the result of inner or outer deprivation, the aim of object-libido undergoes a more or less complete deflection, modification or

- 263 -

inhibition. In the great majority of instances the new aim is one distinct or remote from sexual satisfaction, i.e. is an asexual or non-sexual aim. In certain instances, however, some degree of gratification of the original sexual impulse can be regarded as sublimation or as an early step towards sublimation provided the greater part of its primitive components and all adult genito-sexual aims are inhibited or deflected, e.g. the aim-inhibited impulses and social relations between individuals of the same sex. A third case not to be distinguished from sublimation, but with closer relation to direct uninhibited aims, is the case of extreme falling in love where the degree of over-estimation of the object cannot be distinguished from devotion to an abstract idea. The new aims are in a large number of instances, especially in the case of the adult, not only non-sexual (although psychically related to sexual aims) but definitely cultural; they are in an ethical sense 'higher', less selfish and socially more valuable than the original aim.

Nevertheless some sublimations can be potentially inhibiting to social adaptation, e.g. some sublimations of anal erotism, obstinacy, parsimony, etc. There is in general an anaclitic relationship between sublimated impulses and ego-impulses. This cannot always be distinguished by descriptive study of the new mode, which may appear to be purely an ego-aim, i.e. the psychic relation of the new aim to the original sexual aim may be extremely remote.

Next as to energies: the greater part of the energies in question has its source in the erotogenic zones, i.e. is derived from infantile component sexuality where the object varies from a primary organ-object to a complete secondary external object. These component impulses lend themselves to sublimation owing to the fact that they can act vicariously for one another and change their objects freely. The energies derived from these zonal excitations do not lose their intensity in the process of displacement. Owing partly to the source of sublimated instincts, viz., mainly erotogenic zones, and partly to other constitutional factors, the capacity for sublimation is congenitally variable and is limited by the congenital disposition to fixation, i.e. sublimation proceeds in direct ratio to the plasticity of the libido. Acquired factors affecting plasticity also affect capacity to sublimate.

Finally as to organization of the process: sublimation is demanded by the same ego-instance that instigates repression, but the amount of sublimation is not necessarily in direct ratio to the strength of the demand. The task of effecting sublimation is, like repression, an ego activity. The general relation of sublimation to repression is one of

1The above is compiled from writings of Freud published prior to 1923. It does not consist entirely of quotations, although sometimes Freud's own phrasing is adopted; in other instances the meaning has been paraphrased: occasionally the implications of a statement are presented instead of the statement itself.

- 264 -

an auxiliary, in that it satisfies the claims of the ego without involving repression; but it does not loosen existing repression. One form of sublimation shares with repression the mechanism of anti-cathexis.¹

We are now in a position to study in some detail the systematic approach to the subject.

Complexity of Mechanism. —First take the view that sublimation is not a single mechanism but a group of mechanisms. The advantages of this view are the following: it rules out the necessity of producing a short and possibly hampering definition; it indicates the possibility that seeming contradictions may be due to an unjustifiable comparison of components of different mechanisms. The best example here is a seeming contradiction or uncertainty pointed out by Bernfeld (2) and others: they remind us that in one of Freud's statements sublimation is regarded as a special example of reaction formation and that, according to a subsequent statement, reaction formation is to be regarded as a special case of sublimation. Incidentally, this difficulty can also be reduced by considering the relation of sublimation to the anti-cathexis of repression.

Thirdly, it affords us breathing space for future research. For instance, increasing knowledge of the workings of the super-ego compels us to consider just how far certain guilt factors play a decisive part in processes of sublimation. In particular, recent papers by Melanie Klein (3) and Ella F. Sharpe (4) suggest that certain almost stereotyped 'restitution' phenomena are responsible at the same time for instigating and producing an outlet for creative urges with an ultimately non-sexual aim. Melanie Klein, for example, has shown how the desire to 'make good' impulses to destroy the mother was at the bottom of a compelling urge to paint portraits of relatives; and Ella Freeman Sharpe showed that dancing in one case represented the re-animated phallus of the father, i.e. was a restoration of that which the patient wished to destroy out of hostility to the mother.

We must not of course rush to conclusions. We should first of all have to consider whether restitution situations are invariably a factor

- 265 -

and frequently the only important factor. Even so we should have to decide whether this would justify special nomenclature. Granted that restitutive urges play a decisive part in particular sublimations, artistic, professional and otherwise, it might be considered more convenient to take cognizance of this fact under some system heading, e.g. super-ego factors. Or again we could consider it under the general heading of substitution. We might, for example, label the sublimation by reference to the psychic situation which mainly determined the ultimate presentations of instinct, e.g. expiatory sublimations. We may in fact talk too glibly of a number of mechanisms when we ought more economically and therefore more correctly to speak of different components in one main mechanism, as, for instance, a 'substitution' component, or a 'substitution determinant'.

Cultural Valuation. —Then as to the cultural valuation of sublimations. This is an issue that cannot be buried. On the whole Freud has come down heavily in favour of a social, ethical and cultural valuation of sublimations; but he has left the door open in a minority of instances. Bernfeld (2) in particular has felt uneasy at this state of affairs, and has indicated that the activities of children and adults belong to the same process whether they are concerned with artistic, with scientific or with worthless objects. He recommends the use of the term sublimation for all aim deviation of object libido which takes place without repression and is ego-syntonic. In his view sublimation is a deviation which serves an ego-aim (although the ego-aim may of course have been in existence already). The former view, i.e. definition by relation to repression, does not take sufficient cognizance of the relation, on the one hand, between anti-cathexis and repression, and, on the other, between anti-cathexis and sublimation. The second criterion, viz. the relation to ego-aims, compels us to discriminate between the ego-aims of childhood and those of adult life. It is true that by applying an adult standard to the activities of childhood, many of their sublimations could be made to appear culturally valueless, but we are not entitled to apply these standards. Unless we can establish an appropriate set of ego values for every stage of human development, we must regard the

substitution activities of childhood as being either immediately or potentially valuable. Moreover, assuming that we could establish appropriate cultural scales of value, we could not get much farther with the problem unless we could at the same time establish a companion scale of pathological criteria, i.e. even if we could say that certain aims were worthless in the child's own

- 266 -

valuation, it would not follow that they were pathogenic. On the whole there appears to be no objection to adopting a cultural valuation of sublimations, in so far as sublimated impulses have an anaclitic relation to ego-impulses and in so far as these ego-impulses represent or take cognizance of appropriate external standards. On the other hand, from the point of view of substitution products, there does not appear to be any justification for cultural valuation. And we cannot get away from the fact that Freud has laid the greatest emphasis simply on the deviation from a sexual to a non-sexual aim. We may subsequently proceed to classify substitutions as culturally valuable, neutral, worthless or detrimental respectively, but in that case we must have some exact understanding of the relations between sublimation, substitution and symptom formation. After all, when we say that symptom formation can be attributed to mental conflict we are also giving assent to the existence of certain social values. Illness, as Freud remarks, is essentially 'a practical conception'.

So far we have considered two aspects of the problem, viz. whether sublimation should include a group of mechanisms and whether a cultural valuation is justifiable. A moment's consideration will show that the second issue heightens the importance of the first. For example, it is often argued that the activities of a skilled counterfeiter constitute a lower, socially harmful manifestation, hence that a cultural valuation of sublimation is not universally applicable. From many points of view this argument is unsound. It can be said that the modification of the aim of instinct has already been achieved in the engraver's art, whereas the turning of the art to anti-social ends is a sort of secondary elaboration, involving preconscious processes. Or again, that the instincts gratified in the anti-social activity are unmodified as distinct from the modified instincts gratified by engraving activities. Or again, that these anti-social activities represent an alliance between a real sublimation and an infantile regression. Nevertheless, it might be argued that if we take this point of view, we have no right to claim that 'restitutive' urges of the Sharpe-Klein pattern are primary factors in sublimation. It is true that the 'restitutive' factor, unlike the anti-social factor, is at no point (pre)conscious, and therefore may have a closer connection with sublimation, e.g. with its organization. But it might still be regarded as a secondary manipulation of processes of sublimation, not as an immediate instigator. However that may be, it is evident that some grading of the end results of sublimation is a necessary subject for research. It may then be possible

- 267 -

to impose a formal group limit to the classification of sublimations; or rather limit the number of factors which may be said to share in the processes of sublimation.

Sublimation and Object-replacement. —Coming now to the groundwork of the definition; in cultural valuations of sublimation, cognizance is inevitably taken of the object as well as of the aim of the impulse. Now, strictly speaking, this is not in the bargain. I am going to suggest, however, that unless we take a very broad view of 'aims' we cannot avoid paying attention to the objects of sublimated aims. Strictly speaking, the aim of every instinct is gratification, and if we adhere to that view then the change in gratification brought about in sublimation, viz. from a sexual to a non-sexual gratification, permits us to ignore the object. And it is true that in the case of sexual impulses, particularly the component instincts, the object is the most variable characteristic of the instinct. On the other hand, when we think of instinctual aims we are in the habit of thinking behaviouristically, i.e. in terms of the mode of gratification. It is in this mode that the degree of psychic relation to the original aim is preserved. Now since we know that sublimation can exert a protective function in mental economy in the sense of giving outlet to quantities of energy and so preventing damming up and conflict, we are bound to consider whether, apart from the absence of sexual gratification in any sublimated activity, the degree of psychical relation preserved in the new mode varies in remoteness and therefore in protective value. And there can be no doubt that the degree of psychic remoteness does vary greatly in different accredited sublimations. The impulse of infantile sexual curiosity concerning Œdipus objects, when converted into scientific curiosity as to the sexual habits of adults, has certainly undergone not only deflection of aim (there is no sexual gratification in the latter activity) but substitution of object. The mode of looking or listening has not however been appreciably altered. In the case of scientific curiosity regarding, for instance, the sexual habits of bees, the psychic relation to the original stimulating situation is increasingly remote, not as judged by aim or mode but as judged by replacement of objects. Substitute an abstract object, such as curiosity about the concept of sublimation, and the relation becomes still more remote. When anal-erotic sublimations take the form of collecting objects, the social and cultural valuation is determined by the nature of the object, not solely by the fact that a component sexual aim has become a non-sexual one. The collecting mode may alter little, but the object may vary from precious

- 268 -

first editions, to private collections of pieces of soiled paper or definitions of sublimation.

Further, the view that an object is the most variable feature of a sexual instinct is true by comparison with, for example, impulses of the hunger group, where the object must sooner or later minister to the original aim of gratification. In the long run a hunger impulse is not likely to be satisfied by eating the tablecloth or by reading of the feasts of Lucullus. Nevertheless, although sexual objects are in one sense easily changed and a sublimated impulse need not necessarily revert, the factor of fixation to Œdipus objects reduces the value of this pronouncement considerably, i.e. repressed factors may ultimately determine the choice of a substitute object. And you will note that in three special groups of sublimations (aim-inhibited activities, sublimated homosexuality and

devotion to object-idealizations) the degree of psychical remoteness is not so great as in the deviations of component impulses.

Substitution and Displacement. —Our next step is to consider what is the essential psychic process by which deviation is effected. Since, however, the terms 'substitution' and 'replacement' have so far been used without definition, I think we are justified in shelving further consideration of sublimation until we have taken our bearings on the nature of instinct derivatives in general. In particular we must be clear as to the nature of 'displacement', otherwise it will be difficult to describe the relation of sublimation to 'symbolism', to the 'return of the repressed' and to 'symptom-formation' respectively. To start with displacement, I find that there are about twenty-five terms in use in English translations and original works, all expressing some aspect of the mechanism of displacement, and although these can be grouped under the headings of 'displacement', 'replacement' and 'substitution', there is a good deal of overlapping, the net result of which is that the term substitution becomes rather hazy in meaning.

As the basis of all definitions we fall back on units of instinctual representation, viz. psychic content and charges of psychic energy, of which the latter are in the clinical sense by far the more important; and we are agreed that, in so far as charges are apprehended in consciousness apart from ideational elements, they are termed affects. Bearing this in mind it is evident that the term displacement is the most comprehensive of the three. It implies not only the transposition (movement, release, radiation, diversion, dislocation, transference) of affect (intensity, accent) but the replacement (substitution) of one idea

- 269 -

or element by another. The element substituted is more suitable or less unacceptable than the original element or was originally more trivial, indifferent or unimportant, i.e. psychically more remote. Replacement of elements involves transposition of affect, but the terms are not interchangeable. We cannot always use the term replacement in the affective sense. In sublimation, as Ernest Jones (5) has pointed out, sexual energies are not replaced but diverted. On the other hand, although replacement is an accurate term for the dislocation of elements, the term replacement-product is sometimes used in the same sense as substitution-product or substitute-formation. Substitution again, although frequently applied to organised mental formations, is on occasion used (in some definitions of symbolism) in a sense that is already connoted by displacement (or replacement) of elements. It would seem advisable to reserve the term replacement for that aspect of the general mechanism of displacement which concerns ideational elements. This replacement of elements can be observed not only in processes of intercommunication between different psychic systems (dreams, wit, symbolism, etc.), but in communications within one system (allusive forms of verbal (pcs) expression). The term substitution could then be reserved for the relations between organized mental processes (as distinct from elements) in different psychic systems, e.g. the substitution of preconscious ideational systems for unconscious phantasy organisations. Freud originally thought of substitution as concerning the ideational representation of instinct

after repression. In his view, substitution-formations were similar to but more highly organized than unconscious phantasies. Substitute-formations and symptoms implied the return of the repressed. There were, however, many different forms of substitution and at that time he did not consider that substitution and symptom formation invariably coincided. For example, they did coincide in conversion-hysteria but did not coincide in obsessional neurosis; in obsessional neurosis, substitution by reaction-formation preceded and differed in content from symptom-formation. Later (6), however, as the result of his revaluation of the characteristics of mental 'defence', he says that it is better to ascribe to the defensive process what has been said concerning symptom-formation and to regard symptom-formation and substitute-formation as synonymous terms. He would say, for example, that under certain circumstances the replacement of an element (e.g. father by wolf) has claims to be considered as a symptom.

- 270 -

At this point one might protest that there is no object in labouring this matter, that sublimation refers to the fate of some instinct components that are not dealt with by repression, that we have nothing to do with the relations existing between organized formations, and that as far as sublimation is concerned, all we have to consider is the part played by displacement or symbolism. But the matter is not so simple. In regard to the first point, Freud has stated that co-operation between preconscious and unconscious impulses exists even when the latter are subject to repression, if the situation permits of the unconscious impulse operating in harmony with one of the controlling tendencies. Repression, he says, is then removed for the occasion in respect of this single constellation and the results of this co-operation are achievements of special perfection. Secondly, the restitution mechanisms which, according to recent writers, play an important part in sublimation are very definitely reactive substitute-formations for highly organized unconscious phantasies. Thirdly, as Freud tells us, sublimations of anal-erotic components play an important part in determining the end products of certain obsessional onanistic ceremonials.

Reaction-Formation. —The greatest difficulty in establishing a simple relation on the one hand between unrepressed impulse and sublimation and on the other between repressed impulse and substitute (or symptom) formation is vagueness concerning the exact meaning of reaction-formation. To make this difficulty clear we must consider the phenomenon of anti-cathexis. We are familiar with anti-cathexis first of all as the mechanism of primal repression. Following psychic situations of an exceptionally grave order (either immediately or potentially traumatic) instinct presentations are denied entry to the system pcs, whilst in the pcs system we find cathexis of ideas to some extent psychically remote from the traumatic group. We also recognize anti-cathexis as one aspect of actual repression. But here it is combined with 'withdrawal of cathexis' from pcs elements. And it is generally held that the energy of anti-cathexis is derived from the cathexis of repressed elements. Now should the anti-cathexis involve presentations of a directly antithetical element or interest, we are accustomed to describe this as a 'reaction-formation', although the use of the term formation is not strictly justified except in the case of a system of presentations, or at any rate in relation

to a persisting anti-cathexis. Judged by the standards of displacement, all anti-cathexes are displacements and reaction-formations are merely a special example of displacement by the opposite.

- 271 -

The problem has been lightened somewhat by Freud's recent pronouncement on reaction-formation, viz. that it is to be regarded as a mechanism of defence distinct from repression (6). But if we are to regard reaction-formation as a mechanism distinct from repression we ought to be able to offer a good metapsychological reason for this change. Is it because we have hitherto included too much under repression and now desire to split off a special aspect, viz. anti-cathexis through antithesis; or is it simply that from the clinical point of view it is more convenient to raise a particular form of anti-cathexis to the status of an independent mechanism? There are some grounds for the latter view. In hysteria we find that withdrawal of cathexis is the most striking feature. There are anti-cathexes in hysteria, it is true; these move along lines of displacement but vary in psychic remoteness. On the other hand, in obsessional neurosis we find a relative incapacity to withdraw cathexis together with an extreme exploitation of anti-cathexis, particularly along one definite line of displacement, viz. through antithetical preservations. That is to say, the degree of psychic remoteness is more or less fixed. In one case we have a mobile mechanism (exemplified by the changing anti-cathexis of outer stimuli seen in hysteria); in the other we have organized anti-cathexis, more or less permanently embedded in the ego. In other words, if reaction-formation is an independent defence mechanism, it must be in the sense of a substitution product having some degree of permanent organization, as distinct from the lability of hysterical anti-cathexis. From this point of view, we are entitled to classify various substitution products in accordance with their depth and the permanence of their relation to ego structure. For example, to judge by their degree of refractoriness to analysis, we could place in order of permanence the following psychic manifestations, viz. normal character formations, neurotic character formations, a number of obsessional formations and the reaction-formations of hysteria. Possibly criteria of this sort may be applied with advantage to the processes of sublimation.

Sublimation and Reaction-Formation. —In the meantime, let us summarize the possible relations between sublimation and reaction formation in the light of our discussion of displacement. First of all, as regards elements: if reaction-formation is simply a form of anti-cathexis of certain ideational elements, then it is a priori a form of displacement and has that much in common with sublimation. But in that case it is difficult to insist that sublimation is solely concerned

- 272 -

with unrepressed elements. If, however, reaction-formation is an organized psychic formation, then we may be able to distinguish it from sublimation, provided we are content to regard sublimation simply as a variety of displacement. If, however, we regard sublimations as themselves organized psychic formations, then we can justify the use of a special term, 'sublimation', only provided we can distinguish sublimation from

other organized formations, e.g. reaction formations, character formations and symptom formations. Obviously this would raise difficulties because we have become accustomed to regard some character formations as sublimations, e.g. anal-erotic sublimations. With regard to sublimation and symptom formation, it might appear that such a distinction should be taken for granted. It is, however, as I hope to show, by no means axiomatic.

Then as to energies: here the relation to symptom formation is again important. Consider the view that sublimation concerns only unrepressed instinct. If one adheres to this view, then one can definitely distinguish sublimation from organized reaction-formations because the latter certainly deal with instincts under repression, but in that case the relations of sublimation and character formation are again obscured. By existing definitions certain character formations are means whereby an individual can to a large extent spare himself repressions. And sublimation by itself will not cover the phenomena of character formation. In any case, when we talk of an individual sparing himself repressions we mean actual repression. Perhaps we should do well to avoid this loose use of the term repression and speak of sublimation phenomena in quantitative terms: we might say, for example, that a sublimation applied only to the complete transfer of an original cathexis to the replacement element.

To conclude our consideration of reaction-formation in relation to sublimation, we may recall that Ernest Jones (5) has always drawn a distinction between these mechanisms. He has stated that sublimation represents the continuation, after modification, of positive unconscious impulses only, whereas reaction-formations include also certain elements of ego-reaction. He would admit, of course, that the end product in both cases shows deviation of aim, and the distinction, as he points out relates essentially to the source of the instincts concerned. Positive sublimated instincts originally belong to the appetitive group; reaction-formations contain positive drives but include also representatives of reactive instincts. By putting emphasis on the source of instincts and whether they operate directly or through the ego, he has offered us an

- 273 -

apparently simple solution of the matter. According to this view, deviation of aim would not be exclusively a characteristic of sublimation.

Tempting as this definition is, there are certain difficulties in the way. If, as has been suggested, certain creative activities prove to have been stimulated by restitutive urges, then we have an example of an apparently positive urge (the impulse to create), functioning not only in a reactive sense but in a manner which is reminiscent of the obsessional mechanism of undoing (6). In obsessional undoing, you will remember, one representative of instinct is followed by another calculated to 'undo' or 'expiate' or 'cancel' it. This suggests that we may have included and still include under reaction formation, phenomena which require a separate category.

Sublimation and Symptom Formation. —Now let us follow the relations of symptom formation and sublimation a little farther. The main feature in the definition of

sublimation was, it will be remembered, the fact of change of aim. Now in a large majority of instances a symptom amongst other achievements succeeds in altering the aims of impulses—the substitute product is apparently non-sexual and except in rare instances unaccompanied by sexual gratification. One can try to get out of this difficulty by saying, as Bernfeld does (2), that a sublimation is the opposite of a symptom, that the energies are not conflicting but work together producing increased ego activity. Well, unless one combines this with a cultural valuation, one has not discovered a unique characteristic; in certain phases of neuroses, individual activities may be quite excessive. But there is here at any rate some point of agreement. We are bound to concede that obsessional energies are expended on trivial activities. Symptoms, as Freud tells us, are either detrimental or useless to life as a whole or may be obnoxious to the individual and involve him in distress or suffering. These remarks do not appear to apply to sublimations. But these standards are descriptive standards (social and clinical) not metapsychological.

Pleasure-pain Criteria. —In any case the pleasure-pain standard of differentiation requires some assessment. Gratification of sublimated activities is held to reduce Unlust or increase Lust, whereas symptoms (primary or secondary gains apart) induce Unlust. This seems a promising distinction, but one is bound to ask whether it has not been taken too much for granted in the past. It is true that Freud, in his latest work (7), stresses the importance of sublimation as a method of

- 274 -

preventing psychic suffering, and in that sense relates it to the operation of the pleasure principle (in its reality aspect); but he has been careful to point out in the same essay that we cannot estimate what part in these cultural processes is played by the complete suppression or repression of instinct gratification. At a later stage I hope to show that if we investigate the data carefully enough, it is by no means universally true that sublimation is unaccompanied by psychic tension of the Unlust order.

The protest may here be raised that social valuations apart, we have ample means of distinguishing a symptom from a sublimation; in particular it will be said that a symptom is a boundary construction with one foot in the Ego and the other in the Id (6): or to put it another way, that it is a compromise artefact nourished not only by energies proceeding through the Ego but by immediate Id energies. Also that it is rejected by the Ego. So much may be freely admitted. And we can also agree that many reaction-formations and most sublimations appear to be accepted by the Ego without question. But it is equally true that many normal character activities and most neurotic character activities are accepted by the Ego without question. Yet neurotic character activities are not generally regarded as sublimations, nor do they have the same structure as symptoms. The fact that neurotic character formations like sublimations are accepted by the Ego has been commented on by Ernest Jones (8), who goes on to say, 'it is likely that there is no hard and fast distinction between the two'. He believes, however, that the changes in sublimation are more radical and intrinsic, whereas in neurotic character formations the sexual nature of the impulse is retained, being merely disguised through

the contact it has established with the Ego. In so far as he refers to 'desexualization' of sexual impulse, this view is probably quite valid, although it compels us to examine carefully the concept of desexualization. From the point of view of deviation of aim, however, it can only hold in respect of the degree of psychical remoteness achieved by displacement, and is not a completely serviceable distinction for our present purpose.

Sublimation and Action. —We are faced with a similar difficulty if we try to distinguish sublimations by reference to the factor of motor expression. It is true that by means of symptom formation, motor expression of certain instincts is either denied or limited to the body of the individual, whereas sublimation gives free motor discharge to instinct, provided displacement has been effected. Motor expression

2Sublimation and Characterology. —The concept of character, and, in particular, of neurotic character, has been a constant source of difficulty in this context. One way out of this difficulty would be to jettison the term 'character' altogether. It is always possible that this term has outworn its usefulness and is no longer necessary or suited to metapsychological presentation. I believe there is a great deal to be said for such a procedure, although space does not permit any discussion of its justification here. Besides, if we stopped to throw character terminology overboard at this point, we might have to meet a counter-attack from characterologists. They might retaliate with a suggestion to discard the term sublimation. Anyhow, there certainly do seem to be good grounds for a careful overhaul of our terminology in order to eliminate the confusion due to overlapping.

- 275 -

after displacement is, however, also characteristic of neurotic character reactions and the activities extend likewise towards the environment.²

Sublimation and Inhibition. —Perhaps a more fruitful line of approach would be to consider the relations of inhibition in general to sublimation. We know that whereas some inhibitions take part in symptom formation, they can be distinguished from symptom formations in that inhibitions are ego-activities and supplied with energies from within the Ego. To use somewhat loose terms, most inhibitions are considered to be the result of excessive erotization of Ego-function leading to disturbance of that function (e.g. disturbances of vision): and from the point of view of sexual aims, we might regard sublimations as Ego-aggrandisements of certain erotic functions (mainly component). The reader may recall here Ernest Jones' (9) stimulating suggestion concerning sublimation, that it represents an ontogenetic repetition of a stage in the development of primitive man when sexual energy was first drained into non-sexual channels, e.g. work, etc. These seemingly antithetical relations between sublimations and inhibition are deserving of closer investigation.

Apart from that, the relation between sublimation and inhibition brings out a point in the study of instinctual mechanisms which has not yet received sufficient attention, viz. the chronological order of development of instinct modifications. For example, we know

that inhibitions are the last line of defence in dealing with instinct that has escaped repression, i.e. they are interpolated immediately before motor activity. It might be possible, therefore, to introduce a chronological factor in the estimation of sublimation; the latter may occur at some

3Since writing this I observe that Sterba ('Zür Problematik der Sublimierungslehre, ' Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse, 1930, 3/4, S. 371) stresses the chronological order of mechanisms. Not only does he classify various types of sublimation in order of incidence, but he considers that reaction formation must necessarily be preceded by sublimation in the sense of desexualization.

- 276 -

precise point, probably late in a series of instinctual modifications or defences. It would of course come before inhibition.³

A few years ago Melanie Klein (10) considered the relations of sublimation and inhibition in some detail, and although part of her theoretical presentation was based on then existing views as to the nature of anxiety, views which Freud has since modified, her actual findings do not lose their significance on that account. One of the points brought out was the fact that inhibitions tend to make their appearance where superfluous libido is attached to an existing sublimation. (By sublimation she means the transfer of a libidinal cathexis to an ego activity, the path being determined by sexual-symbolic displacement.) This view emphasises the importance of chronological order and incidentally supports the truth of a general statement made by James Glover (11) that an inhibition covers a hidden talent. It is even more important in another respect: it focusses attention on the part played by sublimations as conductors for excessive (pathogenic) libidinal cathexes. It was of course already known that in the obsessional neuroses sublimations acted as conductors for symptoms, but Melanie Klein's work on the 'disinclinations' of children indicated a more general exploitation of this conductor activity. Moreover, it is easy to see that sublimations can play a part as conductors in anti-social constellations (e.g. the activities of a skilled counterfeiter). In view of these facts it seems essential to pay much more attention to the clinical aspects of sublimation before we attempt to determine its relation to symptom formation and neurotic character formation.

Sublimation and Symbolism. —Use of the term 'conductor activity brings us to what is perhaps the most difficult problem of all, viz. the relation between sublimation and symbolism. Strictly speaking, we might have considered it under the heading of displacement, but equally justly it could have been dealt with under the heading of symptom formation. For example, it might be said that sublimations do not act as conductors for symptoms but that the element of symbolism does. This is probably true in the sense of presentation,

- 277 -

but not as regards energy. Ernest Jones (9) has pointed out in regard to this subject that it is the transfer of psychic energy alone which is the significant feature in sublimation, whereas in symbolism the full significance of the original complex is retained unaltered and merely transferred to a secondary idea. He agrees, however, that sublimated ideas can temporarily regress and sink back to become mere symbols of complexes. From the descriptive standpoint, therefore, the distinction does not help us out of our present difficulties; the result in both cases is displacement or change of aim. It would appear that any fundamental distinction must be effected in terms of energy. Such a view would invalidate completely any form of cultural definition. Cultural assessments would then be a matter of individual taste.

The subject has been reconsidered in recent years by Melanie Klein (10). If I have apprehended her views correctly, the phenomenon of sublimation cannot be understood without constant reference to the related factors of fixation and repression. The stages are as follows: primary identification—sexual-symbolic cathexis—sublimation. Repression can play a decisive part at three points; first, in leading to the distinction between identification and symbolism (fixation here has a retarding effect on all subsequent development), second, in preventing the gradual extension from symbolism to sublimation (here fixation is responsible and the result is symptom formation), and third, in interfering with existing sublimations when these are charged later with excess of libido (here the result is inhibition). Melanie Klein's presentation is much more comprehensive than anything hitherto attempted, but it does not solve the problem of the distinction between sexual symbolic cathexis of Ego tendencies and sublimation. It would appear that the only criterion she offers, the presence or absence of a 'tone of sexual pleasure', applies only to the distinction between primary identifications on a pleasure tone basis and symbolic interest in certain activities, not to the relations between symbolism and sublimation. In the absence of some such criterion the distinction she offers as between sublimation and symptom formation is not so serviceable as it appears at first sight. In fact one is more and more driven to the view that sublimation can justify its retention as an independent metapsychological term only provided we can establish some intrinsic change in the nature of the energy, such as was hinted at by Ernest Jones in distinguishing between sublimation and reaction formation. Nevertheless, one of Melanie Klein's findings (12) is extremely illuminating. She points out that the drive to

- 278 -

identification of Ego activities with directly sexual activities is the primary anxiety developed by the child in the course of its object-relations. There is, it appears, an optimum amount, excess of which at an early stage leads to grave retardation in symbolic and ultimately sublimation activity.

Summary. —We must now attempt to summarize the results of this protracted discussion. We started to discuss the state of opinion regarding sublimation up to 1923. This includes definition, description of psychic mechanism and relation to other psychic manifestations. We have paid scant attention to the modifications undergone by the

energies involved, because this aspect belongs more properly to the second phase, viz. from 1923 to the present day. Little has been added since 1923 to the more general aspects of sublimation.

The first and inevitable conclusion must be that the concept of sublimation as originally stated involves a considerable amount of confusion; the second that we have not yet extricated ourselves from this confusion. As regards mechanism, we have produced nothing exclusively characteristic of sublimation. If we reduce sublimation to terms of displacement, there seems no great point in retaining a tautological expression. If we insist on cultural valuations, we cannot be content with a simple definition of 'aim deviation'. We may, if we so desire, introduce a cultural factor, but this implies a complex of mechanisms and we are not in a position to indicate any exact boundary to this complex formation. Moreover, if we include substitution elements in sublimation we have difficulty in distinguishing the latter from other organized substitutions (either characterological or symptomatic). And then we get confused as to the relation of sublimation to repressed and unrepressed instinct.

On the other hand the existence of confusion stimulates us to seek for some precise method of valuation. For example, the degree of psychic remoteness from the original impulse seems to be an important factor in sublimation, but we are unable to estimate this precisely, owing to the element of symbolism present. And if we are to take the remoteness factor seriously, it would appear desirable to exclude mere aim inhibition and object idealization from the category of sublimated processes. As regards the relation to organized psychic formations, a promising line of investigation would appear to be the relation of different formations to the main psychic systems (e.g. super-Ego). Also

- 279 -

the position of sublimation in a hierarchy (or chronological sequence) of psychic mechanisms seems worth investigating.

As regards energy, although we have hardly touched on this matter, certain possibilities have presented themselves. It seems that a quantitative factor in displacement might permit of a classification in which sublimation would be characterized by complete transfer of cathexes. This naturally suggests the operation (independently or concurrently) of a qualitative factor. Indeed one tends to form the opinion that some qualitative change in energy may prove to be the only valid metapsychological criterion of sublimation. An illustration of this qualitative factor would be the process of desexualization to be considered later. Finally, it is obvious that there is much to be gained by an examination of the sources of instincts involved, particularly the relation between reactive instincts and instincts capable of sublimation.

