

## THEORY II: BEYOND WISH AND DEFENSE

### THE EGO IDEAL, THE GRANDIOSE SELF, AND ARDENT LOVE

Aim: The purpose of this class is to introduce the student to the radical revision of psychoanalytic theory inherent in the propositions contained in the essay "On Narcissism." The introduction of two new psychical agencies, the conscience and the ego ideal, the normalization of narcissism as an epigenetic fore-runner of object relations, and the concept of an ideal self formed by identifications with the ego ideal will be explored as they manifest themselves in ardent love and the clinical manifestations of the grandiose self.

Reading: Freud S (1914): On Narcissism: An Introduction. SE 14:73-102.

Optional Reich A: A contribution to the psychoanalysis of extreme submissiveness in women. Psychoanal Quart, 1940; 9:470-480

Reich A: Pathologic forms of self-esteem regulation. Psychoanal Study Child, 1960; 15: 215-232.

Parkin A: On sexual enthrallment. J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn., 1964; 12: 336-356

Sandler J, et al.: The ego ideal and the ideal self. Psychoanal Study Child, 1963;18:139-158

He yields his life if I'll Yum-Yum surrender.  
Now I adore that girl with passion tender,  
And could not yield her with a ready will,  
Or her allot, if I did not  
Adore myself with passion tenderer still

- W.S. Gilbert

In 1914 Freud created a total, revolutionary, revision of his theory. He took the Leonardo model and normalized it. The finding of an object along the path of narcissism was now

no longer a secondary phenomenon, occurring in a few select individuals. It became a primary phenomenon, a universal in all human object relations. Every instance of falling in love has become an externalization of a self-self relationship and every substitution of a self-self relationship for a pre-existing object relationship a return to an earlier state of affairs. The first object of the individual had become the self, and every (external) object-finding a lending to that object a psychic interest that had first been invested in the self. Freud now maintained that the *bulk of the libido must be considered to have always remained in the narcissistic position and to return to that position in the face of trauma, frustration, or loss*. He first voiced this thought in *Totem and Taboo* in which he “suspected” that “this narcissistic organization is never wholly abandoned” and that “a human remains to some extent narcissistic even after he has found external objects for his libido.” A contemporary critic comments, “This is an understatement if there ever was one (Whitebook, J: Hans Loewald: A radical conservative. IJP 2004 85:97-116).”

Two new psychic agencies were now added to the psychic apparatus: the conscience and the ego ideal. Since it is the conscience that enforces the adherence to the ego ideal, there is now a new central object, the ideal self (the ego as modified by identifications with the ego ideal) which can manifest itself clinically as (what Kohut later came to call) the grandiose self. Now object representations are to be considered the final editions of an epigenetic series of projections (of versions of the ideal self) introjections (of abandoned objects). No object representation is thinkable without reference to the ideal self. Defense can no longer be equated with repression since denial (the substitution of fantasy for unpleasant reality) and idealization are already at work in the creation of the self- and object-representations before wishes directed at these objects can become the target of repression (i.e., pre-repressive defenses). It also makes self-esteem maintenance the central focus of inner psychic regulation, thereby shifting the paradigmatic illness of psychoanalysis from hysteria to depression.

### **1. Jones on the impact of "On Narcissism"**

This is a passage in which Jones, writing in 1953, quotes himself from 1925. What is striking to me in this passage is how little Jones understands of the complexities of Freud's thought 11 years after "on Narcissism" was published. The sophistication of what we have described above is completely missing and in its place there is a flattened, simplified and rather caricatured version of what Freud is trying to say:

In 1914 Freud made one of his radical revisions of his views on the structure of the mind in an important essay entitled "On Narcissism: An Introduction." It caused some bewilderment among his adherents until we were able to assimilate its numerous implications. To convey the impression this essay made on psychoanalysts I may reproduce the comments I made on it [in 1925]:

The second phase in the development of Freud's ideas ... dates from 1914 when he published a disturbing essay "on Narcissism." ... Self-love appears in its purest form in a sexual perversion Havelock Ellis was the first to describe by the name "narcissistic," ... but it is easy to detect

numerous other manifestations of the same tendency elsewhere. They can be found in the megalomania of insanity, in the attention the hypochondriac devotes to his body, in various observations easily made on children, on the aged, on patients desperately ill, even in the phenomena of normal love. Common to all these fields is a remarkable reciprocity between the love of self and the love of others, between what analysts term narcissism and object-libido respectively; when one increases, the other diminishes, and vice versa. Freud supposed with good reason that the libido to begin with is all [focused on the self], that self-love is the beginning of all love. When it flows outward we call it object-love, love for objects other than the self. That unfortunately it can flow back again, be once more [directed at the self], is a familiar enough fact. In most marriages there are times later on when one partner reproaches the other that he (or she) does not love as much as formerly, that he (or she) has become "selfish." And, as hinted above, there are many typical situations in life, such as in disease, after an accident, in old age and so on, when the tendency to this withdrawal into self-preoccupation and self-love is apt to become pronounced.

