

It is the purpose of this paper to study the relationships between the self, object and instinctual representations in the ego, and the associated affects of anxiety and depression. Furthermore, it is suggested that the basic anxiety in neurosis is the ego's fear of the instinctually determined wish to regress to the objectless state of narcissistic unity with the primary object at whatever cost to the self. This conception would seem in conformity with Freud's and Anna Freud's ideas about the ego's fear of the instincts. ()

In discussing the three factors which are contributory to the causation of neurosis, () (biological helplessness, phylogenetically acquired infantile sexuality and imperfection of the psychic apparatus) Freud makes it clear that these factors are not in themselves the direct causes but, rather, as he puts it, the cause is determined by "whether childhood neuroses are carried over into later life or not.". Similarly when he states, "the sexual impulses of puberty, which should be ego-compatible, are in danger of succumbing to the attraction exerted by their infantile prototypes", he is talking about regression; (or fixation which lays the groundwork for regression).

Inhibition, Symptom and Anxiety was first published in 1926. At that time analysis was still focused upon the id drives and ego psychology was still relatively in the background. It is no wonder that the concept of regression which Freud had first developed (and which he recognized effected ego and libido), was applied primarily to the instincts. Only much later, with the expanding knowledge

of ego psychology, the importance of regression as it applied to ego states became recognizable.

This paper will attempt to use these newer formulations regarding ego structure and function. Thus, as Jacobson () points out, Freud's use of the term narcissism of the ego is not quite accurate, for it does not differentiate between the self and the object representation in the ego. Narcissism applies only to a libidination of the self representation in the ego; whereas, object love is characterized by the libidination of the object representation in the ego. In the same way, it is not sufficiently explicit to refer to the "body ego"; but rather to the body image of the self or object representation in the ego.

A similar lack of precision is associated with our use of the term id. In the Outline, ()-pp 23 Freud states, "it is difficult to say anything about the behavior of the libido in the id and in the superego. Everything that we know about it relates to the ego in which the whole available amount of libido is at first stored up. We call this state of things absolute primary Narcissism. It continues until the ego begins to cathect the presentations of objects with libido - to change Narcissistic libido into object libido". (see above). Finally, in the Problem of Anxiety, () pp 32 in discussing symptom formation he talks about "the representative (the ideational content) of the instinctual impulse to be repressed, etc."

In other words, the instinctual impulses which derive their un-

conscious sources of energy from the somatic processes in the organism are known only through their representations in the ego. These id representations in the ego take the forms of the ideational contents (wishes and desires); and the libidinal and aggressive (and neutralized) energies with which the self and object representations are cathected. We can thus speak of the self representations, the object representations and the id (or instinctual) representations in the ego.

Freud's study of the dream and the state of sleep is the cornerstone of psychoanalysis; not only because it is the royal road to the unconscious; but also because it is our closest approach to the battleground between ego and instinct. In the Outline,^{pp 54} he states, "The sleeping ego, however, is focused upon the wish to sleep." This wish is based upon an instinctually determined physiological need. It is made possible by a voluntary, partial relinquishment of ego functions. Sleep thus becomes the prototype for all subsequent regressive phenomena. The ideational content of this id representation in the ego, in the form of the wish to sleep is, at the same time, a wish to regress to the more primitive state of ego functioning which makes sleep possible. To quote Freud again (pp 48): "The ego gives evidence of its origin from the id by occasionally ceasing its functions and permitting a reversion to an earlier state of things."

Freud made it clear that the dream whose function it was to ensure sleep was a psychosis. "A dream, then, is a psychosis, with all

the absurdities, delusions and illusions of a psychosis. --- Of short duration --- useful function-with subjects consent---ended act of will." (pp 61-0) Here is the strength; but, also, here is the weakness of the psychic organization. Its strength lies in the fact that by a voluntary, controlled, limited regression of ego function the instinctual physiological needs of the organism are served. This could be termed "ego regression in the service of the instincts" but it is at the same time "regression in the service of the ego". However, as we know only too well, this regression in the satisfaction of the instincts may go far beyond service to the ego and the latter's hard-won establishment of the reality principle and the secondary process. Instead, when ego regression becomes complete and instincts operate unchecked on the pain pleasure principle and according to the primary process we speak of psychosis. The "normal" psychosis of sleep has invaded the waking state. This is the weakness of the psychic organization to which Freud referred; and this is the basic danger inherent in regression, which the ego perceives. It responds with the signal affect of anxiety.