In conclusion, we must remind ourselves of two possible errors in approach. First of all we may have been obsessed by cultural valuations; it may be that we should define sublimation only in terms of protective value (related chiefly to illness). Sublimation might then be regarded as that process which affords the maximum protection from

illness with the minimum expenditure of energy. Lastly the factor of social valuation reminds us that in attempting to define sublimation in purely metapsychological terms we may be attempting the impossible. If, as Ella F. Sharpe suggests, sublimation and civilization are conterminous, it would be unreasonable to expect to shoehorn sublimation into a short metapsychological definition.

Clinical Investigations. —We have at last arrived at the proliferating margin of research on sublimation. There are three obvious directions in recent investigation. The first is clinical, the second a re-examination of psychic structure and the third a qualitative investigation of psychic energies. By accepted usage clinical investigation comes first. Clinical investigations can be either direct, in which case we are concerned at first hand with the observation and analysis of processes regarded by common consent as sublimatory, or they can be indirect, by which is implied the observation and analysis of phenomena accompanying or connected with sublimation, but not usually regarded as part of sublimation.

Transitory Sublimations. (a) Developmental. —A good example of the direct method is the investigation made by Bernfeld (2) into

- 280 -

transitory sublimations occurring in seemingly normal children and adolescents. These transitory sublimations depend, in his view, on the amount of libido the ego has at its free disposal. He has described two extreme cases, (a) where libido gratification, although ego-syntonic: is delayed and the libido is directed towards other ego-syntonic objects of a non-sexual variety; the condition here is that the ego impulses must not (either independently or as the result of libido frustration) be in a state of deprivation: (b) where the libido tends to subserve ego purposes it can be called upon by the ego when the latter has insufficient energy to effect an ego-aim. From his study of these and other types, Bernfeld suggests some general formulations regarding sublimation: that its amount has a definite relation to the strength of the ego, that plasticity of libido is only one factor and that deviation of aim is only one of many aspects of sublimation.

(b) During Illness. —A second example of the direct method brings me to part of the clinical material that is responsible for my own interest in sublimation. I am unable for reasons of space to give details on this occasion and will confine myself to the general description of findings. The material concerns transitory sublimations accompanying pathological states. The states, as might be expected, were not neurotic in type but were partly of the unclassified order, alcoholism, drug-addiction, etc., partly in the nature of neurotic character-formations and partly larval psychoses (e.g. apparently normal individuals with paranoidal formations or schizophrenic reactions). A feature of these cases was the extreme lability of the sublimation processes. It was not that the individual was compulsively hunting without any sense of satisfaction for some ideal activity; all their energies appeared to be poured in one sublimation and then apparently completely displaced to another sublimation, leaving the original interest like an empty husk. And in each phase there was apparently complete satisfaction. Nevertheless, allowing for the change in idiom (in other words, in the presentation content) the

activities invariably showed a common denominator of symbolic expression of unconscious phantasy. But although the processes were extremely labile, and in that way differed from the more usual stable formations of adult life, they could not at first sight have been distinguished from sublimations by the most exacting cultural or æsthetic standards, e.g. they were concerned with singing, painting, sculpture, literature, scientific and historical research, etc., etc. In one case presenting delusional features and a general lack of reality feeling, it could be observed that the delusional mechanism

4Ella F. Sharpe ('Zür Problematik der Sublimierungslehre, ' Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse, 1930, 3/4, S. 371) says: 'Sublimation springs from the same root as the delusion of persecution.'

- 281 -

always secured some element of representation in the activities without necessarily interfering seriously with their performance.⁴ When, however, owing to some extrinsic cause or some intrinsic factor of guilt any one activity was gradually abandoned, the interval was characterized by restlessness, extreme tension and manifestations of anxiety together with spasmodic outbursts of component sexual activities, e.g. playing with fæces.

Sublimation and Sexual Perversion. —A less direct type of observation involves some consideration of the phenomena of sexual perversion. These phenomena have always had some theoretical interest for the student of sublimation. For example, the view that in sexual perversion one or more component sexual impulses are retained and accentuated, as the price of complete repression of other components relating to the Œdipus situation, has a certain resemblance to views held concerning aim-inhibition. Admittedly the degree of direct sexual pleasure enables us to make a clinical distinction, but the refractoriness of many perversions to analysis suggests that, presumably owing to symbolic associations, a considerable deviation of energy from other components has taken place.

On the clinical side the relation of perversion to sublimation is more obvious. In many cases one finds that the perverse activity is more freely exercised where certain æsthetic conditions are fulfilled. For example, an invert with whipping phantasies describes how his erotic activities are inhibited unless the whip conforms to certain æsthetic standards, size, shape, tapering, smoothness, colour, etc., etc. Clothes and shoe fetichists (13) show similar reactions. Underclothes, for example, must conform to certain rigid æsthetic laws of pattern, colour, line and so on. The rigidity of such standards is reminiscent of the severe canons upheld with such religious fervour by critics or exponents of the fine arts. Indeed, if one did not know what was the actual subject matter of association, it would be difficult for the hearer to distinguish some diagnostic discussions of the conditions for perverse sexual gratifications from an æsthetic discussion of the canons of 'good' or 'bad' art.

Sublimation and Affect. —Turning from this type of observation to less direct investigations, I will again eliminate detail and present the conclusions which I have formed gradually and with increasing conviction throughout my analytic practice. I think it cannot escape

- 282 -

the attention of any analyst that in the course of reporting activities of the sublimation type, patients more or less constantly display associated manifestations of anxiety or guilt either directly or in various reactive forms, anger, irritation, criticism of others, feelings of inferiority and self-depreciation, hopelessness, phantastic ambition of a reassurance variety and so forth. And it cannot escape attention that the attempted analysis not only of these reactions but of components of the sublimation evokes intense resistance. Writing some years ago, on the technical aspects of resistance (14), I pointed out the very high defence value of resistances cloaked by sublimation and remarked that not only was the mechanism of displacement exploited or undermined by Id impulses, but that in this situation the mechanism of rationalization could be exploited to any extraordinary degree as a supplementary defence. At the time I merely drew attention to the association of anxiety with sublimation processes, and I did not attempt to pursue the question of a 'formation' any farther. Before doing so now I should like to call attention to a few interesting features of the situation.

Starting with the systems of rationalization just mentioned, it is interesting to note that these are not limited to purely realistic ego considerations which naturally are a feature of sublimated activities. The patient is not content with proclaiming that his activities have no hidden significance and that they represent ordinary accepted social or cultural activities, he usually goes on to proclaim adherence to a system of absolute values, ethical, æsthetic or scientific; in this way he endeavours to bar any investigation of elements that may appear to the analyst to be thin disguises for repressed impulses. And here we can see one of the main practical difficulties attendant on cultural valuation of sublimation. The analyst who has a strong bias in favour of cultural valuations is liable to be hoist with his own petard during the analysis particularly of characterological cases. It is almost as if the patient knew that the analyst had given consent to general values and retorted by raising his own values to a series of absolutes. These absolutes are generally held by the patient to be immune from inspection. Investigation is regarded as a form of blasphemy. The defence is similar to that adopted by theosophically minded patients who endeavour to evade the issue of infantile guilt by reference to the Laws of Karma, the state of their reincarnations, etc. These being in their view beyond discussion, infantile guilt is regarded as a secondary phenomenon of mere academic importance.

- 283 -

Obviously the first step in investigation is to classify the activities in question, next to classify the reactions and then to compare these with reactions to other social situations in which the element of sublimation is not so stressed. I shall not attempt these investigations now; very little reflection suggests, however, that we should have no

difficulty in proving how widespread are the ramifications of social anxiety. The element of snobbery which, statistically regarded, is a common accompaniment of æsthetic and cultural preoccupations provides us with a link to another group of social-anxiety reactions, viz. social snobbery; and it would be easy to establish a series of parallels, ethical, religious or even hypochondriacal. Admittedly the value of rationalization would vary in different series, e.g. the standards of social snobbery would gain less universal acceptance than would æsthetic absolutes (15).

Now these data admittedly comprise reactions tending to conceal anxiety or guilt. But it is not difficult to prove that in a large number of instances there is an aura of anxiety surrounding preoccupation with cultural activities. Sometimes it is free anxiety, sometimes fixed on some definite element of substitution. It is practically a universal analytical experience that patients express open apprehension as to the effect of analysis on their artistic or other creative activities; failing a suitable focus for such anxiety in their own personality, they will propound with great seriousness general problems, e.g. would a great master have produced masterpieces had he been analysed; what would have happened had Christ been analysed; are not neuroses the mainspring of cultural achievement, and so on. Ernest Jones (16) has recently published a short communication on one aspect of this subject.

Now I am not concerned for the moment with the interpretation of such attitudes in terms of replacement of presentation. I merely emphasize the fact that anxiety can be detected either directly or through protective reactions in close association with processes of sublimation. Some patients provide the analyst with abundant material of this kind: they will spend days quoting their own researches into the life histories of geniuses, the object being to show that neurotic suffering is an inevitable prerequisite of creative genius.

In addition to anxiety accompaniments of sublimatory activities, one finds frequently a marked association of reactive attitudes. We know that reactive attitudes of hate are a common cover for anxiety states, but the amount of hate and aggression attached to these cultural constellations is so great as to suggest that they provide a more or less

- 284 -

direct outlet for destructive impulses. It is interesting to consider in this connection one of the natural polarities of æsthetic or scientific pursuits, viz. creative and critical (destructive) activities. Interpretation is after all simply a compromise between these tendencies. It is no exaggeration to say that a large proportion of critical activities are concerned less with measurement, correlation and orientation than with direct satisfaction of destructive urges. The amount of heat which can be engendered in these fields of æsthetic activity is popularly discounted for three reasons; first, that the indulgence is so common, second that destructive trends are cloaked behind the creative aspect of constructive criticism and thirdly that particularly in the case of literary criticism, tendencies of wit and recompense of style (technique) help to conceal or extenuate the more primitive interests.

Obsessional Sequence. —In general then there is sufficient evidence of the association of anxiety reactions and aggressive trends with sublimated activities to warrant further investigation. The most natural explanation appears to be that sublimations act as conductors for unconscious impulses and affects. This has already been stated by Freud for the obsessional neuroses; in that neurosis sublimations act as substitutions and provide suitable points for break through, i.e. for the return of the repressed. If now we find this conductor system in active operation in the general sphere of sublimations, we are bound to ask whether we have somehow failed to recognise an obsessional sequence of events. (The obsessional sequence is: reaction formation—return of repressed—defence formation.) The direction of this train of thought is obvious; all along we have tried to maintain some clear distinction between sublimation and symptom formation, and now we are faced with the possibility that in many instances sublimations are part of larger psychic formations resembling symptoms. The restitution aspect of sublimations emphasised by Melanie Klein and Ella F. Sharpe has distinct resemblances to obsessional formations through the mechanism of undoing.

Phobia Formation. —But it is not only a question of obsessional technique in a social or cultural sphere; wherever we find conductors or substitutions plus a certain amount of anxiety we have all the essential ingredients of a phobia formation. And it is this particular aspect of the problem that I wish to single out on this occasion. Have we any grounds for thinking that sublimations accompanied by anxiety reactions are part of an extended phobia system? You will remember, of course, that the phobias we meet clinically and treat are

- 285 -

'unsuccessful'; the measures adopted to prevent affect following the return of the repressed have failed. If now we regard sublimations accompanied by anxiety as extended phobias, it may be that we can establish a criterion for true sublimation, viz. that it should be a 'successful phobia', an affectless deviation and displacement of sexual energy. But in that case we should have to admit that it is the rarest of human phenomena. I have already referred to the commonly accepted view concerning sublimation that it promotes Lust and diminishes Unlust, and have queried whether it is statistically or approximately true. My clinical experience goes to show that it is by no means invariably true.

We cannot continue discussion of this point without some precise understanding of the nature of social anxiety. The complications of this subject are due to the different manifestations of anxiety and the modifications they undergo at different stages of development. Freud's (6) (7) most recent teaching takes cognizance of primary anxiety states, the phobia formations of early childhood and the classical phobias of adult life. Concentration of interest on adult phobias tends to obscure two important facts; the unassisted dispersal or spread or spontaneous modification of early phobias, and the distinction between external anxiety and endopsychic (guilt) factors which can be observed in infantile phobias. To put the matter simply, there is a tendency to confuse social anxiety with guilt, and there has been a tendency to easy acceptance of the view

that certain anxiety states are spontaneously resolved rather than dispersed in smaller formations.

We have become accustomed to subdivide the conditions for anxiety in a certain order, starting with those dangers which can be attributed to aggression from without (loss of love, castration anxiety) and ending with a completely endopsychic condition (fear of loss of love on the part of the super-ego). This last form of anxiety gives rise to the affect of guilt experienced directly or in the form of need of punishment, and is regarded as having a special relation to the aggressive impulses. The external factor becomes modified in course of time from anxiety about actual aggression to anxiety regarding external criticism. The internal factor is and remains an anxiety of internal criticism. The anxiety regarding external criticism which is identical with anxiety regarding loss of love is distinguished as social anxiety. It can be expressed also in the simple formula—fear of consequences if found out. A prominent factor in childhood, it is probably grossly

- 286 -

under-estimated in relation to adult life. Its relation to internal criticism is, however, very intimate and sharp distinction is difficult. This is to a large extent due to the operation of the mechanism of projection; in the first place the aggression of external authority is exaggerated by projection and in the second the sharpness of internal criticism can be temporarily reduced by displacing it in the form of social anxiety. In the same way introjection processes blur the sharp dividing-line between the two situations. Both are, however, subject to a certain amount of modification in the course of adolescence. Conditions of social anxiety are more precise, and in the same way the most superficial aspects of super-ego criticism begin to merit the term of social or conscious conscience. Recent investigation suggests that the onset of 'endopsychic conditions of anxiety' (guilt) is much earlier than has been supposed, but, speculation apart, we have no proof as yet that guilt and external anxiety reactions are organized simultaneously. And in the meantime theoretical considerations seem to justify the view that primarily fear reactions precede guilt.

Return of Dispersed Phobias. —If now we re-examine the affects and reactions accompanying sublimations, we see that whilst the element of anxiety is in many cases obvious, the reactions appear to present a mixture of social anxiety with displaced guilt. A fair distinction can be drawn between preoccupations that are more or less compulsively followed in order to acquire merit (liquidate guilt) and those in which the desire not to be found out plays an important part. It is not overstating matters to say that many individuals who appear to have spent their lives in cultural pursuits can be found on examination to have been clinging anxiously to a thin façade of cultural preoccupation in order to escape detection and criticism. Doubtless the strength of aggressive components associated with the activity determines whether the reaction falls into one group or the other.

Anyhow we have to consider the possibility that the spontaneously disappearing phobias of earlier life have not in fact disappeared, but have become dispersed and that

they tend to reassemble and organize themselves in association with sublimated activities. These formations are of course not so closely knit or condensed as phobias, hence contain anxiety better. At the same time we must ask whether the freedom from manifest obsessional states enjoyed by a large number of people is not due to displacement of obsessional technique to activities which

- 287 -

according to cultural valuations are not suspected of being symptomatic.

The Anxiety Character. —Now on this point some suggestive work has already been published by Ernest Jones in his paper, 'The Anxiety Character'. (8) Basing himself on the view that if defensive reactions to anxiety are localized they are a priori phobia formations, he defines an anxiety character as that state where anxiety trends and the defensive reactions are built into the structure of the personality as a whole. They are diffuse and laid down early in the defensive process. He sees three components in the formation, a positive one relating to the amount of libidinal excitation, the development of anxiety and its displacement (in the case of anxiety character) by absorption into the personality. The individual reacts to social situations wherever they present possibilities of loss or injury of symbolic significance (operations, loss of valued objects) or where they represent minor social deprivations (slights and rebuffs, etc.). Should, nevertheless, the developed anxiety prove objectionable a third component can be distinguished, a concealed anxiety reaction against anxiety. This frequently takes the form of hate reactions, anger and irritability, although here too the relations to guilt reactions are very close. On the whole he has selected social situations in illustration of this condition, but it is easy to see that it could be held to include most of the formations I have already described in reference to cultural activities. The justification for the concept of an anxiety character is a wider issue into which I shall not enter, except to remark that whilst some characteristics of timidity, cautiousness, etc. seem to be formations, they are certainly more mobile than the usual character reactions. This apart, it is evident that a quantitative factor should help us to decide on possible differences between the anxiety character and sublimations associated with anxiety (or obsessional) technique. And I want to suggest that although these latter states are much more diffuse than localized phobia symptom formations, they are nevertheless by comparison with the diffuse anxiety preparedness described by Ernest Jones sufficiently fixed and highly enough charged to deserve a special category.

Anxiety and Inhibition. —A third possible view of the relation of anxiety to sublimation is suggested by Melanie Klein (10) (12) in her work on the neurotic inhibitions of childhood. According to an earlier paper, there occurs even in successful repression a displacement of affect (in the form of anxiety) from the repressed to ego tendencies; the displacement is effected by identification (later symbolism) and

- 288 -

the ego activity in question has in any case some degree of primary libidinal cathexis. The anxiety is not shown directly, but manifests itself in the form of inhibitions. In

some cases these can be termed normal inhibitions, but where repression is unsuccessful the amount of displaced anxiety is greater and the inhibitions are of a neurotic type. A complementary relation between repression and sublimation is necessary for a neurotic inhibition. Not only must repression be unsuccessful, but there must also have existed strong sublimatory interests in the ego activity in question. The situation has resemblances to a phobia formation, but differs from it in two ways—first that the anxiety is bound in the inhibition, whereas it is freed in the phobia, and second, that where symptom formation exists fixation has led to repression at an earlier stage, before successful sublimation has been effected.

Melanie Klein's later views emphasize the fact that owing to anxiety, induced by frustration and phantasies about the parents' organs, identification with non-sexual objects is stimulated; anxiety is then displaced to the appropriate ego interests. This displacement has adaptation value because through identification (symbolism) energies are transferred to ego tendencies. But the degree of anxiety is important; if early anxiety is excessive it inhibits symbolism and therefore capacity to sublimate (i.e. transfer of interest): if, however, the transfer of anxiety is excessive it is liable to end in inhibition of the ego activity (sublimation).

The earlier theoretical reconstruction of the course of events is not entirely satisfying, partly because it makes use of a now abandoned theory of anxiety, and partly because the relations between repression, sublimation and symptom formation are rather schematic, and depend at some points on the use of terms such as "unsuccessful" repression or sublimation. But the clinical findings are not in dispute, viz. that when inhibitions are analysed quantities of anxiety are freed, that inhibitions (unless presumably pseudo-inhibitions due to absence of transferred interest) are superimposed on existing sublimations, and that transfer of both interest and anxiety takes place along lines of displacement.

Classification. —Now I agree that there is no special virtue in elaborating classifications of clinical phenomena; on the other hand, it is improbable that we can grasp the detailed relations of sublimations and anxiety states so long as we remain content with broad clinical groupings. So making due allowance for over-elaboration and overlapping,

- 289 -

there would appear to be at least four groups of phenomena to be considered: (a) Classical phobia formations (symptoms), which interfere with sublimations in a secondary sense, (b) minor, almost occult, phobia formations (Ernest Jones' 'anxiety character' type) which, again secondarily, interfere with sublimations, (c) inhibitions which conceal the direct attachment of anxiety to sublimations, and (d) anxiety states directly associated with sublimations. The latter, though open anxiety states, are not recognized clinically owing in part to the social sanction given to such reactions or to a social conspiracy of silence (or inattention) on such matters. Other groups could doubtless be added, e.g. (e) sublimations which perform a protective function similar to the protective function of an obsessional neurosis, (f) sublimations in which a delusional element plays a part.

Summary. —The upshot of this discussion is as follows: If we take a wide enough view, it cannot be said that the outcome of sublimation is invariably to promote Lust and diminish Unlust. We do in fact find Unlust in frequent and close association with sublimated activities. This does not exclude the possibility that there is a type of pure sublimation which has such an effect, but it does suggest that pure sublimation is rather a rare phenomenon. We may indeed inquire whether we have not imported into the concept a subjective and phantastic standard, a kind of omnipotent valuation which detracts from the usefulness of the term in workaday analysis. From this point of view we are thrown back rather on a protective standard in estimating sublimations. Secondly, observation of the phenomena of transitory sublimations in normal states and of their regression or mobility in pathological states is a useful preliminary to study of processes such as 'desexualization'. The mobility supports the idea of a store of permanently neutral energy which can follow on the heels of unmodified and merely displaced pilot impulses. Regressional changes and reduction of sublimations to symbolisms suggests that the unmodified energy is quantitatively more than a mere pilot impulse, no matter how much neutral energy is in store.

Modification of Energy. —This brings us to the second phase in the development of the concept of sublimation, viz. research on the modifications of energy involved by sublimation. In essence this is a theoretical matter, a matter of Id psychology; our clinical contact is practically limited to a discussion of sources of instincts and to observation of the phenomena connected with reactive instincts. Needless to say the texts

- 290 -

on which all such discussions hang are to be found in the Ego and the Id (17). They are firstly that 'the transformation of object libido into narcissistic libido which thus takes place (when an erotic object-choice is transformed into a modification of the ego) implies an abandonment of sexual aims, a process of desexualization; it is consequently a kind of sublimation'. It is suggested here that perhaps the ego after this transformation has been effected goes on to give the transformed libido another aim. The second suggestion is that there exists in the mind a neutral displaceable energy which can augment the cathexis of an erotic or destructive impulse. This Freud regards as an indispensable concept, particularly in relation to his discrimination between Life and Death instincts. This neutral energy 'is probably active alike in the ego and in the id and presumably proceeds from the narcissistic reservoir of libido', is 'desexualized Eros'. It might also be described as sublimated energy. The third assumption is that the identification with the father from which the super-ego arises is 'in the nature of a desexualization or even of a sublimation'. But it seems 'there occurs at the same time an instinctual defusion'. After sublimation the erotic components cannot 'bind the whole of the destructive elements' and 'these are released in the form of inclination to aggression and destruction'.

If we try to express these ideas in familiar metapsychological terms it will be seen that they can be contained under the heading of deviation of aim. But it is obvious that the

'desexualisation' implied is something more fundamental: it implies a permanent neutrality. From this point of view the regression phenomena observed clinically in sublimation activities merit careful consideration. A mere cessation of activities could be attributed simply to withdrawal of this auxiliary energy. But a regression, or if you prefer it, a replacement of sublimations by manifest erotic urges suggests two possibilities. It might imply an excess of displaced but not completely desexualized pilot energy existing in the formation. Or it could be due to the transfer of neutral energy to a previously weakly cathected or strongly repressed erotic trend. Moreover, it is to be noted that the energies are derived from external object cathexes of an advanced type. And this leaves the problem of some earlier component sexual instincts rather in the cold. Then as to the view that the erotic component is mainly sublimated after the 'defusion' of withdrawn object cathexes: the simplest explanation of this process would be that the absorption of defused aggressive components by the super-ego provides the additional

- 291 -

impetus necessary to initiate sublimations of whatever variety. Another possibility is worth considering; it might be regarded as a rider to the first proposition. It can be stated as follows: is the defusion simply an inevitable result of withdrawal of cathexis and the sublimation simply a necessary fate of the withdrawn erotic component: or is sublimation only possible after defusion has taken place, i.e. after the destructive components have been isolated and bound in super-ego activity?

Sublimation and Aggressive Impulses. —Some points in favour of this view may be suggested here: it is well known that aggressive impulses are more tenacious of aim than sexual impulses. Their objects can be changed and the mode of gratification altered, but the aim remains. And it would appear plausible that this factor must cause difficulty in the displacement of fused impulses. We can see in the case of certain object relations how erotic impulses can light up aggressive tendencies and aggressive tendencies stimulate erotic relations. To prevent confusion it may be emphasized that we are not concerned at the moment with transformation of love into hate or, except in the most general sense, with ambivalence, but merely with the concept of fusion. Returning to our clinical data, it is to be observed that in practically all cases where Unlust is associated with sublimation, analysis demonstrated without any difficulty the carry over of some component of unmodified aggression. On the other hand, one of the most compelling forms of sublimation appears to be that in which, following the Sharpe-Klein pattern, restitution through creation cancels out existing, but repressed, destructive impulses and phantasy formations.

Masochism. —It has been pointed out that in these recent formulations the study of energy commences at a fairly advanced stage of development, i.e. where incestuous object cathexes are withdrawn. And in the original definition of sublimation we were accustomed to think of the energy being derived mainly from the component impulses, some of which do not necessarily require an external object. Further, as Freud (18) has told us, 'the classical piece of evidence for the existence of "instinctual fusion" is moral

masochism.' Masochism at the time of his Three Contributions was rated as one of several paired sets of component impulses. Now moral masochism has 'loosened its connection with what we recognize to be sexuality'. We must therefore ask: does the sublimation of impulses apply only to that amount which has gone through a phase of external object attachment and has

- 292 -

been withdrawn; and, another problem, is moral masochism a sublimation?

This last is not simply an academic issue: it has frequently to be dealt with in the course of analyses, especially of women. I have often had the problem put to me by patients, some of whom, familiar with analytic theory, stated it in technical terms, and others in a more general way. It amounts to this: if masochistic trends are put to a biological purpose in the sexual activities of women and if sublimation implies a deviation of aim (sexual gratification), then the sublimation of masochism must interfere with adult capacities: therefore, according to social valuation of sublimation, moral masochism would not qualify as a true sublimation. According to the older views of sublimation, this could be answered in two ways; first, that whatever the nature of the component instinct, the part sublimated was that which has been directed to an external object, and, second, that sublimation applied only to frustrated object impulses, not to that amount which was ego-syntonic and would therefore be gratified in sexual adaptation.

A more complete explanation is contained in Freud's discrimination between the moral urges due to reinforcement of the super-ego by the sadistic component freed in defusion and the moral masochistic urges due to an increase in the masochism of the ego after defusion. The latter contain a regressional gratification of Oedipus wishes, the former reinforce the repression or defence against Oedipus wishes. This explanation is a satisfying one, but it weakens the original definition, viz. that sublimation simply implies a deviation from the aim of sexual gratification. Descriptively speaking, moral masochism shows deviation from sexual aim, and even if we agree that there is an element of primitive erotogenic masochism behind all moral masochism, it is not openly manifested as such. Freud has appealed to the usages of speech in this matter, and has said that familiar application of the term masochist to those who behave as 'moral masochists' do, connects the behaviour with erotism. That may be true, but this plainly phenomenological usage cripples the equally familiar application of the term sublimation to manifestly non-sexual activities, or, alternatively, detracts from the value of social standards in assessing sublimation.

Instinct and Aim-deviation. —Space does not permit of any detailed consideration of sadism and masochism, but it is obvious that future investigation of the dynamics of sublimation will be concerned more and more with the relation of destructive to libidinal impulses. But it

- 293 -

is equally obvious that, no matter how convenient it would be to use the term solely in a dynamic sense, and no matter how much confusion is introduced by the application of

descriptive and social standards, it will never be possible to neglect the factor of aim-deviation. Indeed, a closer study of the lability of instinctual aims will be an important part of future research. It does not require much reflection to see that, judged by the lability of aims, the old Freudian classification of instincts was in some respects more convenient than the recent antithesis of death and life instincts. It is characteristic of certain instincts of self-preservation that they are most refractory of all to repression or modification. It is equally characteristic of sexual impulses that they can be completely repressed and completely modified or, to put it more cautiously, modified beyond recognition.

The facts concerning destructive impulses are interesting. The aims of destructive impulses are refractory to modification. Given a certain association with libidinal impulses they can be repressed or opposed by reaction formations or preceded by expiations. But the modification is only accomplished with great difficulty. Indeed, unless repressed, the aims of aggressive impulses, though capable of change from object to subject, are not much modified. The mode of gratification can be altered. The use of aggressive words alters the outcome, as far as the object is concerned (a fact incidentally that goes far to compensate for the occasional traumatic identification of words and deeds): but it does not do more than inhibit the aim. So we cannot talk strictly of aim-deviation in the case of destructive impulses. Speech may sublimate certain erotic components but it does not alter the aim of destructive components. These can only be repressed or held in check or anticipated by the opposite. It is therefore an open question whether the importance of sublimation is primarily that it prevents the damming up of libido by displacing quantities of frustrated energy, or whether its function is to control our surplus of frustrated aggressive impulses by anticipatory expiation which establishes a lien on friendly and helpful relations to objects. Psycho-analytical anthropologists will doubtless have a good deal to say on this point, but in the meantime the question is mainly of clinical interest, viz. does sublimation prevent illness by reducing anxiety, or does it prevent illness by liquidating guilt?

Conclusion. —In the present uncertain state of our knowledge concerning sublimation, we are not in a position to attempt any binding formulations. A few tentative opinions may perhaps be expressed. It

- 294 -

would appear that from the point of view of metapsychology any fundamental conception of sublimation must be expressed in terms of energy (its source and the nature of its modification). The earlier and more descriptive standpoint does not lend itself to the purposes of metapsychology. Nevertheless the term has considerable descriptive (i.e. practical) value. It would be much more useful if we could establish a more precise relation between sublimation and symbolism. Pending further research, we are justified in using the term (a) for loose descriptive purposes, and (b) as a basis of metapsychological investigation of instinct. But we must realize that this double application of the term is liable on occasion to give rise to considerable confusion.

And here I think we can effect a compromise on the vexed question of cultural valuation. From the very outset Freud has emphasized the importance of sublimations in preventing neurotic regression, also the ætiological significance of any breakdown of sublimation. On the other hand, introduction of ethical or cultural valuations has so far caused more trouble and confusion than it has been worth. So long as repression exists, the individual valuation of cultural and social sublimations remains an unknown quantity. Admittedly we are entitled to estimate the social value of other people's sublimations, but that is not the immediate concern of individual psychology, still less the concern of metapsychology. On the other hand, we are on perfectly safe ground if we maintain that sublimation performs a protective (or defensive) function—operates like a compensating balance. According to the taste of the investigator, this function can be expressed in terms of the pleasure-reality principle, or in terms of illness (which includes secondarily maladaptation to existing social regulations). If we attach a cultural (or any other) fixed form of valuation, we are attributing to the pleasure and reality principles a rigidity of function which would seriously impair their psychological utility, and incidentally we saddle ourselves with the incubus of 'absolute values' without any prospect of adequate remuneration. In other words, a sublimation can be regarded socially as pursuing cultural aims, if and when individual protection from illness takes the form of cultural pursuits. In any case, we must keep a sharp look-out to make sure that the sublimations in question do not run in close association with open anxiety formations or concealed obsessional formations. If such should prove to be the case, we can no longer regard the formation as a true sublimation but as a conductor (substitute) formation, accompanied by or heralding the return of the repressed. And here the factor of symbolism is

- 295 -

probably decisive. Should we have any difficulty in arriving at a conclusion as to the significance of any one sublimation, the ultimate appeal must be to analysis. Because, unless the sublimation shows patent signs of having deteriorated into a complex of symbolisms, we may not be able to verify any suspicions until we have examined the effect of releasing repression in analysis. The long-sanctioned practice of advising patients not to make binding decisions regarding their career until their analysis is finished is in itself a tacit recognition of this possibility. In any case, it is good practice to query the significance of a sublimation, so long as the individual concerned is in any degree incapacitated, unhappy or ill.