Now the reason why I called Freud's essay "On Narcissism" a disturbing one was that it gave a disagreeable jolt to the theory of [drive objects] on which psychoanalysis had hitherto worked. The observations on which the new conception of narcissism was founded were so unmistakable and easily confirmed that we had to accept it unreservedly, but it was at once plain that something would have to be done about the theory to which we were accustomed. For [now we should have to reckon] *the self-preservative instinct as a narcissistic part of the sexual instinct* (N.B., my italics)... And what had become ... of conflict? It is true that the psychoneuroses, [Freud's] proper field of study, could still be described in terms of conflict: namely that between narcissistic and object-libido. But did this mean that ... there was no other source of conflict in the mind? These and similar questions were thronging in our minds just as the Great War broke out, and Freud was not able to give any answer to them until after its termination.

Jones E (1955): *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, pp. 302-303.

## **2. A Short History of Freud's Concept of the Ego Ideal**

The term *ego ideal* is introduced in this paper. Freud asserts that the individual "has set up an ideal in himself by which he measures his actual [self]."

The development of this ideal corresponds to the development of an internalized narcissistic object. "The subject's narcissism makes its appearance displaced on to this new ideal [self], which, like the infantile [self], finds itself possessed of every perfection that is of value ... What he projects before him as his ideal is the substitute for the lost

narcissism of childhood in which he was his own ideal."

Freud specifically distinguishes the ego ideal from the "special psychological agency which performs the task of seeing [that] the narcissistic satisfaction from the ego ideal is ensured and which, with this end in view, constantly watches the actual [self] and measures it by that ideal." Unlike the "narcissistic ego ideal" the "institution of conscience" is a "censoring agency", "an embodiment, first of parental criticism, and subsequently that of society."

Freud repeated the formulations of 1914 in the *Introductory Lectures* (1916-1917). The ego ideal was seen as arising "in the course of ... development," "for the purpose of recovering thereby the self-satisfaction bound up with the primary infantile narcissism, which since those days has suffered so many shocks and mortifications." Unlike the ego ideal, the conscience represents the demands of the outside world and acts as an internal critic: "We recognize in this self-criticizing faculty the ego censorship."

In 1917, in "Mourning and Melancholia", he did not refer to the ego ideal but specifically called the "critical agency" the conscience.

In 1921, in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, he began by asserting, as he had earlier, that melancholia shows us "the ego divided, fallen apart into two pieces, one of which rages against the second... the piece which behaves so cruelly is not unknown to us ... It comprises the conscience, a critical agency within the ego, which, even in normal times takes up a critical attitude towards the ego." However, he went on:

On previous occasions we have been driven to the hypothesis that some such agency develops in our ego which may cut itself off from the rest of the ego and come into conflict with it. We have called it the "ego ideal," and by way of functions we have ascribed to it self-observation, the moral conscience, the censorship of dreams, and the chief influence in repression. We have said that it is the heir to the original narcissism in which the childish ego enjoyed self-sufficiency; it gradually gathers up from the influences of the environment the demands which that environment makes upon the ego and which the ego cannot always rise to: so that a man, when he cannot be satisfied with his ego itself, may nevertheless be able to find satisfaction in his ego ideal which has been differentiated out of his ego.

Two things have happened in this passage: 1) the distinction between the narcissistic ideals and the agency which enforces them has been lost, it is now the conscience which is called the ego ideal, and 2) it is now this critical agency (called by its new name, the ego ideal) which is the heir to the "original narcissism in which the childish ego enjoyed self-sufficiency".

In 1923, in *The Ego and the Id*, Freud referred to this newly defined ego ideal as the superego. He claimed, that he had established his theory in the paper "On Narcissism"

and in *Group Psychology*. But Strachey, in the editor's introduction to *The Ego and the Id* stressed that this was not so, that instead what had happened was that the distinction between the ideal itself and the agency concerned with its enforcement had been dropped.

