

THEORY II: BEYOND WISH AND DEFENSE CLASS 5

AGGRESSION: THE IMPULSE TO MASTERY AND THE REACTION OF ANGER

Aim: The purpose of this class is to explore the ego-centered theory of aggression which Freud developed as the complement to (and extension of) his theory of (libidinal) narcissism. At the end of this class the student should be aware of the distinctions between the impulse to mastery, reactive hostility, and sadism, particularly as they relate to ego instincts/egoism, self-esteem maintenance, and narcissistic triumph.

Reading:

This handout

Freud S (1915): *Instincts and Their Vicissitudes* SE 14: 117-140.

The Study of Narcissism as the Study of the *I*

By now, it should be apparent that the study of narcissism is the study of the *I*. Freud, in this period of his development is making active use of the ambiguity inherent in the term *das Ich*, which can mean either the system ego or the psychological self. Freud had apologized to Jung for deferring his study of the ego. Now, having taken it up, he is insisting that there is no ego without egoism, that the structures of the system ego all arise from the history of the love affair with the self, that the ego (in either sense) comes into importance as a libidinal object, and that its structuration is, in large part, a chapter in the history of the individual's libido. This is another example of *anlehnungsfunktion*, the anaclitic mode of libidinizing that which is necessary for survival. The love for the objects is "noisy", it is overt and open to inspection. The love for the self is "silent", it becomes visible only under special considerations and from certain angles. We have seen Freud say, "Certain special difficulties seem to me to lie in the way of a direct study of narcissism ... Just as the transference neuroses have enabled us to trace the libidinal instinctual impulses, so [the narcissistic neuroses] will give us an insight into the psychology of the ego. Once more, in order to arrive at an understanding of what seems so simple in normal phenomena, we shall have to turn to the field of pathology with its distortions and exaggerations". It is only the study of overt (clinical) narcissism which allows us to study egoism/the ego.

Let us summarize the functions we have seen fulfilled by the narcissistic object:

- 1) Defense against sexuality (both heterosexuality and homosexuality)
- 2) Substitution for the lost object and protection against separation anxiety
- 3) Enhancement of self-esteem (protection against depression)
- 4) The capacity for ardent love (through sexualization of externalized self-projections)
- 5) The capacity to love one's children (by aim-inhibition of the mechanism of ardent love) and its relation to the mechanism of idealizing homosexuality
- 6) Introjection of a loving and beloved internal introject
- 7) Introjection of the conscience

- 8) Mastery of trauma
- 9) Reversal of passivity into activity
- 10) The creation of ego goals, and the "cohesiveness" of the ego, the pre-requisites for the use of repression as a defense.

We have been forced to consider the operation of introjection, identification (including magic identification), denial, and idealization. We have had to consider the creation of self- and object representations as being "layered," that is, containing within themselves a history of successive externalizations, identifications with the object, and introjections, so that we can no longer think of objects without considering narcissism as a fundamental aspect of their constitution, just as we cannot think of object relations without regarding them as constituting, in some part, narcissistic group formations. This, in turn, has radically altered the meaning we attach to such terms as "resistance" and "transference."

Having seen that much of what we may have considered "functions of the ego" are, in large part, manifestations of narcissistic mechanisms we are ready to consider what meaning we will give to the concept of "ego instincts." What needs to be examined are two concepts: 1) the impulse to mastery and 2) aggression. It is only when we have some grasp of these terms that we will be ready to turn to libidized aggression (sadism).

1. The Impulse to Mastery

1. The impulse to mastery as an expression of the drives:
 1. The *I* as an organization of interpolated motor sequences

In 1895 Freud attempted to explain his understanding of this component of the *System I*:

Thus judgement is a Ψ -process which is only made possible by the inhibition exercised by the ego and which is brought about by the difference between the wishful cathexis of a memory and a similar perceptual cathexis. It follows from this that when these two cathexes coincide, the fact will be a biological signal for ending the activity of thinking and for initiating discharge. When they do *not* coincide, an impetus is given to the activity of thinking which will be brought to a close when they *do* coincide.

The process can be analyzed further. If neurone *a* is present in both the wishful and the perceptual cathexis but if neurone *c* is perceived instead of neurone *b*, **the efforts of the ego** [N.B. - my emphasis] follow the connections of this neurone *c* and, by means of a flow of quantity ($Q\eta$) along these connections, cause fresh cathexes to emerge until at last the missing neurone *b* is reached. As a rule, what is **interpolated** [N.B. - my emphasis] between neurone *c* and neurone *b* is a **motor image** [N.B. - my emphasis], and, when this image is revived by the actual carrying out of a movement, the perception of neurone *b* is obtained and the desired identity established. Suppose, for instance, that the memory-image wished for is - to take the case of a baby - an image of the mother's breast with a front view of its nipple, but that the baby begins by having a perception which is a *side* view of the same object without the nipple. Now, he has in his memory an experience, made accidentally while he was sucking, of a particular movement of his head which

changed the front view into the side view. Accordingly, the side image which he now sees leads to the head-movement, and an experiment will show him that the reverse of the movement must be performed and the perception of the front view will thus be obtained.