REFERENCES

Freud Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie, 5te Auf. 1922 ss. 23 43–44, 100–101 Eine Kindheitserinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci 1919 ss. 17, 19, 20, 75 Collected Papers Vol. I, 67; Vol. II 33, 47–8, 55, 82, 139 Vol. III, 376; Vol. IV 51, 68–9, 92–3, 116, 123, 127, 132 Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis pp. 117, 146, 198, 220, 236, 248, 250–3, 259, 290, 293, 301, 306–7, 323, 326, 372, 380 Beyond the Pleasure Principle pp. 52–3, 65 Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego pp. 17, 23, 33, 57, 74–5, 118
Bernfeld 'Bemerkungen über "Sublimierung"' Imago 1922 viii 333

Melanie Klein 'Infantile Anxiety Situations Reflected in a Work of Art' Intern. Journ. of Psycho-Analysis 1929 x. 436

Ella F. Sharpe 'Certain Aspects of Sublimation and Delusion' Internat. Journ. of Psycho-Analysis 1930 xi. 12

Ernest Jones Papers on Psycho-Analysis 1923 pp. 20, 34, 50–2, 115–16, 127, 157, 193–8, 209, 216, 247, 257–8, 275, 324–6, 355, 359, 362, 606–7, 657

Freud Hemmung, Symptom u. Angst pp. 12, 18, 26, 30, 33–4, 39, 41, 44–6, 50–51, 54, 64, 83, 86, 94–5

Freud Das Unbehagen in der Kultur 1930 s. 30

Ernest Jones 'The Anxiety Character' Medical Review of Reviews 1930 xxxvi 3 177

Ernest Jones 'The Theory of Symbolism' Papers on Psycho-Analysis 1923 203

Melanie Klein 'Infant Analysis' Intern. Journ. of Psycho-Analysis 1926 vii 31

- 296 -

James Glover 'Recent Advances in the Relation of Psycho-Analysis to Education' Proc. of Teachers' Conference London, January 22, 1924

Melanie Klein 'Importance of Symbol Formation in the Development of the Ego' Intern. Journ. of Psycho-Analysis 1930 xi 24

James Glover 'Notes on an Unusual Form of Perversion' Intern. Journ. of Psycho-Analysis 1927 viii 10

Edward Glover 'The Technique of Psycho-Analysis' 1928 pp. 34–5

See also Eder 'A Contribution to the Psychology of Snobbishness' Intern. Journ. of Psycho-Analysis (Bulletin) 1926 vii 128 'On the Psychology of Value' Brit. Journ. of Medical Psychology 1930 x pt. 2

Ernest Jones 'Communication to British Psycho-Analytical Society', June 1st, 1927: Abst. Intern. Journ. of Psycho-Analysis (Bulletin) 1927 viii 558

Freud The Ego and the Id pp. 38, 63–7

Freud 'The Economic Problem in Masochism' Collected Papers Vol. II p. 255

- 297 -

SPITZ, R. (1955) THE PRIMAL CAVITY—A Contribution to the Genesis of Perception and Its Role for Psychoanalytic Theory. PSYCHOANAL. ST. CHILD, 10:215 (PSC)

THE PRIMAL CAVITY—A Contribution to the Genesis of Perception and Its Role for Psychoanalytic Theory

RENÉ A. SPITZ, M.D.

In recent years two forms of psychoanalytic approach to the phenomenon of sleep have claimed our interest. I am referring to Lewin's (1946) interpretative and reconstructive work on the dream screen, on one hand, and to Isakower's (1938) clinical observations on the psychopathology of going to sleep, on the other. It is my belief that these two studies cover two aspects, and, beyond this, two stages of a regressive phenomenon, which has its counterpart in ontogenetic development. The regressive phenomena described by Lewin and by Isakower fall into the area of "normal" psychological functioning. The developmental data which I shall present in what follows, will serve to retrace the same process in the opposite, in the progressive direction. I hope to show that the dream screen hypothesis of Lewin and the clinical observation of Isakower have their parallel in the independent findings of direct infant observation and in the neurophysiology of perception. The convergence of the three lines of research, Isakower's, Lewin's, and my own, is noteworthy. Each started from a different point and, using different approaches, yields findings which are mutually explanatory. I have first spoken of such convergences in a communication on "Experimental Design" (1950b) and stated that in psychoanalysis such a convergence can occupy the place which validation has in experimental psychology.

THE DREAM SCREEN AND THE ISAKOWER PHENOMENON

Lewin's hypothesis takes as its starting point Freud's statement that the dream is the guardian of sleep. The fundamental wish-fulfilling nature of the dream ensures the continuation of sleep. In this function the dream is the manifestation of a regression to the emotional state of the infant when it goes to sleep at the mother's breast after having drunk

- 215 -

his fill. Certain of his patients' dreams appeared as if projected onto a screen which, Lewin holds, is the visual memory of the breast. He further assumes that this dream-screen-breast is always present in dreaming; that in the "blank dream" it actually is the dream content. He connects these findings with his other proposition, that of the oral triad of the wish to eat, to be eaten, to sleep (to die).

Isakower's contribution is the clinical observation that some of his patients, when in the reclining position, particularly when subject to elevation of temperature, or in the predormescent state, have certain sensations which partake of the mouth, of the skin surface and of the hand sensitivity. The somewhat vague sensations are of something wrinkled, or perhaps gritty and dry, soft, filling the mouth, being felt at the same time on the skin surface of the body and being manipulated with the fingers. Visually the

sensation is perceived as shadowy, indefinite, mostly round, approaching and growing enormous and then shrinking to practically nothing.

Lewin's and Isakower's observations have proved extraordinarily fertile both clinically and theoretically. The clinical observations of numerous analysts, including myself, have confirmed their findings.

When, however, I confronted Lewin's hypothesis with the findings of my own research on perceptive development, a difficulty arose. Lewin's description of the dream screen has a perceptive aspect and an affect aspect. We will begin with the discussion of the perceptive aspect, for since Freud's earliest writings perception has been rarely explored by psychoanalysts.

THE BEGINNINGS OF PERCEPTION

Both Lewin and Isakower state that the phenomena described by them are based on the memory of what they consider to be the first visual percept, namely, the mother's breast. My own work on the earliest stages of perception, conducted by the method of direct observation on infants, led me to experimental findings which at first appear to contradict their conclusion. In agreement with the statements of the academic psychologists Volkelt (1929), Hetzer and Ripin (1930), Rubinow and Frankl (1934), and Kaila (1932), I came to the conclusion that the first visual percept is the human face; to be more exact, it is a Gestalt configuration within the human face.

This first visual percept cannot be achieved at birth. It is progressively developed in the course of the first three months and is reliably perceived, and reacted to as such, in the course of the third month of life. I have

- 216 -

elaborated these findings in my experimental study "The Smiling Response" (1946), (1948), in which I have also shown experimentally that at this period no other visual percept is recognized or reacted to in the same reliable manner as the human face.

This is a decisive turning point in the development of the psyche during the first year of life. It is the turning from passive reception to active perception, and accordingly I have called it, in analogy to an embryological concept, an "organizer" of psychological development. We will come back later to some of the details of this phenomenon.

The period prior to the crystallization of this first visual percept has been described by Hartmann (1939) and Anna Freud (1952) as the period of undifferentiation, by myself as that of nondifferentiation. The term nondifferentiation should be understood in a global, total sense: on one hand, the infant does not distinguish what is "I" from what is "non-I," the self from the non-self, let alone the constituent elements of his environment. On the other hand, his own faculties, be they modalities of feeling, of sensation, of emotion, are not differentiated from one another; finally, no differentiation within the psychic system or even between the psyche and soma can be demonstrated. A case in point is the phenomenon of the so-called "overflow" in the newborn.

The subsequent differentiation is a progressive one, maturational on one hand, developmental on the other. It is in the course of the first three months, more or less beginning after the sixth week, that we can detect experimentally certain areas in which the infant begins to distinguish visual percepts. The first such percept to which it reacts is the human face. Toward the middle of the second month of life, the infant begins to follow the movement and displacement of the human face. Later, after about ten weeks, he responds to the human face with a differentiated manifestation of emotion, that of smiling.

With these observational facts in mind, let us now imagine the perceptual world of the infant before differentiation has begun; to achieve this, it is well to project ourselves backward to the memories of our own childhood and to realize how gigantic every remembered street, house, garden, piece of furniture appears in our memory; and how, if we happen to see it again twenty years later, it seems, surprisingly, to have shrunk.

This shrinkage of remembered impressions is due to the increase of our own size, for man is the measure of all things. Considering that the infant's face is one third the size of the adult's face, and that the infant's whole length at birth is little more than one quarter that of the adult, one begins to realize how gigantic the adult appears to the infant.

Swift illustrates this in *Gulliver's Travels*, a point mentioned by

- 217 -

Freud (1900, p. 30); Lewin (1953a) refers again and again to this distortion of the infant's perception. The distortion is even more accentuated through the fact that the perceptive angle of the infant's vision, when approached by an adult, has to be an extremely wide one—we do not usually see people as close as the infant sees them. Lewin did not overlook this; he speaks of the "diplopic, amblyopic baby, with its weak powers of accommodation and its confused depth and color perceptions (1953a, p. 183). (See also Margolin, 1953.)

We can assume that the baby, if indeed it perceives anything, perceives moving, shifting, gigantic, vaguely colored and even more vaguely contoured inchoate masses. In the midst of this chaos certain of these shifting masses reappear periodically and are associated with certain recurrent sensations, feelings, emotions. They become associated, in short, with need satisfaction.

It is at this point that my observations on infants appear to contradict both Lewin's and Isakower's assumptions. The reason for this divergence is a twofold one; one has already been mentioned: namely, that the first percept to be crystallized out of the shifting nebular masses in the world of the baby is the human face. The second is an easily demonstrable fact which can be checked by anyone who takes the trouble to observe a nursing baby. The nursing baby does not look at the breast. He does not look at the breast when the mother is approaching him, nor when she is offering him the breast, nor when he is nursing. He stares unwaveringly, from the beginning of the feeding to the end of it, at the mother's face.

Therefore, I offer the proposition that the Isakower phenomenon does not represent the approaching breast—at least not from the visual point of view. In my opinion it represents the visually perceived human face. All the phenomena, all the details described in Isakower's and Lewin's examples, as well as in those provided by other analysts, are to be found in the human face. The cracks, the wrinkles, the roses, the spots—but let Gulliver in Brobdingnag speak: "Their skins appeared so coarse and uneven, so variously colored when I saw them near, with a mole here and there as broad as a trencher, and hairs hanging from it thicker than pack threads, to say nothing further concerning the rest of their persons" (Swift).

It would seem that the facts of perceptive development cannot be reconciled with either Isakower's or Lewin's assumptions. Such is not my opinion; on the contrary, I believe that my findings, and the observable data of perceptive development, actually form the bridge between the Isakower phenomenon and the Lewin propositions, and round them off

- 218 -

in certain aspects. The real point of juncture is to be found in the observation that the infant, while nursing at the breast, is at the same time staring at the mother's face; thus breast and face are experienced as one and indivisible.

It should be remembered that at birth the newborn perceives only sensations originating within his body. He is protected from outside perceptions by the stimulus barrier. How, then, does the turning from inner stimuli to outer perception, be it even of the inchoate kind described earlier, come about? It seems to me that the present state of our knowledge permits the following proposition:

We possess one localized perceptual zone which includes in itself both the characteristics of interior and exterior perception. From birth on and even before (Minkowski, 1925), (1928); (Davenport Hooker, 1942), (1943), a readiness for response to stimulation can be demonstrated in and around the mouth. This behavior is of an aim-directed nature. We may, with Konrad Lorenz (1950), call the readiness underlying this response an innate releasing mechanism, an IRM. Like all IRM's, it has survival value.¹ The resulting behavior consists in the following: The whole outside part of the mouth region, of the "snout" (nose, cheeks, chin and lips), responds to stimulation by a turning of the head toward the stimulus, combined with a snapping movement of the mouth. The function of this response is to take the nipple into the mouth.

We call this behavior the sucking reflex. Though it can be elicited by appropriate stimulation in the fetus and even in the embryo, at birth it is unreliable like all innate behavior in man. In reflexological terms, it is neither stimulus-specific nor response-specific; that means that it does not always take place in response to the stimulation of the snout, nor does it only take place in response to the stimulation of the snout.

But despite this comparative unreliability it is one of the most reliable responses at birth. Its reliability is second only to that of the clutch reflex, which is the closing of the hand on palmar stimulation; in the same order of reliability as the clutch reflex is its

antagonist, described by me under the name of the digital stretch reflex (1950a) which consists

IIRM (innate releasing mechanism) is a concept introduced by animal ethologists (Uexküll, Lorenz). The concept has hardly ever been defined in the literature, except in terms of the releasing stimulus. An exception to this is an attempt made by Tinbergen (1950, p. 309). The approximate definition given by Tinbergen elsewhere (1951) will suffice: "There must be a special neurosensory mechanism that releases the reaction and is responsible for this selective susceptibility to a very special combination of sign stimuli. This mechanism we will call the Innate Releasing Mechanism (IRM)" (p. 42). We may complete it by a definition given by Baerends (1950): "The mechanism beginning at the sense organs, ending at the center released and including the sensitivity for characteristics of the object, we will call the releasing mechanism" (p. 338).

- 219 -

in the stretching of the fingers on dorsal stimulation of the phalanges. It is noteworthy that sucking and clutching—the two archaic responses which show directed behavior and which are far and away more reliable than all others at this period—are to be found in connection with the hand and the mouth; and, moreover, that they are both directed to an action of "taking into," as it were. It is surely significant that the regression in the Isakower phenomenon concerns the selfsame organs, the hand and the mouth.

One may speculate on the question whether the unreliability of these responses may have its cause in the fact that they are provoked by stimuli originating on the outside of the body, so that they impinge on the sensorium, which at this stage is not yet cathected. But, as we have stressed before, reception of inner stimuli is already present at this stage. Accordingly, we have next considered a stimulation which involves simultaneously both the outside and the inside. Such a stimulation takes place when the nipple is placed inside the newborn's mouth. In view of what we have said above, it is not surprising that this stimulation elicits a much more reliable response at this period; the response consists in sucking and in the concomitant process of deglutition.

What appears to me significant in this phenomenon is that the inside of the mouth, the oral cavity, fulfills the conditions of partaking for perceptive purposes both of the inside and of the outside. It is simultaneously an interoceptor and exteroceptor. It is here that all perception will begin; in this role the oral cavity fulfills the function of a bridge from internal reception to external perception.

Both Isakower and Lewin have included some of these ideas into their reconstructive approach to the problem. Isakower has assumed that the combination of the oral cavity with the hand corresponds to the model of what he defines as the earliest postnatal ego structure, and that the sensations of the oral cavity are probably unified with those of the external cutaneous covering.

Lewin (1953a) in his "Reconsideration of the Dream Screen," quotes Dr. Rogawsky to the effect "that the original cavity might well be the inside of the mouth, as discovered

and perceived by the suckling's finger. Accordingly, the earliest impression of the mouth would serve as a prototype of all later ideas of body cavities."

I would agree with this formulation, but would make it more specific. It is misleading, in my opinion, to speak of the suckling's finger discovering or perceiving anything. At this early stage (the first weeks of life) the organ in which precursors of perceptions are received is the oral cavity and not the finger. We have, therefore, to consider rather what the oral

- 220 -

cavity perceives when something—in the case suggested by Dr. Rogawsky, the finger—is introduced into it. Even earlier than this, the nipple, and the jet of milk coming from it, have acted as the earliest postnatal liberators from thirst. How enduring the memory of the unpleasure of thirst is can be seen from the repetitive mentioning of the gritty, sandy sensation in Isakower's examples.

To me this finding is not surprising. I have stressed again and again in the last twenty years that speaking of hunger in the newborn and infant is a misnomer. The sufferings of hunger are not comparable to thirst, nor do they occur in response to as brief a deprivation as those of thirst. We are all too prone to forget that at birth the infant shifts from the life of a water dweller to that of a land animal. During the intrauterine period his mouth cavity, larynx, etc., were constantly bathed in the amniotic liquid. After delivery a continuous stream of air will dry out the mucosa with great rapidity, particularly since the salivary glands begin to function only many weeks later. This drying out of the mucosa will cause all the discomfort sensations of a dry mouth, throat, nasal passages, etc., connected with thirst; and not with hunger. Thirst, or rather dryness of this area, will therefore be one of the first experiences of discomfort in the infant.

But the experience of relief from unpleasure through the nipple which fills the newborn's mouth (remember the disparity of sizes!), and the milk streaming from it, is only one part of the picture, a passive experience. The act of sucking and of deglutition is the infant's first active co-ordinated muscular action. The organs involved are the tongue, the lips and the cheeks. Accordingly, these are also the muscles which are the first ones to be brought under control, a fact which makes the later smiling response possible.

Similarly these will be the first surfaces used in tactile perception and exploration. They are particularly well suited for this purpose because in this single organ, the mouth cavity, are assembled the representatives of several of the senses in one and the same area. These senses are the sense of touch, of taste, of temperature, of smell, of pain, but also the deep sensibility involved in the act of deglutition. Indeed, the oral cavity lends itself as no other region of the body to bridge the gap between inner and outer perception.

True, the quality of this perception is a contact perception, not a distance perception like the visual one. Hence, a further transition has to occur from tactile to visual perception.

I have already mentioned one factor in this transition: the fact that the nursing infant stares unwaveringly at the mother's face as soon as his

- 221 -

eyes are open. We have to add to this a second factor, namely, the maturational and developmental level of the infant's sensory equipment, including the central nervous system on one hand, the psychological development on the other, during the first weeks and months of life, previously characterized as the stage of nondifferentiation. Stimulation occurring in one system of the body is responded to in others. Overflow is the rule of the hour. We may again advance a hypothesis: when the infant nurses and has sensations in the oral cavity while staring at the mother's face, he unites the tactile and the visual perceptions, the perceptions of the total situation, into one undifferentiated unity, a situation Gestalt, in which any one part of the experience comes to stand for the total experience.

THE MODALITY OF PRIMAL PERCEPTION AND ITS THREE SUBSIDIARY ORGANS

It has become evident in the course of this discussion that this first experience of the baby is not a simple one. We had to expand our approach to the genesis of perception by including in it emotional qualities, those of pleasure and unpleasure, as well as dynamic qualities, namely activity and passivity. That, however, is inevitable in all developmental research, as I have shown elsewhere (1946, p. 65), because affects are the initiators of all perception, emotional development its trailbreaker, indeed the trailbreaker of development in all sectors, hence also dynamic development.

Obviously the source of these affects of the infant is a physiological one, a need. As Freud (1915b) stated, the drives originate at the dividing line between the soma and the psyche. It is the need which produces the tension that is expressed by the affective manifestations of unpleasure. It is the need gratification which leads to tension reduction and quiescence. This dynamic process activates the first intraoral perceptions, which take place on a dividing line again, that between inside and outside.

The site of the origin of perception and of psychological experience has far-reaching consequences. For it is here that the task of distinguishing between inside and outside has its inception; this discrimination becomes established much later and will lead in an unbroken development to the separation of the self from the non-self, of the self from the objects, and in the course of this road to what is accepted and what is rejected (Freud, 1925). I might mention in passing that the time necessarily elapsing between the arising of the need and the reduction of tension introduces a further element into our picture, that of the capacity to

- 222 -

wait, the capacity to tolerate tension or, in a term recently become fashionable, that of frustration tolerance.

The particular anatomical location and physiological function of the oral cavity enables it to distinguish the outside from the inside. This leads us to a qualification of a generally accepted psychoanalytic proposition stressed by both Isakower and Lewin. It is correct that the breast is the first object; it is probable that the breast, or rather the nipple, forms a part of the first percept; but direct observation proves that the breast definitely is not the first visual percept.² This is because at this earliest stage of life distance perception is not operative, but only contact perception. It is of special interest to our discussion to examine what organs besides the oral cavity are involved in the contact perceptions of the nursing situation. Three such organs are in evidence from birth.

1. Of the three, the most evident is the hand. Its participation in the nursing act is obvious to every observer. At birth this participation is in the nature of overflow; the sensorium of the hand is not cathected as yet, as shown by Halverson's experiments (1937). He found that the clutch reflex on palmar stimulation is reliably elicited when tendons in the palm are stimulated—a stimulation of deep sensibility—and was unreliable on cutaneous stimulation. The activity of the hands during nursing, when both hands find their support on the breast, consists in a continuous movement of the fingers which clutch, stroke, claw and scratch on the breast. This activity will accompany the nursing process consistently during the subsequent months. It will become more and more organized, probably as a function of the progressive cathexis of the hand's sensorium. We can imagine the development as beginning with an activity of the mouth, overflowing into the hand; at a somewhat later stage this is proprioceptively perceived and, when the sensorium is cathected, also exteroceptively. This early coordination of mouth and hand function and its progressive development is in agreement with the embryological and neurobiological finding that maturation proceeds in a cephalocaudal direction.³

²Percept, the thing perceived (Hinsie and Shatzky), should be clearly distinguished from object (libidinal); the latter originates through the focusing of a constellation of drives onto a percept. Perception of the percept is the prerequisite of object formation.

³Hoffer discusses the relationship between hand and mouth in two articles. In the first (1949) he investigates the function of the hand in ego integration and in the development of early ego functions. His conclusions are in accordance with the above statements; but they deal with a later stage than the cavity perception described by me. In his second article (1950), he introduces a new concept, that of the "mouthself" which is progressively extended to the "body-self" through the activity of the hand which libidinizes various parts of the body. This process also occurs at a later stage than the one discussed in my present article.

- 223 -

2. The second organ which participates in the nursing situation is less evident. It is the labyrinth. Both Isakower and Lewin speak of the frequent presence of dizziness,

murmur and noise in the phenomena they describe. This finding is supported by direct observation on the newborn. It has been shown experimentally that the stimulus which leads to the earliest conditioned response in the newborn is a change of equilibrium. The experiment consists in the following: If, after about eight days of life, the breast-fed infant is lifted from his cot and placed in the nursing position, he will turn his head toward the person holding him and will open his mouth. It is immaterial whether the person in question is male or female. What does this experiment show, what is the sensory organ involved in this reaction of the newborn?

When we lift the newborn from his cot and place him in the nursing position, we set in motion in the labyrinth a neurophysiological process of a very special nature. This process is a gravity-induced shift of the endolymph within the labyrinth, resulting in two sensory stimulations of a completely different nature in two spatially separate parts of one and the same organ. The pressure of the endolymph on the lining of the semicircular canals results in changes of the equilibrium sensation; the same pressure will simultaneously provoke auditory sensations in the organ of Corti in the cochlea. The morphological difference between the lining of the semicircular canals and that of the cochlea is responsible for the difference between the two resulting sensations. The sensations connected with the stimulation of the semicircular canals will be dizziness and vertigo, those connected with the stimulation of the Corti organ will be auditory, probably vague, rushing, murmuring, roaring noises which may be similar to the sensations described by Isakower and Lewin (see also French, 1929); (Rycroft, 1953); (Scott, 1948). We can then envisage that the newborn experiences the being lifted into the nursing position as an interoceptively⁴ perceived experience with all the vagueness, diffuseness and absence of localization that is characteristic of prothopathic sensation.

3. The third organ involved is the outer skin surface. Isakower's as well as Lewin's descriptions emphasize the vagueness of the localization. Isakower speaks of the big and then again small "something," gritty, sandy, dry, which is experienced both in the mouth and on the skin surface, simultaneously or alternately; it is experienced like a blurring

⁴In the following I will speak of interoceptors and interoceptive systems, using the definition given by Fulton (1938) and Sherrington (1947): "The interoceptors are divided into two groups: (1) the proprioceptors (muscles and labyrinth) and (2) the visceroreceptors (gut, heart, blood vessels, bladder, etc.)."

⁵Two highly pertinent papers of M. F. Ashley Montagu (1953), (1950) came to my attention too late to incorporate his findings into the present paper. Basing himself on some theoretical considerations, and on a series of observations on nonhuman animals (Reyniers, 1949); (Hammett, 1922), he concludes that the skin as an organ has a hitherto unsuspected functional significance for physiological and psychological development. Laboratory evidence indicates that in the nonhuman mammals the licking of the young by the mother activates the genitourinary, the gastrointestinal and the respiratory

systems. Some evidence is offered that matters may be, if not similar, at least analogous in man (Drillien, 1948); (Lorand and Asbot, 1952).

- 224 -

of widely separated zones of the body. I believe that we do not have to postulate intrauterine memories here. It seems to me rather that this is the echo of an experience that is analogous to that of thirst in the mouth—only that it involves the skin surface instead. Up to delivery the skin surface had been in the least irritating and most sheltering environment imaginable. It was surrounded by liquid and protected even against this by vernix caseosa. After delivery it is exposed to the roughness, unevenness, dryness of the textiles into which we wrap babies. It is inevitable that the stimulation due to these textiles will be infinitely sharper than we adults can imagine; that it will take quite a long time, weeks and months, until the newborn's skin has adjusted to these stimuli and toughened sufficiently to relegate them to the normal environmental background.⁵

It might be assumed that to the newborn the sensations of skin discomfort are indistinguishable from discomfort in the passages of mouth, nose, larynx and pharynx. From our knowledge of the nondifferentiation in the perceptive sectors (and all others) this must indeed be so.

The sensations of the three organs of perception—hand, labyrinth, and skin cover—combine and unite with the intraoral sensations to a unified situational experience in which no part is distinguishable from the other. This perceptive experience is inseparable from that of the need gratification occurring simultaneously and leading through extensive tension reduction from a state of excitement with the quality of unpleasure to quiescence without unpleasure. We do not postulate any memory traces, be they even unconscious, of this situational percept of the newborn. Whether engrams are laid down at this stage also remain unanswerable.⁶ But this selfsame situational experience, repeated again and again, will many weeks later eventually merge with the first visual percept and be present simultaneously with it, remaining attached to it in first unconscious and later conscious visual imagery.

⁶It is perhaps useful to remind ourselves in this context (and also in reference to the dream screen and to the Isakower phenomenon) that from the beginning Freud (1900) stated that the first mnemonic traces could only be established in function of an experience of satisfaction which interrupts the excitation arising from an internal need. This experience of satisfaction puts an end to the internal stimulus (p. 565).

- 225 -

The cluster of factors which go into the nursing experience of the newborn therefore can be enumerated as follows:

1. The psychophysiological factors of unpleasurable tension and its reduction through nursing;

2. A factor which in due time will become a psychological one, that of activity;
3. The neurophysiological perceptive factors of the oral experience of sucking and deglutition involving a number of proprioceptive sense organs situated within the mouth;
4. Simultaneous sensory experiences of the hand and of the outer skin;
5. Simultaneous interoceptive experiences in the labyrinth.

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF DISTANCE PERCEPTION

On reflection it must be evident that the majority of these factors—with the one exception of skin discomfort—belong to, or at least are very close to, perceptions of changes going on in the inside of the neonate, that is, proprioceptive perceptions. Even in regard to the hand we may assume that the movements do not represent a response to a tactile sensation, but an overflow into the hand musculature of the innervation of the nursing and deglutition activity. As for the labyrinth sensations, these belong patently to the coenesthetic (protopathic) system and share with this the diffuseness, vagueness and lack of localization.

We have to stress again that the whole experience with all its percepts and sensations is centered inside or linked up with the oral cavity and belongs to the modality of contact perception. That modality must also be postulated for the perceptions of the labyrinth which originate on the inside of the body. This contact perception, taking place inside of the body, is the crystallization point for the first modality of the perceptive process and is secured with the help of the endlessly repetitive experience of the unpleasure-pleasure cycle.

In the course of maturation, a second modality appears—distance perception in the form of the first visual percepts. Through the baby's unwavering stare at the mother's face during nursing the visual experience is merged into the total experience. The infant still does not distinguish inside from outside, what he sees with his eyes from what he feels with his mouth.

A large number of disappointing experiences—namely, waiting periods intruding between the perception of mother's face and the lowering of need tension through food in the mouth—are required before a differentiation

- 226 -

between the two can take place. Until that occurs, mother's face—not the visual percept of mother's breast!—will mean "food in the mouth" and relief from unpleasure. It can be experimentally proved that at this stage—the third month of life—the visual percept of the maternal breast produces no change whatever in the hungry baby's behavior.

That much of this applies to the hand and its sensations, is obvious. After all, the simultaneous activity of the baby's hand during nursing is familiar to every mother. We may assume that also in the hand it is not so much the tactile percept which is connected with the intraoral experience, but rather a proprioceptive percept, that of the contraction and relaxation of the hand muscles which is perceived in the same manner as the

contractions of the oral muscles in sucking. That something of the kind must be taking place can be shown in motion pictures, where it is amply evident that in the nursing baby the closure of the hand is performed in the same rhythm as the sucking movement of the mouth. The "taking into" quality of these hand movements appears to me to justify the proposition that they are experienced by the infant as belonging to the sucking movements of the mouth. Perhaps we are justified in expanding this proposition to the child's coenesthetic sensations. When the child is lifted and cradled in the mother's arms, pressed against her body and held securely during the act of nursing, it comes near to the blissful intrauterine state in which need tension never arose and the insecurity of our modern baby cot with its lack of support was unknown.

An excellent illustration of all that I have discussed above has been provided to me through the courtesy of a colleague from Habana, Dr. Carlos Acosta (1955). In the course of the analysis of an adult patient, Dr. Acosta noted a number of unusual dreams, hallucinatoryform visions and similar manifestations, of which I will quote a few.

Case O. V.:

O. V. is a twenty-one-year old white male. He came into treatment because of overt homosexuality. He is an extremely infantile individual, given to daydreaming which borders on the hallucinatory, with an I.Q. of 74. Both the testing psychologist and Dr. Acosta agree that the patient's I.Q. actually is higher and that the test situation is distorted through the patient's emotional difficulties. It was not possible to determine whether he is a case of arrested development or whether his symptomatology is the consequence of a regression; I would lean toward the former.

Four communications of the patient which bear on our discussion follow:

1. The patient visits his girl. Sitting next to her he falls asleep and on awakening he peeks into her décolleté and sees "the breast cloudy, with spots, like a glass from which milk was poured out, the glass remaining covered with a

- 227 -

film of milk, forming spots," which he compares to "manchas en mujeres embarazadas" ("chloasmata in pregnant women").

2. Lying on the couch during treatment he hallucinates as follows: "There is a piece of white bread, shaped like a pear, with its point toward me, approaching me, coming closer and getting bigger... Funny, now it has jumped suddenly to my thumb and is much smaller."

3. The patient reports on another day that the previous morning the chore of boiling the breakfast milk filled him with resentment because while the milk was on the fire, he was masturbating and indulging in fantasies, but worried that the milk would boil over. In his masturbatory fantasy he imagined that he was having intercourse with his girl and was sucking her breast. He associated the milk boiling over in the pot with that coming out of the girl's breast and with the sperm spurting out of his penis. In this fantasy part

of the sperm was going into the vagina (and spurting out of the breasts), another part was splashing onto the floor.

4. When confronted with maternal-looking women, he gets a peculiar sensation when they look at him. He feels the inside of his mouth contracting (Analyst's note: like a contraction of the buccal and labial musculature), and he associates to this a "displeasure" in the stomach, like heat or emptiness. He had the same feeling in his mouth when he hallucinated the "clouded breast" vision of his fantasy. The contraction of his mouth muscles forces him to turn away and hide his face from such a maternal woman, because he does not want her to see him making faces. He remembers that he had this feeling as a very small child when mother carried him in her arms at her breast from one room to another; he also remembers the feeling of dizziness and nausea. This he has also at present when riding on a bus and "the air rushes into his mouth." The circumstances leading to his mouth sensations often also provoke similar sensations in the inside of the belly, which then contracts in the way the inside of the mouth contracted.

CONSIDERATIONS SUGGESTED BY THE CASE MATERIAL

In the various dreams and observations reported by Lewin and Isakower as well as by an ever-increasing number of analysts who in the meantime have written on the subject, a large number of the constituent elements of the picture we are concerned with can be found in one place or another. Some of these elements belong to dreams and normal states, others are found in pathological conditions. The case described by Dr. Acosta seems to bring together in one and the same individual all these elements. I feel, therefore, that it makes further examples repetitive because it is sufficiently representative of the large body of observations published on the subject.