In 1924, in "The Economic Problem of Masochism", he noted that, "the superego, a substitute for the Oedipus complex, becomes a representative of the real external world as well and thus also becomes a model for the endeavors of the ego." Thus the ego ideal, now the superego, served the needs of narcissism by virtue of the introjection of the idealized Oedipal-period parents. The notion of the child's own sense of *his own* perfection had been lost.

In 1932, in the *New Introductory Lectures*, Freud expanded on this theme:

We have now to mention another important activity which is to be ascribed to the superego. It is also the vehicle of the ego ideal, by which the ego measures itself, towards which it strives and whose demands for ever-increasing affection it is always striving to fulfil. No doubt this ego ideal is a precipitation of the old idea of the parents, an expression of the admiration which the child felt for the perfection which it at that time assigned to them.

Sandler, et al. (1963), summarize these contradictory propositions regarding the ego ideal as follows:

1. In "On Narcissism" (1914) and *Introductory Lectures* (1916-1917) the term was used to refer to the individual's ideal for himself, constructed as a consequence of his efforts to regain infantile narcissism. It was here distinguished from the self-observing and critical agency, the conscience.
2. In *Group Psychology* (1921) the term was equated with both of the two structures which had been distinguished in the earlier phase. It now included both what had been referred to as the conscience and what had been called the ego ideal..
3. In *The Ego and the Id* this newly defined ego ideal was identified as the superego.
4. In the *New Introductory Lectures* (1932) the superego was referred to as the "vehicle of the ego ideal." This usage was foreshadowed in 1924 in "The Economic Problem of Masochism" where Freud noted that "the ego reacts with feelings of anxiety ... to the perception that it has not come up to the demands of its ideal, the superego." The use of the term "ideal" here refers to the ideal parents as embodied in the superego. There is no longer any reference to the self taken as one's own ideal.

In the years since, a number of the most prominent analytic writers have reverted to the

formulations of 1914 as being superior, in clarity and usefulness, to the later ones. Nunberg (1) insisted on the value of differentiating an ego ideal that was cathected with libido from a superego that was an image of the hated and feared objects. Annie Reich (2, 3) saw the ego ideal as more narcissistic than the superego, expressing what one desires to be (at the core of which is the feeling that the person is *himself* the admired, omnipotent, and idealized object), while the superego expresses what one ought to be. Jacobson (4) saw the ego ideal as the outcome of the magic images of the self and of the love objects while "internalization of the parental prohibitions and demands [establishes] superego identifications and self-critical superego functions." Both Reich and Jacobson felt that the core of the ego ideal arose earlier in development than the superego and that its function must sometimes be regarded as that of a superego precursor. Piers & Singer (5) asserted that the superego sets boundaries for the ego, while the ego ideal sets goals. They described the ego ideal as clustered around a core of narcissistic omnipotence, and modified by later identifications and the goals of the drive to mastery. Novey (6) also described an ego ideal that was dependent upon later significant persons and constituted "a distinct psychic institution related to the ego and the superego." Lampl de-Groot (7) clearly differentiated the ego ideal from the superego stating that the ego ideal was a need satisfying agency with a large degree of functional independence from the superego. At its core lie fantasies of grandeur which predate the formation of the superego, e.g., Ann (three years old): "When my penis will be as big as Dick's (her older brother) ...", Mother: "But you are a little girl, only boys have a penis, why do you think you will get one?", Ann: "When I want it I'll get it."

1. Nunberg H (1932): *Principles of Psychoanalysis*. New York: IUP, 1955
2. Reich A (1954): Early identifications as archaic elements in the superego. *JAPA* 2:218-238
3. Reich A (1960): Pathologic forms of self-esteem regulation. *Psychoanal Study Child* 15:215-232
4. Jacobson E (1954) The self and the object world: Vicissitudes of their infantile cathexes and their influence on ideational and affective development. *Psychoanal Study Child* 9:75-127
5. Piers G, Singer MB (1953): *Shame and Guilt*. Springfield: Thomas
6. Novey S (1955): The role of the superego and ego ideal in character formation. *IJP* 36:254-259
7. Lampl-de Groot (1962): Ego ideal and superego. *Psychoanal Study Child* 17:94-106

### **3. Sandler et al. on the Ideal Self**

Sandler et al. (8) insist that there can be little doubt on clinical and theoretical grounds that Freud's later formulation of the ego ideal, in which it is equated with the structural superego, is insufficient to cover the phenomena to which the concept was earlier applied, and that this problem makes it necessary to either broaden the concept of the superego (as it was presented in *The Ego and the Id*) to include what was included in the older concept of the ego ideal or else to retain the concept of the superego as it was later defined and apply the term ego ideal to some elaboration of Freud's original concept of

the ego ideal.