The effort of the *I* is thus to convert, by the activation of interpolated motor images, *any* perceptual presentation into one which will permit a situation of satisfaction (either through 1) perceptual identity or 2) thought identity). The *I* manifests itself in the performance of motor acts which are not, in themselves, drive gratifying but which are subsidiary links in a chain of behavior leading to drive gratification. The image of the object begins as the impetus to behavior (the source from which $Q\dot{\eta}$ flows into the system) but ends as the goal of behavior, that which is created (or revealed) by the action of the interpolated motor sequences. Notice that in the Freud quotation above, “neurone a” is the point at which drive energy invests the perceptual presentation and that the final cathected pathway includes all the interpolated motor images that connect the perceived “neurone c” to the wished-for “neurone b.” This means that the object representation is much more a map than an icon: it specifies a series of actions necessary to arrive at the perceptual hallmarks of the situation of satisfaction. This definition of the object inverts the usual terms of a stimulus-response paradigm. To the extent that the individual is operating under the influence of her own drives, the perceptual presentation is no longer a stimulus to behavior but rather raw material to be acted on until it is converted into a shape suitable for satisfaction. Corollary to this, the psychoanalytical clinical transference must be understood, not as an *image* the patient has of the analyst, but rather as a mode of object relations designed to elicit desired behaviors. If, as Freud insists, the transference is merely the most pernicious of the resistances, we have come to “object relations” as the core of the defenses. Analysis of defense (*i.e.*, of the *I*) is analysis of *behavior* towards the object (which does not become a consummatory object until the behavior is successful in modifying the object as originally perceived). The prudent analyst will not interpret interpolated motor sequences as if they represented consummatory behavior.

2. The impulse to mastery as the control of trauma

The *competence* (or *mastery*) of the *I* in activating adequate interpolated motor sequences (*i.e.*, in creating the wished for object) is centrally important to its ability to control anxiety. Freud defines anxiety as the reaction of the *I* to the situation of danger, *i.e.* to the threat of trauma. Trauma, in turn, is the inability to control overwhelming stimulation. The result of trauma is to render the *I* incompetent - crisis and disorganization are cognate terms. Overwhelming stimulation may come from within or without. All drives carry within them the threat of mounting to traumatic proportions if not gratified and the ability to discover and activate adequate interpolated motor sequences (to convert situations of unsatisfaction into situations of gratification) is crucial in avoiding danger arising from inner stimulation.

3. Epigenetic development of situations of mastery

Danger is epigenetically layered. The prototypical situation of danger changes as the child

matures and develops. It goes through a series of stages: abandonment, loss of love, punishment and, finally, conflict with the *über Ich*. The individual must always scan the perceptual environment (both inner and outer) for hints of these dangers and be prepared to contend with them by means of appropriate interpolated sequences.

4. Crisis and the development of new interpolated sequences

These activities may be broadly categorized as *assimilative* and *accommodative* (Piaget). In assimilation, the perceptual *gestalt* is fitted to a previously known situation and is responded to by the reproduction of past interpolated sequences. This becomes another part of the meaning of the psychoanalytic clinical transference. The patient attempts to assimilate the new experience of the analytic relationship to old relationship forms (leading to a repetition of past behaviors). In accommodation there is acknowledgement of the inability to analogize the current situation to the past. There is a need to develop new ways of relating and coping. Assimilation repeats, accommodations develops. Accommodation always implies, to some degree, a situation of crisis - an inability to respond with a pre-established repertory. The encouragement of accommodation is one of the major goals of psychoanalysis: "Where *It* was there *I* shall develop." This is part of what Freud means when he insists that the drives are profoundly conservative: they tend to activate old patterns of interpolated sequences that have led to satisfaction in the past. It is only when this behavior comes under the influence if the *I*'s impulse to mastery that new behaviors will be developed.

2. The impulse to mastery and the ego ideal

As the relationship with the self emerges from the stage of autoerotism, there arises a second motivation towards the impulse to mastery: maintenance of the self-regard through adequate congruence with the ego ideal. With the formation of the first identifications with the loving parent there arises the capacity to love oneself as one has been loved. Any child who has survived to adulthood has gotten rather more than less of this loving treatment - those who are neglected tend to lapse into "anaclitic depression" (Spitz) and fail to show much in the way of an impulse to mastery. This love for the self manifests itself in part as self-regard, an element of morale. This self-regard is founded on the acquisition of interpolated motor sequences that allow the growth of morale: a feeling of zest and optimism in the performance of one's activities. It is a truism that adequate morale is a precondition of adequate performance. States of demoralization (as in depression) always give rise to anxiety on the grounds that function will prove inadequate.

1. Achieving adequate congruence with the ego ideal

The ongoing effort of the *I* is thus to enhance the self-regard by the activation of interpolated motor images that will increase the congruence of the real self with the ego ideal and thus make the self more lovable to the self. The power of the *I* to do this is manifested in the ability to enhance the self-esteem and lift the morale so that the self becomes an attractive object to the self. Just as the interpolated motor sequences transform the perceptual world in the direction of

perceptual or thought identity with a situation of satisfaction, just so they also transform the self-representation into perceptual or thought identity with the ego ideal. The ego ideal is both original impetus and final goal of mastery behavior in a way analogous to that we have described for the object representation. This means that both the ego ideal and the object representation specify a series of actions necessary to arrive at a situation of adequate congruence. Here again there is an inversion of usual terms of a stimulus-response paradigm. It is not merely that we think well of ourselves if we do well. We need to do well and scan our self-representations for raw materials to be enacted until we are converted into a shape suitable for maintaining and enhancing our self-regard. Corollary to this, the psychoanalytical clinical transference must be understood, not as an *image* the patient has of the analyst, but rather as a mode of object relations designed to make the patient think well of himself. Analysis of defense (*i.e.*, of the *I*) is analysis of *behavior* towards the analyst as a distanced but not separated part of the patient's self who will enhance the patient's self esteem.

2. Maintaining euthymia: the control of depression

The *competence* (or *mastery*) of the *I* in activating adequate interpolated motor sequences is therefore centrally important to its ability to control depression. In analogy to anxiety, depression may be regarded as the reaction of the *I* to the situation of inability to repair loss of congruence with the ego ideal. Any situation which renders the *I* incompetent carries with it the threat of depression as, circularly, depression carries with it the threat of incompetence.

3. Epigenetic development of the ego ideal

The contents of the ego ideal are epigenetically layered. The prototypical ideal situation changes as the child matures and develops. It goes through a series of stages: proof against abandonment, capacity to maintain the state of being loved, safety from punishment by being good, fair and clean and, finally, approval by the *über Ich*. The individual must always scan the self-representation for hints of these traits and be prepared to enact them by means of appropriate interpolated sequences.