- 228 -

Communications No. 1 and 2 describe phenomena which are strikingly similar to and in some particulars even more vivid than those reported by Isakower. That the patient brings together the breast-shaped object with his thumb, has particular significance for our further remarks. It impresses me as an example of the mode of operation of what, for want of a better term, we have to call the "psyche" in early infancy; this "psyche" causes different percepts with similar functions to be merged into one another; this merging is the result of a lack of differentiation. In the example quoted above thumb sucking and nursing have the same function, namely to release tension. The percepts are different, but the function is identical.

But Communication No. 4 suggests conclusions which are more far-reaching. Here sensations in the oral cavity, which refer to subliminal mnemonic traces of the nursing situation, are brought into relation by the patient with sensations within the abdomen, on the one hand, envelopment in the mother's arms and body, on the other.⁷

In the case of Dr. Acosta's patient, the hand and simultaneously the equilibrium sensation (both in the "being carried" memory) as well as the intra-abdominal sensation are combined with the intraoral experience (French, 1929); (Rycroft, 1953). It is this

summative aspect of the nursing experience which has motivated me to speak of the inside of the mouth as the primal cavity. I believe that the data provided by the reports of Dr. Acosta's patient rather convincingly substantiate the opinion held by

Two points are worth mentioning, although they do not belong into the framework of the present article. One is O. V.'s sensations of muscular contractions of his mouth region, which he associates with fantasies connected with the breast, with breast feeding and with seeing "maternal-looking women." He is so intensely conscious of these contractions that he has to avert his head for fear that "the woman may notice that he is making faces." This suggests that the Schnauzkrampf symptom in the schizophrenic may be connected with wishful fantasies of breast feeding and with the mnemonic traces of the proprioceptive percept of mouth activity during nursing.

The other point is that, when the patient travels on a bus and "the air rushes into his mouth," he has a feeling of dizziness and nausea. He says that this feeling is like the feeling he had as a very small child when his mother carried him in her arms at her breast from one room to another. We may well add this finding to Freud's assumptions on the origin of flying in dreams (1900, pp. 271 f.; 393 f.) on one hand, on the other to his hypotheses on the production of sexual excitation (1905, p. 201). In the latter he specifically states that the stimulus of rhythmic mechanical agitation of the body operates in three different ways: on the sensory apparatus of the vestibular nerves, on the skin, and on the muscles and articular structures. He even mentions the impact of moving air on the genitals. He connects these childhood experiences with later developing train phobias. The contribution of Dr. Acosta's patient appears not only to confirm fully Freud's findings, but to add to them the information that the origin of the multiform traveling phobias may reach back to the nursing period of the infant in the first year of life.

- 229 -

Isakower, Lewin, and myself: intrauterine fantasies at a later age are based on a regressive imagery of early intraoral experience.

The patient's description bears out what I had postulated earlier: the oral cavity, in which the interoceptive and exteroceptive perceptive systems are united, forms the basis of a perceptive mode (we might call it "perception according to the cavity mode"), in which inside and outside is interchangeable and in which furthermore a variety of other sensations and perceptions find their focus.

It may be added here that this early intraoral experience consists of taking into oneself the breast while being enveloped by the mother's arms and breasts. The grownup conceives of this as two separate experiences. But for the child they are one experience, single and inseparable, without differences between the constituting parts, and each constituting part being able to stand for the whole of the experience. This is essentially the paradigm of Lewin's formulation: "to eat and to be eaten." It is a most vivid example of the mode of functioning of the primary process.

PERCEPTION OF ENVIRONMENT VERSUS PERCEPTION OF SOMATIC EXPERIENCE

There are certain aspects in the preceding discussion which are reminiscent of the brilliant, but in part erroneous, speculations of Silberer. Lewin has referred to them, and stressed how misleading many of his concepts were. In one of Silberer's articles, "Symbolik des Erwachens und Schwellensymbolik überhaupt" (1911), he states that symbolic imagery can express two things, content and the state or the functioning of the psyche. I believe that in my foregoing discussion it has become evident that his assumption has to be revised and that the infant's as well as Dr. Acosta's patient's experience can be separated into two perceptual aspects:

1. The aspect of perception mediated to us by our sensorium. This is the perception of the outside, the perception of things and events.
2. The second aspect is that of the perception of states and of functions; not, however, the states and functions of the psychic apparatus of which Silberer speaks, but rather the states and functions of the musculature, of joints, of position—in other words, an interoceptive perception. Dr. Acosta's patient describes a few of these perceptions of states and functions; I postulate their existence in the first period of nursing and probably, in a progressively decreasing measure, throughout the first year of life.

These two perceptive aspects, however, do not encompass the totality of the experience. We have already stressed several times that an instinctual gratification is connected with it. This implies the presence of affects

- 230 -

and emotions of some kind, which provide the percept with its valency and with the quality of an experience. In the adult, affects may evoke visual imagery or, vice versa, visual imagery may evoke affects; but the two, affect and visual imagery, originate at two different stages in the infant's development. One may speculate whether the percept activates also the arousal function of the reticular system which, according to Linn (1953), is capable of mobilizing further affects.

LEVELS OF INTEGRATION AND PERCEPTUAL FUNCTION

We can now examine the degrees of regression attained in the dream screen described by Lewin and in the Isakower phenomenon. In dreaming, we relinquish the level of the verbal symbolic function and regress to the level of symbolic imagery (Freud, 1916, p. 143).

In the infant, the level of imagery is presumably reached after the third month; that of verbal symbolic function, approximately around eighteen months. According to our experimental observations, we may assume that somewhere from three to eighteen months the infant perceives mainly in images and operates mentally with the memory traces laid down by visual percepts. It is around eighteen months that verbal proficiency becomes sufficiently established, enabling the infant to begin to replace in his mental operations an increasing number of visual percepts by verbal symbols.

We believe that the infant passes in the course of his first two years through three stages, or, as we can call them also, through three levels of integration of increasing complexity.

1. The first level is that of the coenesthetic organization, when perception takes place in terms of totalities, because it is mediated mainly through the coenesthetic system on one hand, through interoceptive- and tango-receptors on the other.
2. The second level is that of diacritic perception, when distance receptors come into play, when visual images become available, but when the mnemonic traces of these images are still impermanent, at least in the beginning. This is due to the fact that they are in the process of acquiring what Freud (1915a) calls in his article on the "Unconscious" in a specific context "topisch gesonderte Niederschriften" ("topographically separated records") (p. 108).
3. The acquisition of language marks the inception of the third level of integration. This presupposes an ego development, the development of the abstractive capacity, called by Kubie (1953) the symbolic function.

In waking life adults operate on the last of the three, on the level of

- 231 -

symbolic function. In dreams they normally regress to the level of visual perception and imagery. This is the level at which Lewin's dream screen can become perceivable.

In his paper "The Forgetting of Dreams," Lewin (1953b) with the help of a reconstructive procedure arrives at formulations closely resembling mine. He deduces logically that if a regression occurs from the visual imagery level at which the dream functions, then there should be memory traces older than these pictures. Thus, as I do, he sees these memory traces "more like pure emotion," made up of deeper tactile, thermal and dimly protopathic qualities which are in their way "memory traces" of early dim consciousness of the breast or of the half-asleep state. And, if I read him correctly, he believes that it is to this level of integration that the subject regresses in the so-called blank dream.

It follows that the level of regression involved in the Isakower phenomenon harks back to an earlier period, that which precedes the reliable laying down of visual mnemonic traces or at least to a period at which a significant number of visual mnemonic traces has not yet been accumulated. I would be inclined to say that while the regression of the dream screen goes to the level of the mnemonic traces laid down somewhere between the ages toward the end of the first half year and reaching to the end of the first year, in the Isakower phenomenon the regression reaches to the traces of experiences preceding this period. Obviously, these age ranges represent extremely wide approximations.

We may now examine the dream screen in the light of our assumptions. Following Freud, Lewin has pointed out that the dream itself already marks a disturbance of sleep. The function of the dream is to act as the guardian of sleep. The dream screen, which represents the breast, is derived from the infant's experience of going to sleep after

nursing at the breast. This is exemplified by Dr. Acosta's patient who, when describing and reliving his hallucinatory experiences, frequently becomes drowsy and falls asleep on the couch. We might say that the dream screen described by Lewin is the achievement of a wish fulfillment, the gratification of a need, the symbolically used mnemonic trace of satiated quiescence. The visual dream, on the other hand, is the symptom of the ego having become alerted to an extent sufficient to abolish the complete regression into dreamless sleep and to enforce a reversal of the regression to the level of visual perception, the level of three to eighteen months. The quality of satiated quiescence in the dream screen places the regression into the earlier part of this period.

It is not likely, however, that the dream screen is the visual image of the breast. It is much more probable that it is the result of a composite

- 232 -

experience, which in the visual field represents the approaching face of the mother, but in the field of the other percepts involves the sensations within the oral cavity. This is perhaps also an explanation of the fact that in so many of the dream screen reports the dream screen appears dark, at other times colorless, amorphous. Lewin actually speaks of the dream screen being like a composite Galtonian photograph in certain dreams—only he conceived this as a blending of different images of the breast. I would rather call it a synesthesia of many different senses, the visual constituent of which is derived from the percept of the face.

What, then, is the relationship between the blank dream discussed by Lewin and the Isakower phenomenon? Perhaps it replaces in the sleeping state what the Isakower phenomenon is in the predormescent and pathological states. The level of regression in the two phenomena is comparable. Lewin considers the regression a topographical one in the blank dream. In the light of our findings on infant development we may add that it is also a genetic regression (in the terms of Freud, 1916, "a temporal or developmental regression," p. 143). It goes to a level which is earlier than the regression to the visual mnemonic traces. It goes to the level at which mnemonic traces were laid down in sensory modalities other than the visual ones.

This may provide the explanation why the blank dream is devoid of visual content. We know from Freud and from our daily experience with patients that the dream operates primarily with visual images. It operates much more infrequently on the higher level of verbal symbols; Lewin mentions this and Isakower (1954) in particular has commented on the phenomenon in his paper "Remembering Spoken Words." But the dream also has difficulties in representing emotional content as well as the mnemonic traces which belong to the period in which they were not associated to imagery as yet. At that early period in life emotional content of a very primitive nature and the mnemonic traces of bodily functions were associated to the traces of coenesthetic functioning. It is in good accordance with this that when reporting blank dreams, the subjects comment on the tone of affect which accompanies it, whether that be an affect of happiness or one of terror. And the coenesthetic mnemonic association is confirmed by the fact that in some

cases the blank dream is accompanied by orgasm—in the case of one of my patients orgasm could only be achieved in a blank dream.

We now may follow Isakower in his careful discussion of the processes which take place in the ego when a regression to the phenomenon observed by him occurs. He postulated two such consequences:

- 233 -

1. A disintegration of the various parts of the ego and its functions.
2. A dedifferentiation of the ego.

Isakower describes, within the many-faceted process of going to sleep, one specific consequence of the disintegration of the ego. This is the change which takes place through the withdrawal of cathexis from the outward-directed sensorium and a concomitant increase of the cathexis of the body ego. This formulation of the going-to-sleep process (in the adult) has an exact counterpart in our observations on the way in which the newborn functions. The newborn is incapable of perceiving the outer world. This has been shown in numerous findings of experimental psychologists as well as in our own. The sensorium is not yet functioning because, in terms of the dynamic viewpoint, the newborn has not yet cathected it.

THE STIMULUS BARRIER AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF LIBIDINAL CATHEXIS

This experimental finding enables us to understand Freud's concept of the stimulus barrier from the economic and the dynamic viewpoint, from that of the distribution of cathexis. The stimulus barrier is not to be understood as an obstacle in the path of the reception of stimulation originating in the environment. It is to be understood as consisting in the uncathected condition of the sensorium. In other words, the receiving stations are not energized as yet.

Conversely, the totality of the available cathexis of the newborn is directed toward his own body, a state of which we speak as the primary narcissistic stage. Isakower assumes an overcathexis of the body ego in the sleeping adult. Whether in the newborn one can speak of an absolute overcathexis of his own body, is questionable. There can be no question, however, about the disproportion between the infinitesimal amount of cathexis directed by the newborn toward the sensorium as against the enormous amount of cathexis allotted to his own body. We may speculate on this disparity in the distribution of cathexis. In a way, this condition is a continuation of the intrauterine situation. During the intrauterine period the mother has two roles: that of protecting the foetus from danger. In this role she carries out all the sensory and action functions needed for the purposes of adaptation to the conditions of living. Her second role could be described as that of assimilation because she also performs all the embryo's metabolic and catabolic functions. But after birth, these two roles are redistributed. The protective role against outside stimulation which the mother had during the period of gestation will be continued, for she still has the task of performing for the newborn the function

of the sensorium as well as those of the action system. However, she can no longer perform the newborn's metabolic functions as she did during pregnancy. To survive, the organism of the newborn has to take over these functions and has to cathect the interoceptive system for the purposes of metabolic functions. Accordingly, toward the own body there will be no stimulus barrier. Therefore the responses of the newborn are a function of the messages transmitted by the interoceptive system; but as there is no localization within the interoceptive system's reception, these messages will be undifferentiated. They will operate in terms of the economic viewpoint, that is, of the pleasure principle. Such perceptions of himself as the newborn receives are of a total or global nature and cannot be assigned to specific systems; therefore the motor apparatus will respond to them by diffuse, undirected excitation and overflow.

In the adult's falling asleep as described by Isakower we have the withdrawal of cathexis from the sensorium and the increased cathexis of the body ego. We may add to this that the motor pattern of the sleeping adult also approximates that of the newborn in its undirected responses. The basic difference between the adult and the newborn lies in the fact that while the adult cathects a body ego, an organized structure of body representations in the psyche, there is no such thing in the newborn. The newborn has still to develop the body ego, and what we witness in the newborn is not a withdrawal of cathexis but a nonexistence of cathexis.⁸

CATHEXIS AND PERCEPTUAL EGO FUNCTIONS

The falling apart of the ego functions in the adult as described by Isakower might be spoken of metaphorically as a consequence of a weakening of the cohesive forces of the ego, which is a result of the process of falling asleep. In the newborn these cohesive forces have still to come into being and are only developed as a function of the constitution of the ego. It is an attractive hypothesis to assume that when the ego is weakened, be it by the process of falling asleep or by pathological processes, one of the first attributes of the ego, its cohesive force, will be diminished and the co-operation of the ego constituents ceases; or, in terms of present-day

⁸It will be seen from this discussion that when I speak of the phase of nondifferentiation, I am referring to something much more inclusive and general than what Hartmann, Kris, and Loewenstein have described in "Comments on the Formation of Psychic Structure" (1946, p. 19). They refer specifically only to the absence of differentiation between the ego and the id, and the undifferentiated phase is the one in which both the id and the ego are gradually formed. My concept is much more closely allied to Hartmann's discussion of the same concept in "Ichpsychologie und Anpassungsproblem" (1939).

communication theory, "intracommunication" becomes impossible (Cobliner, 1955).

The second consequence of the regression in the Isakower phenomenon is spoken of by him as a dedifferentiation of the ego. He believes that the dedifferentiation takes place somewhat later in the process of going to sleep than the dissociation of the ego components; therefore, when the body ego has arrived at this stage, when it is overcathected, it has reactivated an archaic developmental level. He stresses that on this archaic level perception is directed toward the processes of the subject's own body, toward the changes in intracorporal tensions, and not toward the external stimuli which may provoke them. He mentions that in the waking adult this mode of perception remains in function in one organ only, the vestibular organ. There it is the perception of intracorporal changes informing us (and frequently in a very disagreeable manner, indeed!) of changes taking place in our surroundings. We have nothing to add to these propositions of Isakower. By and large, they have been paralleled by our preceding discussion of the newborn's progressive development which corroborate his conclusions.

Freud (1915a, p. 111) stated that affects and emotions represent our awareness of discharge processes. The intracorporal sensations of which we have spoken actually are discharge processes. This may be the reason for their close connection with affects and in particular with anxiety.

SUMMARY

We may summarize by saying that adults, who operate on the level of the symbolic function, will regress normally to the level of visual perception and imagery in the dream; it is at this level that Lewin's dream screen becomes perceivable. When a disturbance of going to sleep occurs, as in febrile disease, or when a dissociation of the ego in waking states takes place, then a further regression to the level of the coenesthetic perception may occur in which the Isakower phenomenon becomes available.

The level of coenesthetic perception belongs to what I would call the experiential world of the primal cavity. It is the world of the deepest security which man ever experiences after birth, in which he rests encompassed and quiescent. It is to this world that man escapes when he feels threatened by pathological conditions in febrile states; also when in the waking state the ego becomes helpless through dissociation, as in toxic conditions. The method of escape has a double mechanism: the withdrawal of cathexis from the sensorium, on one hand, the hypercathexis

- 236 -

of the body ego, on the other. The particular sector of the body ego representation which seems most highly cathected is the representation of the primal cavity. This distribution of cathexis makes the experience of the Isakower phenomenon possible.

From the point of view of therapy these considerations underscore the necessity of understanding the patient in terms of earliest orality, as has been stressed repeatedly by Lewin. When we deal with the adult, however, the approach to earliest orality is not a direct one, for the mnemonic traces of earliest primal cavity experiences as such are not

available to the patient and cannot be communicated to him by the therapist in terms of these experiences—the terms for them do not exist in language, they can only be paraphrased. Many, but certainly not all mnemonic traces of the primal cavity experiences are attached in the course of development to memory traces in the nature of images, acquired and mediated by the visual and by the auditive senses. Later still, in the course of the elaboration of the symbolic function, word representations will be attached to these images. This is the linkage between the memory traces of object representations and the memory traces of word representations. The therapist, in his therapeutic endeavor, has to travel this road in the inverse direction, from the abstractive word to the concrete representation that evoked the original affect.

A better understanding of the intraoral experience and of its ramifications into experiences of hand and skin surface suggests nonanalytical therapies in the case of the deeply regressed psychoses. Up to now such therapies have scarcely yet been attempted.⁹

The world of the primal cavity is a strange one: indistinct, vague, pleasurable and unpleasurable at the same time, it bridges the chasm

⁹This communication was already in the hands of the editor when Louis Linn's paper "Some Developmental Aspects of the Body Image" (1955) was published.

His remarks parallel in many aspects the views expressed in my present paper. He reports on M. Bender's recent experiments in simultaneous sensory stimulation of adults. Bender's findings (1952) corroborate our direct observations on perceptual development and function in infants and their psychological concomitants.

Bender investigated two simultaneous stimulations of the same sensory modality. Our own propositions refer to simultaneous experience of stimulation in different sensory modalities. Linn's own work also deals with the fusion of two sensory modalities into a single perceptual event. We are referring to the patient who, when touched simultaneously on face and hand, reported this as "the hand of my face." The reader will note the similarity between Linn's observation and the conclusions drawn by me on the blending into a single event of the contact percept and the visual distance percept in earliest infancy (see pp. 222, 229). I am inclined to assume that the body ego originates from the sensations experienced in the oral cavity. The latter are vastly predominant in earliest infancy. This is in agreement with Linn's ingenious hypothesis on hand-mouth identity and with his explanation of the scotomization of the hand in adult perception.

- 237 -

between inside and outside, between passivity and action. The earliest sensory experiences of events taking place in the primal cavity are dealt with on the level of the primary process, yet they lead to the development of the secondary process.

In its nondifferentiation this world is the matrix of both introjection and projection, which therefore appear primarily normal phenomena, though we become really aware of their proliferation in pathological processes.

The perceptive modality of the primal cavity will also form the matrix for later developmental stages of perception in sensory organs with a very different function. The specific morphology of the particular organ will determine the mode of function—yet it will hark back to the inside-outside mode established by the intraoral experience, as for instance in the distinction between the "I" and the "non-I," the "self" and the "non-self."

We may say in conclusion that the mouth as the primal cavity is the bridge between inner reception and outer perception; it is the cradle of all external perception and its basic model; it is the place of transition for the development of intentional activity, for the emergence of volition from passivity.

When, however, the body relaxes diurnally in the passivity of sleep, the activity of the mind will retrace its way toward the primal process, and the primal cavity then becomes the cavernous home of the dreams.

REFERENCES

Acosta, C. 1955 Personal Communication.

Baerends, G. P. 1950 Specialization in Organs and Movements with a Releasing Function Sympos. Soc. Exper. Biol. IV

Bender, M. B. 1952 Disorders in Perception Springfield: C. C. Thomas.

Cobliner, W. G. 1955 Intra-communication and Attitude: A Methodological Note J. Psychol. XXXIX

Drillien, M. 1948 Studies in Prematurity. Part 4: Development and Progress of the Prematurely Born Child in the Pre-School Period Arch. Dis. Childhood XXIII

Federn, P. 1953 The Awakening of the Ego in Dreams Ego Psychology and the Psychoses New York: Basic Books.

Ferenczi, S. 1913 Stages in the Development of the Sense of Reality Sex in Psychoanalysis New York: Basic Books, 1950

French, T. M. 1929 Psychogenic Material Related to the Function of the Semicircular Canals Int. J. Psch. X

Freud, A. 1952 The Mutual Influences in the Development of Ego and Id This Annual VII

Freud, S. 1900 The Interpretation of Dreams Standard Edition IV & V London: Hogarth Press, 1953

Freud, S. 1905 Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality Standard Edition VII London: Hogarth Press, 1953

- Freud, S. 1915a The Unconscious Collected Papers IV London: Hogarth Press, 1925
- Freud, S. 1915b Instincts and Their Vicissitudes Collected Papers IV London: Hogarth Press, 1925
- Freud, S. 1916 Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams Collected Papers IV London: Hogarth Press, 1925
- Freud, S. 1925 Negation Collected Papers V London: Hogarth Press, 1950
- Fulton, J. P. 1938 Physiology of the Nervous System New York: Oxford University Press.
- Halverson, H. M. 1937 Studies of the Grasping Responses of Early Infancy I, II, III J. Genet. Psychol. LI
- Halverson, H. M. 1938 Infant Sucking and Tensional Behavior J. Genet. Psychol. LIII
- Hammett, F. S. 1922 Studies of the Thyroid Apparatus Endocrinology IV
- Hartmann, H. 1939 Ich-Psychologie und Anpassungsproblem Int. Ztschr. f. Psa. XXIV
- Hartmann, H.; Kris, E.; Loewenstein, R. M. 1946 Comments on the Formation of Psychic Structure This Annual II
- Hetzer, H. and Ripin, R. 1930 Frühestes Lernen des Säuglings in der Ernährungssituation Ztschr. f. Psychol. CXVIII
- Hoffer, W. 1949 Mouth, Hand and Ego Integration This Annual III/IV
- Hoffer, W. 1950 Oral Aggressiveness and Ego Development Int. J. Psa. XXXI
- Hooker, D. 1942 Fetal Reflexes and Instinctual Processes Psychosom. Med. IV
- Hooker, D. 1943 Reflex Activities in the Human Fetus In: Child Behavior and Development ed. R. G. Barker, J. S. Kounin, H. F. Wright. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Isakower, O. 1938 A Contribution to the Pathopsychology of Phenomena Associated with Falling Asleep Int. J. Psa. XIX
- Isakower, O. 1954 Spoken Words in Dreams Psa. Quart. XXIII
- Kaila, E. 1932 Die Reaktionen des Säuglings auf das menschliche Gesicht Ann. Univ. Aboensis XVII
- Kubie, L. S. 1953 The Distortion of the Symbolic Process in Neurosis and Psychosis J. Am. Psa. Assn. I
- Lewin, B. D. 1946 Sleep, the Mouth, and the Dream Screen Psa. Quart. XV
- Lewin, B. D. 1948 Inferences from the Dream Screen Int. J. Psa. XXIX
- Lewin, B. D. 1950 The Psychoanalysis of Elation New York: Norton.
- Lewin, B. D. 1953a Reconsideration of the Dream Screen Psa. Quart. XXII
- Lewin, B. D. 1953b The Forgetting of Dreams In: Drives, Affects, Behavior ed. R. M. Loewenstein. New York: International Universities Press.

Linn, L. 1953 Psychological Implications of the "Activating System." Am. J. Psychiat. CX

Linn, L. 1955 Some Developmental Aspects of the Body Image Int. J. Ps. XXXVI

Lorand, S. and Asbot, J. 1952 Ueber die durch Reizung der Brustwarze angeregten reflektorischen Uteruskontraktionen Zentralbl. f. Gynäkol. LXXIV

Lorenz, K. 1950 The Comparative Method in Studying Innate Behavior Patterns Sympos. Soc. Exper. Biol. IV

Magoun, H. W. 1952 An Ascending Reticular Activating System in the Brain Stem A.M.A. Arch. Neurol. & Psychiat. LXVII

Margolin, S. 1953 On the Psychological Origin and Function of Symbols Paper read at the Meeting of the New York Psychoanalytic Society.

Minkowski, M. 1924/25 Zum gegenwärtigen Stand der Lehre von den Reflexen in entwicklungsgeschichtlicher und anatomisch-physiologischer Beziehung Schweiz. Arch. f. Neurol. und Psychiat. XV, XVI

Minkowski, M. 1928 Neurobiologische Studien am menschlichen Foetus In:Abderhaldens Handbuch d. biol. Arbeitsmethoden V

- 239 -

Montagu, M. F. A. 1950 Constitutional and Prenatal Factors in Infant and Child Health Problems of Infancy and Childhood New York: Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation.

Montagu, M. F. A. 1953 The Sensory Influences of the Skin Texas Reports on Biol. & Med. XI

Nunberg, H. 1931 The Synthetic Function of the Ego Int. J. Ps. XII

Ostow, M. 1955 Behavior Correlates of Neural Function Am. Scientist XLIII

Peiper, A. 1928 Die Hirntätigkeit des Säuglings Berlin: Springer.

Peiper, A. 1930 Sinnesreaktionen des Neugeborenen Ztschr. f. Psychol. CXIV

Reyniers, J. A. 1946, 1949 Germ-Free Life Studies Lobund Reports Nos. 1 and 2

Rubinow, O. and Frankl, L. 1934 Die erste Dingauffassung beim Säugling Ztschr. f. Psychol. CXXXIII

Rycroft, C. 1951 A Contribution to the Study of the Dream Screen Int. J. Ps. XXXII

Rycroft, C. 1953 Some Observations on a Case of Vertigo Int. J. Ps. XXXIV

Scott, W. C. M. 1948 Some Embryological, Neurological, Psychiatric and Psychoanalytic Implications of the Body Scheme Int. J. Ps. XXIX

Sherrington, C. 1947 The Integrative Action of the Nervous System New Haven: Yale University Press.

Silberer, H. 1911 Symbolik des Erwachens und Schwellensymbolik überhaupt Jahrb. f. Ps. und psychopathol. Forschungen II

- Spitz, R. A. (with the assistance of K. M. Wolf) 1946 The Smiling Response Genet. Psychol. Mon. XXXIV
- Spitz, R. A. (with the assistance of K. M. Wolf) 1947 Birth and the First Fifteen Minutes of Life A motion picture. Studies of the Psychoanalytic Research Project on Problems of Infancy. New York: New York University Film Library.
- Spitz, R. A. (with the assistance of K. M. Wolf) 1948a The Smiling Response A motion picture. Studies of the Psychoanalytic Research Project on Problems of Infancy. New York: New York University Film Library.
- Spitz, R. A. (with the assistance of K. M. Wolf) 1948b Genesis of Emotions A motion picture. Studies of the Psychoanalytic Research Project on Problems of Infancy. New York: New York University Film Library.
- Spitz, R. A. (with the assistance of K. M. Wolf) 1949 Grasping A motion picture. Studies of the Psychoanalytic Research Project on Problems of Infancy. New York: New York University Film Library.
- Spitz, R. A. (with the assistance of K. M. Wolf) 1950a Digital Extension Reflex Arch. Neurol. & Psychiat. LXIII
- Spitz, R. A. (with the assistance of K. M. Wolf) 1950b Experimental Design and Psychoanalytic Concepts Paper read at the Symposium: Experimental Approach to Psychoanalytic Theory. 58th Annual Meeting, Amer. Psychol. Assn.
- Spitz, R. A. (with the assistance of K. M. Wolf) 1953 Aggression: Its Role in the Establishment of Object Relations In: Drives, Affects, Behavior ed. R. M. Loewenstein. New York: International Universities Press.
- Spitz, R. A. (with the assistance of K. M. Wolf) 1955 Genese des premieres relations objectales Rev. Franç. Psa. XX
- Tinbergen, N. 1950 The Hierarchical Organization of Nervous Mechanisms Underlying Instinctive Behavior Sympos. Soc. Exper. Biol. IV
- Tinbergen, N. 1951 The Study of Instincts London: Oxford University Press.
- Volkelt, H. 1929 Neue Untersuchungen über die kindliche Auffassung und Wiedergabe von Formen Bericht über den 4. Kongress für Heilpädagogik Berlin: Springer.
- Waelder, R. 1936 The Principle of Multiple Function Psa. Quart. V
- Windle, W. F. and Fitzgerald, J. E. 1937 Development of the Spinal Reflex Mechanism in Human Embryos J. Comp. Neurol. LXVII

KRIS, E. (1955) NEUTRALIZATION AND SUBLIMATION—Observations on Young Children. PSYCHOANAL. ST. CHILD, 10:30 (PSC)

NEUTRALIZATION AND SUBLIMATION—Observations on Young Children¹

ERNST KRIS, PH.D.

The problems with which Hartmann² found himself confronted when surveying the concept of sublimation, its history and its vicissitudes, are familiar to me from a similar but much more restricted attempt which I undertook some years ago (Kris, 1952).

In this publication my attention was focused on art and creative activity. I was at the time faced with the fact that sublimation was being used to designate both transformations of energy and displacements of goal; that is, activities in which this transformed energy was being discharged. In my discussion I suggested that the term neutralization could be conveniently used to designate the relevant energy transformations, and that the term sublimation might be reserved for the displacements of goal. This terminological division, I thought, would help to avoid misunderstandings which tend to arise because of the fact that displacements of goal can take place without the energy used in the activity having been neutralized, or because these activities can be continued when the formerly neutralized energy has become deneutralized (i.e., "instinctualized," "sexualized" or "aggressivized"). The use of the terms neutralization and sublimation as two relatively independent variables seems useful for the following reasons: The division preserves the term sublimation and attaches it to its original meaning. However, my attention was centered on the study of a specific activity, i.e., "art," and I believe that the study of specific activities represents an important subject for future psychoanalytic investigations. "It seems possible not only to organize the structural characteristics of various types of activity according to the opportunities they offer for more or less direct discharge

¹From the Child Study Center, Yale University School of Medicine. Presented as a contribution to the Symposium on Sublimation at the Midwinter Meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association, in New York City on December 4, 1954.

²See "Notes on the Theory of Sublimation," This Volume, pp. 9-29.

- 30 -

of instinctual energy, but also to organize them according to the degree of neutralization of libidinal and aggressive energies which they require" (Kris, 1952, p. 27). A further reason which led me to suggest the distinction of terms leads thus to a specific problem. I feel that many problems of neutralization, and particularly some ontogenetic aspects of it, can best be investigated if viewed in conjunction with the influence that certain

activities exert on the process itself. In the course of this presentation this point will be illustrated by examples.

The relationship between goal displacement and energy transformation is naturally that of a circular interdependence. However, as the child grows, so does complexity, so that the choice of activity is increasingly determined by the interaction of many factors. Some concern the influence of endowment; others are more specifically related to the problem of discharge of id impulses, the aspect which is best known from our clinical experience.

Expectations are significantly limited when we hear that a certain patient is an actor, a dancer, a cartoonist, or a dress designer. They are less limited but still significant when we hear that he is a writer, painter, architect, or poet. In all these cases—in the first instances more definitely—we expect that certain typical conflict constellations will more likely occur than others: The problem of rapidly changing identification may be crucial in the actor, that of coping with exhibition in the dancer, the wish to distort others in the cartoonist, and to adorn them in the dress designer; but each of these dominant wishes—which we here have mentioned only in order to characterize one direction of our expectations—is clearly merged with innumerable other tendencies in the individual, and each of them is rooted in his history. According to clinical experience, success or failure in these professions depends, among other factors, on the extent to which the activity itself has for any particular individual become autonomous, i.e., detached from the original conflict which may have turned interest and proclivity into the specific direction [Kris, 1952, p. 29].