They argue that the difference between the two structures corresponds to the difference between introjection and identification. Introjection raises an object representation to a special status so that the individual continues to behave as if the introjected object were present. Introjection can take place without resulting in identification. It creates a second presence in the inner world, a presence which is capable of watching and reacting to the self. Identification, on the other hand, is defined as the changing of the shape of one's self-representation on the basis of another representation as a model. The most primitive form of identification is a fusion, in whole or in part, with self- and object representations. Later, it can become a conscious or unconscious copying of aspects of the "shape" of an object representation. Identification can take place either with introjects or with other self- or object representations

The ego ideal is the "self-I-want-to-be", the shape of the self that would provide the highest degree of narcissistic gratification. It is conditioned by desires to have drive wishes fulfilled, to gain the love of objects or introjects and to avoid their disapproval or punishment (to minimize the quantity of aggressive discharge on the self), "and this is the sense in which Freud spoke of the ego ideal in his first formulation, in the paper 'On Narcissism'."

An individual is strongly motivated to include in his ego ideal the idealized features of his authority figures, whether they are real persons or introjects, for by identification with this ego ideal (formation of an ideal self) he can transfer some of the libidinal cathexis attached to the object to himself: "if I am like them, I can love myself as I love them". Object love is transformed into secondary narcissism with a resulting potential increase in well-being and self-esteem. On the other hand, by identifying with ego ideal elements derived from attributes loved by his objects or introjects, he can, through identification with these representations, feel loved and admired by them.

Thus identification with the ego ideal (formation of an ideal self) is equivalent to identification with 1) loved, admired, or feared objects (which may be figures in the real environment, introjects, or objects of fantasy), 2) the shape of the lovable or admired self as conveyed by the objects, and 3) previous shapes of the individual's own self (especially those connected with "ideal" states previously experienced in reality or in fantasy). Self-esteem can be understood as the degree of congruence between the self-representation and the ego ideal (this point is made by both Jacobson and Reich whose work is referenced above, and by Bibring whom we will discuss in conjunction with depression).

The establishment of an ego ideal allows an individual to become more independent of the love, praise, or hostile censure of his objects. He can always maintain his self-esteem and avoid disappointment and frustration by identification with the ego ideal (formation of an ideal self). Alternatively, parts of the ego ideal can be externalized (projected) onto an object which then becomes the vehicle of desired aspects of the self. By forming a relationship with this object, the externalized parts of the ego ideal are regained through a love that produces narcissistic gratification through a concealed union with the ego ideal.

8. Sandler J, et al. (1963): The ego ideal and the ideal self. *Psychoanal Study Child* 18:139-158

#### **4. Hanly on the Ideal Ego**

Hanly (9), uses the term *ideal ego* for what Sandler calls the *ideal self*. His discussion of the intrinsically defensive nature of narcissistic object relations underscores the essential point that, from the point of view of narcissism, object relations are defenses and defenses are object relations.

The ideal ego is built up out of denials and is preserved in existence by them. It is this defensive feature of the ideal ego that enables us to use it to shed light on the differentiation in severity in the neurotic conditions to which narcissistic conflicts make a contribution. The consolidation of the ideal ego and its defensive function can be most completely achieved by establishing relationships and securing positions for the sake of their self-enhancement instead of for love and work. It is the narcissism of the ideal ego that causes a man to choose a strikingly beautiful woman for a lover in order to enhance his image among other men without himself being physically attracted to her. Similarly, it is the ideal ego that facilitates the triumphant moral masochism of those who are virtuous for the sake of being virtuous (the self-righteous) rather than because their conduct benefits themselves and others. The manipulation, control and domination of others for the narcissistic pleasure of self-enhancement causes experiences in which the secret narcissistic relation between the ego and the ideal ego acquires a foot-hold in what is, for the individual, objective reality. In this way there is brought into existence a double denial - a denial of a denial - in which, to the greater confusion of the ego's reality testing capacity, the original denial, the substitution of a fantasy for an unpleasant piece of reality, has been denied by an object, relationship or circumstance which makes or appears to make the fantasy real. People are used as mirrors in which the ego is able to catch a glimpse of itself decked out in its ideal ego finery.