4. Developing new means of achieving self regard

These activities may again be broadly categorized as *assimilative* and *accommodative* (Piaget). In assimilation, the (partially) idealized self-representation is a revival of one previously known and is re-enacted by the repetition of past interpolated sequences. As Annie Reich describes it:

... self-evaluation may remain infantile in certain restricted areas. For instance, the high sense of gratification which arose when the child was able to master certain difficulties may persist throughout later life, even though "objectively" such activity no longer represents any particular achievement. Rather minor activities and productions can thus be experienced as extremely important, sometimes, as though a hidden narcissistic fantasy had been realized. The resulting feeling of increased self-esteem, of exaggerated self-assurance, creates an impression of unwarranted conceit, since others cannot share the archaic value judgements which underlie it (A. Reich, 1960).

This becomes another part of the meaning of the psychoanalytic clinical transference. The patient attempts to assimilate the analytic experience by re-enacting old relationship forms that have the function of maintaining self-regard. In accommodation to the analytic situation there is acknowledgement of the inability to analogize it to the past. The relationship with the psychoanalyst prompts a crisis in self-self relations which mandates the need to learn new ways of behaving in order to develop self esteem.

3. Active repetition of passive experience

Trauma destroys the feeling of competence and mastery. It engenders feelings of helplessness, anxiety, and rage. These represent narcissistic injuries and result in a turning away from love objects to an overvaluation of the self.

1. Identification with the aggressor

One response to this narcissistic injury (when it is seen as emanating from a person) is the standard path leading to the formation of a narcissistic object (with the substitution of hate for love). The individual is given up as an object and identified with. This implies a transitional phase of a self-self relationship in which one does to oneself the traumatizing things that the object had done. This may also partake of the mechanism of mastery through active repetition. Now a surrogate is found to represent the passive, suffering, object self who is mistreated as an externalized part of the self.

As Freud wrote in 1920:

If a doctor examines a child's throat or performs a small operation, the alarming experience will quite certainly be made the subject of the next game, but in this the pleasure gain from another source cannot be overlooked. In passing from the passivity of experience to the activity of play the child applies to his playfellow the unpleasant occurrence that befell himself and so avenges himself on the person of this proxy.

Identification with the aggressor may be considered a halfway house or precursor to the *über Ich*. Attacks on the self are not merely warded off, they are internalized. However the internalized aggression does not become self-criticism. Instead, it is dissociated from the self by being turned out onto the world. Warding off the attack on the self is often accomplished by denial of victim status through magical fusion with some grandiose ego ideal. This prepares the way for violent oscillations in self-regard when anything ruptures the denial.

A. Freud (1936) stresses that identification with anticipated aggression is also an intermediate stage in the development of paranoia (this touches on the intimate connections between obsessional self torment, melancholic self reproach and paranoid accusation). She cites the following vignette to show the overlap between the two concepts:

In certain phases of resistance a young patient used bitterly to reproach her analyst with being too secretive. She complained that the analyst was too reserved and she would torment her with questions on personal matters and be miserable when she received no answer. Then the reproaches would cease, only to begin again after a short time, always in the same stereotyped and, as it seemed, automatic fashion. In this case again we can detect two phases in the psychic process. From time to time, because of a certain inhibition which prevented her speaking out, the patient herself consciously suppressed some very private material. She knew that she was thereby breaking the fundamental rule of analysis and she expected the analyst to rebuke her. She introjected the phantasied rebuke and, adopting the active role, applied the accusation to the analyst. Her phases of aggression exactly coincided in time with her phases of secretiveness. She criticized the analyst for the very fault of which she herself was guilty. Her own secretive behavior was perceived as reprehensible conduct on the analyst's part.

This is precisely the mechanism we have seen Freud use in relation to Breuer and Otto in *Irma's Injection* and to Paneth in *Non Vixit*.

2. The compulsion to repeat

As Freud himself pointed out, examples such as this are always muddled by the possibility that they (at least in part) reduce to opportunities to discharge aggressive feelings that would otherwise be dangerous or forbidden. This mixture of mastery and aggression appeared to be present in the spool game that Freud saw his grandson playing:

The child was not at all precocious in his intellectual development. At the age of one and a half he could say only a few comprehensible words; he could also make use of a number of sounds which expressed a meaning intelligible to those around him. He was, however, on good terms with his parents and their one servant-girl, and tributes were paid to his being a "good boy." He did not disturb his parents at night, he conscientiously obeyed orders not to touch certain things or go into certain rooms, and above all he never cried when his mother left him for a few hours. At the same time, he was greatly attached to his mother, who not only fed him herself but had also looked after him without any outside help. This good little boy, however, had an occasional disturbing habit of taking any small objects he could get hold of and throwing them away from him into a corner, under the bed, and so on, so that hunting for his toys and picking them up was often quite a business. As he did this he gave vent to a loud, long-drawn-out "o-o-o-o," accompanied by an expression of interest and satisfaction. His mother and the writer of the present account were agreed in thinking that this was not a mere interjection but represented the German word "*fort*" ["gone"]. I eventually realized that it was a game and that the only use he made of any of his toys was to play "gone" with them. One day I made an observation which confirmed my view. The child had a wooden reel with a piece of string tied round it. It never occurred to him to pull it along the floor behind him, for instance, and play at its being a carriage. What he did was to hold the reel by the string and very skillfully throw it over the edge of his curtained cot, so that it disappeared into it, at the same time uttering his expressive "o-o-o-o." He then pulled the reel out of the cot again by the string and hailed its reappearance with a joyful "*da*" ["there"]. This, then, was the complete game - disappearance and return. As a rule one only witnessed its first act, which was repeated untiringly as a game in itself, though there is no doubt that the greater pleasure was attached to the second act.