To the psychoanalytic study of what is commonly called creative activity the relation of ego and id is of particular importance. It is a powerful factor not only in the experience of the creator but also in the reaction of his audience. The specific functions of ego autonomy in this connection have certainly not been sufficiently explored. Our guidepost is still Freud's suggestive hint, when he speaks of a peculiar "flexibility of repression" as distinctive feature. As implementation of this thought, I proposed many years ago that the control of the primary process and generally the control of regression by the ego may have a specific significance

3A more detailed typology of creativeness would obviously have to take a larger number of variables into account.

4For a similar suggestion see Jacobson (1954).

- 31 -

for the creative process (Kris, 1934), (1935). Only recently two observations suggested to me an additional approach. The first of these observations started out from analytic experience with professional "creators." In the analysis of one such individual, a particularly successful man, it became evident that a sharp cleavage existed between routine work and work in which he was fully, one might say, personally engaged. The first type followed a formula; the second was deeply and, as it were, inextricably

interwoven with his present and hence also with his past conflicts: the process was a painful one and accompanied (preceded or followed) by a more or less intensive acting out of the same conflicts in the transference or in his life situations. It later appeared that the cleavage between the two types of creative activity was one of degree only; that in routine or formula work the experiences of the "true" or "great" creative process appear reduced to signals and that it is justified to say that "in every process of creation the gradual emergence from conflict plays a part" (Kris, 1953). This then led to the following assumption: It may be useful to distinguish between "the permanent or relatively permanent investment of the ego with neutralized aggressive or libidinous energies" on which secondary autonomy in ego functions mainly depends, and "the energy flux, i.e., transitory changes in energy distribution and redistribution such as the temporary and shifting reinforcement of sexual, aggressive and neutral energy as may occur in the course of any type of activity" (Kris, 1952, p. 27). The first, the permanent investment of the ego, represents what Hartmann (1955) describes as the reservoir; the second, the transitory changes in energy distribution and redistribution, the flux, represents instinctual energy which may or may not be added. The capacity to neutralize can then be viewed as determined by both the reservoir and the flux. Creative individuals may be characterized by a particular span between both.³ However, the usefulness of similar distinctions seems somewhat limited, their relation to observable phenomena tenuous, unless other factors are taken into account, factors related to the individual's endowment. While one part of them, those connected with the strength of instinctual forces, remains in the area of those necessary assumptions which at the present time cannot be specified, another factor has become somewhat more tangible through one of Hartmann's suggestions (1955). He points to the possibility that the permanent investment of the ego may in part consist of energy of noninstinctual origin.⁴ When Freud hinted at the existence of such energy sources, it seemed

- 32 -

difficult to find a place for them in psychoanalytic thinking. Now this assumption seems to have become eminently useful. The energy might be thought to stem from the apparatus of the ego, and we might add that, by its quantitative variations it may influence the investment of the ego with neutralized energy. To put the vista which this opens into a highly condensed example: the endowment of the gifted facilitates the development of his capacity for successful activity.

The suggestion that a sharper distinction between energy reservoir and energy flux might throw some light on the vicissitudes of creative processes was, as I said before, brought to my attention by two kinds of observations. While I mentioned that the first was gained in analytic work, I did not refer to the second: they are of a different nature and connected with the study of nursery school children.⁵

I shall briefly report on three types of observations. The first will deal with the relationship of neutralization of drive energy to a specific type of activity; the second is meant to illustrate in even more aphoristic form two contrasting ways in which identification may influence the process of neutralization. The third tries to illustrate

the possible influence of earliest object relations on the development of the capacity for neutralization.

II. THE EASEL IN THE NURSERY SCHOOL

There is an easel in every well-run nursery school; on the ledge there are pots neatly set apart, in each one color and one brush. Why is the easel there? How do the two to fours or fives who use it behave? What can we learn from watching them?

The literature has no systematic answer to these questions. The few who have studied the problem have been attracted by the product:⁶ The masses of more or less well-organized colors distributed over white sheets of paper, out of which in the later years configurations and even representations emerge. In recent years the easel paintings of nursery children

⁵The impressions I am going to report have been obtained in the course of my participation in various research projects in the Child Study Center at Yale University, School of Medicine. They owe their focus to the fact that I have had the privilege to organize some psychoanalytically oriented investigations in creative activity under a grant from the Arthur Davison Ficke Foundation of this City. Some of this work, to be published under the editorship of Dr. K. M. Wolf with the assistance of Mrs. Robert Bury, deals with creative sublimation in early childhood. For data from other studies I feel particularly indebted to Dr. Rose W. Coleman, Miss Eveline Omwake, Drs. Sally A. Provence, Samuel Ritvo and Albert J. Solnit.

⁶I found the comprehensive material presented by Alschuler and Hattwick (1947) very useful; see also Friess (1952).

- 33 -

have been largely viewed as projective material and used for diagnostic purposes. This particular viewpoint will be neglected here. We turn, at least initially, not to the product but to the process of production.

The two- to three-year-old child in front of the easel finds itself in a situation which as a rule does not satisfy one of his most urgent demands: the situation does not allow for imitative role play. Hence there are many who use the easel only as a starting point for other activities; their interest focuses on the apron which has to be put on before painting, on washing of brushes, the cleaning of pots, or more generally on cleaning of what has been soiled for this purpose.

But let us leave this longlasting and time and again repeated cycle of playful housewifery and turn to the child that stays at least for some time before the easel. There are significant and typical moments: There is the first stroke and its result. The transposition of the kinesthetic experience of the arm movement with the big brush onto the trace on the sheet is to some two-and-a halves a significant experience. It is not a totally new experience; the principle is familiar from the handling of pencil or crayon.

But the broader scope of the movement, the larger and brighter result on the sheet is bound to attract interest. There something has been done; dare we say "created"?

Some children are, as it were, soon captured by the expansiveness of the movement; the hesitancy of others is gradually overcome—and in some instances the motor pattern alone can serve as the child's signature.

These and similar individual differences offer a promising field for study. I shall neglect many alluring sideroads and concentrate on the problem with which almost all those who stay with the easel for their nursery years meet at one point: the battle against the impulse to smear which the medium itself stimulates. (I do not here enter into the problem how easel and finger painting compare in the opportunities for discharge which they offer.) That battle apparently sets in without a clear temporal relation to the stage of bowel training, i.e., irrespective of the fact whether bowel training has been completed or not and, if completed, whether it was a light or a bitter, a short or a protracted experience.

The battle against smearing starts not at once and its intensity is subject to great variations. There are children who start to mix colors in the pot, others who change the brushes and by putting the green brush in the blue pot achieve their first result. There are children who for some time produce monochromes, then add a second and third color kept strictly apart; then a slight shading starts until the mixing becomes wilder and wilder. At one point the sheet will look like a cauldron. In any one painting the whole process of defense and eruption may be

- 34 -

repeated. The smearing may start after ten or more minutes of work, and then an explosive process may take over, sometimes supplemented by excited stamping, clutching of the genitals and rhythmical rubbing of the brush against the sheet—briefly by a passionate outburst.

There is the four-year-old who has sensed the danger. When in the nursery school much interest had been focused on easel painting, he, a highly verbal gentleman with a great capacity for a dry but gentle kind of what might be called "pre-humor," was suddenly heard to say: "I wish I would like to paint." And when he finally yielded to the (slight) pressure of the group and the temptation itself, his apprehension seemed justified. He was one of those whose temper carried him finally into a violent outbreak of excitement.

Let me turn to another example: this time we will start from the product. A brown mass irregularly shaped but placed approximately in the center of the sheet; not dirty but somewhat repulsive. The painting of the three-and-a-half-year-old is almost unambiguously representative: he has painted fecal matter, and calls it "a big one."

A study of the process of painting reveals that the result at first was not easily or painlessly achieved, that the first sheets in brown were not covered in a wild discharge. He went to great length to mix on the sheet out of pure yellow, pure blue and shining red the right shade of brown. The effort involved in achieving this mixture could be

studied "experimentally." The teacher added green to the colors previously available. Now the mixing became more arduous. For some weeks it seemed as if green would prevail, but then Tommy learned the trick and once more he was able to produce the desired brown masses.

Tommy's interest in "brown" was highly overdetermined. He was under psychiatric treatment for a stool retention of unusual severity and long duration. The symptom itself, closely linked to his struggle with his mother, who actually—not figuratively—provoked it, represented at the same time an identification with her. Tommy had been aware of his mother's pregnancy, and of the birth of a baby that died a few days after birth when Tommy was sixteen months old, and of a second pregnancy which had started when he was twenty-six months old.

Tommy's painting in the nursery school had in the past not shown unusual features. He turned to the series of brown themes after he had been witness to a dramatic spontaneous abortion of the mother.⁷

Under the influence of this experience and his rising anxiety, the goal of displacement was lowered, and after this lowered goal had first

⁷He simultaneously developed stuttering.

- 35 -

been achieved by a well-co-ordinated production process, deneutralization became noticeable in his painting behavior; he learned to mix the brown in the painting pots and filled the sheets with it while stamping, and masturbating in trembling excitement.

Let us now turn to the question how other children try to cope with impulses which, activated by the medium, become threatening. Some retreat after more or less bold attempts at color mixing into monochromatic drawing, others interrupt their work when temptation approaches: they ask the teacher to remove the sheet, start on a new one and interrupt once more when the point comes at which the tension rises. (This naturally is not the only reason for their wish to complete their work at a given point. The sheet may satisfy some of their intentions and they may feel that to continue might mean to destroy it. Only in careful analysis of individual cases is it sometimes possible to determine what "completion" signifies to the child at any given moment in his development.)

Defenses against the danger may appear in strange combination: a particularly illustrative one was displayed by a four-and-a-half-year-old boy who has obsessional-compulsive mechanisms of various sorts at his disposal. He is intellectually far advanced, and intellectualization has become his preferred tool in coping with conflicts. His colors tend at first to be simply isolated, in band-like configurations. But then he turns from bands to shapes, squares and rectangles, outlined in one, filled in another color; seen over the course of a nursery year, his work conveys the impression of a sequence of solutions of the problem of balance in shape and color—so consistently that

observers are able to establish the chronological sequence of the paintings, as they might do it in viewing the work of say Cezanne. And yet there is little thrill in looking at this boy's achievements; only when he borders the danger zone, the attraction to the observer seems to increase. During two phases of the year's work his paintings are flooded with red: shortly after a suddenly performed tonsillectomy, and six months later when in an organized play situation the operation was re-enacted.

With those children who stay at easel painting and do not abandon it at one point of the conflictual period, other less dramatic but no less significant methods of conquest of the danger can be studied. Already at an early stage the pleasure in mixing and smearing may appear combined with pleasure in interesting color contrasts, rare shading, balanced shapes and fantastic configurations. During the fourth and fifth year these configurations tend to be named, and gradually (typically during the fifth year) the representational elements take charge. Fantasies become attached to shapes. An early stage shows similarity to adult doodling: the

- 36 -

brush produces and the child names the configurations. It plays both at rendering and combining recognizable or not so recognizable shapes and at developing and combining fantasies. The primary process is at work, but while it emerges, first attempts at control—or at pretense of control—can be noticed. On later stages the fantasy content becomes elaborate, stories may be expanded, and some of those faithful to the easel achieve what seemed to attract them when the first stroke of the broad brush created that bright trace on paper: but now their product is "organized," they "make" a world of things. This progress requires renunciation of direct discharge. The neutralization of energy can, as it were, be watched. There always is initially a defensive move to ward off the temptation. There comes in every child's painting development the moment when the dripping paint is being resented, when the disorder it produces disturbs the child, when mixing of colors is done with particular care, and when out of the cauldron some signs of a tasteful arrangement emerge—all this with individual differences for which we can account only rarely.

The easel painting of nursery school children is here being used to illustrate the interdependence of drive discharge and goal displacement, of neutralization and sublimation. The point I should like to make is that as maturation proceeds, as the inner world grows, as new pleasures in fantasy and mastery become accessible, the structure of the activity itself influences the process of neutralization.

The easel then stands in the nursery, because it is thought that instead of the sudden and "total" suppression by reaction formation of a component drive of anal satisfaction, the child should be offered an activity, which, as catalyst, stimulates further neutralization. In the course of this process the easel painting of the nursery years comes into being. It is difficult to account for the attraction many of these paintings exercise on adult observers. The most plausible explanation may well be that some of the conflicts which the child experienced, some of the intensity of the struggle between id and ego, some pleasure at compromise, some triumph is shared by their adult admirers. The

transparency of the id, the charm of the infantile, may have led educators and artistically inclined people to lift the color scribbles in loose designation into the category of the sublime: they do so when we speak of children's art.

III. THE ROLE OF IDENTIFICATION AND OBJECT RELATION

The experience of the children who perform as easel painters has here been viewed in the light of one problem: we tried aphoristically to

- 37 -

illustrate how during a given phase of development one component drive, stimulated by the medium, breaks through neutralization, how deneutralization and reneutralization follow each other. The processes described can be viewed as exemplary: most activities of two's and three's (and sometimes those of older children,) are constantly threatened by a regressive trend; the break-through of immediate instinctual gratification is almost at any time a possibility, depending on the amount of stress and direct stimulation to which the child is exposed (Kris, 1950). The structure of the activity, pure or constructive play as the case may be, supplies an incentive for increased neutralization, and on the other hand the capacity to neutralize codetermines the preference for any one activity. But the general aspect of what is here being viewed as childhood behavior is, I believe, of less interest than the place of these vicissitudes in the development of the individual. Macroscopic observation itself suggests the problem, since individual differences seem to be most significant where attitudes of children to organized activity are concerned. Preference for any one activity, the range of such preferences, the degree to which the child can endure difficulties, solve problems, elaborate fantasies, and at the same time discharge instinctual tension, have to be taken into account.

A whole range of problems for the study of initial steps in ego functioning opens itself before our eyes. But only where a large set of data on any individual child is available, where influences of the various figures in his home and environment are accessible and the child's history is known in some detail can such questions gain full meaning. The two cases about whom I report in the following are part of a longitudinal study, which supplies the required data.⁸ It is a single episode in the life of a charmingly smiling girl of two and a half which I should like to choose as starting point: One day in November, four weeks after she had first learned to handle the brush on the easel, Evelyne sets to work. As usual the young lady, at the time a painter in monochrome blue, selects her brush and color. She carefully drives it over the paper and a circle emerges. She looks at it for a while, then sets in it eyes, nose and mouth and clearly says, "Halloween."

The achievement is an extraordinarily advanced one. The elaborateness of the performance leaves no doubt about the intention, and circumstances before the painting throw light on the motivation. Evelyne is a fearless child; her courage and independence are outstanding, but a few days before the painting she had an attack of prolonged terror and fright. She reacted to children with Halloween masks.

8The study is supported by the Commonwealth Foundation.

- 38 -

The painting reproduces this impression. The active repetition of the passively experienced terror is here not entrusted to play. Evelyne can represent what she wants, and she wants to represent what frightened her. Active repetition is entrusted to a higher level of imagination and action: Evelyne herself, unaided as always, produces the mask in a painting.⁹ We may describe the step she has taken from three aspects: The drawing requires an unusual degree of skill, which cannot be achieved without neutralization; the goal, a re-productive painting, is very highly set for her age, at least a year or a year and a half ahead of others; and this capacity is mobilized by a painful experience and serves to cope with it. The model of similar behavior, familiar from latency age, and there described by Anna Freud (1936), is extremely rare at Evelyn's age. Can we determine some of the factors which enabled Evelyne to act on a level, which is not only out of the range of her peers, but which even much older children will reach only rarely?

Evelyne is highly advanced in all her intellectual achievements. She is not very sociable, but determined and resolute even if alone. When she came to nursery school she impressed the teacher as the most mature and best predictable of the children, as the one who sought least help, was least dependent, and least forlorn when the mother left. In fact, her independence is demonstrative and energetic. Nothing in her behavior indicates disturbance; all seems smooth and even. However, there are differences in her skill. She has less ability in motor achievements than in others; and during a whole year at the nursery she sets to work on this area, purposefully determined, and yet full of high spirit, she learns to ride a bike. And in her very independence and courage she is a striking simile of her mother.

During the very period in which she drew the Halloween mask she was engaged in a bitter fight with her mother, in the battle for toilet training. In this battle, induced and fostered by the mother, the child tortured the mother by a highly complex sequence of behavior, best described as aggressive sweetness. The singularly interesting fact is that trait by trait the child's handling of her mother could be transposed a generation backwards: Evelyne's mother had used similar techniques when she struggled against her own mother's impositions. A long and detailed story of the interaction between mother and child starting from

⁹Evelyne was at the time a master in role and fantasy play, an ability which, like that of representational painting, has stayed with her. We find her at three and a half enacting Alice's adventures in Disney's version. The problem of why the active repetition of what seemed to have been her first fearful experience was entrusted to painting rather than to role playing raises many intriguing questions, which are reserved for a more detailed report on Evelyne's personality development.

- 39 -

birth and largely based on observations by Dr. Provence will present answers to the question on how such a closeness of identification came about. Here it suffices to say that Evelyne's mother is a gifted, highly introspective, and according to all clinical criteria, normal woman who devoted to her child a maximum of attention. It was less in the area of intimate physical contact that this intensity became manifest; there is some reason to believe that the lack of motor skill in Evelyne may have to do with this. But no opportunity for mental stimulation was missed. Imagination seemed to mold every contact with the child. The very history of feeding is one in which mental stimulation was communicated jointly with an almost puritanical scale of values by a skillful combination of indulgence and deprivation. The control of impulses, e.g., the distraction from a period of masturbation by thigh pressure at seven months were entrusted to stimulation by play and later by fantasy. At fourteen months the child was able to recognize in a cookie into which she had twice bitten the shape of a dog; at nineteen months her play with imaginary companions started; she is one of the children whose infantile fetishes, the transitional objects of Winnicott (1953), soon became fantasy beings in their own rights.

The creation of an inner world and the ability to produce the Halloween mask are connected in various ways. Visual stimulation played a decisive part in the contact of mother and child—and then there is the crucial fact that the mother herself was a drawing teacher and drew for her child. The child was never "taught" to draw. There was never explicitly a premium set on her achievements, and yet every one of Evelyne's achievements meant much to the mother. The skill which Evelyne displayed is only one in a broad picture of a relationship in which learning by imitation becomes part of the molding of personality.

This is one example out of several which I might have chosen to illustrate the point that the activity to which neutralized energy can be directed, is likely to be the most significant to the child, the choice of sublimation most successful when this activity at the same time represents a bond with the love object.

This is only a special instance of a more general principle; the richness of needs simultaneously satisfied by any sublimation, the overdetermination of the activity or the multiple functions which it fulfills have always been considered to be of decisive importance. When the activity satisfies the most important need of the child, the wish for closeness to the parent, we may expect it to be of great significance indeed.

Evelyne was thirty months old when she painted the Halloween mask. It

- 40 -

is not her skill or what it means prospectively which is likely to interest us most but rather the factor behind it: the extraordinary capacity to neutralize, the extent of her secondary ego autonomy.

I now turn to an example meant to illustrate a different and, in some sense, opposite aspect of the problem:

The relationship of Anne to her mother had gone through dramatic vicissitudes.¹⁰ The normally born and originally active little girl soon showed signs of decline in her development under the care of a mother whose unconscious set-up revolted against the double narcissistic mortification of having to give up her career and of having to devote her attention to a girl. The developmental picture of the child between six months and twelve months resembled that of children in institutions. Under the influence of a variety of circumstances the picture changed around one year, when particularly a developmental spurt of the child enabled the mother to find an outlet for a fantasy: She became the child's devoted teacher, as her father had been her own teacher. The ambivalence in the relationship did not subside, but a complex interaction, in which aggressive elements played a part comparable to that which more frequently libidinal elements play between the small child and his mother, opened the way for a workable and even satisfactory relationship. Anne developed into an anxious but active and gradually sociable two-and-a-half-year-old whose behavior was compounded out of friendliness tempered by a "be-a-nice-girl" comportment and a genuine "touch-me-not" attitude. She had some outstanding achievements to her credit: her vocabulary and language development were extraordinary, her pronunciation immaculate, and her ability to name and recognize pictures was above that of her age group. These were the areas in which the mother's ambitions were most marked.¹¹

Initially the interest in picture books facilitated the separation from the mother in nursery school, and was the bridge on which Anne moved to closer attachment to one of the teachers. During a brief period, when the relationship of mother and child was once more obscured, both Anne's achievements were subjected to a slight regressive trend. The mother was pregnant and could not decide to let her child know about her pregnancy. During this period Anne's speech became excited and somewhat more infantile, its use defensive. At the same time her handling of books changed in character: she would anxiously go from one picture

¹⁰See for a history of Anne's development, Coleman, Kris, Provence (1952).

¹¹See a report by Dr. Marianne Kris at the extraordinary meeting of the New York Psychoanalytic Society and Institute in honor of Miss Anna Freud at Arden House, N. Y., on May 7, 1954.

¹²Anne's behavior with the picture book supplies a further example for the relationship of neutralization to sublimation: On the first level, the picture-book activity serves to alleviate the anxiety. When connected with the separation from the mother, it has a defensive quality. We therefore assume that neutralization has been carried to a given point. In the mother's absence the shared activity is simply repeated with a substitute. This defensive performance breaks down when difficulties between mother and child arise. Though the activity with the picture book, i.e., the sublimation continues, the energy neutralization seems lowered.

On a third level the activity is used in a new context. Instead of mere repetition, initiative and problem solving can be noticed. After the mother had been able to tell Anne about her pregnancy, their relationship improved. When Anne sees a sad child, she now comes over to him with a picture book, sits down, and suggests that she would "read to him a story." (These and similar instances in Anne's behavior were noted by Lottie M. Maury.)

- 41 -

to the other in restless search for what she needed.¹² No other symptoms of regression were noted: in the rigorous atmosphere in which she was brought up a regression in cleanliness or sleep might have been too dangerous. But the area which she chose for regressive behavior was the one in which she had established the relationship with her mother. She had acquired mother's attention by performance, and performance deteriorated first: the energy was clearly deneutralized. No similar regression affected Evelyne's development. Her reaction to the birth of a sibling at two was reinforced resistance to bowel training, whereas her ego functions, "her character" remained unaffected. The areas in which neutralization had been achieved remained autonomous. Anne's choice of sublimation, the mastery of language, never reached the freedom and scope of Evelyne's achievements, but the fundamental difference between both children seems best characterized if we make a very general assumption: In Evelyne the capacity to neutralize was early developed, in Anne this general capacity did not reach a comparable stage: Most areas of her behavior were free from instinctual outbreaks, but in none was neutralization carried as far as with Evelyne. While Evelyne soiled at two and a half, in those activities in which neutralization had been achieved the degree of neutralization seemed extraordinary. It is a difference which, I believe, can be well expressed in terms of the "reservoir" and the "flux."

We may assume that in Evelyne the permanent investment of the ego is far advanced, but the flux is left relatively free. In Anne the flux is well controlled, but the degree of neutralization is not comparable; there is something reactive and defensive about her achievements. Though these differences must have many roots, some, we may assume, are likely to be connected with the quality of the early relationship of the two mothers to their two children.¹³

¹³They are naturally also related to the personalities of the mothers themselves.

- 42 -

IV. OBJECT RELATION AND INITIAL STEPS IN NEUTRALIZATION

Since the early 1930's the influence of early object relations on ego development has been a much-discussed topic of psychoanalytic work in various areas. In viewing this work from the vantage point of neutralization and sublimation, it seems obvious that emotional deficit in child care affects specifically the capacity to neutralize—so obvious, in fact, that it is scarcely necessary to review the evidence in detail.

A word first need be said about one group of clinical pictures in which the corroborating impressions are highly suggestive but ambiguous—the psychotic children. There the interaction between the defect in the child and in the mother, the reaction of the mother to an unsatisfactory "receiver," and the reactions of the child to an initially or reactively unsatisfactory "sender" of stimuli leads to a large number of puzzling phenomena repeatedly discussed and clarified particularly in Mahler's contributions (1952). The deficient neutralization of libidinal drives has been repeatedly implied in the literature. However, it is my impression that the deficient neutralization of aggression is equally pathognomonic (and this may sharpen our eye for the lack of synchronization in the neutralization of aggressive and libidinal drive energy in other children, thus pointing to an area in which even variations of normal behavior could be fruitfully studied from a new vantage point.) But the complexity of the clinical pictures in this area excludes them from more detailed discussion on this occasion.

I now turn to another group of data. They concern the developmental deficit in institutionalized children. The findings reported are derived from a detailed longitudinal study of individual children by Drs. R. W. Coleman and S. Provence, some results of which will be published in the near future. The study confirms in a general way previously established knowledge (Spitz, 1945) but presents more detailed and in many instances unexpected findings. However, I bear sole responsibility for the selection of data here mentioned and the conclusions drawn.

The decline in the general response and developmental picture of these children, some of whom were institutionalized shortly after birth, starts even with apparently well-endowed individuals at five months. It does not affect all areas measured by tests with equal intensity. Motor functions are on the whole at first (up to six months) less affected than others, and fine motor activity less than gross motor activity. (One might say the body needs a mother to stimulate it; the self-stimulation of the hands is more effective.) That language development or response to human

- 43 -

contact should be more severely affected, needs hardly an explanation. In our context, however, it is particularly interesting that no activity that involves higher organization of discharge, problem solving, and thinking as related to action, develops as it does in normals. Individual variations as to the degree of maturity at birth play a decisive part, and the investigators gained the impression that the resistance to deprivational experience constitutes some sort of measure for intactness or for some other total factor of endowment. Moreover, the maturational processes themselves change the picture. Maturation, as it were, proceeds in spite of impediment. During the second half of the first year rocking dominates the picture. But, though mostly delayed, the institutionalized children here studied "learn" to walk. These and similar steps in maturation initiate around one year a shift in the total picture. It seems that some substitutions and restitutions are being attempted; yet the total achievement level (as measured by developmental tests) does not rise. Much more impressive than the quantitative data are the clinical impressions. The investigators feel the absence of

"driving power." What lacks is the initiative. Imitation comes easier than self-initiation of action; and though equipment facilities brought about by growth are at the child's disposal, they are not being used. It should be added that none of the children studied showed the depressive reaction to the separation from the mother described by Spitz and Wolf (1946), since the separation had taken place at a very early stage. In certain areas, the impression arises that one can actually differentiate purely maturational forces from those which show influences of the environment. The area where this differentiation is clearest is that of earliest language development.

Seen in conjunction with the assumption concerning the existence of two kinds of energy at the disposal of the ego, the following hypothesis becomes feasible: one might assume that maturational processes are more closely connected with noninstinctual energies and that the organization of action and problem solving is more dependent on the neutralization of instinctual energy. If this neutralization does not occur to a sufficient extent and/or degree, even the flow of noninstinctual energy tends to tarry. Only the combination of both energies in the investment of the ego leads to the normally expected developmental steps during the later part of the first and the second year of life.¹⁴ Such an assumption encroaches, as Hartmann (1955) said, on the competence of the physiologist. We therefore continue on lines more familiar in psychoanalytic theory. The

14A separate set of assumptions might naturally envisage the possibility that the conditions of institutional care affect the quantity of available instinctual energy itself.

- 44 -

neutralization of instinctual energy does presumably not occur or does not become effective in institutionalized children because a central love object is absent. We have learned from Freud (1931) that the child's development is largely determined by the general tendency to repeat actively what has been and is being passively experienced in infant and child care; Freud speaks of the child's identification with the active mother. We assume that through this identification the child develops certain action units, which seem to include some more complex motor performances and adaptive movements as they occur in the contact between mother and infant. These action units, we assume, require and stimulate neutralization.

The study of two interacting processes, of maturation and adaptive patterning in response to the mother's ministrations, might enable us to approach the question of how specific types and modalities of maternal care can be related to the development of the capacity for neutralization of instinctive energy in the child.

In my own mind (1950), I had viewed the opportunity for simultaneous discharge of libidinal and aggressive energies, their earliest fusion in discharge, as a favorable factor. But it can be no more but one among many.

A more comprehensive approach can be suggested if we generalize some of the assumptions recently made by Winnicott (1953) in the study of transitional objects. To

put his thought in briefest outline: Grossly defective maternal care fails to stimulate the child's earliest mental processes. These earliest mental processes tend to supplement whatever satisfaction the child obtains by the illusion of complete satisfaction. The "ordinarily devoted mother" gratifies the child's needs at any given time only to some extent; there is always some slight deficit, some discontent. This discontent, Winnicott argues, is filled by the child's capacity to imagine full satisfaction. Not only extreme deprivation but also extreme indulgence eliminates the incentive for mental activity.¹⁵ In this set-up, mental activity, which is related by Winnicott to an equipment factor (he chooses, I believe erroneously, the I.Q.), stands as it were at the beginning of what might be called initiative for independence. The assumption of a hallucinatory stage (Ferenczi) can thus be related to specific experience of the infant; it can be integrated with other assumptions, for instance, those concerning the relation to the mother and the growth of the apparatus itself. The capacity for appropriate illusion seems to constitute one of the earliest stages in neutralization. It would

¹⁵See in this connection Hartmann, Kris, Loewenstein (1946).

- 45 -

be the one which predominantly and typically depends on the interaction between mother and child, and prepares the way for identification.

REFERENCES

Alshuler, R. and Hattwick, B. W. 1947 *Painting and Personality: A Study of Young Children* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Coleman, R. W.; Kris, E.; Provence, S. 1953 *The Study of Variations of Early Parental Attitudes* This Annual VIII

Freud, A. 1936 *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* New York: International Universities Press, 1946

Freud, S. 1931 *On Female Sexuality* Collected Papers V London: Hogarth Press, 1950

Friess, A. 1952 *The Study of a Child: Her Paintings and Personality* Sarah Lawrence Studies VI

Hartmann, H.; Kris, E.; Loewenstein, R. M. 1946 *Comments on the Formation of Psychic Structure* This Annual II

Jacobson, E. 1954 *The Self and the Object World: Vicissitudes of Their Infantile Cathexes and Their Influence on Ideational and Affective Development* This Annual IX

Kris, E. 1934 *The Psychology of Caricature* See Kris 1952

Kris, E. 1935 *Comments on Spontaneous Artistic Creations by Psychotics* See Kris 1952

Kris, E. 1950 *Notes on the Development and on Some Current Problems of Psychoanalytic Child Psychology* This Annual V

Kris, E. 1951 Some Comments and Observations of Early Autoerotic Activities This Annual VI

Kris, E. 1952 Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art New York: International Universities Press.

Kris, E. 1953 Psychoanalysis and the Study of Creative Imagination Bull. N. Y. Acad. Med. XXIX

Mahler, M. S. 1952 On Child Psychosis and Schizophrenia: Autistic and Symbiotic Psychoses This Annual VII

Spitz, R. A. 1945 Hospitalism: An Inquiry into the Genesis of Psychiatric Conditions in Early Infancy This Annual I

Spitz, R. A. and Wolf, K. M. 1946 Anaclitic Depression This Annual II

Winnicott, D. W. 1953 Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena Int. J. Ps. XXXIV

BERNFELD, S. ET AL (1931) THE PRINCIPLE OF ENTROPY AND THE DEATH INSTINCT. INT. J. PSYCHO-ANAL., 12:61 (IJP)

THE PRINCIPLE OF ENTROPY AND THE DEATH INSTINCT

SIEGFRIED BERNFELD and SERGEI FEITELBERG

In the psycho-analytical theory of instincts the death instinct occupies a peculiar position. Some psycho-analysts are of opinion that it is entirely superfluous, while others make use of it as of a notion based on proved clinical experience. Freud constantly reiterates that this notion is conjectural, ¹ and he holds that we must not regard the instincts of death or Eros as ranking with the other propositions he has laid down in his theory of the libido. In his view, with the assumption of the death instinct that theory enters the realm of speculation, for here it oversteps the boundaries of psychological or psycho-analytical methods, since the notions of the death instinct and Eros purport to embrace biological facts—indeed, the universal behaviour of nature (the stability principle). Many uncertainties, confusions and errors arise from the circumstance that we do not always sufficiently distinguish between the different meanings attached to the one word: 'instinct' [1].

