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NARCISSISM IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE EGO*

Through an accurate study of ego disturbances such as depersonalization and estrangement—which are caused by the investment of excessive amounts of object libido at the expense of ego libido, by deficiency of the latter without that of the former—a clear separation of ego libido from object libido is achieved. The actual existence of narcissism is thus verified; it is normally felt in the healthy bodily ego feeling, which is absent or altered in states of estrangement. Libidinal conditions at both the core and the periphery of the ego in various emotional states are discussed from the dynamic, the economic, and the topographic points of view.—E. W.

Although the disturbances which I propose to consider are experienced in a mild transient form even by healthy people from time to time, disturbances which you yourselves have all shared, I fancy that you have not paid them much attention. For they are not striking, and it was only a particular occasion that led me to take that path of inquiry along which I am asking you to accompany me. You will probably feel an inner resistance against this, for we would all rather leave untouched our own undisturbed ego feeling, that precondition of all happiness. Because of this resistance, the observation of the components of the ego has been ignored by those authors who would see in the ego only an abstraction of the distinction be-

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tween subject and object, and also by those who have attributed to the ego a "homogeneous wholeness," so that for them the term "ego" was almost synonymous with the old term—"the soul."

Consequently, psychoanalysis must disown both these conceptions. The structure of the ego, i.e., its division into institutions, the dynamics of these, their relation to the instincts, to the unconscious, even to the body, occupies us all. Here lies the test of Freud's theory of narcissism: Does the libido merely actuate the ego, or does it build it up?

I

One might have expected that, even if the observation of our own mild disturbances did not prompt us to the psychoanalytic investigation of the ego, nevertheless those severe cases of illness, depersonalization and estrangement, which long ago aroused the interest of psychiatrists, would have done so. They have been treated extensively in the writings of Janet and Schilder. These distinguished works, however, were written without any acknowledgment or application of the libido theory. It is only recently that psychoanalysts have attempted to apply this theory in order to explain depersonalization. It is my aim here to test the libido theory on this task, and by this test to demonstrate its correctness anew.

And here I take my stand on Nunberg's work. From his psychoanalytic observations he has conclusively proved that depersonalization and estrangement originate in the loss of an important libido object, in the traumatic effect of the withdrawal of the libido. Nunberg has also drawn attention to the ubiquity of these disturbances in the beginning of neuroses. I myself go still further and believe that all psychoses and neuroses are preceded by a disturbance of the ego in the form of estrangement, but that, for the most part, this has disappeared by the time a neurosis or psychosis has been established, for it has often occurred in early childhood and has been forgotten. Moreover, it is not always recollected during analysis, especially as psychoanalysts so far have not paid it sufficient attention. Thus,

our experience that the initial disturbance of the ego cannot in every case be proved, must not prevent us from assuming its ubiquity. I hope that further inquiry will succeed in demonstrating its occurrence as essential to the libido theory.

Now, since the frequency of its occurrence is unquestioned, I have previously described "estrangement" as the most frequent "transitory narcissistic actual psychosis."¹ I wish to justify this nomenclature. First of all, I will draw your attention to the fact that this nomenclature involves me in a certain opposition to Nunberg's discovery that we are concerned with an injury to the ego through the withdrawal of the object libido from an object, for I have in mind a direct actual disturbance of the narcissistic libido. This divergence brings into relief the most important fact from which my further conclusions proceed: We are not concerned with distinguishing the ego libido from the object libido only theoretically, but with marking off their limits by means of observation.