9. Hanly C (1984): Ego ideal and ideal ego. *IJP* 65:253-261

#### **5. Identification with the Ego Ideal: Clinical formation of a Grandiose Self**

In reading the following case vignette from an analysis it is important to review the ideas of Reich, Lampl-de Groot, Jacobson, Sandler, and Hanly. Review their formulations and see how you would fit them to the following material:

The patient was an unmarried woman in her early 30's who sought analysis because of a sense of stagnation in her life. She had been a successful high fashion model, but this career had faded naturally as she grew older. For some years now she had been living on her savings, lecturing herself about the necessity of getting started on some new career.



She was chronically unable to overcome her indecisiveness, inertia and timidity. She would spend her days in her apartment doing jig saw puzzles and sewing dresses. She felt paralyzed and, increasingly, desperate.

She was equally desperate about her intimate relations. She had been married briefly in her early 20's but since her divorce she had been unable to find "Mr. Right." She had a large circle of sympathetic girlfriends who admired and loved her. All of them felt protective of her, having seen her devote herself to one promising man after another only to be repetitively, inexplicably abandoned in circumstance that heightened her friends' conviction that she was a nice person who had been treated badly. Most recently several of these friends had gotten married and she was frightened as she saw her protective circle diminishing.

She began her analysis stating, "I get depressed ... I don't pick up my cleaning, my laundry ... I don't buy hand lotion, pay my bills, clean my apartment ... I feel everything is over ... I don't even know I'm depressed ... I just have tired feelings behind my eyes ... it's very subtle ... I feel I have no active causation of my life ... like I have run out of steam ... I feel listless, wilted, tired." She continued "I try to latch onto a man to give me energy and I avoid being active in order to cling to him ... then I can't afford to see his flaws or I will be left alone." In contrast, she explained, "I feel good when I feel strong, like I'm having something to say about what happens in my life ... but I'm afraid I'll become too strong ... too dominant, too articulate, too forceful ... then no one will love me or have anything to do with me ... I'll end up a little old lady, alone, drinking coffee in Starbucks ... so I give in to being a little girl ... I lean on a man, on pity ... I give in to depression to make people go easy and be gentle with me ... it's what my mother wanted me to be ... I become little, invisible, pitiful ... I entice people by doing things they approve of ... I do things for people to make them depend on me ... and all the time I keep hoping they'll see through it and say, 'You're terrific, fantastic, marvelous' ... I want to be discovered ... instead I become a 'nu-nu', an unthinking blob ... I answer 'I don't know' to all questions ... that way I am not too successful or too strong ... to be direct or strong is asking for trouble ... it's like thumbing my nose ... I can only do it if I'm feeling totally secure."

After two weeks of analysis, she became aware of something changing in her, "I'm comfortable talking to you ... I'm becoming aware of a flamboyant, breezy side of me ... I was always such a conservative dresser, such a good girl ... I want to be more brave ... I don't want the development house ... I want the million-dollar mansion ... I **am** better than [my boyfriend]."

Three days later she reported, "I said to an unpleasant woman in the store today, 'Who do you think you are? Hitler?' ... I was so shocked when that popped out of my mouth ... I'm not like that ... I'm afraid that's going to take over ... I'll become this foul-mouthed screaming banshee ... I'm afraid of that ... I want to be loving and gracious, super gracious, super understanding ... a good person."

After one month of treatment, she had experienced some lifting of the depression. She

developed a tendency to irritable and angry reactions whenever things did not go exactly her way. She said, "I am basically this good person ... then my other self takes over and I have to wait for the fit to pass until I can be good and giving again ... I didn't cause the fit to happen in the first place and I can't stop it from happening ... my reactions are all or nothing ... I'm not in control of it." She no longer felt comfortable in analysis, "I don't feel in control here ... I'm used to being in control but here I feel like I am going under ether ... I won't be able to take care of myself ... I have been swimming against the tide all my life ... I'll drown if I don't have control ... it's like floating ... I don't trust you." She continued her complaint, "I'm so afraid there is nothing inside me ... I'm just a skilled actress ... there's nothing there ... the wind's whistling through me ... when a man adores me I feel like an idol of gold ... I click into ice ... not one degree of feeling inside ... I make my voice warm, understanding ... inside I'm wood or ice or steel ... inanimate ... like a line drawing with air in the middle ... it makes me nervous when people like me ... can they be so dumb that they don't see through my act? ... that's why I don't trust them ... they're making a big deal about nothing ... I **know** it's nothing." She had a long string of rejected men who thought she was "sweet," "a jewel," or "a special girl": "they don't take hints ... they fall in love, propose marriage ... then I'm faced with telling them that I don't want them ... that the romance has been a kind of act ... that it doesn't matter what they do, that I don't feel anything for them ... and I have to say it so they like me and feel sorry for me while I am doing it."