As we know, from the psychological standpoint—i.e. as concrete forces within the personality (id, ego and superego)—Freud differentiates the sexual instinct and the instinct of destruction. In antithesis to these stand the speculative biological notions of Eros and the death instinct, by which we mean not so much forces within the personality, but the most universal behaviour of living substance. They are principles, or, if you like, natural forces, but not instincts in the narrower sense of the word. The term 'death instinct' denotes the fact that everything living is of limited duration, has a beginning and an end, and it represents the course of life as the restoration of the inanimate state in which life originated. 'Eros' denotes the constant prolonging of life through reproduction and the aggregation of ever-greater organic masses in increasingly complicated unities. This clear distinction between the 'speculative' (biological) and the psychological standpoint has been frequently emphasized by Freud; nevertheless, it is still possible for misunderstandings to occur because he

¹Not only in Beyond the Pleasure Principle [11], but also, e.g. in [12].

- 61 -

now seeks to abolish this differentiation by enunciating a fundamental principle. He tries to connect the two instincts (the sexual instinct and the instinct of destruction) with the extrapsychic natural forces (Eros and the death instinct). He looks for analogies for the two last within the ego and discovers there Eros, in operation as the sexual instinct, and the death instinct operating as the instinct of destruction. It is this idea which really

belongs to the realm of theory and which is, on the one hand, rejected as empty speculation, and, on the other, employed uncritically as a proved fact.

Now that Freud has overstepped the boundaries of psycho-analysis, not only in the direction of biology, but also in that of physics, ² it is the more urgently important to decide whether in his speculation he is misusing an analogy which takes us nowhere or whether he has introduced into biology and psychology a new natural scientific theory. For he expressly emphasizes the fact that he is identifying the death instinct with the general principle of stability in nature [II].

The decision is especially important for our theoretical study of the psychology of energy and instinct. In this connection we might borrow a criterion from the methodology of the natural sciences and say that similarities between physical, biological and psychic processes may be appraised as more than mere analogies if they can be demonstrated to be special cases of some more comprehensive natural law.

Freud states clearly that he regards the death instinct as the special biological case of the principle of stability [II]. The pleasure principle, which subserves the death instinct, is presumably the psychological special case of that principle. Opponents of Freud's theory of the death instinct, who scent mysticism and religion in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, have entirely overlooked this fact. The conjunction of physical, biological, physiological and psychological facts and laws is neither inadmissible, 'unscientific', nor (as has actually been suggested) meaningless. It depends altogether on whether we have any concrete success in demonstrating that a hitherto unknown case comes under a general law; but endeavours in this direction by no means deserve to be dismissed as speculative or as a priori inadmissible from the standpoint of methodology.

How far removed the Freudian conception is from mere physico-psychological analogy is shewn by that important part of his theory of

²And of late also of the history of cultural development [15].

³[In a previous paper (*Imago*, B. XVI, p. 66) the authors divide the organism into two systems: (1) central apparatus, which is roughly the same as the central nervous system (system P); (2) system of cells (system C), which consists of the rest of the body. In a unicellular organism these systems are represented by the nucleus and the cytoplasm.—Translator's Note.]

- 62 -

the death instinct which represents the pleasure principle as a special case of that instinct, shall we say on the level of the system P.³ What is remarkable about this hypothesis is, surely, just that it unifies apparent opposites, not things analogous. Self-observation and naïve perception and evaluation discern in death and pleasure merely irreconcilable opposites. Freud maintains that there exists a hidden functional connection between these two apparently entirely heteronomous spheres.

It cannot, of course, be maintained that he has proved this. It is not, however, his purpose merely to announce dogmatically a paradoxical and bewildering theory; on the contrary, he develops it into a true working hypothesis in the following sentences: 'The pleasure principle seems directly to subserve the death instincts. ... At this point innumerable other questions arise to which no answer can be given. We must be patient and wait for other means and opportunities for investigation' [II, p. 83].

Let us now see whether the conceptions of a dual system and its energies propounded by us [3], [4], [5] will help to corroborate these ideas of Freud's in some respects.

He takes as his starting-point the principle of stability, but in our view this does not formulate with sufficient precision or concreteness the facts intended to be conveyed. In its most recent form, that adopted by Petzold, it runs as follows: 'Every system left to itself and in process of development ultimately terminates in a state of more or less permanence, or at least in a state which either no longer contains the inherent conditions for further change or else contains them, at any rate over a long period of time, only to a negligible extent' [16, p. 241]. Whether we accept this formulation or the very similar one by Fechner or Spencer [6], what is connoted by the principle of stability is simply this: that all movement and, indeed, all change are of limited duration. Leaving aside a possible philosophical content, this statement scarcely advances us beyond the confines of naïve knowledge. Nor do we gain anything by drawing an analogy between the states of repose and death,

- 63 -

the formula then being that everything set in motion leads to death. The value of the principle is still further diminished by the reflection that motion and rest, life and death, are concepts of relative significance and can never be grasped except in reference to a given system in relation to other systems, or else in reference to a particular level in a given system. Thus the 'macrocosmic' repose of a stone which has just fallen to the ground connotes intensified movements of a 'microcosmic' nature (thermal motion of the molecules), and the state of repose in a sleeping human being implies repose in the system P but intensified activity (growth) of the integrated systems C. Rest and motion, life and death, cannot be defined with precision at all, i.e. they are dialectical opposites. So long as we deduce from them universal modes of behaviour, we remain in the realm of philosophy.

The facts connoted by the principle of stability find pregnant and concrete formulation in the theory of energy. We shall not discuss whether this theory exhausts the content of the stability principle in its physical aspect. We will confine ourselves to the theory of energy because it has sufficient theoretical substantiation and because it must be considered first of all when we are dealing with our psycho-analytical problem. This theory includes the quantity and trend of those changes which are the subject of the stability principle, and it formulates quite plainly the condition which, in terms of that principle, is called indefinitely 'repose' or 'death'. The second main thesis of the theory of energy is this: that all physical processes in any isolated system have a definite trend, namely, towards the equalization of the different intensities [Intensität] of the system's

energies; a state is aimed at in which such differences no longer exist, that is to say, a state also in which no movement can any longer take place by means of endosystemic factors alone. Such an ultimate cancelling out occurs only when differences in temperature are equalized (when mechanical differences of intensity are equalized, oscillations arise which, in the process of equalization, create fresh differences); hence, what the second main thesis affirms is that this maximum state of repose can occur only when all the energies have been converted into heat.

This state to which every isolated system (and so, perhaps, the whole universe) tends acquires the maximum durability, for it must last as long as the isolation of the system (of the universe) lasts. But, even here, there can be no talk of a state of absolute repose, for the 'microcosmic' thermal oscillations of the molecules persist. On account of the macrocosmic permanent rigidity of the system in its

- 64 -

'ultimate state' it has been held to be analogous to death and termed 'thermal death'. A more exact term is 'the more probable state' (Boltzmann), and the measure of this is called entropy. Henceforward we will give this second principle of the theory of energy the not wholly accurate but concise name of the entropy principle and speak of the entropy law or the tendency to entropy.

Interesting philosophical discussions have taken place on 'thermal death', and the attempt has been made to prove that it is not inevitable, or at least to leave open the possibility that it may not involve the death of living matter. In support of this view Stern [19], [20] has cited in a brilliant passage Fechner's law, which, he says, represents the most favourable situation that we can conceive of for organisms which are endeavouring to maintain themselves in spite of constantly diminishing differences of intensity in their environment. Fechner's law makes organisms dependent not on the absolute but the relative degree of the differences in intensity; hence it is possible for them to exist up to the point of zero. In recent times the most important attempt to handle the problem has been made by Nernst [18], who endeavours, with the help of new findings in physics, to prove that it is inadmissible to apply the entropy law to the universe. We may spare ourselves this discussion, for we are concerned exclusively with systems which are finite in space and time. To these, however, applies the third principle of thermodynamics, the theorem of Nernst, according to which it is not possible to reach zero in finite systems. It is true that in a concrete system all differences in the intensity of energy may be equalized, so that there exists in it only more thermal energy; but it is impossible by means of any exosystemic influence wholly to withdraw this energy from the system and thus reduce its temperature to absolute zero. Accordingly, although from the macrocosmic standpoint absolute repose is attainable, there is bound up with it a corresponding increase in microcosmic (molecular) motion, and this can never be wholly destroyed. Absolute repose is unattainable.

Our discussion of the death instinct will be more fruitful if we take as our starting point not the stability principle, but the entropy principle. The first question we must ask is

whether the death instinct can be conceived of as a special case of the latter principle in the realm of organic process.

There is no need for me to prove here that this is the trend of Freud's argument; but I must point out that, even if it be demonstrated that the entropy principle is identical with the death instinct

- 65 -

and death with the 'probable state', his train of thought would not be exhausted. For with the death instinct the historical character of all instincts plays an important part, and Freud holds outright that this instinct represents the striving of organic substance to return to the earlier state of inanimate matter. In a consideration of dynamics this historical factor must be disregarded. This is self-evident, but by emphasizing it afresh we may guard against confusion with the Ostwaldian or similar natural philosophy and escape the reproach of substituting physics for psychology.

To adduce the required proof is, of course, beyond our scope, for biology and physiology to-day have not yet progressed beyond the rudiments of a dynamics of the life-process. Nevertheless, it is certain that the processes of life are fixed. It is characteristic of such processes that certain conditions within the system compel the transformation of energy to follow a cyclical course, so that the initial phase is constantly reached again. So long as the exosystemic accession of energy is ensured and so long as the conditions within the system which cause the cycle remain unchanged, the fixed system endures. 'Death' occurs only as an accident in functioning. Many biologists do, in fact, hold this view. The life-processes themselves (apart from traumatic injuries) produce a progressive deterioration of the 'machine', and this, when the so-called necrobiotic processes have reached a certain point, results in the final impairment of the conditions of the cycle, i.e. in death. 'Death is evolved from life' [20, p. 160]. We must conceive of death as in some sense a functional accident which, from birth on, is gradually prepared for by deficiencies of functioning. It is inevitable, because the conditions of the cycle are very complicated and the factor of safety in the machine is indeed low; but, in principle, it is merely an accident, an inadequacy.

'Death as an incident', as Ehrenberg says [8, p. 29] —the isolated process of dying in the individual—would, according to this view, not subserve entropy. 'Death no more furnishes energy than does the breaking of an electric current' [8, p. 29 ff]. Yet it must be pointed out that the result of death is the dissolution of the system, i.e. that at death considerable differences of intensity between the system and the environment arise, which during life (indeed, precisely by means of life) were compensated. All the same it is true that, after a certain period, dissolution results in their ultimate equalization, which life prevented. These contradictions can be explained if we make use of our concept of the individual as a dual system. We differentiate the

4Moreover, the same statement seems to apply to the living system C which is also a dual system (plasm and nucleus) of a lower order, whose death is brought about by cariolysis.

5An observation by Crile [7, p. 536] seems actually to indicate the contrary, for after death the electrical potential difference between brain and body, which at the moment of death had the value O, rises again.

- 66 -

processes in the cells (system C) from those in system P. Death is an incident which overtakes the latter system and destroys its regulating function, with which is inseparably bound up the existence of the cells which now undergo dissolution. Of course this accelerates the attainment of equilibrium in system C, which becomes subject to the laws of physics instead of those of life. For system C the death of its superior system signifies accelerated equalization; the death of system P, we may say for the moment, 'subverts the entropy' of the cells. For the entropy of system P (i.e. for the height of its potential = difference of intensity between the central apparatus and the body) no concrete significance can be attributed to death, because what death annihilates is precisely the relation between the parts of the dual system.⁴ The system P keeps the common reckoning of energy for the cells and endeavours to hold the 'balance of energy' steady. At the moment when the death of the system occurs, it is futile to ask whether the accounts balance, for they no longer exist. The cells appropriate the balance and each keeps its own account, which the physicist can check by his measurements. Thus the question is not whether the death of system P signifies an increase of entropy in that system,⁵ but whether life has the function of increasing the entropy of it.

If the death instinct is to be conceived of as an instinct at all after the incident which we call 'the death of an individual', it cannot be held to be a special organic case of the entropy principle, but (and this is Freud's opinion) it must be historically determined, like all genuine instincts.

Nevertheless, from the dynamic standpoint the dictum that for the living organism 'the goal of all life is death' has ample justification if the concepts in question are suitably defined. It is gratifying to be able to quote a biologist in this connection.

Ehrenberg builds up a biological theory upon the basic idea of the irreversibility of the elementary life-processes. Life consists in a continuous structural process, the growth of substance at the expense

- 67 -

of fluid; it consists of the utilizing of energy-intensities to build up substance from which no more work can be extracted, which is partly secreted from the body and partly precipitated within it as cell-nucleus structure (apparatus structure). The structural substance (e.g. the cell-nucleus) determines the velocity, intensity, etc., of the subsequent life-processes. It is this metabolism, this substance-formation, this dying which constitutes life. What we call the life of an individual is the integration of

countless elementary life-processes to form a unity determined by the structures which produce those processes. Every individual elementary life-process leads to the irreversible binding of the energies in structure, i.e. to 'death'. The life of the individual aims at the filling of the 'vital space' with structure; its intensity and duration are determined by the gradient between the vital space and the amount of structure it contains. At any point before the end (which can probably never be reached) the 'incident of death' may bring the process life-death to a standstill.

Freud ascribes to organic substance the tendency to strive after stable conditions and to achieve lasting states of repose, and he calls the agent which executes this tendency the 'death instinct'; it seems that we may not unreasonably anticipate that biology and physiology, as they advance, will adduce cogent evidence that this tendency is the special case of the entropy principle for organic systems. The death instinct (using the term in the sense attached to it in biological theory) is, if we leave aside the historical factor, rightly regarded from the standpoint of dynamics as a scientific and not a merely speculative hypothesis. Of course the words 'death' and 'instinct' do give prominence to the historic factors in the behaviour of a system, and this easily leads to misunderstanding. We should probably therefore be wise, when considering the death instinct in this sense (which is entirely in accordance with Freud's view), to reserve for it the term 'Nirvana principle' [10].

The attempt to see in the pleasure principle the psychological special case of the entropy principle must for the moment remain at a very rudimentary stage of theory. If we should succeed in evolving satisfactory methods for measuring the libido, we should no doubt be able to arrive at an exact proof of this hypothesis, arguing from the principles of psycho-analytical psychology. Freud has repeatedly shown that the problems of the pleasure principle are quantitative and ranks them as a separate economic standpoint. According to his economic hypothesis, pleasure is experienced when quantities of

- 68 -

excitation within the psychic system are diminished and pain when they are increased. He does not overlook the fact that this experience does not depend on the absolute quantities and that possibly the quality of the tension plays a part [12]. If we could demonstrate experimentally that these quantities of excitation and tension represented quantities of energy, we could prove that the decisive part of the individual's whole behaviour is regulated by the entropy principle [12].

Our first attempt at an experimental computation of libido [5] testifies clearly to the correctness of Freud's theory of pleasure, provided that we guard against vague analogies in our discussion. According to our findings, the potential of the individual is raised in the state of repose (sleep), hence repose does not represent increased entropy; on the contrary, the differences in intensity are considerably augmented. To try to draw an analogy between repose and 'entropy' would result unfavourably for the psycho-analytical theory of instinct. But the state of repose of system P must not be construed as a state of physical equalization of account of the phenomenon of rest. It is obvious that, during sleep, system P is to a great extent eliminated. Directly the individual

awakes and motor actions occur, which are regulated by system P, the potential is lowered. Whilst retaining the notion that P is a superior system, we may assert that its function is to lower, and keep low, the potential, which rises as soon as P is eliminated. This elimination (the state of repose) produces a dynamic situation in opposition to the principle of entropy: hence system P 'subserves entropy'.

In one of the sleep-curves plotted by Mosso [5, p. 180] we see that in restless sleep, talking during sleep, etc., there is always a decrease in the temperature-difference (which, according to our view, is a factor of the potential). We cannot immediately reject the supposition that the lowering of the potential during the state of repose corresponds to dreaming. In dreams the system P once more comes partly into play, its function being to guard sleep. Without anticipating future experiments, we might conjecture that this is another proof that system P operates to increase entropy. We thus arrive at the notion (which is in accordance with the practical findings, if not with the theories, of the biology and physiology of sleep) that out of the lively metabolism of the cells during sleep there accumulates a considerable measure of potential difference, which presses to be lowered. The individual awakes, the energies are personalized [4] and are diminished by the psychic work performed during the waking state. We may even say

- 69 -

that spontaneous waking occurs because the potential has become too high. The curves of sleep and narcosis [5, p. 181] do indeed show that, with awaking, the potential begins to be lowered. So, from this point of view also, partial awaking—dreaming—with its lowering of potential must be looked upon as 'guarding sleep'.

The waking, rested system has a large store of potential, while the exhausted system has a minimum. At first sight it seems from the dynamic point of view almost self-evident that potential is lowered by the working of system P; for work uses up energy. But when we realize that in the waking state a constant stream of energy flows into system P (e.g. through the process of perception), and when we remember that various considerations have forced us to conceive of muscular activities as not merely using up the energies of P (on the contrary, part of these energies is augmented by muscular action) [4, p. 112], the question arises how that system's function of lowering the potential is achieved. The waking, rested individual displays a lively inclination towards the stimuli and objects of its environment; it craves for stimulus and finds pleasure in the gratification of this craving. This mode of behaviour is especially characteristic of the sexual instincts, where it takes the form of attraction and attachment to an object; but we have evidence of it in connection with the instinct of destruction also. The result of this turning towards objects is that the system receives accessions of energy, and this seems the more unreasonable because it is just when the system is rested that it has a very high potential, whereas in a sleepy state with a low potential it cuts itself off from stimuli. At first it seems that the fact of the craving for stimulus is in direct contradiction to a tendency in the system P to keep the 'sum of excitation' as low

as possible. Here we are faced with the same problem in the psychological aspect as the life-instinct presents to the Nirvana principle.⁶

If there is really a contradiction to the entropy principle here, the explanation must lie in the mechanical conditions of system P, and it must be only apparent and ultimately capable of solution. In the thermodynamic-osmotic model of the dual system P [4, p. 82] the potential difference between the sphere (central apparatus) and the

⁶In our subsequent argument we shall modify and give a greater exactness to Bernfeld's argument [1] that the solution of the problem of craving for stimulus and delight in it lies in their agreement with the Nirvana principle.

- 70 -

cylinder (system C—'body') arises from the fact that the initial temperature of the former is lower than that of the latter. Autonomous equalization of temperature is impossible because the temperature of the cylinder is kept constant. It would appear that the easiest way to secure in the model a minimum of potential (the difference in temperature) would be to prevent fresh energy being conducted to the cylinder from outside. This is in accordance with the kindred psychological notion that through the avoidance of stimuli, i.e. through narcissistic isolation, the 'excitation-level' is kept low. But the potential can be kept constant through isolation in the model only, not in a living organism, for in the latter the potential is raised endosystemically. In the model the potential can be lowered only by conducting new energy to the cylinder which, according to the mechanical conditions, must be transferred to the sphere, so that its temperature is raised and the difference in temperature—the potential—between cylinder and sphere is diminished. The model's mode of functioning corresponds exactly to the apparently paradoxical behaviour of system P. Only if it receives fresh energy can its potential be lowered. This energy is conveyed by waking psychic activities and is guaranteed by the psychic phenomenon of the craving for stimulus. Libido directed towards the outer world, all the activities of self-preservation and many of those of the instinct of destruction, fulfil the dynamic function of lessening the difference of intensity in system P—lowering its potential. That is to say, they increase the entropy of that system. From the dynamic standpoint Freud's view that the life instincts pave the way to death is most exactly correct. The pleasure principle is the most general conscious regulator of the individual's behaviour. In its function of avoiding pain and achieving pleasure and in its modified development as the reality principle it accomplishes the lowering of the potential in accordance with the law of entropy. Through the pleasure principle the objects, actions and affects, which, dynamically regarded, are processes tending to raise the entropy of system P, become valuable for pleasure and for life itself. When the optimal entropy has been reached, that system has fulfilled its task and 'goes quietly to sleep'; its function is suspended. But when it ceases to operate to reduce the amount of energy, the potential once more is quickly raised to a degree which rouses system P to work again.

If, then, the experience of pleasure is associated with a lowering of potential and if this acts, as we may say, as a physical force, the

- 71 -

question arises how it comes about that pain is experienced at all or that there is any painful tension other than that of quite brief duration which is immediately cancelled by pleasure?

According to the view of Fechner and Freud, it would seem natural to include amongst painful experiences those processes in the system P which are contrary to the conditions of pleasure—that is to say, to assume that pain occurs when the potential of the system is raised. What are the conditions in the dual system under which the potential is thus raised for considerable periods, contrary to the 'natural trend' of the processes of nature?

In discussing perception we endeavoured to show [4, pp. 80 and 88 ff.] that through the operation of the intensities of the environment energy is conducted to system P and, through personalization, lowers that system's potential. This energy reaches the central apparatus through the sense-organs. The potential is lowered through the conducting of energy to the central apparatus and through its personalization, i.e. through the raising of the level of energy in one part of the dual system. On the other hand, this conduction of energy depends on the difference of intensity between the cells and the central apparatus, and therefore on the presence of the potential. If the latter is considerably lowered it must entail difficulties in the mastering of the energies conducted to the system through external stimuli. The energy so conducted must remain in the sense-organ, in system C (in our model, the cylinder) and augment its intensity, thus raising the potential. It is evident, then, that the conception of a dual system enables us to interpret pain dynamically. Pain is associated with conditions in which the potential is low, as we assume it to be in fatigue before sleep. This is in accordance with our empirical knowledge, for it is characteristic of these states that stimuli are felt to be painful and the objects from which they proceed are shunned and eliminated from consciousness.

When the potential is high, the individual's behaviour is characterized by a readiness to turn towards objects and to desire them libidinally. So we could describe as narcissistic or as a flight from objects the state of minimal potential, in which stimuli and objects are shunned (in our model this state is represented by equality of temperature in the cylinder and the sphere). Dynamically we must conceive of the craving for stimulus and flight from objects as two easily differentiated modes of behaviour of system P. Both aim at the increase of entropy but under different mechanical conditions. From the discussion of the economics of energy in the dual system when the

- 72 -

potential is low, we gain some light on the question which had to be left open at the end of our second work [4]: painful conscious processes occur when there is a difficulty in augmenting the intensity in the central apparatus, i.e. in the transport of energy from the cells to that apparatus.

The reason why human life is accompanied by so much pain, in spite of the pleasure principle and the physical tendency to entropy which this safeguards, must be sought in the conditions of the dual system which, given a certain distribution of energy, may lead to temporary malfunctioning. That this possibility is, in fact, so abundantly realized due to all the social and psychological conditions and complications of natural processes, upon which psycho-analysis throws all the light we need. There are historical influences (ontogenetic and phylogenetic detours, and others imposed upon the individual by the conditions of his social station, which have now become historical) forbidding us many of those activities which would lead to a pleasurable equalizing of tensions. In a word, the restrictions of instinct which reality and the super-ego impose on the system P are the cause of the painful states so remarkably common and persistent.

It is very probable that constitutional factors, i.e. exceptional mechanical conditions, make it physiologically difficult to equalize the potential difference and so provide an opportunity for the excessive development of pain. Or they may permanently keep the potential difference very low, making the individual in question either chary of stimuli or over-sensitive to them, apathetic and narcissistically secluded in himself. Above all we should expect that any pathological structure of the central apparatus would be an important factor here (understanding by structure the energy-capacity in both senses of the term [4, p. 88 ff.]).

As far as it is possible to make an assertion before experimental psycho-analytical work has been done, it seems quite conceivable that the pleasure principle may be demonstrated to be a special case of the entropy principle on the level of system P.

But with this conclusion we have not reached the end of the task which we set before us in this paper, for Freud's argument to which, so far, we have exclusively adhered has hitherto had but little place in psycho-analytical discussion. When we speak of the death instinct, we are struck by a whole series of other elements in Freud's construction: above all, there is dying as an incident. We sometimes find

- 73 -

psycho-analytical writers expressing the view that the premature death of children, or even of adults, is a manifestation of their death instinct (cf. Ferenczi, 9). From the nature of the case there can be no clinical proof of the correctness of this opinion, for it is part of the essence of the death instinct that it is not readily noticeable and sometimes cannot be detected at all. From the dynamic-economic standpoint it is impossible to decide whether this hypothesis is justified. As against it we may point out that, as we have shown, dying is not a concept which can be expressed in terms of dynamics, and that probably it cannot be adopted as an instinctual aim in the proper sense of the term. Freud has constantly asserted that dying and death cannot be instinctual aims for the id. Hence the question is only whether they represent an aim of the ego or a demand of the superego. Nevertheless, we would freely admit that a constant starvation of the erotic life or constant dissatisfaction and pain may have a very injurious effect upon the functioning power of system P. In suicide it certainly seems as though we had a direct

manifestation of the 'death instinct'. Of course, in examining suicide analysis constantly reveals nothing else but complicated libidinal situations, implacable demands of the superego, identifications and, finally, a hatred of the subject's own ego or person, which feelings can usually be shown to have their origin in relations with objects. The mysterious factors in suicide, the intensity of the hate or other qualitative characteristics which are difficult to understand, possibly have not much to do with the final result: self-destruction. Like the corresponding factor of sadism these should probably be attributed rather to the instinct of destruction than to the death instinct (Nirvana principle).

But in psycho-analytical discussion it is just the instinct of destruction which constitutes the real difficulty. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud recognizes as the pleasure principle within the ego the death instinct of biological speculation (an idea to which, so far, we have confined our discussion). Since then, however, it has become increasingly clear that he is seeking to identify the death instinct with the instinct of destruction, and in his terminology the two are interchangeable. The question is whether it is justifiable so to identify them even from the dynamic-economic standpoint. We shall show that this is not so unless the death instinct which Freud identifies with the instinct of destruction has already acquired a meaning other than that attaching to the term in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, where it is regarded as a special case of the stability principle. His writings of

- 74 -

recent years do not lead to any final decision on the point. But it is noteworthy that he accepts the death instinct (or instinct of destruction) as a psychological fact—a dynamic, and no longer an economic, fact. He does not attempt to describe it in terms of biological theory, nor does he link it up with the stability principle. He views it as a counterpart to the sexual instinct, but not in relation to the pleasure principle. We read, for instance: 'We must confess that it is more difficult for us to detect the latter [the death instinct] and to a great extent we can merely conjecture its existence as a background to Eros, also that it eludes us wherever it is not betrayed by a fusion with Eros' [15, p. 101].

The instinct of destruction and the sexual instinct give rise to two easily differentiated modes of behaviour of the individual in relation to his environment; undoubtedly they are to be construed as two different instincts. Instinct is the urge to restore a lost situation of gratification [11]. Though it is not possible to name with certainty any definite situation of this sort which can be attributed exclusively to either of these two instincts, yet on the whole the trend of the instinct of destruction is to recover gratification by annihilation of the environment and probably also by isolation of the subject from objects. The sexual instinct aims at attaining gratification by turning towards the environment and by retention of objects, i.e. by their preservation. Love is characteristic of the one instinct, hate of the other. They are certainly both of a biological nature, but not, like the death instinct, simply hypotheses in biological theory: these two easily distinguishable modes of behaviour may be demonstrated as concrete

facts in the animal world also, right down to the protozoa. Freud observes that it was extraordinarily difficult for psycho-analysis to recognize the instinct of destruction [15], but it is for the biologist precisely the behaviour motivated by destruction which is an incontestable fact, while it is more difficult to discover love-activities not associated with a sexual instinct tinged with the tendency to destroy. Even when studying earliest infancy we see clearly that originally, in the first weeks of life, the predominant behaviour is rejection of the stimuli of the environment, exclusion and 'hatred' of them [Bernfeld, 1]. When the environment gradually begins to become interesting and stimulating, the infant's first aim is to master it in order to annihilate or reject it orally; finally this urge to mastery issues in an active, aggressive, destructive phase which imparts to the child's pregenital development an obviously sadistic character. In

7A more precise account cannot be given here of the reasons for the view which we are advocating and of which Bernfeld [1] has given a detailed exposition, namely, that a very close connection exists between narcissism and the instinct of destruction. In his work on Fascination [2] he shows that the preliminary phases of libidinal identification are conditioned by the suppression of motor activity (mastery). Perhaps if we follow this line of thought we shall be able to arrive at more concrete ideas about the energy of the instinct of death or destruction as contrasted with libidinal energy [15]. In the following remark Freud seems to hint at the affinity between narcissism and the instinct of destruction, on the one hand, and the process of binding with libido, on the other: 'But even where it shows itself without any sexual purpose, even in the blindest frenzy of destructiveness, one cannot ignore the fact that satisfaction of it is accompanied by an extraordinarily intense narcissistic enjoyment, due to the fulfilment it brings to the ego of its oldest omnipotence-wishes. The instinct of destruction, when tempered and harnessed (as it were, inhibited in its aim) and directed towards objects, is compelled to provide the ego with satisfaction of its needs and with power over nature' [15, p. 101]. Perhaps this affinity inspired Cohen-Kysper with the idea that the goal of the death instincts is repose and that they aim at lulling to rest ... Eros, the disturber of the peace [6, p. 405].

- 75 -

Psychologie des Säuglings [1] all these facts are classified under a single heading according to the primal aim: that of restoring the repose of sleep, which has been interrupted by the disturbing values of the environment and by hunger-stimuli. To this group we give the name: 'repose instinct'. The term 'destruction instinct', however, describes subsequent development very much more clearly. This is the supremely conservative instinct which aims at preservation of the state of sleep—narcissistic repose—which feels and treats the world as an interruption to be escaped or annihilated. Ontogenetically the instinct of destruction as a guardian of sleep, as hunger, as an urge to mastery, is the earlier. It is in connection with the gratification of this instinct that the infant discovers the pleasure of the erotogenic zones and, through modification,

restriction and transformation of the activities which it motivates, passes on to manifestations of tenderness and to libidinal object-attachment.⁷

The study of the sexual instinct and that of destruction (even if extended to include all living beings), the demonstration of the differences between the two, of their origin, mutual determinants, the development of their aims, the individual and secular evolution of the

- 76 -

means of gratification—all this lies within the sphere of the qualitative. These are problems which are germane to Freud's dynamic conception. Though the instincts may be characterized generally as being directed towards gratification, and this may in fact mean the restoration of a state of repose or equilibrium, and though we may even identify this equilibrium of 'release from tension' with a physical equilibrium—nevertheless, all this is merely a quite general proposition inadequate for the characterization of an instinct or its differentiation from other instincts. The gratification aimed at (even if it were in the physicist's view an increase in the entropy of the system) is in every instance a qualitatively determined situation, which has become historic and has certain conditioning factors which are extradynamic. From the point of view of dynamics there is no sense in considering it except in its quantitative aspect. The qualitative and historic factors must be considered from other points of view. They will of course be comprehended in the dynamic-economic purview also, in so far as they enter into the mechanical conditions of the system or the integrated subsystems. We must leave it to future investigators to examine whether in the case of the instinct of destruction and the sexual instinct these factors do so co-operate.

But we may venture to make a suggestion. In deriving pain from the mechanical conditions of the dual system we have become acquainted with a state in which the dynamic intensity is so distributed that it is necessary to eliminate and annihilate the sources of excitation (i.e. objects) in order to secure the minimum of potential. This probably corresponds to the psychic situation in which stimuli from the outside world are felt as disturbing factors which must be annihilated if they cannot be ignored—it corresponds, that is to say, to the instinct of destruction.