From our practice and from the literature on the subject, we all know the earnest, and always somewhat uncanny, complaints with which severe cases of depersonalization describe their condition, or rather their changing conditions. The outer world appears substantially unaltered, but yet different: not so spontaneously, so actually, near or far; not clear, warm, friendly, and familiar; not really and truly existing and alive; more as if in a dream and yet different from a dream. At heart the patient feels as if he were dead; and he feels like this because he does not feel. His feeling, wishing, thinking, and memory processes have become different, uncertain, intolerably changed. And yet the patient knows everything correctly, his faculties of perception, of intellect, and of logic have not suffered at all. He knows, too, how his capacity for feeling is diminished. As Schilder, using a term of Husserl, so rightly says: "The evidence" (or "*le sentiment du réel*," as Janet plastically calls it) is lacking. In still more severe cases even the unity of the ego has become doubtful; in its continuity the ego is only perceived, not felt. Time, place, and causality are

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¹"The Most Frequent Narcissistic Psychosis," a paper read before the Hungarian Psychoanalytic Association on Feb. 19, 1927.

recognized and properly applied to finding one's bearings, but they are not possessed spontaneously and self-evidently. It is only in the very worst cases that the core of the ego, which Hermann rightly pointed out is connected with the sense of equilibrium, is lost.

With cases of average severity, there are more of those who complain only of estrangement of the outer world than of those who have also lost the evidence for their affects and the rest of their inner life. Now, applying the libido theory, we should assume that where the self-evident experiencing of the outer world has been lost—object libido is lacking; contrariwise, where the ego feeling and the inner life have been disturbed—narcissistic libido is lacking.²

I have found this assumption to be incorrect. For we learn from our patients that in every case of estrangement, even in those which are supposed to be exclusively external, the ego feeling is disturbed. It is true that the patients themselves do not notice this. Indeed, that portion of the ego feeling is disturbed which I have described in my communication about the variations in ego feeling as bodily ego feeling. This compares with the "body scheme" discovered by Schilder, as "evidential experience" perception. The corporal ego feeling is the evidential sensation of the whole body, not only of its weight (as Schilder and Hartmann found), but also of its size, extension, and sense of fullness. This feeling, always a characteristic one, indeed our most characteristic one, we pay no attention to at all, not even when it is disturbed. However, once one's attention has been drawn to a change in this sensation (e.g., after a state of fatigue), the healthy person no less than the patient is easily in a position to distinguish and pursue its variations. I myself discovered this when, several years ago, I wished to observe how ego cathexes are withdrawn from the body and

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²We are not concerned here with what happened to it in a particular case, whether and whither it was withdrawn, whether it has disappeared or been transformed, any more than we are with the pathological conditions in which the estrangement takes place, that is to say, the previous history of the estranged ego. My inquiry is not concerned with the clinical picture of estrangement, but only with the diagnosis, the phenomenology, and the theory of its dynamics.

mind at the time of falling asleep. Those who have lost the happy capacity for going off to sleep at once like a child, or those who are ready from time to time to deny themselves in this respect, will confirm the fact that the corporal ego feeling is subject in this connection to simple or complex alterations.

With the help of this piece of knowledge let us return to our cases of estrangement of the outer world. We find that with them the bodily ego feeling, this psychical representation of the bodily ego boundary, is always disturbed during the estrangement. It is then no longer coterminous with the correct "body scheme."

Now, diminutions and distortions of the bodily ego feeling often occur, even in a state of complete wakefulness, in people when they are not in a very good mood, although they do not suffer from estrangement and consider themselves perfectly healthy. They are very frequent in so-called neurasthenia. The disturbance vanishes, however, as soon as attention is drawn to the representation of the total configuration of the body, which happens of its own accord when movements are intended or carried out. Then the complete bodily feeling is immediately restored. The whole symptom appears so harmless that it may seem to you not even significant enough for conclusions to be drawn from it. But, in spite of its harmlessness, it is not vague, it is surprisingly precise. If, for example, a neurasthenic's ego feeling ends at his armpits due to fatigue, when he presses his arms to his breast, the latter, quite remarkably appears to him too narrow, although he perceives and knows how broad his thorax is. I have been able to produce in myself a still odder feeling when, through work and lack of sleep, I have felt the bodily ego feeling of my head disturbed. In such a state, when I clasp my skull with my hands, in spite of my perception of the hard bone between the outstretched fingers, I feel as if it was without extension.³

I found that with those suffering from estrangement of the outer world the bodily ego feeling is not only temporarily lacking, limited, or diminished, it is unadjusted by half an

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* Such symptoms are even of practical importance because, being the earliest failure of the ego feeling, they warn one not to go on overtiring oneself.

hour's sleep and it obstinately remains in a state of disturbance. Nor can it be restored solely by drawing attention to it, or by movement, so long as the estrangement lasts. These particulars can be obtained quite exactly from those suffering from estrangement, for introspection is a constant necessity for these patients. This has caused some authors wrongly to explain the estrangement itself by the increased introspection, or, as Hesnard has recently done, by an increase of narcissism. In contradistinction to this, my explanation emphasizes the reduction of narcissistic cathexis.