As the second month of treatment ended she was involved in two love affairs simultaneously, playing one lover off against the other. She dismissed one of them saying she was more interested in the other and then took him back when he begged that she do so, "I liked the feeling of the power of his wanting me ... his waiting for me, his playing Prince Charming ... his efforts to fight for me with no commitment on my part ... what is becoming of me? ... how can I sleep with [one man] on the weekend and be with [the other] on Monday? ... I wouldn't like my girlfriends to see me like that ... they all think of me as someone to pity ... as needing encouragement ... I wouldn't want them to think of me like this, strong and with no regard for anyone's feelings." Two weeks later she again dismissed one of her lovers, "He was being loving, repentant, sexually wonderful, begging for a chance ... he proposed ... but my thought was 'marry him? Oh no!'" At the same time she found herself increasingly contemptuous of her other lover, "He has dark red oogie nipples and a penis that curves." The other lover at least had a divine physique and was "really hung." "This one is just a sweet little boy ... he just wants to be in love and **GIVE** ... it's like carrying around eggs with a crack in them ... actually they are both honest and reliable and both want to marry me ... neither one of them is good enough for me ... I can't stand it when they hover over me and want to know what I'm thinking ... I'm paying back all the men who snubbed me when I was a skinny teen-ager."

Several days later, she announced, "I had a flash about myself last night ... I said to myself, 'You are pluperfect, you are better than anyone ... you are extremely special, no one has a clue as to how special you are' ... that made me feel good, warm, sunshiny." She then became resentful and suspicious, "I feel that you are my mother's agent ... that you'll punish me for being so cocky ... you won't like me if I'm not modest ... but I'm afraid to be ordinary ... I feel so boring and unimportant that way ... I won't be obvious or

pedestrian ... I won't let you put me in a box like that ... I'm special ... I want to be outrageous and brash ... I resent having to be careful not to hurt other people's feelings ... Mother always said, 'Why can't you be more like a girl?' ... she made me wear little white gloves but I wanted to be raucous, crude, exuberant like a man."

As the third month began, she said, "When I left here, I felt like a superman ... fantastically strong and invincible ... I felt like the cock of the walk ... if anyone had seen me they'd have backed away ... I felt oversized ... it made me feel free and giggly ... I felt if someone came up and asked me what time it was I might just poke them in the nose ... I feel I should be locked up for society's protection ... married and put away in a chintz-covered kitchen ... like a psychotic murderer ... I ought to be stopped ... still, I like the way I feel, I laugh a lot ... I feel very young, carefree ... I never used to have flare-ups of temper, now it happens all the time ... Wow! ... I no longer feel unsure of myself ... You know that Freudian thing about falling in love with your analyst? ... well, I'm afraid you'll fall in love with me ... I've always felt that anyone who knew me well would love me ... and here I have been exposing myself to you ... and I'm scared that you won't be able to help yourself."

She talked of herself as "a special little girl with original ideas who was forced into a conventional mold of what was good ... I was miscast ... a special person trying to be what her conventional mother wanted her to be ... there was no way that special little girl could behave properly ... she was too original, too clever, too enthusiastic ... I used to think 'I don't know where I come from ... I'm so different from my mother and father'." She described her childhood as the family attempt to break a "beautiful wild stallion." She said, "The whole family acts like trying to break me never happened ... mother acts like the most loving mother in the world ... it's like nobody noticed what happened ... now I understand why I feel such repugnance at kissing or embracing my mother ... it's like I barely got away and I may not make it this time ... I remember, at twelve I made a pact with myself, 'It's going to be different, they can't get you any more'." At this time she talked for several sessions about her sense of being different from the other girls her age and of being unaffectionately treated by both her mother and father. She became aware of a constant, sullen anger, "I'm always angry that I am not being treated special enough ... I'd like to stick out my chest and boom out my voice ... and behind that, I'm really haughty and cold ... I really despise everyone ... but I have to hide that." Following this session she dreamt of being a tail gunner in a war plane with her guns blazing. Her only association was to say that she enjoyed the dream because in it she was "as deadly as [she] could be." She remembered that when she came to New York she had been determined to be "the best that ever was." She was convinced that she had the potential to "make all the others look like kids ... in my heart of hearts there isn't anything I don't have this fantasy about ... I don't like anyone ... I feel superior to everyone I know ... I despise them for what I've got that they haven't and I hate them for having anything I want ... I manipulate them ... [one of my friends] said, 'We all admire you so' ... and I thought, 'You dope' ... I hate someone who can see through me and despise someone who can't ... to not be angry would be like giving up .. like accepting what my mother said about me."