Freud describes this signal as against an anticipated danger the kernel of which is "the admission of helplessness in the face of it - of material helplessness in the case of a true danger, of psychic helplessness in that of instinctual danger". In order to determine the significance of psychic helplessness in terms of ego psychology, it is proposed that we subject the two simple examples which Freud uses, little Hans and the Wolfman, to an analysis of the development of castration anxiety in terms of the

dynamic interrelationships between the self, object and instinctual representations in the ego. With castration anxiety formulated in these terms, we can then continue to a further elaboration of anxiety in general, its relation to depression and the state of psychic helplessness.

However, we immediately encounter difficulties which are exemplified in one deceptively simple statement in which Freud condenses and summarizes the whole ego development of little Hans and contrasts it with the Wolfman. Pof A-38 "Both forms of the oedipus complex - the normal active as well as the inverted - founder on the castration complex."

An exhaustive analysis of this crucial summarizing sentence discloses the areas of investigation which are necessary before we can properly analyze the interrelation between the self, object and instinctual representations in the egos of little Hans and the Wolfman. These interrelated areas are (1) ego identity, and the mechanisms of identification by which little Hans is differentiated characterologically from the Wolfman; (2) bisexuality, and its component instinctual derivatives, hetero and homosexuality, which furnish the instinctual basis for the id representations in the ego, and (3) the role of activity versus passivity as modes of behavior.

1. Ego Identity and the Mechanisms of Identification.

The self and object representations are created by the dynamic

mechanism of identification. It is as a result of these identifications that ego development takes place, and, eventually, that an ego identity is established. (Jacobson, Erikson) We are not dealing with autonomous ego functions which have a relatively independent maturational course; () but rather with those aspects of ego functioning which have to do with those instinctually determined relationships with objects, which are the primary source of neurotic conflict.

It is as a result of primitive differentiations between the self and the non self that the primary undifferentiated psyche first establishes the primitive part-self and part object representations in the emerging ego. We assume that the earliest body image of the self representation is established by the mouth of the infant; and that of the object by the representation of the mother's breast. It is only with increased maturation, induced in part by gratifications and frustrations, that these part-self and part-object representations become merged and integrated into their respective wholes. As firm, stable identifications are created a definitive self and object representation emerges. Only as this process of integration is well established, and, based upon relatively stable realistic representations of self, object and instinctual drives, can we speak of an ego identity.

The hungry infant, who through past experience of satisfaction, has laid down memory traces of that satisfaction, reactivates that memory, and we then speak of the "hallucinated breast".

Originally there was no differentiation between my mouth and the other's breast since there was no capacity for this distinction. It was only as repeated satisfaction and frustration became associated with the presence or absence of the object that the distinction between self and the object became possible. This distinction in turn was laid down in the ego of the infant as the self and object representation.

Here we see the intrusion of the reality principle into the hitherto unrestricted pain pleasure principle; and conversely, the first appearance of instinctual representations into the dawning ego. Perhaps we could consider this the first step in the 'taming of the instincts'. This is the period of Lewin's "Oral Triad", () where the wish to eat, to be eaten and to sleep constitute the primary psychic instinctual representations of the oral phase of libidinal development. It is only after a long and tortuous developmental history, when the representations in the ego most realistically represent the true nature of the self and the object world that we can speak of a ~~real~~ ego identity.

Robert Burns, with true poetic insight, expressed this human difficulty in his "gift to see ourselves as others see us". It is interesting that the use of the very term - objective - in contradistinction to the word subjective implies an almost insurmountable inability to maintain a completely reality dominated conception of the self representation. As Freud indicated, it is due to the innate weakness of the psychic apparatus that this goal of objectivity is always imperfectly achieved.

One of the causes of this innate weakness may well have been laid down as a basic prototype when the hungry infant confronted with the painful reality of his externally conditioned frustration regressed to the pleasurable fantasied union with an hallucinated breast; thus following the psychotic precedent of the dream state. The precariously established distinction between self and other is now abolished and a "psychotic" unity reestablished. Reality - the persistence of the instinctual hunger - makes it break down.