On various occasions and from various standpoints Freud has made a number of statements about the death instinct. If we were to summarize all that he has said about it under a single heading (because he uses the same term throughout) the result, from the standpoint of dynamics, would be a notion full of contradictions, for he alternates dynamic with economic considerations. The 'death instinct' is synonymous with the instinct of destruction, its partner is the sexual instinct and it is a dynamic concept in the theory of instinct; yet at the same time it is an historic concept, definitely comprising qualitative elements. It is to be found in the ego like the sexual instinct, with which it generally appears in combination, and, though it possibly

- 77 -

presents more problems for research than that instinct, these problems are of the same nature. Being ubiquitous, it has biological validity. Being, like the sexual instinct, on the boundary-line between psychic and physical concepts, it is a subject for physiological, but not for dynamic, examination.

The death instinct is something 'other' than the instinct of destruction only when we use the term to connote the biopsychic special case of the principle of stability; to physicists a more significant way of expressing this is to say: when the term 'death instinct' is used to denote the general tendency to entropy in all natural systems. We should be wise not to employ the term 'instinct' to describe this general behaviour of systems. For such a terminology obscures the problem of the function of the instincts (instinct of destruction and sexual instinct) in the general behaviour of the system, i.e. the equalization of difference of intensity.

If this exposition contain a germ of truth, then Freud's notion of the death instinct loses, it is true, the fine philosophical flavour which makes it at once so attractive and so controversial. For to the antithesis: instinct of destruction—sexual instinct, he opposes the antithesis: death instinct—Eros. In the physico-biological notion of the death instinct Eros has no place. The theory of energy has no cognizance of any partner, rival or opponent where the law of entropy is concerned, or at least of none other than the 'mechanical conditions' which in certain cases lengthen the way to entropy and enforce detours. Moreover, the combination of increasingly large masses of substance to form single entities is not in accordance with the trend of the physical process; on the contrary, this aims not merely at the dispersal of energy, but also at the dispersal of substance. From the point of view of physics the philosophically satisfying idea of 'forces opposed to death' has little meaning: from the standpoint of dynamic theory it has none at all. The death instinct, regarded as the behaviour of a system, has no partnership with Eros. Eros is not a mode of behaviour of systems in general; it belongs specifically to organic systems. Similarly, the tendency to destruction does not connote physical behaviour of systems in general: it, likewise, is specific for organic systems. These two modes of behaviour may, in the strictest sense of the word, aspire to the title of instinct—that which differentiates the behaviour of organic systems from the inorganic.

One might possibly have the impression that these ideas tend to a monism contradicting the dualism of instinct upon which Freud

- 78 -

insists. In particular, when we compare libido with free energy (potential of the individual) [4, p. 104] we may well be struck by a resemblance to the psycho-dynamic monism of Jung, his equation of libido and energy (primal libido). This is not the place in which to discuss Jung's theory. What he calls 'Energetik' (dynamics) [17], has little more than the word in common with the physicists' concept of energy. It is precisely when we wish to establish the dualism of instinct that we lay special emphasis on the monistic character of energy and distinguish it from the multiplicity (dualism) of the instincts. Energy is the sum of the capacity for doing work. Hence it is the 'same'

energy which operates as the libido and as the motive power of the instinct of destruction. The free energy of the system P, its potential, can be measured only by a 'monistic' computation. The potential is directed, moreover, to one end only, as is all dynamic movement in nature—namely, towards diminution. Certain specific organic conditions of the system compel organisms to follow this trend in two modes qualitatively so different, accompanied by such opposite phenomena and consciously felt to be so incommensurable. To revert to the language of psycho-analysis, I refer to the manifestations of the instinct of destruction and the sexual instinct.

We have tried to find out something about these specific conditions of the system. When the course of dynamic processes in a dual system, subject to the mechanical conditions of osmosis, is such that a single potential difference exists between the two parts of that system (central apparatus [brain plus nervous system] and cells [body]), the entropy-law impels it to a lowering of the potential. So long as the latter does not exceed a certain minimum, it may be lowered by cutting off from the system supplies of energy from the outside world. If, however, this minimum be exceeded the potential can be lowered only by the accession to the system of fresh quantities of energy. Hence our physicist's model can achieve its entropy in two opposite ways. These correspond respectively to narcissistic-destructive and to object-libidinal behaviour. It would be more accurate to say that, dynamically, these two modes of instinctual behaviour are identical with the two modes of behaviour in the model. So that, without for a moment abandoning our theory of the dualism of instinct, the single trend of the physical processes in the system is maintained. Indeed, this 'referring' of the two instincts to the single dynamic process which comprehends them both adds certainty to Freud's thesis that from the dynamic standpoint the two are essentially different.

- 79 -

The general behaviour of systems is associated with the principle of Le Chatelier [3]. This lays down that every system resists the influences of the outside world, its aim being 'self-preservation', and is a special formulation of the more comprehensive entropy principle. It applies to systems in stable equilibrium. System P cannot behave simply in accordance with Le Chatelier's principle, for it is only in special border-line states that it has a stable equilibrium (or at any rate for short periods of time, e.g. in sleep). In these states the system's behaviour does actually consist of nothing but the simplest activities of resistance or yielding—it is motivated by the 'instinct of repose' (the instinct of destruction). In general, however, its task is not merely to strike a balance of energy, which would soon lead to a stable condition in its relation to the outside world, but it has also to master the differences of energy arising within it and therefore it has need of the more complicated mechanism of the craving for stimulus, libidinal behaviour and the sexual instincts.

From the hypothesis of the dual system we draw the conclusion that the sexual instinct and the instinct of destruction alone can claim to rank as instincts: the specific behaviour of living systems (osmotic dual systems). The death instinct in the sense of the Nirvana principle represents the general behaviour of natural systems (the same

applies to the so-called instinct of 'self-preservation' [3]) which, on the level of system P with its historical mechanical conditions, is secured only by the operation of the instinct of destruction and the sexual instinct.

REFERENCES

Bernfeld Psychologie des Säuglings Vienna.1925

Bernfeld 'Faszination' Imago 1928 Bd. XIV p. 76

Bernfeld and Feitelberg 'Das Prinzip von Le Chatelier und der Selbsterhaltungstrieb' Imago 1929 Bd. XV p. 289

Bernfeld and Feitelberg 'Über psychische Energie, Libido, und deren Messbarkeit' Imago 1930 Bd. XVI p. 66

Bernfeld and Feitelberg 'Über die Temperaturdifferenz zwischen Gehirn und Körper' Imago 1930 Bd. XVI p. 173

Cohen-Kysper Die mechanistischen Grundgesetze des Lebens Leipzig, 1914

Crile, Rowland and Telkes 'An Interpretation of Excitation, Exhaustion and Death in terms of Physical Constants' Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of U.S.A. 1928 Vol. XIV p. 532

- 80 -

Ehrenberg, Rudolf Theoretische Biologie vom Standpunkte der Irreversibilität des elementaren Lebensablaufs Berlin.1923

Ferenczi 'Das unwillkommene Kind und sein Todestrieb' Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse 1929 Bd. XV p. 149

Freud 'The Economic Problem of Masochism' Collected Papers Vol. II London.1924

Freud Beyond the Pleasure Principle London.1922

Freud The Ego and the Id. London.1927

Freud Selbstdarstellung, Ges. Schriften Bd. XI p. 118

Freud 'Psychoanalyse und Libidotheorie Ges. Schriften Bd. XI p. 201

Freud Civilization and its Discontents London.1930

Herzberg, A. 'Das Stabilitätsprinzip in der modernen Psychologie' Annalen der Philosophie und philosophischen Kritik 1929 Bd. VIII p. 238

Jung, C. G. Über die Energetik der Seele Zurich.1928

Nernst Das Weltgebäude im Lichte der neueren Forschung Berlin.1921

Stern, L. W. 'Der zweite Hauptsatz der Energetik und das Lebens-problem' Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophischen kritik 1903 Bd. CXXI p. 175

Verworn, Max Allgemeine Physiologie Jena.1915 6th Edition.

- 81 -

FLÜGEL, J. (1929) CLOTHES SYMBOLISM AND CLOTHES AMBIVALENCE. INT. J. PSYCHO-ANAL., 10:205 (IJP)

CLOTHES SYMBOLISM AND CLOTHES AMBIVALENCE

J. C. FLÜGEL

It would seem only proper that some part of this special number of the JOURNAL should be devoted to symbolism; for Ernest Jones' own contributions to this subject display in a very typical manner the qualities of keen insight, deep erudition, minute study of detail and clarity of thought and exposition—precious qualities which, when present in a high degree, are all too rarely found together, but which are combined to a remarkable extent in the work of our friend and colleague whom we here desire to honour, and which indeed, through their combination, may be said to constitute the distinguishing characteristic of his scientific writings. It would, however, in any case be almost impossible to avoid touching upon the subject in some way or another, for, as Jones has himself said, symbolism in its widest sense 'comprises almost the whole development of civilization'. But it is not of symbolism in general that I here desire to speak; the masterly exposition of this subject which Jones himself gave to the world thirteen years ago still stands as the supreme accomplishment in this direction. I intend rather to confine myself to the symbolic aspect of one particular class of objects—the various articles of human clothing. A number of psycho-analysts, again including Jones himself, have already made valuable isolated contributions to our knowledge of the symbolic significance of particular garments; but the time has perhaps come when it is worth while to attempt a brief survey of what we know of the symbolism of clothing as a whole, especially as this symbolism would appear to be connected with certain interesting tendencies to conflict and ambivalence which have not yet found a fully adequate description in psycho-analytic literature.¹

So far as our present knowledge goes, it would appear that the object most frequently symbolized by clothes is the phallus, though it is recognized that the female external genital organs may also be symbolized by various garments, occasionally by the very same ones that in other cases serve as phallic symbols. Perhaps the most familiar

¹In what follows I have made use of certain statements of fact and of certain interesting suggestions, for which I am indebted to my friends Mr. Eric Hiller and Professor N. J. Symons, to both of whom I hereby acknowledge my sincere thanks.

²Vide, e.g. Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*, p. 132.

³Cf. Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis* (2nd ed.), p. 136 (Punchinello symbolism); Marie Bonaparte, 'Über die Symbolik der Kopftrophäen', *Imago*, 1928, XIV, pp. 100 ff.

4Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis* ; Ferenczi, 'Sinnreiche Variante des Schuhsymbols der Vagina': *Int. Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, 1916, iv, 112.

5E.g. H. Hellmuth: 'Ein Fall von Weiblichem Fuss, richtiger Stiefelfetichismus': *Int. Zeitschrift f. Psychoanalyse*, 1915, iii, 111. Sadger, *Die Lehre von den Geschlechtsverirrungen*, 325. Cf. the well-known lines of Herrick:

Her pretty feet,

Like snails did creep

A little out, and then

As if they played Bo-Peep

Did soon draw in again.

6Havelock Ellis: *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, V, 25, quoting Dufour, *Histoire de la Prostitution*.

7Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, V, 25, quoting Dufour, *Histoire de la Prostitution*.

8Vide, e.g. Abraham, *Selected Papers on Psycho-Analysis*.

- 205 -

symbol of all is the hat, 2 which is usually masculine, especially when pointed or decorated with horn-like appendages, 3 and occasionally feminine; and the shoe, which is again sometimes feminine, 4 as enclosing the foot (= penis), but which can also be masculine, especially in its connection with fetichism, 5 and in certain special forms, such as the long pointed poulaines of the Middle Ages, 'which were always regarded by mediæval casuists as the most abominable emblems of immodesty'.⁶ The poulaine was indeed sometimes actually made without disguise in the form of the phallus, 7 thus justifying the moral indignation which this shoe aroused when the symbolism employed was of a less transparent kind, the shoe ending merely in a beak or claw. Our present-day erotic symbolism of shoes and boots is probably but a faint echo of that of earlier times, but the condemnation of the pointed toe and high heel, now usually rationalized under hygienic pretexts, is probably a relic of the feeling of outraged morality formerly aroused by the poulaine, for the modern pointed toe doubtless retains some of the significance of its more exuberant predecessors, and the heel, as we know, can also be a phallic symbol.⁸

The high head-dress of the eighteenth century probably played much the same rôle as the extremely long and pointed toe of earlier periods and was subject to much the same moral denunciation. It is

9'Das Titanenmotiv in der allgemeinen Mythologie', *Imago*, 1913, II, 48.

10Frank Alvah Parsons, *The Psychology of Dress*, p. 188.

- 206 -

interesting to find among these denunciations a reference to the 'storming of heaven' motive, which Lorenz⁹ has shewn to have an important phallic element. Thus one preacher said of the female wearers of such head-dresses that 'in defiance of our Saviour's words, they endeavour, as it were, to add a cubit to their stature. With their exalted heads, they do, as it were, attempt a superiority over mankind; nay, their Babel builders seem with their lofty towers to threaten the skies and even to defy heaven itself.'¹⁰

Almost equally familiar to psycho-analysts is the phallic symbolism of the tie.¹¹ In my own experience I have found reason to believe that a similar symbolic meaning may often attach to the collar, ¹² particularly the stiff collar, in spite of the fact that, as a garment through which the neck protrudes, it might seem at first sight more suitable for a female symbol. A good many men, it would appear, enjoy the stiffness of the starched collar, feel greatly strengthened thereby, and suffer a corresponding sense of inferiority when discovered collarless or with a crumpled collar. One distinguished man of science told me he 'did not feel a proper man' in a soft collar, and I have known a youth who could not be persuaded to divest himself of his abnormally high collar even when learning a difficult and strenuous game; he faced both argument and ridicule with the retort that he needed the collar just because the task was difficult. In some (now archaic) forms of collar there is a part which projects and hangs down in front very similar to a tie; collar and tie are here one. And it seems probable that the English clergyman's collar, ¹³ which is fastened at the back and presents a rounded unbroken surface to the front, dispensing with the usual tie, symbolizes reduction of virility, in much the same way as certain other features of clerical costume of appearance (e.g. tonsure, skirts).

That humble, but invaluable aid to modern dress, the button, is

¹¹H. R., 'Zur Symbolik der Schlange und der Kravatte', *Zentralblatt für Psychoanalyse*, 1912, II, 675; Hollos, 'Schlange und Krawattensymbolik, ' *Int. Zeitschrift f. Psychoanalyse*, 1923, ix, 78; Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis* 132.

¹²Melanie Klein has already shewn that this symbolism may be found in children: 'The Development of a Child, ' *this JOURNAL*, 1923, iv, 464.

¹³The reason for the peculiarity of which, we are told by a clothes historian, 'is not at all obvious.'

¹⁴As, for instance, in the well-known story—usually told, I believe, with reference to a distinguished author—of the boy who always played with a certain button when answering questions in school and who was always at the head of his class, but who immediately dropped to the bottom when an envious class-mate unobservedly cut off the button just before a lesson and induced a state of mental paralysis thereby (castration).

also, I believe, at times invested with some phallic significance—probably in virtue of its function of passing through a hole specially made for its reception (cf. the so-called male and female screws, though it is true that in this case the analogy to the act of coitus is closer); and in the light of psycho-analytic knowledge it is not very daring to interpret the constant twiddling of buttons to which some individuals are liable in conditions of embarrassment as a symbolic act of masturbation.¹⁴ I have also found that trousers may be treated as symbolic of the phallus or of the external male genitals as a whole, as in the following short dream of a male analysand: 'Two men, one with baggy trousers and the other with narrow trousers, attacked a girl in a ditch. I struck the one with narrow trousers with a truncheon I was carrying'. Here the baggy trousers were associated with the father, and were also clearly shewn to represent the testicles, while the narrow trousers represented the penis. The two men together thus stand for the father's genital organs, and the whole scene constitutes a rescue phantasy, with castration of the father. At one period of history the presence of the penis was of course clearly indicated in the cod-piece, a feature of dress which may have been necessitated by the tightness of men's nether garments, but which was often rendered unnecessarily obtrusive by having a special colour of its own and by being shaped so as to simulate a perpetual erection. I have myself observed a very striking representation of an enormous phallus worn by a well-known male dancer on the modern stage, while the Scotch sporran (sometimes adorned with three tassels, the middle one somewhat lower than the other two) is very clearly a symbolic object of a similar kind. The same applies almost certainly, though somewhat less obviously, to the Masonic apron.

Consideration of these latter garments inevitably suggests the Biblical fig-leaf, which has indeed already been shewn to have very strong phallic associations, ¹⁵ due probably to its remarkable similarity

¹⁵Levy: 'Sexualsymbolik in der biblischen Paradiesgeschichte', *Imago*, 1917, iv, 27. For more detailed further consideration of the phallic significance of the fig (connection with castration in initiation ceremonies, marriage of two trees with each other, worship by women who desire offspring, beating by fig rods to ensure fertility, use in fire drill, connection with snakes, heavenly ladders and, nota bene, with clothes), see Frazer, 'Folklore in the Old Testament', III, 217 ff, and 'The Magic Art', II, 313 ff. I am inclined to regard Groddeck's interpretation of the fig-leaf as the hand (in contact with the genitals) as doubtful, except perhaps in special cases (*Das Buch vom Es*, p. 72).

- 208 -

(especially at one stage of its development) to the male genitals and perhaps to the nature of the fruit. It is recognized by many authorities that magical beliefs probably had an important influence upon the first development of clothing and bodily ornamentation and the instruments of magic—talismans and amulets—are themselves, as we know, originally for the most part (perhaps always) symbolic of the generative organs.

That phallic symbolism is not confined to relatively small garments connected with one particular part of the body is shewn by the most surprising and unexpected of all these sartorial symbols—that of the cloak or mantle, originally found by Freud in dreams, 16 corroborated by Reik from folkloristic phenomena¹⁷ and elucidated by the further observations of Ernest Jones.¹⁸ Here we find that a large and voluminous garment loosely covering the body as a whole, and without any resemblance to the phallus as regards shape, may nevertheless be a frequent phallic symbol.

In all these instances the main function of the phallic symbolism of clothes would seem to be the proud display of potency. But such display, as we know, is often based upon a desire for reassurance—reassurance against the fear that the phallic organ may be lost. Accordingly it is no surprise that clothes may also play a part in the symbolic representation of castration. In this case the idea of castration usually expresses itself through the taking off or destruction of clothes. Freud has shewn¹⁹—a that the common greeting of taking off the hat may symbolise castration, and Prynce Hopkins²⁰ has reported a rather striking case of a similar kind, originally observed by the present

16Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis, p. 132.

17'Völkerpsychologische Parallelen zum Traumsymbol des Mantels', Int. Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse, 1920, vi, p. 350.

18'Der Mantel als Symbol, ' Int. Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse, 1927, xiii, p. 77.

19Collected Papers, II, p. 163.

20Father or Sons, p. 28.

21Principles of Sociology, II, pp. 128, ff.

22Reik, 'Die Türhüter', Imago, 1919, V, p. 345.

23It has been suggested that the 'nicks' in modern coat collars (where the collar passes into the lapel) are connected with this practice; though Webb, who mentions this (The Heritage of Dress, p. 30), considers it doubtful.

- 209 -

writer. The removal of head-covering seems to be only a particularly important and persistent instance of the general primitive tendency to disrobe as a sign of respect. Just as, according to Herbert Spencer, ²¹ clothing originated in the carrying of trophies (themselves of course largely phallic symbols), so the removal of garments or ornaments, as the same writer points out, signifies submission or reverence (similar to the giving up of weapons by the vanquished). As an unhackneyed instance of this tendency we may mention Marco Polo's description of the forcible removal of clothing from anyone who trod on the threshold of the palace at Peking²²—a particularly illuminating case in view of the known symbolic significance of threshold itself. I believe that certain forms of the 'typical' dreams of being naked or inappropriately clad may also on occasion be connected with castration fear, particularly perhaps those

dreams in which some particular article of dress is missing or unsuitable, dreams which according to my experience are more frequent in men than in women. In other cases the idea of castration may be connected with the cutting or rending of garments. Such ideas may perhaps play a part in the tearing of garments in mourning among the Jews.²³

The following dream well illustrates this connection between the tearing of cloth and castration: 'I dreamt that my father ... tried to go into the house one day. I put up my hand to keep him out; as I did so, I tore a piece of cloth out of the coat he had on. For days afterwards I could feel the cloth in my hand'. Ferenczi has shewn that the sons of tailors may be especially liable to the castration complex.²⁴ This last point suggests that the work of preparing garments (cutting and sewing cloth, the tailor's art) may probably symbolise coitus with the mother (cloth = material = mother). The erotic significance of sewing is indeed well recognized, ²⁵ though this significance has usually been taken as a purely auto-erotic one (a

24'Die Söhne der Schneider', *Int. Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, 1923, ix, p. 67.

25Havelock Ellis: *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, I, p. 176.

26Cf. Groddeck, *Das Buch vom Es*, p. 168.

27Flügel: 'Polyphallic Symbolism and the Castration Complex', *this JOURNAL*, 1924, V, p. 155.

28'Fetichism', *this JOURNAL*, 1928, IX, p. 161.

- 210 -

substitute for masturbation).²⁶ Where castration fears are reacted to by an exuberance of phallic sartorial display, this would seem to be only an instance of the usual apotropaic function of polyphallic symbolism.²⁷ On the important part played by certain aspects of the castration complex (the missing penis of the mother) in the production of fetichism it is not necessary to enlarge here, in view of Freud's very recent treatment of this question.²⁸

In women the castration complex may, according to Sadger, ²⁹ lead to general exhibitionistic tendencies with regard to the whole body, as if they endeavoured to compensate for the lack of the penis by the display of other charms. This is doubtless true of certain cases, but it is only fair to bear in mind that several women analysts have recently been inclined to think that the female castration complex in its simple form (castration = removal of penis) is less frequent than was formerly supposed and that the sense of inferiority may, among women, attach ab initio to the body as a whole.

At any rate, it seems clear that the typical male castration symbol of removing clothes does not apply to women to any great extent. Women, indeed, tend perhaps rather to throw off certain garments under the influence of the castration complex. Reassurance against castration is found, for instance, in the removal rather than in the putting on of hats. This corresponds with the fact that the conventions of modesty and respect are in many ways the opposite of those in force for men. Men remove garments in obedience

to those conventions; women keep their garments on (e.g. compulsory wearing of head-dress in church, retention of outer garments in a private house until invited to remove them).

As compared with the richness of phallic sartorial symbolism, the corresponding female symbols in clothes seem to be less numerous and frequent. In addition to the hat and the shoe of which we have already spoken, the veil, girdle³⁰ and garter seem to be the most important of

²⁹Die Lehre von den Geschlechtsverirrungen, p. 378.

³⁰"... that zonulet of love Wherein all pleasure of the world are wove."—Herrick.

According to Babylonian mythology, when Ishtar removed her girdle in the underworld, reproduction ceased in the world (Elliot Smith, *The Evolution of the Dragon*, p. 154).

³¹The best survey of symbols of this kind is probably that of Storfer, 'Maria's Jungfräuliche Mutterschaft', pp. 49 ff.

- 211 -

those that have attracted the attention of psycho-analysts. Bracelets and other ornaments, as well as jewellery, can however also have this significance.³¹

Do instances of this kind exhaust the female symbolism of clothes? I think not. I believe that, alongside of the symbolic representation of the external female genitalia, there is another class of female symbols, which might more appropriately be called mother-symbols or womb-symbols, and which play much the same part as regards the protective function of clothes³² as is played by the phallic or vaginal symbolism in their decorative function. In this matter we may safely take our lead once more from the work of Ernest Jones, who, in his highly suggestive paper on 'Cold, Disease and Birth', ³³ has endeavoured to shew that the unconscious foundation of the fear of cold is derived from the fear of separation from the mother—in the first instance the separation from the mother that takes place at birth. It is true that in this paper he is largely concerned with the equation 'birth = castration', so that if we follow out his train of thought in its application to clothes, we see that the function of clothes in protecting us from cold is itself another aspect of the protection that they afford against the fear of castration. But much that we have learned from psycho-analysis forbids us to believe that the psychological significance of birth and separation from the mother is exhausted by such castration symbolism. Although the idea of birth is undoubtedly connected with the idea of castration in subtle ways of which we have as yet only a partial understanding, it has as certainly a high affective value in its own right, and the fear of separation from the protecting love of the mother, together with the correlative desire to retain this love (both ultimately expressed in the wish to return to the mother's womb), may persist throughout life quite independently of any associated fears of castration. If this is so, and if cold is one of those features of a hostile world against which we should be most adequately protected by a return to the womb, we may expect that clothes,

which protect us against cold, may be regarded by the unconscious as an equivalent of the protecting womb; we should expect, that is, that clothes may sometimes serve

32That is, so far as clothes serve to protect the whole body (against cold or other dangerous outer stimuli) rather than as a magical protection of the genitals.

33Papers on Pyscho-Analysis, 3rd Edition.

34'Primitive Man and Environment, ' this JOURNAL, 1921, II, p. 162.

35'In the Satapatha Brahmana, when the king is invested with the garment called tarpya, the officiant says: "Thou art the inner caul of dominion". Then he puts on a second garment, saying "Thou art the outer caul of dominion". Then he causes him to be born from what is the outer caul of dominion. He then throws over the mantle with: "Thou art the womb of dominion". He then causes him to be born from the womb of dominion'. From a paper read to the International Folklore Congress, 1928.

36'Die Nausikaaepisode in der Odysee', Imago, 1920, vi, p. 349.

37'Raumempfinden und Moderne Baukunst', Imago, 1928, xiv, p. 293.

38'Raumempfinden und Moderne Baukunst', Imago, 1928, xiv, p. 308.

39When the question 'Are there any circumstances (other than temperature) or states of mind in which you feel the need of more clothes than you usually wear?' was put to a class of fifty students, twenty-four gave replies of this kind. I am much indebted to Miss Eve Macaulay for this information.

40Quoted in One Thousand Beautiful Things, edited by Arthur Mee, p. 37.

- 212 -

as womb-symbols. It is true that evidence for this symbolism is not as yet forthcoming in anything like the abundance of that in favour of the phallic significance of clothes. Nevertheless, there are various considerations which indicate that the expectation of such symbolism is far from being altogether unjustified. In the first place there exists among those who have written on clothes a strong tendency to compare the functions of clothing with the functions of the house or room—and these latter, as we know, are among the most important of womb-symbols. Clothing and houses are both protections to the body, though situated at different distances from it. Our outdoor wraps are indeed a definite substitute for the house, when we leave its protecting shelter. But the same applies to the bed, again a recognized womb symbol, and in English we stress this similarity by speaking of our sheets and blankets as 'bed-clothes'. Róheim³⁴ has already argued that both certain temples and certain priestly vestments symbolise the universe, and through this the womb. 'Like buildings', he says, 'we frequently find cloaks and garments which symbolize the universe. ... This is quite evidently derived from the state of the embryo: enveloped in the amnion like a cloak, the cloak forming the limits of the universe'. In another communication he refers to other ritual garments definitely spoken of respectively as the 'caul' and the 'womb' of dominion.³⁵ When

Odysseus landed on the Island of the Phæacians, an episode which v. Winterstein³⁶ has shewn to be a variant of 'the myth of the birth of the hero', he is carried ashore on a garment—the veil of Leucothea—which here replaces the basket, boat or other receptacle, which elsewhere in this myth symbolizes the womb. Quite recently too, Löwitsch in a striking paper³⁷ has endeavoured to shew that the symbolism of architecture is sometimes predominantly phallic, sometimes predominantly uterine, sometimes a

- 213 -

mixture of the two in varying proportions; and has indicated that the same oscillation and conflict may be found in the changing fashions of clothes³⁸ the present tendency lying in the direction of an accentuation of the phallic aspects. Just as we tend in other respects to seek regression to the womb in time of stress and difficulty, so also it would appear that many tend to feel the need of more or warmer garments when depressed, worried, frightened, home-sick, lonely or unloved.³⁹ But by far the most striking and direct equation between a protecting garment and the protecting love of a woman with which I am acquainted comes from the writer of the most celebrated of all books on clothes; in a letter to Lord Houghton, speaking of his dead wife, Carlyle said, 'she wrapped me round like a cloak, to keep all the hard and cold world off me'.⁴⁰

The three classes of symbols with which we have dealt—the phallic, the vaginal, and the uterine—would seem to form between them the unconscious foundations of the conscious motives of modesty, protection and display which writers on clothes are agreed to regard as the three primary functions of dress.

All these motives, both the conscious ones and the unconscious tendencies that underlie them—lead to some form of enjoyment of, or satisfaction in, dress. But these various satisfactions are not achieved without conflict. The conflicts which centre round dress would seem to be of two main kinds, though in the last resort the distinction is a physical rather than a psychological one. There are in the first place conflicts between the various kinds of clothes-satisfactions themselves. Thus, as Löwitsch has suggested, there may sometimes be a struggle between the phallic and the uterine significance of clothes—two tendencies which do not easily permit of satisfaction through a compromise. In many ways independent of this, there is the more obvious struggle between the tendencies to display (whose foundations are probably in most cases phallic) and the tendencies to modesty (which can most easily ally themselves with unconscious uterine symbolism). The

- 214 -

varying fortunes of these struggles can, to some extent, be studied in the successive changes of fashion.

Psychologically continuous with this last conflict is the struggle between modesty and the more primitive forms of exhibitionism connected with exposure of the naked body (instead of in its displaced form connected with striking or beautiful clothing). This leads us to the second class of conflicts which centre round clothes: conflicts which are

fought out, not between the various motives and satisfactions of clothing itself, but between all or any of these motives and certain other motives which oppose themselves to the wearing of any clothes at all. These latter motives may be classified into two main groups—the narcissistic (exhibitionistic) and the auto-erotic. As regards the first group, nothing need be added here to the penetrating and detailed study of Rank, 41 who has admirably brought out the exquisite ambivalence manifested in the mental attitude to clothes, the repressed exhibitionistic tendencies manifesting themselves through the very objects which are used to frustrate them.

A few words may be said, however, in conclusion about the autoerotic elements and their conflicts with the chief forms of clothes satisfaction, as these have received comparatively little attention from psycho-analysts. The auto-erotic elements concerned would seem to be chiefly of two kinds, those connected with the skin and the muscles respectively.⁴³—these The pleasures that are undoubtedly to be derived from the stimulation of the skin by wind and sun and from the sensations accompanying muscular contraction⁴³—these pleasures are necessarily dulled by clothing, particularly by stiff or heavy clothing. Hence the satisfactions afforded by clothing are obtained at the cost of some sacrifice of these skin and muscle pleasures, and persons in whom the capacity for these latter pleasures is well developed will not easily reconcile themselves to this sacrifice. Hence there are some persons

41'Die Nacktheit in Sage und Dichtung', *Psychoanalytische Beiträge zur Mythenforschung*, p. 177.

42Sadger's work on 'Haut, Schleimhaut und Muskelerotik', *Jahrbuch für Psychoanalytische und Psychopathologische Forschungen*, 1912, iii, p. 525, still seems to be the most important contribution to this somewhat neglected field.

43In the replies to a questionnaire recently sent out by myself such phrases as 'heavenly', 'immensely enjoyable', 'air currents mean vitality', 'like breathing in happiness', with reference to sensory pleasure of this kind are by no means rare.

44The real difficulties of development that may arise in connection with the restraint of movement (and of the expression of affect thereby) through tight clothing in young children are vividly brought out in a case described by Landauer, 'Die kindliche Bewegungsunruhe'. *Int. Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, 1926, xii, pp. 287–288. Cf. also Chadwick, 'The Psychological Dangers of Tight Clothing in Childhood', *National Health*, 1926, XVIII.

- 215 -

who throughout life retain some of the original hostility to clothes that is probably felt by all young children; they never learn to sublimate their exhibitionistic interests on to clothes, the strength of their cutaneous and muscular auto-erotism tending to produce a fixation of exhibitionistic tendencies upon the actual body.⁴⁴ To such persons the more positive satisfactions of clothing remain but little known; clothes are to them instruments of oppression put into operation either (in the case of the more open rebels)

by the dictates of society or (in the case of those whose super-ego has taken over the functions of society in this matter) by the sense of modesty or the sense of duty; for at a higher level the ideals of work and duty may become firmly associated with certain kinds of dress—especially dress of a stiff and unyielding variety. The struggle here is entirely between the exhibitionistic and auto-erotic constituents of the joy of nakedness, upon the one hand, and the repressive forces opposed to these, upon the other.