Freud notes that "throwing away the object so it was 'gone' might satisfy an impulse of the child's, which was suppressed in his actual life, to revenge himself on his mother for going away

from him." Yet he is left with the feeling that there may be an "impulse to work over in the mind some overpowering experience so as to make oneself master of it," although he finds it difficult to find convincing evidence for that belief. He notes that the whole field of children's play is under the domination of the child's wish to be grown-up and to be able to do what grown-up people do (i.e. to establish the competency of the *I* through congruence with elements of the ego ideal).

Despite this lack of convincing evidence, he was increasingly persuaded that examination of children's play, of post-traumatic dreams, and of repetitions (without pleasure) in the course of analysis all pointed to the idea that the functional integrity of the *I* (the ability to pre-cathect, in a trial-action way, interpolated motor sequences that lead to situations of satisfaction, safety, and self-regard) is so important that any event that disrupts and overwhelms that organization will be worked over again and again until mastery is gained over the traumatic event (i.e., that the experience is rendered assimilable) and that the acquisition of this mastery takes precedence over the experience of pleasure.

4. The impulse to mastery as an independent drive

Parsons based his formulations on his experience in the Early Child Development Project. He concluded that the formulations of 1915 seemed to best fit the child observational material. He stated that aggressive behavior needed to be divided into three areas: 1) Sadism, 2) Reactive rage, and 3) Aggressive impulses to master. With regard to the last of these, he noted the compelling drive-like behavior, the constant, driven motor discharge, continuing to the point of exhaustion, that accompanied the child's attempts at mastery and stated that, "The only instinctual drive manifestations that match it in intensity, constancy, reliability, and drive character are sucking ... and rage upon sufficient frustration." He drew attention to the "inner-drivenness and the constancy of ... the pressure to master the inner-outer environment ... and the attention cathexis commanded by this inner-drivenness," even when "physiological needs are sufficiently ... gratified." He concludes:

"Observational data compels me to propose ... that the aggressive drive has an inherent trend that is non-destructive in character. Rather, it joins that aspect of the libido which serves the ego in its task of adaptation, of self-preservation. Hence the ... self-preservative instincts which Freud placed under Eros in 1920 may well not belong only there; rather, contributions are made to self-preservation from both libido and aggression [NB This is a reiteration of Freud's position in 1915]."

5. Sexualization of dominance, power and control: The case of Jeffrey Dahmer

The following material may be upsetting to the reader. It should not be reacted to as "shock-material" but as an attempt to bring into discussion the extremes to which anger at other human beings can go. Susan Sontag in her book on photographs of war atrocities, has, says her reviewer Charles Simic, "no patience for those who are perennially surprised that depravity exists, who change the subject when confronted with evidence of the cruelties humans inflict upon other

humans. 'No one after a certain age,' [she says], 'has the right to this kind of innocence, of superficiality, to this degree of ignorance, and amnesia. (New York Review of Books, Volume L, Number 7, May 1, 2003)'

When Jeffrey Dahmer was arrested on July 22, 1991 the immediate findings were: the overwhelming stench in his apartment; a severed head in the refrigerator; three more severed heads in the freezer; a stock pot containing decomposed hands and a penis; a fifty-seven gallon barrel holding decomposing body parts in a hydrochloric acid bath; glass jars holding male genitalia preserved in formaldehyde; a file drawer containing three skulls; an additional four skulls in the closet; commercial pictures of nude males and posters of body builders; pornographic male homosexual videotapes; a collection of Polaroid photos showing a head in the sink, a victim cut open from the neck to the groin, a bleached skeleton hanging in the closet (with the flesh on the head, hands, and feet intact), hands and genitals in the stockpot, heads arranged artistically with the victims' hands on one side and their severed genitals on the other, skulls on a plate next to an array of condiments, heads in the freezer, one victim carefully skinned, and pictures of his victims (while still alive) in sexually explicit poses, wearing handcuffs for bondage photos and assuming (in one case) a muscle-man stance.

He eventually confessed to the murder of seventeen men. He would lure them to his apartment on the pretext of paying them money to watch homosexual pornography and pose for him, give them a drink laced with Halcion, and then strangle them when they were unconscious. He would perform oral and anal sex on the corpse, slit the corpse open with his hunting knife, and masturbate into the wound or have sex with the viscera (which was his preference). He always used a condom when having sex with a corpse. He could not get an erection when his partners were awake, only after they were immobilized. All his "fun" began after his victims died. Later, he would masturbate in front of the body parts and skulls. He saved a penis from one victim and painted it flesh-colored so it would look "natural." He would keep the bodies in the bath-tub and shower with them. He would steep the unwanted body parts in hydrochloric acid so they would turn sludgy and could be flushed down the toilet. He boiled the heads in Soilex (a household cleaner) to strip the flesh and then spray-painted the skulls gray.

He emphasized that he killed his victims because he wanted to be with them. He kept the skulls of the good-looking ones because he did not want to lose them. His idea was that if he could drug people they would never leave. He ate the body parts so they would become alive in him. He bought a meat tenderizer to tenderize their hearts and muscle meat before eating them. He ate one set of biceps because they were "big." Eating male flesh gave him a sexual thrill, he got an erection while eating it because now the man was part of him. He felt he could hang on to his victims if he killed them and kept their skulls. Holding their skulls gave him an erection and, sometimes, an orgasm. He would leave the bodies around the house naked so he could have sex with them at will. He felt a combined sense of loss and sexual excitement when he killed them. When he disposed of their bodies he thought their lives were such a waste because they were reduced to a few bags of garbage. He felt remorse after each murder but the feeling did not last. He planned to build a shrine out of their remains, with painted skulls and painted skeletons,

incense burners and mood lights. He felt this would give him power that would help him socially and financially. He purchased a black table to be the base of this shrine and planned to buy a black chair to put in front of it.