The next developmental step in dealing with a frustration following this original pattern is known as identification with the aggressor^(A. Fra) or frustrator.^(Spitz) In this mechanism of identification as a defense, the regression is also manifested by a merging of the hitherto separate representations of self and object. However, it is significant that now the regression is not as far reaching; and, as a result, the object is retained.

Finally, with increased maturation, identifications which may have originated as a defense become integrated within the ego as a part of the ego identity. For example, little Hans' determination to become big and strong like his father may have originally been established in part as a defense against his oedipal frustration and hostility. However, his biological destiny as a male certainly ~~entered~~ markedly into his capacity to identify with a man.

The mechanism of identification is thus always based upon a regressive instinctual function -- the psychic representation of

the instinctual impulse of incorporation. However, although identifications may be established regressively in the service of a defense (identification with the aggressor, in which case it may become a symptom); identifications may also be established regressively in the service of the ego (Hans' wish to be like the father and thus the basis for healthy growth).

With this hasty resume of the area of ego identity and the mechanisms of identification, we can now turn to the second component subject of bisexuality inferred by Freud when he referred to the inverted form of the oedipus complex as applied to the Wolfman.

2. Bisexuality.

The biological basis for the psychological inverted form of the Oedipus complex is the bisexuality of man which is phylogenetically determined. This bisexuality makes it possible for the instinctual representation in the ego to be represented by the wish to play the role of both male and female. When the primary identifications are established with the object of the same sex, the form of the oedipal conflict is the so-called normal or positive. However, since the biological fact of bisexuality furnishes the potentiality, identification with the object of the opposite sex becomes possible; and the basis for homosexuality, latent or overt, is thus established.

Infantile sexuality with its polymorphous perverse manifestations is the ontogenetic expression of this phylogenetically determined bisexuality. As quoted above, Freud ascribed "the most definite

etiology of the neuroses" to a regression to infantile sexuality. Furthermore, his statement: "the mental structure least accessible to influence in patients" "in a woman her desire for a penis, and in a man, his feminine attitude toward his own sex --" also refers to the regressive pull of infantile sexuality and its influences upon ego development.

3. The Role of Activity and Passivity.

The third factor which Freud referred to in his description of the oedipus complex and its relation to castration anxiety was the factor of activity versus passivity as a mode of behavior. There is an obvious connection between activity, passivity, and maleness and femaleness. However, there are important earlier determinants for activity and passivity which antedate the awareness of sexual differentiation.

The development from infantile dependency based upon an original biological helplessness, to adult independence is manifested primarily as a gradual and progressive shift from passive to active behavior. This is obvious in the realm of physical activity; and is no less apparent in the sphere of psychic activity. This is the essence of all learning and becomes the pathway of experience. As we have seen, the establishment of an ego identity and a healthy superego is based upon the shift from a "passive" defensive identification to the activity of an independent ego identity; wherein the psyche of the subject takes over actively the role originally assumed by the protective parents.

However, development is an "open system". Progress once achieved is not necessarily maintained once and for all. Instead, a constant effort is required to ensure that regression does not occur. In the ego, as an accompaniment to all ambivalent states, the mental representation of the regressive drive, which is also instinctively determined, is manifested as an ambivalent wish to regress.

Fundamentally, this wish is a wish to revert to a more passive state, to a state of helplessness and dependency which is equated with the libidinal wish to be loved; a wish which "leans" on self preservation needs. Since this wish is instinctually determined, it is no less inexorably a part of the human psyche.

In this wish to regress we see an expression of the never completely relinquished basic urge to reestablish the original unity of passive oneness with the mother. This primary, unconsciously determined biologically rooted need, operating on the level of the primary process of the unconscious, underlies all human activity, ready to be mobilized whenever the appropriate circumstances call it into being. The relationship of such a wish to the part-instinct of masochism is obvious.

It may not be anticipating too much to say now that this fear of the ego, that it may regress in its hard-won struggle for the establishment of its identity, because of the pressure of instinctive needs which it cannot control, is the anxiety on the side of the ego which parallels castration and its antecedent anxieties on the

side of instinct. It represents a fear of its own dissolution and a helplessness in the face of it.

Now, with this sketchy presentation of the development of the ego and its capacity for regression, we can return to our study of little Hans, the Wolfman and their development of castration anxiety.