In other cases, however, the pleasures connected with nakedness may conflict also with the more positive and deep-lying satisfactions in clothes that we have studied in the earlier part of this paper. It is clear, for instance, that in some persons the desire to throw off clothing as an impediment to freedom and enjoyment is closely connected with the uterine significance of clothes. To get free of clothes may thus serve as a symbolic expression of the need to become independent of the protecting, but, if excessive, hampering and paralysing love of the mother. Mothers always tend to express their anxiety for the welfare of their children by seeing that they are adequately, often indeed more than adequately clothed; and children in their turn express their need to free themselves from the trammels of mother-fixation by the rebellious throwing off of garments. Such throwing off becomes indeed a gesture of individual independence and of the defiance of parental authority. But it is interesting to note that, even when carried to extremes, the mother is not lost thereby. As the literature of the 'Nacktkultur' movement in Germany clearly shews, the lost

45E.g. 'only utter nakedness truly unites us for the first time with Nature'. Surén, *Man and Sunlight*, p. 107.

- 216 -

human mother is found again in a more ample and satisfying form in Mother Nature.⁴⁵

With others, however, the chief conflict may be between the satisfactions of nakedness on the one hand and of sartorial phallicism on the other. The full gratification to be obtained from the phallic significance of clothes can often only be obtained when the pressure of clothes is distinctly felt—felt even to the extent of creating some degree of discomfort. But, in the words of a man who has through analysis obtained insight into his own condition, 'these tightnesses and stiffnesses are all discomforts gladly suffered for the sake of an idea'—the idea, that is, of 'having a continuous erection'. But 'at the same time', he adds, 'to be in a loose, soft silk garment is my idea of real physical comfort'⁴⁶; also he considers that he grows 'better-looking' with every garment he takes off. In this case, which (except for the self-knowledge) seems to be typical of many, the narcissistic and auto-erotic elements concerned continue to oppose the expressions of the phallic symbolism to which they have been sacrificed.

Thus it would appear that the conflicts connected with the wearing of clothes may be both numerous and complex—tending to create in many persons a highly ambivalent attitude towards dress. Not only are there certain strong and perhaps inevitable antagonisms between the various satisfactions and reaction-formations that find

expression in clothes, but the mere fact of wearing clothes at all occasions certain conflicts on its own account. Furthermore, it is often a matter of the degree of fixation or displacement that determines whether particular tendencies (e.g. those entering into exhibitionism) find themselves ranged on one side or the other of the conflict. Fully to understand the dynamic relationships involved in a man's attitude to the garments he wears would carry us far towards a knowledge of his whole psychological development.

46Italics in the original.

- 217 -

FEAR, GUILT AND HATE¹

ERNEST JONES

I

Anyone who has seriously tried to unravel the complicated relationships subsisting between any two of these emotional attitudes will agree that the problem is one of exceptional difficulty. I hope, nevertheless, that the considerations to be brought forward here will contribute in some measure in elucidating at least the nature of the complexities in question and thus in furthering the approach to the more fundamental problems that lie behind them. As in our daily analytic practice, and indeed in all forms of scientific investigation, to get problems clearly stated is by no means the least difficult part of the task, nor is it the least important part.

Let us first consider the more purely clinical aspects of these relationships. The heart of the difficulty soon reveals itself. It is that—to speak statically—there exists a curious series of layer formations definitely connected one with the next, the connection being often in the nature of a reaction. This holds good for each of the emotional attitudes in question, so that one may be found at a given level in the mind, another at a deeper level, the former again at a still deeper level, and so on. It is this stratification that makes it so hard to tell which is the primary and which is the secondary of any two groups. To put the matter more dynamically, it is the complex series of interactions among these attitudes that makes it hard to determine chronologically their developmental relationships.

¹Read at the Eleventh International Congress of Psycho-Analysis, Oxford, July 27th, 1929.

- 383 -

Let me now illustrate these generalities. If we have a patient suffering from any form of fear neurosis, of bound or unbound 'morbid anxiety', we know from our experience that guilt must surely be present also. It is sometimes easy to demonstrate this, sometimes extremely hard, but we know that if the analysis is consistently pursued this proposition will be proved to be true. I am not maintaining in the abstract that fear cannot exist apart from guilt, but I should certainly maintain that clinically observed fear, a neurosis in which fear is one of the symptoms, always has guilt behind it. As Shakespeare long ago pointed out, 'Thus conscience does make cowards of us all'. Yet the matter is not so simple. It cannot be that an emotional reaction so phylogenetically ancient as fear is can be solely dependent on, or generated by, one so recently acquired as guilt is, one the very existence of which—at all events in a fully developed form—is doubtful in other animals than man. We have here an example of how a biological outlook may serve as a check on clinical investigation and warn us against a possibility of readily going

astray. Our scepticism is confirmed by still deeper analytic research, particularly into the earliest stages of infantile development, where we find extensive evidence indicating that the guilt itself proceeds from a yet earlier state of fear. And it is worth while remembering in this connection that the guilt can be extraordinarily deep. A patient may have succeeded so extensively in expressing unconscious guilt conflicts in terms of conscious fear, may be so completely convinced that his difficulties arise from fear and nothing else, that it may in certain cases take years of analysis to make the underlying guilt conscious. Were it not that this procedure does not necessarily in itself solve the therapeutic problem the analyst might well have rested from his labours and felt satisfied that he had found a complete answer to his problem of the genesis of the phobia, namely, that it originated in guilt.

A similar stratification can be observed with hate. This is one of the commonest covers for guilt, and the way in which it functions here is easy to understand. Hatred for someone implies that the other person, through his cruelty or unkindness, is the cause of one's sufferings, that the latter are not self-imposed or in any way one's own fault. All the responsibility for the misery produced by unconscious guilt is thus displaced on to the other, supposedly cruel person, who is therefore heartily hated. The mechanism is, of course, very familiar in the transference situation. We know that behind it there always lies

- 384 -

guilt, but further analysis still shows, in my opinion always, that the guilt itself is dependent on a still deeper and quite unconscious layer of hate, one that differs strikingly from the top layer in not being ego-syntonic.

In the last of the three possible combinations, of fear and hate, the same thing is to be observed. Hate, notably in its milder forms of ill-temper, irritability and anger, is commonly enough a cover for, or a defence against, an underlying state of apprehensiveness. This may occur either chronically, as in a disagreeable and irritable character, or acutely, as when a sudden alarm evokes an outburst of anger in place of panic. Yet we have good reason to think that the underlying fear is rarely, if ever, present unless there is a still deeper layer of hate, of the same ego-dystonic type mentioned just above.

In all these three cases, therefore, it is not hard to demonstrate the presence of three layers of which the first and third are of the same nature. In one of the three cases fear constitutes the deepest layer, in the other two hate. But we are here only at the beginning of our problem, for the state of affairs just presented does no more than illustrate the nature of the complexity in it; it tells us nothing about the final chronological or aetiological relationships. For this a deeper analysis is necessary and this time I shall find it easier to consider each of the three emotional attitudes separately. We may begin with that of hate, for it would appear to be the least complicated of the three.

II

We have seen how various manifestations of the Hate impulse can cover both anxiety and guilt, but that there is reason to suppose that in all such cases there is present below these a still deeper layer of hate. It is highly probable that the more superficial one is derived from the latter, so that it might from one point of view be described as a breaking through of what had been repressed. It is, of course, not simply a break through, for there are several notable differences between the two, the aim towards which it is directed, the conditions under which it appears, and so on. Among these the most important doubtless is the relation to the ego. What we have called the superficial, i.e. conscious, layer achieves in most instances, at least at the moment when it is being experienced, an extraordinary degree of ego-syntonicity. There are few emotions in life that can give the subject such intense conviction of being in the right, that carry with them such a complete sense of self-justification, as anger—the acme being reached in what is

- 385 -

called righteous indignation. By definition this is quite otherwise with the deeper, unconscious layer of hate. If now we try to reconstruct the precise relationships between the two layers, we come to the following conclusions: The primary hate can only be the instinctive response of the infant, usually in the form of rage, to frustration of its wishes, particularly its libidinal wishes. This primary 'reactive' impulse commonly fuses with the sadistic component of the libido to make what we meet with clinically as sadism. In the overcoming of the thwarting object there are therefore two sources of erotic satisfaction, the original, previously thwarted one and the pure sadistic one. Later on, however, this gratification is interfered with by guilt. The secondary, conscious reaction of hate is an attempt to deal with the guilt, or rather, the impotence it has caused. Its method of revolting against the guilt is to project this outwards, to identify the forbidding agency with another person, who is then identified with the original thwarting person in connection with whom the guilt has been generated to start with. It is in this sense that we can speak of the secondary hate layer as a return of the oppressed, but it is strictly conditioned by creating a phantasy of the other person being in the wrong or by manœuvring reality so as to bring this about.

It is curious, and seemingly a paradox, that guilt can be relieved by an exhibition of the very thing, namely hate, which was the generating occasion of the guilt itself. We are familiar with the talion principle in psychology and with the exactness with which the punishment is made to fit the crime. We have here an example of a very similar principle, which might be termed the isopathic principle, ² according to which the cause cures the effect. If hate causes guilt, then only more hate, or rather hate otherwise exhibited, can remove the guilt. The most remarkable example of it is the idea unconsciously cherished by every neurotic, part illusion, part truth, that love is the only cure for guilt, that only by pursuing (and being allowed to pursue) a sexual goal will he ever be relieved of his suffering. The idea is compounded of a pleonastic platitude ('if I feel free and sanctioned in a sexual situation I shall feel no guilt') and an illusion, that privation or frustration must necessarily signify guiltiness. I may quote another example of this isopathic principle, one also closely connected with

2At the Congress I used the phrase 'homeopathic principle', but Dr. Federn reminded me that homeopaths reserve the term 'isopathy for the particular part of their principles here involved.

- 386 -

the themes here under discussion. In a previous paper, on the Origin and Structure of the Super-Ego, I insisted on the essentially defensive nature of guilt, on its being generated to protect the personality from the privation which this characteristically interprets as frustration (e.g. at the hands of the father). Now clinically in the neuroses, and always in the transference situation, we observe this guilt mainly in the indirect perspective of projection; the prohibiting, condemnatory and thwarting functions of the guilt-arousing agency, the super-ego are mirrored in the patient's vision of the analyst. More than this, if the self-punishing tendencies are at all highly developed, we may expect to find that the patient will provoke the outer world, i.e. father-substitutes, to inflict punishments on him, and it is easy to see that this is done in order to diminish the sense of guilt; by provoking external punishment the patient saves himself from some of the severity of internal (self-) punishment. We get three layers very alike to the other sets of three mentioned above: first dread of external punishment (e.g. by the father); then guilt and self-punishment to protect the personality from the outer one, the method of religious penance; and finally, the evoking of external punishment, a disguised form of the original one, so as to protect the personality from the severity of the self-punishing tendencies. The father is invoked to save the person from the thing that saved him from the father! As in vaccine therapy, the disease is cured by administering a dose of its cause, and, just as there, the success of the cure depends on the dosage of the morbid agency being brought under voluntary control.

The last part of this excursion, which I hope will help us in our further considerations, leads us to the second of our themes, namely Guilt. I should expect to find general agreement among analysts in the clinical and analytical observation that the sense of guilt is the most concealed—though not necessarily the deepest—of the three emotional attitudes we are considering. My experience is that human consciousness tolerates either fear or hatred more readily than the sense of guilt. A feeling of inferiority or general unworthiness is the utmost that the majority of patients can achieve in this direction, and from their extreme sensitiveness to the very idea of criticism one can only infer that the risk of really—not merely verbally—admitting that they are in the wrong constitutes a formidable threat to the personality. This intolerability varies a good deal, of course, among different people, and I have very much the impression that one of the

3Freud has pointed out a similar connection in the case of obsessional neuroses (Hemmung, Symptom und Angst, S. 50).

4It seems to me highly unlikely that guilt ever appears in relation to an object who is simply hated: ambivalence is an essential condition of guilt.

5It is interesting that the word 'innocent' denotes 'not hurting'.

- 387 -

chief factors on which the variation depends is the strength of the sadism present. If this observation proves to be correct³³—that is, that the intolerability of guilt varies directly with the savagery of the sadism present—one could not fail to connect it with Melanie Klein's conclusion that the genesis of the super-ego is to be found in the sadistic rather than in the phallic stage of development. In this connection one must raise the question whether guilt can arise purely as a way of dealing with—a defence against—the primary anxiety of unsatisfied libido or, on the other hand, is it always and inevitably associated with the hate impulse? I should be inclined to answer both these questions in the affirmative, but with the important modification that one is thereby distinguishing two phases in the development of guilt. In the former case it would not really be correct to speak of guilt in the full sense: one needs some such expression as a 'pre-nefarious' stage of guilt. This must closely resemble the processes of inhibition and renunciation; the formula would appear to be the categorical 'I mustn't because it is intolerable'. It attempts thus to avoid the primary anxiety, but the situation becomes more complicated when an object relationship begins to be set up. Here sadism combined with rage at frustration breaks through, love of the other person⁴ conflicts with dread of punishment at his hands (castration and withdrawal of the loved person), and the second stage, that of fully developed guilt, is constituted. Here we may describe the formula as 'I shouldn't because it is wrong and dangerous'. Love, fear and hate⁵ are all equally necessary for this consummation, so that it would not be wrong to describe the super-ego as a compound of all three, its peculiarity being the making internal of attitudes previously directed outwards. As was remarked earlier, there is little doubt that the self-punishing function of guilt is destined to protect the individual from the risk of punishment from without, just as it is with religious penance.

It is at this point that we encounter the first of the more ultimate problems. How comes it that the process designed to protect the

- 388 -

personality from an impossible situation, which may for present purposes be defined as the fear evoked by hate, becomes itself unendurable? So much so that the individual in self-defence against this salvation reverts to the very attitudes, fear and hate, he was being protected from. How can these be at the same time more intolerable and less intolerable than guilt? It can only be that we are confounding two things under the one term, that of guilt. I suggest that the two things are the two stages indicated above, that of renunciation and that of self-punishment respectively. If so we should expect a certain inverse correlation between the two. There is a great deal of evidence to bear this out, and indeed Reik and Alexander go so far as to see in the self-punishing tendency a device to spare the subject the necessity of renunciation; that is to say, he punishes himself so as to procure for himself the necessary condition for indulgence. It has further to be remembered, as was hinted earlier in this paper, that the secondary appearance of fear and hate is by no means identical with the deeper layers of these. It

is in a sense much more artificial: the danger of external punishment to which the subject exposes himself, for instance, is rarely serious, certainly not in comparison with the grim reality that the original danger seems to the unconscious. They are, in other words, much more ego-syntonic than the primary layers, much more under the control and regulation of the ego.

We now have to consider the third and last theme, that of Fear.⁶ Let us begin by putting the question: does fear (of injury) always signify the idea of retaliation, i.e. does it always imply a previous attitude of hate, or even of guilt as well? Theoretically there appears no good reason why it should, and with many animals, e.g. rabbits, it would seem a very gratuitous assumption. Nevertheless, if we adhere to our clinical findings, at least in all ages beyond the very earliest infancy, we are bound to admit that we never find the one without the other, so that we have to postulate the presence of hate, and probably also guilt, whenever we come across fear. This is perhaps because pure privation so rapidly comes to signify deprivation and frustration and hence evokes anger and hate. If privation proves too hard to bear and leads to fear we may be sure that in practice both hate and guilt are also present. This clinical observation is, however,

⁶It will be plain that I constantly use the word 'fear' in this paper in the clinical sense of anxiety and apprehension, not necessarily in the biological sense of alertness with its appropriate responses.

- 389 -

no proof that early anxiety is secondary to either hate or guilt, as it would often appear to be in the upper layers of the mind. On the contrary, all the evidence, notably that of infant analyses, points to its preceding these.

Coming now to the subject of fear itself, the first problem is to distinguish between fear of an external danger, an event proceeding from without, and fear of an internal danger, one arising from the development of a certain internal situation. There is no doubt that failure adequately to appreciate this distinction has greatly retarded our progress in the past. It has been so illuminatingly drawn by Freud in his *Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* that I need only refresh your memory by quoting one passage from that work (S. 120): 'Der Angst wurden so im späteren Leben zweierlei Ursprungsweisen zugewiesen, die eine ungewollt, automatisch, jedesmal ökonomisch gerechtfertigt, wenn sich eine Gefahrensituation analog jener der Geburt hergestellt hatte, die andere, vom Ich produzierte, wenn eine solche Situation nur drohte, um zu ihrer Vermeidung aufzufordern'. Our patients sometimes give us a conscious hint of it in their complaint of being 'afraid of fear'.

Before inquiring into the nature and function of the fear or anxiety response let us be clear about the nature of the danger. Freud (*Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* S. 126) gives the name of 'traumatic situation', characterized by helplessness and completely vague indefiniteness about the object of the dread, to that in which the subject is unable to cope with a mass of over-excitation for which no discharge can be provided. It is

evidently the primordial situation, though he thinks it can recur in later life, particularly in the somatic anxiety neurosis. The typical fear in the psychoneuroses, on the other hand, he terms 'a danger situation', where anxiety is purposively produced by the ego so as to warn the personality of the possible approach of the traumatic situation and the desirability of taking precautions to avoid it. These two evidently correspond to what we have provisionally termed the internal and external dangers respectively. Freud insists that the dread in the psychoneuroses is always dread of an outside intervention, that the libidinal impulse is a source of danger not in itself but only because of the intervention it may give rise to (Hemmung, Symptom und Angst S. 67). There would appear to be two fundamental ways in which the external danger expresses itself, and we shall see that they both lead to the re-establishment of the primary internal one. Either the object who can provide gratification, e.g. the mother in the boy's case, is withdrawn, or else a parent,

- 390 -

there the father, threatens to take away the organ necessary for the obtaining of gratification. In either event the result is the same: in the former a state of privation is set up directly, in the latter indirectly through deprivation. But privation is another name for the original traumatic situation, that of intolerable libidinal tension consequent on the blocking of efferent discharge. We can thus say that the danger to which Freud alludes when speaking of the 'Kastrationsangst des Ichs' (Hemmung, Symptom und Angst S. 40) is that the ego may lose the capacity, or opportunity, for obtaining erotic gratification. The fear is lest the excitation of libido that cannot or is not allowed to obtain gratification may lead to the interference with the libido that can: to put it shortly, the libido that is not ego-syntonic constitutes a danger to the libido that is. This may be expressed clinically as a direct fear of impotence, but the more interesting variety is where the fear is lest the personality itself be lost, lest the loftiest ideals or the most laudable enjoyments be interfered with. Analysis shows that in such cases these always represent imperfect sublimations of the incest wishes themselves, for they constitute the kernel of the narcissistic investment of the ego. That is why the danger in question can be equally well described as one to the ego or to the libido; strictly speaking, it is to the ego's possession of libido, to its capacity for achieving libidinal gratification whether of a sensual or of a sublimated kind.

Now this is exactly what I wished to designate by using the term 'aphánisis'. Some colleagues have expressed surprise that just I, who have always insisted on the concrete nature of the unconscious, notably in connection with symbolism, should now describe part of its content by such an abstract Greek term. My reasons were two. In the first place I find it necessary to insist on the absoluteness of the thing feared, and this thing is something even wider and more complete than castration, if we use this word in its proper sense. The penis can be very extensively renounced by men, even in the unconscious, its place being taken by other erotic zones in exchange, and with women the significance of it is almost altogether secondary. The ultimate danger with which we are here concerned is to all possible forms of sexuality, not only to the inaccessible, forbidden ones, but also to the ego-syntonic ones and the sublimations of these. It

means total annihilation of the capacity for sexual gratification, direct or indirect, a matter on which we shall again have to lay emphasis when we come to consider the primary traumatic situation. In the second place it is intended to represent an intellectual description on our part

- 391 -

of a state of affairs that originally has no ideational counterpart whatever in the child's mind, consciously or unconsciously. It is therefore quite a different thing from an analytic interpretation of the unconscious in the usual sense. In the anxiety neurosis, for instance, there is, according to Freud, an automatic creation of an emotional state of anxiety rather than a state of fear with the idea, either consciously or unconsciously, of any specific danger. Whether this is so there or not—and it seems to me likely enough—we have to admit that it must be so in infancy, at a period that precedes any ideational thought whatever; I refer not merely to the birth situation itself, about which so much is still doubtful, but to many months afterwards when we can observe a state that may be called pre-ideational primal anxiety (Uranngst). It is only later, when the situation is becoming externalized and the anxiety is created by the ego as a 'signal' (Freud) for warning purposes, that we can speak of ideational fear, one which then usually has a specific reference.

Having cleared some of the ground concerning the 'danger' we can now pass to closer consideration of the dread itself, and this brings us to the primary 'traumatic situation'. There is little doubt that, as Freud has from the beginning insisted, this early anxiety is quite directly connected with the simple situation of libidinal privation. One says 'connected with', but the precise nature of the relationship between the two constitutes the second of the more fundamental problems we encounter in the course of the present considerations, and one of the most obscure in the whole field of psycho-analysis. I have for many years expressed the view that Freud's formula of the conversion of repressed libido into anxiety was untenable on both psychological and biological grounds and he has himself recently withdrawn it (Hemmung, Symptom und Angst S. 40), though he still makes a reservation in the case of primal, automatic or objectless anxiety (Hemmung, Symptom und Angst S. 41, 88). The question therefore arises whether the known biological significance of the fear instinct as a defensive response, together with the entirely defensive significance of 'signal' anxiety in the psychoneuroses, should not lead one to attempt the same solution in the case of primal anxiety. The situation itself can be defined: it is that of helplessness in the face of intolerable libidinal tension for which no discharge is available, no relief or gratification of it; Freud speaks of the 'Unbefriedigung, des Anwachsens der Bedürfnisspannung, gegen die er ohmmächtig ist' (Hemmung, Symptom und Angst S. 82) and says that the real kernel of the 'danger' is 'das Anwachsen der Erledigung heischenden Reizgrössen' (Hemmung, Symptom und Angst S. 83). Can

- 392 -

we get any further than this? Why is the tension in question intolerable, and in what sense is it alarming? Is the evidently inhibiting effect of the anxiety in some way a

defence against whatever is intolerable, or is it a simple, so to speak mechanical, consequence of over-excitation that is blocked? I believe it is both. If we consult the sister science of physiology—and perhaps we are justified in doing so when dealing with such a profound pre-ideational region—we learn that a similar situation there, which can of course be experimentally induced, ends in exhaustion of the stimulation itself; a hungry man ceases to be hungry when food is unobtainable for long, and fasting experts are presumably men who can tolerate the initial stage of excitation and reach that of gastric anæsthesia better than others can. With the libido, however, this would be tantamount to total annihilation of it and all possibility of erotic functioning would be gone, subjectively for ever. It may be that it is this resulting state of aphánisis, corresponding exactly with that brought about by external danger in the ways described above, against which the primal anxiety constitutes a defence.

There are two other points of view which would appear capable of throwing light on the problem. If we inquire into the constituent phenomena of anxiety we find, as I have described elsewhere in detail, that both the mental and physical ones can be divided into two groups, that of inhibition and that of over-excitation respectively; the contrast between the diminished flow of saliva and the increased flow of urine will serve to illustrate the point. This must have some meaning. A second consideration is afforded by the following suggestion. It continues the train of thought already hinted at, according to which it may be possible to show that even primal anxiety has, if not a purpose in the psychological sense, at least a function to perform. It would not be strange if the ego, in the truly desperate situation in which it finds itself, made every imaginable effort to alleviate it. These efforts, I suggest, may be divided into two groups, which overlap the division of the actual phenomena into the two groups mentioned above. They are (1) attempts to isolate the ego from the excitation; these represent the flight aspects of the fear instinct, would if successful bring about a state akin to hysterical anæsthesia, and must be the dawns of what Freud terms the primal repression (*Urverdrängung*), and (2) attempts to deal more directly with the excitation itself, either by affording limited avenues of discharge or, more aggressively, by damping down the excitation itself. The first of these groups needs no further explanation,

- 393 -

but it is necessary to amplify the account of the second one. Many of the over-excitation phenomena, e.g. mental excitement, pollakiuria, etc., must afford some measure of libidinal discharge, and Freud has suggested (*Hemmung, Symptom und Angst* S. 129, footnote) that even the paralysis of inhibition may be exploited in a masochistic sense. We are reminded of the circumstance, which has not, I think, been explicitly formulated, that the same is true of all forms of defensive mechanisms. Reik and Alexander have, for instance, forcibly pointed out that guilt has not only the effect of inhibiting the forbidden impulses; it has also invented a special mechanism, that of punishment, whereby they can, at least in some measure, be gratified. In regression, which, as Freud has clearly pointed out, is a form of defence, there occurs a leak on the lowlier but more accessible levels to which the libido has receded. In guilty self-

castration itself, the subject obtains the benefit of functioning erotically on the feminine plane. As to the damping down process, the essence of every inhibition, I regard this as the earliest stage of the renunciation which later on is an essential part of the process whereby the unavailing incest wishes become transformed into more useful psychical activities. The central importance of it in the genesis of the neuroses will presently claim our further attention.

If the conception put forward here is valid we reach the conclusion that what the infant finds so intolerable in the primal 'traumatic' situation, the danger against which it feels so helpless, is the loss of control in respect of libidinal excitation, its incapacity to relieve it and enjoy the relief of it. If the situation is not allayed it can only end in the exhaustion of a temporary aphánisis, one which doubtless signifies a permanent one to the infant. All the complicated measures of defence that compose the material of our study in psycho-analysis are fundamentally endeavours to avoid this consummation. Primary anxiety, no less than the later 'signal' anxiety, belongs essentially to these defensive measures. Repression, which, as Freud has recently pointed out, takes its place in the series of defences, is one of the consequences of anxiety.

III

It remains to co-ordinate the relations subsisting between fear, guilt and hate, and to formulate the generalisations that would appear to emerge from the reflections I have detailed above.

We have observed that two stages can be distinguished in the

- 394 -

development of each of these three mental reactions. With fear there is first the primal aphánistic dread arising from the intolerable tension of unrelieved excitation and, secondly, when this privation has become identified with external frustration, the 'signal' dread of this danger. With hate there is first the anger at frustration, and, secondly, the sadism resulting from the sexualizing of the hate impulse. With guilt there is first what we have termed the pre-nefarious inhibition, the function of which is to assist the early fear reaction and which in effect is hardly to be distinguished from it, and, secondly, the stage of guilt proper, the function of which is to protect against the external dangers.

It will be noticed that only fear and guilt exhibit the phenomenon of inhibition. When this develops further into the renunciation undertaken with the object of deflecting the wishes into more promising directions the outcome may prove satisfactory. Perhaps it is because this element is lacking in the hate-sadism reaction, and also because from its very nature it tends to provoke the external danger still more, that this reaction has such unfortunate consequences both socially and pathologically (obsessional neurosis, paranoia and melancholia). Clinically it commonly appears as the only available alternative to inhibition and guilt, as a defence or protest against them, but the reverse of this may also occur, where inhibition and guilt alternate with each other as a defence against the dangers of sadism.

The critical point in the whole development is evidently that where the internal situation becomes externalized, where privation gets equated to frustration. Just because it is more accessible, more easily influenced, and a welcome aid in the task of obtaining the relief of gratification, the infant must find the situation altered to its advantage, though, it is true, it then encounters old dangers in a new form. In dealing with these the phantasy of the strict parent plays an important and, indeed, indispensable part. The magnification of the external dangers increases the advantages gained by externalizing the situation and also, by the development of the super-ego, points the way to coping with the difficulties in their new form. Just as the reactions of adolescence are determined by those of the infantile sexual phase, so must those of the external, i.e. Oedipus, situation of fancy be influenced by those of the preceding internal situation. For instance, the greater the primal anxiety the more will the imago of a strict parent be used in the Oedipus situation; the more sadistic the earlier reaction the more difficult will it be to deal with the guilt of the latter, and so on. We

- 395 -

are thus led to lay stress on the importance of the earliest reactions. It was a revelation when Freud established the fundamental truth that all fear is ultimately fear of the parent, all guilt is guilt in respect of the parent, and all hate is hate of the parent. We are beginning to see, however, that even these very early attitudes must themselves have a pre-history, one which in all probability greatly influences them.

To complete the list of our conclusions the considerations should be recalled that were brought forward at the beginning of this paper. There I called attention to the various layers of secondary defence that covered the three attitudes of fear, hate and guilt, and pointed out that the defences themselves constituted a sort of 'return of the repressed'. We have seen how deep must be the primary layers of these three emotional attitudes, and also that two stages can be distinguished in the development of each of them. The relationship of the secondary layers would appear to be somewhat as follows. Any one of these primary attitudes may prove to be unendurable, and so secondary defensive reactions are in turn developed, these being derived, as was just indicated, from one of the other attributes. Thus a secondary hate may be developed as a means of coping with either fear or guilt, a secondary fear attitude ('signal' anxiety) as a means of coping with guilty hate, or rather the dangers that this brings, and occasionally even a secondary guilt as a means of coping with the other two. These secondary reactions are therefore of a regressive nature, and they subserve the same defensive function as all other regressions.

It is worth calling attention to the part played by the libido in connection with the three emotional attitudes in question. Each one of them may become sexualized. With fear there is the masochistic aspect of paralytic inhibition and the somatic discharge in the fear reaction itself, with guilt there is moral masochism, and with hate the development of sadism.

Freud has recently commented on the remarkable fact that we are even yet not in a position to give a satisfactory answer to the apparently simple question of why one

person develops a neurosis and another not. I am convinced that when we are able to give a final form to this answer it will prove to lie in the infant's response to the primal 'traumatic' situation, and consequently to the Oedipus danger that later develops out of it. The main conclusion of the present paper is that fear, hate and guilt can all be regarded as reactions to

- 396 -

this primal situation, as means of coping with it. The fundamental problem is evidently how to sustain a high degree of libidinal tension without losing control of the situation. If the infant is so helpless as to stand in danger of the spontaneous aphansis of exhaustion he will resort to desperate measures and will then run the risk of oscillating between two unfavourable reactions. On the one hand he may depend too much on the artificial aphansis of inhibition, and this will, in its turn, bring with it loss of control over the disturbing wishes through losing possession of them, through disappearance of the wishes themselves. On the other hand, he may pursue the easier path of developing in an excessive degree the defensive reactions of fear, hate and guilt, the path leading surely to neurosis. It would probably be more accurate to say, not that he oscillates between these two ways, but that the former is the primary one and that he is impelled to adopt the latter one only when that fails. This would account for the prominence of the 'all-or-none' reaction so characteristic of severe neuroses and of the demonstrable fear of moderation that neurotics display. To control or guide a wish, or to hold it in suspense when necessary, signifies to a neurotic to admit into play the reaction of guilt which to him appears the only conceivable motive for controlling an impulse. Of this he has a well-founded dread, because he has never learnt to control the inhibiting tendency that constitutes its essence and in which is inherent the danger of artificial aphansis. The very thing in which he originally sought salvation has become his greatest danger.

If the train of thought here presented is substantiated it must have important bearings on the practical problems of therapeutics. The most difficult aim of therapeutic analysis is to induce toleration, first for the reaction of guilt, then for the hate and fear that underlie it, and the greatest obstacle we encounter is the patient's lack of confidence in the possibility of controlling the originally defensive inhibiting tendency. The battle is half won when he realises that there are other than moral reasons for restraining the gratification of an impulse; it is wholly won when he fully realises that this capacity for restraint, instead of being the danger he has always imagined, is, on the contrary, the only thing that will give him what he seeks, secure possession of his personality, particularly of his libidinal potency, together with self-control in the fullest sense of the word. Then only is he able to deal adequately with reality, both in his own nature and in the outer world.

- 397 -