He had not really "come out" publicly and had serious problems accepting his homosexuality. He hated anyone who was more "gay" than he. He was attracted by them and then felt terrible about it. He felt they should be punished for it. His victims were all "pretty men," boyish, willowy, effeminate, and "stereotypically gay."

His real desire was to turn people into "zombies" who would have no memory or identity and would always be there for him. To this end he would drill holes in their skulls and inject their brains with muriatic acid, hoping to perform a kind of lobotomy. One of his victims walked around for two days after one of these injections.

He was fascinated with the figure of the evil emperor in *The Return of the Jedi* and purchased yellow-tinted contact lenses to look more like him.

He took body parts to the chocolate factory where he worked. He kept a severed head in his locker there.

At four he had had a double hernia operation with subsequent intense pain in his groin. He asked his grandmother if his genitals had been cut off. As a child (after the age of eight) dead animals fascinated him. He experimented with dipping them in chemicals from his chemistry set in order to preserve them, kept insects in jars with chemicals, retrieved "road kill" and had a collection of animal heads impaled on stakes in his back yard (where he also kept an animal cemetery). He was fascinated by the "insides" of things and would chop fish in pieces to see them. He liked listening to heartbeats and would astonish his friends by pressing his head to their chests to listen. By 14 he was a full-fledged alcoholic who would bring styrofoam cups of Scotch to class. He showed up for the National Honor Society photograph even though he was not a member. His face had to be blacked out before the picture could be printed in the High School Yearbook. In 1978 he committed his first murder. In 1979 he enlisted in the Army and was discharged 2½ years later for chronic alcohol abuse. When he returned home, he would roam the bars, stay until closing time, demand yet more drinks, and get into fights. He was arrested for dropping his pants in public and sent to his grandmother's house where he lived for seven years and killed two people.

In 1985 he hid in a Milwaukee department store all night and stole a male mannequin that he took home and used sexually. He once went to the funeral home where an 18 year-old boy was lying and tried to figure out how to steal the body or rob the grave. He called taxidermists to learn about stuffing and preserving animals so he could preserve humans and keep them with him. In 1986 he was given a prescription for Halcion and began to experiment with drugging people. He could not get an erection if his partner was awake, only if he was unconscious. When they were unconscious, they could not have anal sex with *him*. *He wanted to perform sex on*

them but did not want to cater to any of their desires (N.B., italics mine). In 1987 and 1988 he drugged and assaulted three people while they were unconscious, but did not murder them. In 1988 he moved to his own apartment where he killed fourteen men in three years. He had sex with every man he killed.

Schwartz, AE (1992): *The Man Who Could Not Kill Enough: The Secret Murders of Milwaukee's Jeffrey Dahmer*. "A Birch Lane Press Book."

6. Summary

From a number of different points of view we are led to the notion of an impulse or drive to mastery, one which includes some of the behavior referred to under the rubric of aggression. Though there may be contributions to such behavior arising from the needs for satisfaction, safety and self-esteem and there may be further contributions from the internalization of traumatic interactions with the environment, beyond all these there appears a drive-like pressure to master the inner-outer environment which appears to meet the requirements to be called an ego drive.

2. Anger and Hatred

Edward Bibring has written the classic account of the development of Freud's theory of the drives. It is a highly regarded paper. Stepansky, in his monograph on aggression in Freud's thinking has this to say:

Edward Bibring's 1934 paper on "The Development and Problems of the Theory of the Instincts" remains to this day perhaps the most authoritative account of the various phases of Freud's views upon the instincts. Both Jones and analytic aggression theorists like Heinz Hartmann and Robert Waelder have cited it approvingly. It is consequently to Bibring that we initially turn in assessing the new role of aggression which appears in the metapsychology.

The phrase "in the metapsychology" refers to the *Papers on Metapsychology* including, particularly *Instincts and Their Vicissitudes*. It is not generally appreciated that this phase of Freud's thinking contains a new theory of aggression which Bibring calls "the third theory of instincts."

In the beginning, Freud merely distinguished two groups of drives: the sexual and the self-preservative. This began to change in 1905 when he realized that "sadism" was a "component" drive: it seemed to have a life of its own and to enter into the sexual fantasies and wishes at every stage of development. Sadism was a poorly defined concept that included sexual perversions,

certain aspects of non-perverse sexuality, impulses of cruelty and harshness devoid of manifest eroticism and certain ego instincts.

In 1914 he characterized the ego drives as non-libidinal egoism and in 1915 gave the aggressive trends (“sadism” or “hatred”) an independent status as an intrinsic aspect of the ego drives. He argued that all ego instincts can be divided into impulses to mastery, dominance and self-assertion or else defensive impulses to flee or counterattack. Both of these have distinct aggressive characteristics. Therefore, all ego drives have an aggressive aspect which becomes most prominent when they are exposed to harm.

He further decided that since love and hate were different in their origin and aim, one could not be “converted” into the other. The two trends might be in opposition (conflict) or else fuse with each other. Therefore, the sadism of the sexual drives (to the extent it exists) arises from the aggressiveness (“hatred”) of the ego drives in those cases where “the sexual function is governed by the ego instincts.” Thus, clinical sadism is never purely sexual.

Edward Bibring: The Development and Problems of the Theory of the Instincts

... Freud kept firmly to the idea of the autonomous nature of the ego instincts. This may to a large extent have been because he had classified the instincts in accordance with biological considerations and those considerations were not at first upset by his new discovery of narcissism. The life of the individual seemed to have quite different interests from those concerned with the preservation of the species. Thus it was natural to suppose that different forces were at work. Moreover, the phenomena of sadism in its wider aspects had not as yet been explained. Freud therefore introduced the notion of ego interest in the sense of a non-libidinal egoism; or, to put it more correctly, he asserted that what was known as egoism had two components, a libidinal-narcissistic component and a non-libidinal component. Narcissism, as he wrote (1914), is only “the libidinal complement to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation, a measure of which may be justifiably attributed to every living creature.” Originally these two components were undifferentiated.