Hence we have arrived at the firm conviction that the evidence of the bodily ego boundary must be retained in order that the outer world may remain evident. We possess therefore—quite apart from Freud's reality test, through which the outer world is recognized by its independence of the ego by means of search and comparison—a permanent evidential feeling of the outer world which originates in the fact that impressions from the outer world pass a bodily ego boundary charged with a particular quality of sensation and bodily ego feeling. The psychical representation of the bodily ego boundary, the evidential feeling of the same, is sometimes lacking only for parts of it, e.g., for the legs when walking, or for the organs of hearing, sight, or taste. Mild stages which represent simply a deadening of an ego boundary can still be overcome by exertion. This exertion accompanies the reality test so familiar to us, and the evidential feeling is restored simultaneously with it. The normal person with a completely healthy ego, on the contrary, uninterruptedly possesses his full feeling for bodily boundaries which permanently and unobtrusively demarcates the outer world.

From all this we are led to the certain conclusion that the estrangement of the outer world consists in a disturbance of the ego periphery in relation to a feeling cathexis. This must be distinguished from the cathexis of objects. In particular, this peripheral ego feeling is by no means identical with the sense of touch and the other sense functions. Many authors have established in great detail the fact that all these functions have remained intact even in the most severe cases of estrangement.

Nunberg's observations have already shown us that this cathexis of the bodily ego boundaries is libidinal in its nature.

I, too, have definitely been able to ascertain, just as Nunberg stated some time ago without mentioning ego cathexis, the direct connection between the origin and disappearance of the peripheral ego cathexis and actual sexual processes. I will here give some examples from my experience.

For two years I observed and analyzed daily a case of estrangement of the outer world which was temporarily extremely severe. It turned out that my patient always reacted to his sexual claims by losing the corporal ego feeling. In addition, his lasting condition of estrangement had begun after a period of excessive sexual indulgence. (Numbers of such cases, moreover, are to be found in nonpsychoanalytical literature, though the authors do not assign to them the importance that is their due.) This case supplied me with a quite special proof of the derivation from sexuality of the cathexis of bodily ego feeling. This patient recollected the former evidential feeling of the bodily periphery in his bath quite well, but had now entirely lost it. However, during occasional masturbation in the bath, the full bodily ego feeling was restored, only to be succeeded by more intense estrangement as sexual tension was eased.

A convincing proof of another kind was a dream of which I have already given particulars. It is quite peculiar because it ended with a very high degree of temporary estrangement of the bodily ego. The man dreamed very vividly, and in an unusually intense sexual way, that he had coitus outside his bed with a strongly desired sexual object. The whole process was described by the dreamer as the most vivid dream he ever remembered. One may say that all the libido aroused during sleep had become object libido. This use of the libido was retained for a short while in waking, for he awoke from the dream (this gives renewed interest to the problem of awaking from dreams), and then he felt himself aware only of the awakened mental ego feeling, while the bodily ego feeling in the periphery and depths was at first completely lacking. It was an uncanny experience; beside him in the bed lay his body, and he himself felt as though still with the loved sexual object, whose absence he felt with surprise and regret. If we picture to ourselves continuous states of this kind, we get some idea of that degree of estrangement in which all narcissistic cathexis of

the bodily ego is lacking. Similar conditions are reported of narcotized patients. Such stages of estrangement are frequently described in the literature.