We were now beginning the fourth month of treatment and her mood was good, "I feel above it all a lot lately ... I've stopped 'rising to the occasion' ... plying the other person with questions ... setting out to be charming and likeable ... I don't do that anymore ... I feel more self confident ... I don't have to bother ... I want deluxe, super, grade A, nothing but the best, when I want it ... I'm feeling strong ... I **can** do it ... I feel hopeful ... I feel better than all my girl friends ... I'm going to be happier, live a richer life than they will ... I'm more patient with myself ... I'm confident I'll get what I want ... everything should be easy for me ... lights should turn green for me, elevators should come for me ... I'm enraged when that doesn't happen."

She had acquired a new boyfriend. "I only feel free when I am pushing him around, when I'm giving him less and less and driving him into walking away ... if he does that I can play the victim ... when I lay a yell on him it makes me feel so big and like he is such a schnook ... he says I am not reasonable and then I yell at him again and he makes nice ... is he a dodo ... you can slap him and he just smiles at you ... I am so cynical and sarcastic about him inside ... I compliment him because he expects it and he is such a baboon he licks it up with a spoon ... and there I am making an ass out of him and he doesn't even know it ... last night [patient giggles] I made him crawl around on his hands and knees to help me hem up a dress ... I even got him to admit he liked it ... I have utter contempt for him ... it's important for me to get a man to do what I want him to do ... I want to get my way ... when he was on his hands and knees I felt like the Wicked Witch of the West ... narrow-eyed as if I were bending him to my will ... since then I've had no interest in seeing him ... the bank is filled up ... I'm in control ... I'm standing up straight, feeling good, like the boss lady ... I really like that image ... tough ... I'm making decisions ... that's the real me in there ... natural and unfettered ... he's not in my league ... he makes me feel **very** superior ... like I'm the perfect princess and he's the perfect slob ... I felt very kind because I didn't tell him what a slob he was."

As the fourth month of treatment ended she said, "I love the way I feel ... the worst thing is when you don't feel anything ... now I am willing to try things ... I'm not so afraid of making a fool of myself ... my feelings seem stronger somehow ... I'm allowing myself to feel what I feel ... I feel so much stronger ... even when I have a down day ... I'm getting ready to allow myself things that I have been resigned to not having ... to expect a lot from men ... and from myself ... and feeling hateful to people and liking them in a way I didn't before ... really feeling warm ... sometimes I just want to hug people and let them know I like them ... I think I'm fantastic ... I think I'm terrific ... I think I'm wonderful and delightful and I deserve to have a good time ... I think I'm nice ... my feelings have changed ... now, when I cry, it's different ... real wet sobbing ... not the controlled tearing I used to do ... it's like there's a lot of crying down there still to do."

## **6. Projection (Externalization) of the Ego Ideal: Ardent Love and Enthrallment**

Desperate love, enthrallment or *hörigkeit* may be seen as the opposite of the Grandiose Self. In these conditions, the contents of the Ego Ideal are projected out onto the object and re-union with the object is required to re-establish the whole self. Note the evidence for this process in the following clinical vignettes:

I wanted to comb my hair before I came in, maybe I should have. See, I've been trying to decide about whether or not I'm too self-conscious about myself. I suppose I am, but you see, I love someone very much, and now that I do, I want to be perfect for him. When we go someplace I want to, I wish I was the most beautiful person there, even though I know I'm not. But he makes me feel that way sometimes anyway. He's so ... I've never met anyone like him before, and I probably never will again. I don't think anyone could ever compare to him. Anton. (laughs) Anton is his name. I think it's a fantastically glorious name, in itself, maybe because it's his. It's so fitting. Anton, Anton (laughs). I say it constantly, whether or not he's there, I don't care. I've never been so much in love before, never, it's so consuming. I'm an artist, and that's ... I *am* one (laughs). That's funny, hearing me say that, and I always thought that that was the most important thing in my life and yet, I don't even care about it when he's around.