Thus Freud still upheld the view that the nature of the ego instincts was originally non-libidinal. And this view was supported in the first instance by considerations of a theoretical and heuristic kind.

Later on, on the strength of empirical observations and theoretical arguments, the non-libidinal portions of the ego instincts were given some additional attributes which tended to confirm their independence of the libido. This constituted the third step in the development of the theory of the instincts, a step which gave the aggressive trends an independent status *vis-à-vis* the libidinal currents and classed them as belonging to the ego instincts.

Let us see what the observations and arguments were which led to this attempt to classify the instincts in this way. The most important reason was that the theory had not, so far, adequately ordered or explained the known facts.

Where the sexual instincts were concerned, it was primarily the position of their sadistic components which still lacked a sound theoretic basis. At first it had seemed as though sadism was

erotogenetically bound. Sadistic impulses were to be found on every level, though in a form which apparently varied with the nature of their source [or] their erotogenic zone. The oral, anal and phallic levels each had their sadistic constituents. As the field of observation widened it seemed more and more probable that sadism was an independent component instinct which permeated every level, was able to ally itself to any other component instinct, had its own vicissitudes and could be regarded, in accordance with the dominant criterion of that time, as linked to the striated muscular system as its "source." Viewed in this way, sadism occupied a more curious position than ever in contrast to the purely libidinal instincts. What was particularly difficult to account for was the contradiction between the *aims* of the two. This contradiction seemed to call for a different genetic history for each. The term "sadism" undoubtedly included all sorts of phenomena, some of them not of an erotic kind, ranging from sexual perversions to impulses of cruelty and harshness which were devoid of any manifest eroticism; and finally it was also employed for certain ego instincts.

As regards the ego instincts, too, various component instincts could be distinguished. In connection with the criterion of source, hunger and thirst seemed to be the appropriate representatives of the ego instincts. But in the course of time they came to lose that position.

Closer inspection of the ego instincts made it possible to introduce a more fundamental classification of them. Impulses to control could be distinguished from defensive impulses; and instincts of power and of self-assertion could be added to them. The impulses to control seemed to be related to the trends of power and neither differed very much from many sadistic manifestations of instinct. The defensive trends, too, which could be subdivided into impulses to flight and to attack (destructive impulses) exhibited an unmistakable streak of aggressiveness. Thus most of these ego trends had to be credited with an aggressive character; it became necessary to suppose that, in addition to sexual sadism, there was a "sadism" of the ego instincts, while they in their turn entered into the service of the libido in the form of instincts of dominance. All this made the situation more than a little complicated. It was precisely this concept of the sadism of the ego instincts that showed clearly what an undue extension the notion of sadism had undergone. The terminology used at that time was the result of the absence of any distinction between the relation on the one hand of sadistic phenomena to libidinal phenomena and on the other hand of aggressive phenomena to sadistic ones.

Since the idea of sadism embraced facts of a disparate kind, the question was, how could the relationship be cleared up between the two sets of instinctual components - between those with aggressive and those with libidinal aims? There is only a limited number of ways in which we can imagine this relationship. Either the libidinal and aggressive instinctual phenomena start from something that is primal and common to both and only become differentiated in the course of development; or they each have a different origin and follow separate though at times intersecting lines of development.

The first of these possible views, namely that they have a common origin, is a monistic one and seeks to regard the libidinal and aggressive phenomena of instinctual life as products of differentiation or modes of the manifestation of one and the same instinct - bipolar phenomena which can replace each other ...

The alternative view of the relations between the two groups of instinctual impulses is a purely dualistic one. It assumes the existence of two qualitatively different instincts and endeavors to subsume all the relevant phenomena under them. While the first view draws its support from the existence of phenomena which contain both sets of trends in an undifferentiated state and is met by the problem of accounting for their emergence in differentiated form, in the second form, it is precisely the undifferentiated phenomena which constitute a stumbling-block and have to be

accounted for with the help of a theory of fusion.

Before committing himself to the dualistic theory, Freud, as has been seen in the passages referred to in his "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes," put forward the possibility of a bipolarity of instinct as its ordering principle. But, after having compared the aims of the two groups of instinctual trends and established their disparate character, and after having discussed the question of the "transformation of love into hatred" and denied the possibility of such a thing, he rejected the idea that there was a genetic relationship between the two sets of phenomena.

Thus aggressiveness (including hatred and sadism) and libido differed in regard to aim and origin. But this still left aggressiveness in an uncertain position in the framework of the instinctual theory. Freud's next attempt to solve this point was to ascribe the characteristics of aggressiveness (or "sadism," to use the then current term for the last time) to the ego instincts and to assume that, side by side with an opposition between the sexual and ego (aggressive) instincts which expresses itself, among other things, in conflict, certain states of fusion between them also occur.

It is important to notice that in this connection Freud did not as yet talk about instincts of aggression as independent entities but only about the aggressive aspect of the ego instincts. This seemed to offer a provisional answer to the question of the relationship between aggressiveness and the ego instincts - namely, whether there are any phenomena of aggression at all outside the field of the ego-preservative functions. (The problem of erotic sadism is not affected by this question.) The question goes back to the empirical fact that aggressiveness appears only or almost only when the life instincts or the ego instincts are exposed to harm ...