We shall start with our prototype of the positive oedipal conflict, the case of little Hans. We assume that genital primacy has been established; which means that the pregenital strivings toward the mother object have not been relinquished; but that they have assumed a relatively subordinate relation to the primacy of genital needs. We assume further that he has developed a relatively well integrated ego organization where self and object representations are firmly established.

The instinctual source of the libidinal need is derived from somatic stimuli which are perceived as sensations by the ego and expressed in a heightened libidinal cathexis of the genital image of the self representation. The mental representation of this heightened genital cathexis creates as the object by which this increased tension can be alleviated, the representation of the mother who has always relieved all pre-existing tensions. As a result, the object representation is now also cathected with genital libido. The ideational content (see () above) of the id representation by which the relief of this increased sexual tension

is expressed in the fantasy of a contact with the object; namely, a wish to have intercourse with the mother. This is an identification with the father.

This wish to have sexual intercourse is first expressed as a desire to unite a body part of the self representation with a body part of the object representation; which, when orgasmic response becomes possible, is associated with an almost total merging and loss of distinction between self and object representation. (Is this the goal of all satisfaction of instinct?) It was this intra-psychic union with the mother to which Freud was referring when he described the act of sexual intercourse as the later attempt of the adult to recreate the never completely relinquished wish for psychic unity with the mother.

The ideational expression of the libidinal instinctual need (the wish to have sexual intercourse) sets into operation the ego function of thought - the trial action - permitting other ego functions - judgment and reality testing - to evaluate possible consequences before thought is replaced by action.

The "trial identification" with the father introduces comparison; and as a result, doubts regarding size and competency are first introduced. Now the aggressive component of the ambivalent feelings toward the father begins to enter the psychic arena. Envy and jealousy and hostile feelings, first experienced in the self representation, are projected and now perceived as the aggressive cathexis of the object representation. It is this projected

aggressive cathexis of the object representation of the father which is responsible for the effect we call castration anxiety. Little Hans' wish to castrate and destroy his ambivalently loved father is first recognized as a danger. By identifying his father with himself, the wish is rejected and made his father's wish to castrate him but the danger is no less great. In the case of little Hans the struggle is not yet over for he has not yet renounced his incestuous wishes nor his aggressive impulses toward his father. His horse phobia is the result.

The situation with little Hans is not quite as dangerous as it is in the Wolfman, for the former has still not relinquished a woman as his sexual object. The little Wolfman, however, has regressed deeper in his homosexual choice of love object, trying to make his father assume the role of his mother; namely, identifying father with mother. In order to accomplish his incestuous wishes, he must, therefore, forego the role of activity which characterizes little Hans' fantasy of sexual relations with his mother; and by way of a feminine identification, substitute for it a passive feminine relationship with his father. The only way in which he can accomplish this is for him to regress - to renounce his newly won genital primacy, and regress to the passive receptive sexuality of the pregenital zones. This, too, is perceived as castration, a self castration.

It is not necessary for our purposes that we trace out in any further minute detail the various vicissitudes of the self,

object and id representations. Suffice it to say that it is as a result of this trial action in fantasy that the ego perceives the castration threat as a threat to the integrity of the body image of the self representation which appears as a castrated image. Later we shall see that it is in exactly this way that anxiety differs from depression - in anxiety the threat is to the integrity of the self-representation whereas in depression, the object representation in the ego is envisaged as destroyed.

Now we can investigate the affect of anxiety more closely. We have chosen in our example of castration anxiety a relatively late phase - the specific anxiety associated with the oedipal phallic phase of libidinal-aggressive instinctual development. However, anxiety, too, has a developmental history and as Freud indicated there are phase specific anxieties characteristic of each libidinal level. With the associated regression of ego function and of instinctual need, the corresponding anxieties become reactivated. This is most clearly manifested in the case of little Hans where the anxiety specific for the oral phase was manifested in the castration anxiety of the phallic state in the overdetermined form of the fear of being bitten by the horse.