Sperling MB (1988): Phenomenology and origins of desperate love. *Psychoanal Contemp Thought* 11:741-762

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It was a rainy night when Mary and I had a terrible argument. I jumped in my car and started driving. I saw a girl walking in the rain and pulled over. Her name was Paula, she was a prostitute. We went to a hotel that night and she performed oral sex on me. After this, Paula occupied my every thought. Soon my life was in shambles. I lost my job and my family. I even ended up in jail. She was in love with drugs and I was in love with her. I don't know what happened to me during our two year relationship, but nothing else seemed to matter but to please her.

Bruno CA (1992): Pathological Infatuation or the Blue Angel syndrome. *Arch Psychiatr Nurs* 6:203-233

## **7. Jekels and Bergler on Elevation of Self-Esteem through Falling in Love**

We see that the object is being treated in the same way as our own ego, so that when we are in love a considerable amount of narcissistic libido overflows on to the object. It is even obvious, in many forms of love-choice, that the object serves as a substitute for some unattained ego ideal of our own. We love it on account of the perfections which we have striven to reach for our own ego, and which we should now like to procure in this roundabout way as a means of satisfying our narcissism.

-- Freud S (1921): *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, pp. 44-45

Jekels and Bergler insist that the motivation for this state of affairs is criticism from the

conscience which rebukes the individual for failing to live up to the ego ideal. The successful lover projects his ego ideal onto an object who in turn credits him with being all that he wanted to be. The beloved becomes a witness that there is no disparity between the ego and the ego ideal. In this way there is relief from self-criticism and the lover is able to recapture something of the lost narcissism of childhood.

Jekels L, Bergler E (1949): Transference and love. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 18:325-350

## 8. Parkin on Sexual Entrallment

In his paper on *Sexual Entrallment*, Alan Parkin gave a very succinct review of the ideas of both Anna Freud and Annie Reich on this syndrome:

In 1892 Von Krafft-Ebbing described a state in which one person showed an unusual degree of dependence and submission, sometimes carried to the greatest extreme, toward another with whom she is in a sexual relationship. This state, *Hörigkeit*, has been referred to as *sexual thralldom* by Riviere and *sexual bondage* by Strachey, and as *extreme submissiveness* by A. Reich (1) and *emotional surrender* by A. Freud (2). To emphasize the ambivalence which is characteristic of this state, I have preferred the word *entrallment* which embraces the meanings both of being enslaved and of being "spellbound by pleasing qualities" (Oxford English Dictionary). That is, it consists of both fascination for and struggle against the entralling object.

In a series of papers extending over fifteen years, Annie Reich investigated these women and emphasized their extreme submissiveness to and fascination with their sexual partner in their willingness to comply with all his wishes and to sacrifice all their own interest and independence to his. The woman idealizes the man and regards him as an extremely important person and prizes in his physical appearance all those characteristics typical of the overvalued phallus, such as being tall, erect, slender, and sinewy. She seeks an identification with him and finds it most completely in sexual intercourse and orgasm when she experiences a flowing together with him, a *unio mystica*. In achieving this archaic mode of identification with the magnificent body-phallus, the woman recovers her own lost infantile megalomania and restores her own traumatized narcissism by *becoming* the penis. When separated from him, she feels inferior, empty, alone and desolate. Her wish to remain passive, far beyond the realm of sexuality, reveals a wish more primitive than to possess the penis - it is the wish to *be* it. "The man has always to take the first step; she wants only to be his executive organ."

The center of the disturbance in all these patients was considered by Reich to lie in the nature of their ego ideal and in the fluidity of its differentiation from their egos. The ideal is constructed on the image of an omnipotent

mother, and its core shows grossly unsublimated sexual features, representing in succession the mother's breast, the mother's phallus, and finally the paternal phallus. The dissolution of the boundaries between the ego and the ego ideal, which is the basis for the *magic (primary) identification* of the one with the other, results in an exorbitant inflation of self-esteem; its re-establishment leads to the outbreak of narcissistic anxieties. The early narcissistic trauma, occasioned by the inevitable but intolerable loss of the state of omnipotence created by the mother, is overcome by the fantasy of being a physical appendage to her. In the phallic phase, when the concentration of narcissistic cathexis upon the phallus spreads over the whole body, the castration complex regressively revives the early narcissistic identifications and displaces the identification of the whole body from the illusory maternal phallus to the paternal penis.

1. Reich A (1940): A contribution to the psychoanalysis of extreme submissiveness in women. *Psychoanal Quart* 9:470-480
2. Freud A (1952): A connection between states of negativism and of emotional surrender. *Abstr in: IJP* 33:365

Parkin A (1964): On sexual enthrallment. *JAPA* 12:336-356