This third step, then, furnished provisional solutions to a great many problems. In the first place, sadism was taken out of the category of sexual instincts and put among the ego instincts; and in this way the independent character of the ego instincts was asserted. But this amounted only to a reshuffling of the two big groups of instincts, not to a new classification of them. In the second place, the idea of states of fusion threw a little more light upon the situation. The sadism of the sexual instincts would arise from the aggressiveness of the ego instincts and would emerge "when the sexual function is governed by the ego instincts:" the latter would "impart to the instinctual aim as well the qualities of hate" (the general name for aggressiveness at that time). Freud attempted to trace the evolution of the influence which the ego instincts have over the sexual instincts, starting from the ambivalence of the oral stage and passing through the sadism of the anal stage to the love belonging to the genital stage, at which love and hate come into direct collision for the first time. Conversely, the ego instincts might themselves receive an admixture from the libidinal side, as in narcissism. In the third place, an alteration in the criterion of the classification of the instincts was thus brought about. The notion of instinctual source gave way to that of instinctual aim. The typical example of the ego instincts was no longer hunger but "hatred," *viz.* aggression. As we know, the fact of there being different instinctual aims had already led to the problem of the position of sadism. At the same time the question arose whether along with this change of criterion from source to aim there went an alteration in our concept of instinct. As far as the sexual instincts were concerned, this stronger emphasis upon the instinctual aim had entailed no such alteration. It must be remembered, moreover, that instinctual source still retained its significance as a criterion; and so did the theory of energetic tension with its chemical foundation. Even if no chemical hypothesis could be formulated for the ego instincts, the general concept of instinct which had been gained from the sexual instincts could nevertheless be carried over to them. They, too, could be regarded as demands for work imposed upon the mental apparatus, as tensions which set going certain activities which procured satisfaction by the attainment of their aim - hunger, for instance, and its resultant impulse to control - as stimuli which impinged upon the mental apparatus and produced energy.

Thus this third step in the theory of instinct apparently solved a whole number of problems. It seemed to establish the aggressive ego instincts as independent entities; to render plausible the fact that the aim of "sadism" was not purely sexual, by means of the theory of instinctual admixture; and to order and clarify the various manifestations of libidinal and non-libidinal aggressiveness.

Egoism and Cruelty in the Three Essays

This view of aggression had been developing in Freud's mind since 1905.

Stepansky in discussing the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* notes Freud's search for a nonerogenous inclination toward cruelty apart from the sadism implicit in the anal zone:

To answer this question Freud returned to the child's primordially "egoistic" disposition, which he previously considered in the context of oneiric death wishes directed against siblings in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. The aggressive impulses generated by sibling rivalry were found to be natural correlates of this egoistic status, and could further be translated into actual "death wishes" because such egoism precluded the presence of "adult" restraints to temper the expression of hostility. Freud now applied this same level of analysis to the nonzonal cruelty he postulated as an independent partial impulse:

Cruelty [*Grausamkeit*] in general comes easily to the childish nature, since the obstacle that brings the instinct for mastery [*Bemächtigungstrieb*] to a halt at another's pain - namely a capacity for pity [*Mitleiden*] is developed relatively late.

Aggression, it now appears can be linked ... to a nonsexual "mastery" impulse [*Bemächtigungstrieb*] which describes the immature ego's reflexive attempt to control and structure its environment. Such ego-directed mastery is not in itself explicitly (or definitionally) cruel. The "cruel" child is not one who has a positive interest in destruction, but rather one who does not care at all. His object interest relates only to potential sources of gratification and potential threats ... Thus,

It may be assumed that the impulse of cruelty arises from the instinct for mastery [*die grausame Regung vom Bemächtigungstrieb her stammt*] ...

Rage as Fulfillment of Narcissism

Here are two excerpts, one from Freud and one from Eissler that make this point:

From Civilization and its Discontents

In the blindest fury of destructiveness, we cannot fail to recognize that the satisfaction of the instinct is accompanied by a high degree of narcissistic enjoyment, owing to its presenting the ego with a fulfillment of the latter's old wishes for omnipotence.

Kurt Eissler on Death Drive, Ambivalence, and Narcissism

There probably is no more exquisite exultation than the one that is felt when a harsh and uncompromising hatred is gratified by the total destruction of an execrated enemy. The more terrible and humiliating the destruction, the greater the triumph.

This should be the lesson of history, since morality forbids us to revel consciously in such feelings. It is the message one obtains from a good many inscriptions on the *stelae* of ancient kings. What were the frustrations they had to suffer? Their sexual wishes were abundantly gratified, yet they did not take pride in them. What seems to have gratified them most, to have impressed them as their most significant experience, was the destruction of a mighty rival king - the mightier, the better. If it were simply a matter of gratifying an aggressive, destructive urge, the destruction of any enemy would have been sufficient. But the triumph that is glorified by the inscription is a narcissistic triumph of extraordinary dimensions ... A triumphant experience of hatred [and] narcissism ... that together have been fulfilled can probably not be exceeded in intensity by any other experience. The self at that time experiences a boundless sense of omnipotence...

Injured Narcissism as the Source of Rage

Conversely, in the analysis of every example of rage we must look for evidence of wounded narcissism. Rage is the reaction to severe frustration resulting in unpleasure and what is frustrated is always, primarily, the egoism which is the vehicle of the self-preservative functions:

Two Readings from Heinz Kohut

1. Letter of March 21, 1973

Is there another kind of rage than a narcissistic one, you ask. This is a matter of definition, I think. Intense feelings of anger within the object-instinctual sphere do certainly occur and may arouse intense aggressions in support of one's object-instinctual goals. But in order to qualify as rage, I would think that, even in these cases, there ought to be a large admixture of narcissistic injury, perhaps secondary, in response to one's frustration, impotence, etc.

2. Thoughts on narcissism and narcissistic rage

Human aggression is most dangerous when it is attached to the two great absolutarian psychological constellations: the grandiose self and the archaic omnipotent object. And the most gruesome human destructiveness is encountered, not in the form of wild, regressive, and primitive behavior, but in the form of orderly and organized activities in which the perpetrators' destructiveness is alloyed with absolute conviction about their greatness and with their devotion to archaic omnipotent figures.