When Freud discussed phase specific anxieties, he was concerned primarily with those anxieties which sprang from instinctual dangers. More recently, however, Greenacre has studied the ego states in their relation to the corresponding libidinal phases. () It is her opinion that this phase specificity is in both cases of ego

and libido a relative matter and there is much overlapping. In other words, genital primacy, as well as the associated ego development characteristic of that developmental level, is always an admixture of pregenitality and earlier ego states. In any event, associated with anxieties which spring from fears connected with instinctual dangers there are present at the same time anxieties which are of ego origin. Here the basic danger is the traumatic state of ego disintegration: the fear of loss of ego identity, brought about by the regressive defusion of identifications. This regressive defusion could lead eventually to a return to the state of primary narcissistic union with the object such as we observe in severe psychotic regressions. Here the manifestations of the most primitive needs associated with Lewin's "Oral Triad" indicate the depth to which ego regression can go.

Behind the fear of castration lies the regressive wish to be castrated; a wish more clearly seen in the Wolfman. Similarly behind the fear of ego regression lies the wish for ego regression, the pleasure principle, primary process expression of the most primitive unconscious needs to be loved, to be taken care of, and to be dependent at whatever cost to ego identity. (Perhaps this explains the frequent adult's call for mother in moments of extremis.)

In his discussion of anxiety, Shur^() makes the distinction between anxiety and depression in the following way. He conceives of depression as a reaction to the loss of the object, and anxiety as a fear of the loss of the protection of the object. It would

seen, as was previously suggested, that anxiety is the affective response to the threatened loss of integrity of the self-representation in the ego whereas depression is the reaction of guilt added to the dreaded and desired destruction of the object representation; and, with this destruction, regression to a state of primary narcissism wherein self and object representation are both merged.

This conception of depression seems in conformity with the views of Edward Bibring who saw depression as the result of an intra-systemic conflict in the ego associated with a feeling of helplessness. We would only add that this state of psychic helplessness is not only feared; but also regressively desired, which thereby introduces the element of guilt because of the associated hostility toward the ambivalently loved object. (Jacobson^()).

Freud, Shur and others have emphasized the role of anxiety as a motor for defense in the production of symptoms. However, anxiety is also used as a stimulus for healthy sublimations and developmental growth in the service of the ego. Castration anxiety in the healthy child becomes a useful adaptive force to stimulate learning during the latency period, and thereafter.

Castration anxiety, as Freud pointed out, is the basis for the formation of a pliant healthy superego, which in turn is based upon healthy, well integrated identifications/^{which are} essential requirements for a mature stable ego identity and satisfactory object relations.

Regarding the crucial role we have ascribed to regression in the ego's attempts to cope with anxiety, we can do no better than, once again, to quote Freud: "When we investigate psychoneurotic conditions, we find in each of them the occasion to comment upon a so-called temporal regression, i.e. the particular extent to which each of them retraces the stages of its evolution. We distinguish two such regressions - one in the development of the ego and the other in that of the libido. In sleep the latter is carried to the point of restoring the primary narcissism, while the former goes back to the state of hallucinatory wish fulfillment." We might say of the anxiety of the instincts, that the danger is the frustration of need; and the anxiety of the ego is the danger of regressive disintegration and an ensuing state of psychic helplessness.

Finally, as we examine the devastating effects of uncontrolled regression of the ego in the service of the instincts, and recognize the extent to which this regression represents a fundamental weakness of the psychic structure, we may be prone to underestimate the importance of regression in the service of the ego. Freud first pointed this out in regard to the dream, and, later, Hartmann, Kris and others expanded this concept. Certainly as analysts we appreciate the importance of the regressively created transference neurosis, without which, cure is impossible. Perhaps, in the last analysis, the whole progress of man is a testament to the importance of regression in the service of the ego to the extent that this progress is based upon a realistic utilization of the regressively

reactivated "hallucination" of the past we call the memory of past experience.

In summary: The attempt has been made to reevaluate Freud's findings regarding anxiety and depression in the light of the newer concepts of the ego. To this end, the cases of little Hans and the Wolfman were subjected to critical analysis in terms of self representations, object representations and id representations. Castration anxiety and anxiety in general was formulated in terms of a threat to the integrity of the self representational image; thereby being differentiated from depression wherein the object representation was lost. It was suggested that behind each anxiety was a regressive wish which ultimately represented the basic fear of the ego: the fear of the primitive wish to regress to a state of ego disintegration characterized by narcissistic union with the primary object, at whatever cost to ego identity. Finally, the recognition that regression in the service of the ego was as powerful a developmental factor as uncontrolled regression in the service of the instincts was a danger.