Strictly speaking, the term narcissistic rage refers to only one specific band in the wide spectrum of experiences that reaches from such trivial occurrences as a fleeting annoyance when someone fails to reciprocate our greeting or does not respond to our joke to such ominous derangements as the furor of the catatonic and the grudges of the paranoiac. Following Freud's example (Freud, 1921),

however, I shall use the term *a potiori* and refer to all points in the spectrum as narcissistic rage, since with this designation we are referring to the most characteristic or best known of a series of experiences that not only form a continuum, but with all their differences, are essentially related to each other ... It is easily observed that the narcissistically vulnerable individual responds to actual (or anticipated) narcissistic injury either with shamefaced withdrawal (flight) or with narcissistic rage (fight) ...

Narcissistic rage occurs in many forms; they all share, however, a specific psychological flavor which gives them a distinct position within the wide realm of human aggressions. The need for revenge, for righting a wrong, for undoing a hurt by whatever means, and a deeply anchored, unrelenting compulsion in the pursuit of all these aims, which gives no rest to those who have suffered a narcissistic injury - these are the characteristic features of narcissistic rage in all its forms and which set it apart from other kinds of aggression.

The desire to turn a passive experience into an active one (Freud, 1920), the mechanism of identification with the aggressor (A. Freud, 1936), the sadistic tensions retained by those who as children had been treated sadistically by their parents - all these factors help explain the readiness of the shame-prone individual to respond to a potentially shame-provoking situation by the employment of a simple remedy: the active (often anticipatory) inflicting on others of those narcissistic injuries which he is most afraid of suffering himself.

The heightened sadism, the adoption of a policy of preventive attack, the need for revenge, and the desire to turn a passive experience into an active one, do not, however, fully account for some of the most characteristic features of narcissistic rage. In its typical forms there is utter disregard for reasonable limitation and a boundless wish to redress an injury and to obtain revenge. The irrationality of the vengeful attitude becomes even more frightening in view of the fact that - in narcissistic personalities as in the paranoid - the reasoning capacity, while totally under the domination and in the service of the overriding emotion, is often not only intact but even sharpened.

Underlying all these emotional states is the uncompromising insistence on the perfection of the idealized selfobject and on the limitlessness of the power and knowledge of a grandiose self which must remain the equivalent of "purified pleasure" (Freud, 1915). The fanaticism of the need for revenge and the unending compulsion of having to square the account after an offense are therefore not the attributes of an aggressivity that is integrated with the mature purposes of the ego - on the contrary, such bedevilment indicates that the aggression was mobilized in the service of an archaic grandiose self that is deployed within the framework of an archaic perception of reality. The shame-prone individual who is ready to experience setbacks as narcissistic injuries and to respond to them with insatiable rage does not recognize his opponent as a center of independent initiative ... "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?" the grandiose-exhibitionistic self is asking. And when it is told that there is someone fairer, cleverer, or stronger, then, like the evil stepmother in "Snow White," it can never find rest because it can never wipe out the evidence that has contradicted its conviction that it is unique and perfect.

The opponent who is the target of our mature aggressions is experienced as separate from ourselves, whether we attack him because he blocks us in reaching our object-libidinal goals or hate him because he interferes with the fulfillment of our reality-integrated narcissistic wishes. The enemy who calls forth the archaic rage of the narcissistically vulnerable, however, is seen by him not as an autonomous source of impulses, but as a flaw in a narcissistically perceived reality. The enemy is a recalcitrant part of an expanded self over which the narcissistically vulnerable person had expected to exercise full control. The mere fact, in other words, that the other person is independent or different is experienced as offensive by those with intense narcissistic needs.

It has now become clear that narcissistic rage arises when self or object fail to live up to the expectations directed at their function - whether by the child who more or less phase-appropriately insists on the grandiosity and omnipotence of the self and the selfobject or by the narcissistically fixated adult whose archaic narcissistic structures have remained unmodified because they became isolated from the rest of the growing psyche after the phase-appropriate narcissistic demands of childhood had been traumatically frustrated. Or, describing the psychodynamic pattern in different words, we can say: although everybody tends to react to narcissistic injuries with embarrassment and anger, the most intense experiences of shame and the most violent forms of narcissistic rage arise in those individuals for whom a sense of absolute control over an archaic environment is indispensable because the maintenance of self-esteem - and indeed of the self - depends on the unconditional availability of the approving-mirroring selfobject or of the merger-permitting idealized one.

However different their manifestations, all instances of narcissistic rage have certain features in common because they all arise from the matrix of a narcissistic or pre-narcissistic view of the world. The archaic mode of experience explains why those who are in the grip of narcissistic rage show total lack of empathy toward the offender. It explains the unmodifiable wish to blot out the offense that was perpetrated against the grandiose self and the unforgiving fury that arises when the control over the mirroring selfobject is lost or when the omnipotent self-object is unavailable. And the empathic observer will understand the deeper significance of the often seemingly minor irritant that has provoked an attack of narcissistic rage and will not be taken aback by the seemingly disproportionate severity of the reaction.

Gregory Rochlin (1973) on Man's Aggression

... such acts of unrestrained aggression are characteristically self-indulgent and self-aggrandizing, the actors egocentric to a fault - insulting, erratic, and cruel. While such behavior is indeed aggressive, violent towards others, and sometimes abhorrent to the aggressor himself, the crux of it, which has been overlooked, is a narcissism which allows no compromise. The key to the conceptual understanding of such cases lies basically in the process of narcissism. The so-called "defect" in the in the adaptive functions of the ego is the result of massive failure in the task of relinquishing egocentric aims. It is not, as has been long proposed, some supposed weakness or incapacity, inherent in the ego, to control aggression or else some sort of overpowering strength of impulses.

... when narcissism must be served, aggression issues.

... only the lifelong dynamic presence of narcissism can account for the anatomy of aggression in man.

Aggression always issues - although unconsciously we may distort or symbolize the form it takes - as a reaction to threatened or actually damaged narcissism, whether the loss of our self-esteem is provoked by our own hostility, doubts and demands, or by some sense that others doubt, hate or otherwise seem to devalue and abuse us. ... it would seem a matter of common sense that injured self-esteem endlessly creates a menace which finds expression in both social and inner conflicts.