I could produce still more examples of how immediately the bodily ego feeling is dependent on the sexual instinct, but the above example is enough to let us draw this conclusion: The evidential feeling is based on the libido directed on to the ego, or better, on the libido employed for ego feeling. The libido only establishes the ego. Here narcissism is not a theoretical conception, but observed as it were in *statu nascendi*. The actuality of narcissism is thereby demonstrated.⁴

With what I have said so far I have justified my description of estrangement as a narcissistic actual psychosis. I have devoted so much space to the actual sexual cause only for the purpose of demonstrating my point, not because I wish to describe it as the only cause of states of estrangement. Estrangement takes place not only on account of actual disturbances in the economy of the actual sexual processes, i.e., on account of exhaustion of the libido reserves; much more frequently the narcissistic cathexis of the bodily ego boundaries disappears from all the complicated psychoneurotic mechanisms by which the libido is repressed or displaced. Especially important, and at the same time empirically demonstrable, is the narcissistic cathexis due to the identification of the ego with the male genital and, likewise, the disturbance of the one by the disturbance of the other, as in pathoneuroses according to Ferenczi's description. Thus the narcissistic cathexis may be interfered with either from the side of the ego or from that of the sources of the libido in the id.

I will repeat what I said before in Budapest, because it has since then been put forward by Reik in Vienna: The first estrangement in childhood is due in most cases to a shock. (The fact that in many people the ego remains permanently weakened, so that afterwards depersonalization processes are prom-

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⁴It is empiricism, not belief in authority or partiality for a theory, which prevents us from following Rank's psychology and throwing the libido theory overboard, or from conceiving of sexuality, as Adler does, as an accessory and a mere field of activity of the whole individual psyche.

inent, does not belong to the question of the nature of depersonalization, but to its etiology and clinical picture.) This connection between shock and depersonalization draws our attention to an essential distinction between the dynamics of anxiety and the dynamics of shock. In anxiety, the bodily ego boundary retains its narcissistic cathexis; moreover, owing to the tense expectation and the libidinal stressing of the ego connected with it, which consciously or unconsciously is threatened with danger, it is probably even more strongly charged with narcissistic cathexis. This narcissistically libidinal cathexis explains in part the existence of anxiety pleasure. However, in shock, the ego loses its narcissistic boundary cathexis. Every shock is accompanied by the feeling of alienation. Into this new context, I shall reintroduce Freud's explanation of the traumatic neurosis.

One should not feel surprised that the outer world is estranged when the ego boundary is deprived of its narcissistic cathexis, which we regularly feel in the shape of healthy bodily ego feeling. The phenomena which correspond to the lack of object libido have indeed long been known to us as indifference and callousness in regard to objects. This impoverishment in the libidinal cathexis of objects and object representations often occurs long before the estrangement. We describe the world, or the person no longer loved, as strange, that is, strange in the sense of being "as indifferent to one as a stranger." But the completely indifferent stranger who is unworthy of any interest or any transference does not seem in the least "estranged." When we speak of the fixation of the whole object libido on one person, of love, we notice that if this suddenly cools, our ego abates its ardor and alters, while the object becomes a matter of indifference to us. But neither of them, the ego nor the object, is estranged in the sense of depersonalization. I think that we are not sufficiently surprised by the fact that in general, as we have repeatedly found, the ego and the world can become changed, indeed completely changed, if sexuality is thwarted or repressed. Before Freud, sexuality scarcely belonged to the mind, only to the body. Before psychoanalysis, we conceived of love only as an experience of the ego, as happy or unhappy. But—as we now know—it is love that first creates the ego and sustains it. The

question that the great and pious poet put to his God, "Was love woven by you in the weft of the world, or was it merely a miscalculation that slipped from you unawares?"⁵ was first answered by psychoanalysis. But as soon as we reflect and consider the marvel of the building up of the ego by the libido, we must admire the greatness of Freud's concept whereby he first inferred the existence of narcissism from a schizophrenic's withdrawal from the world.

II

The psychical representation of the perceptive organs, the bodily ego boundary, is charged with bodily ego feeling from narcissism. We have already heard that this narcissistic covering, and along with it the corporal ego feeling, varies normally and pathologically, according to its strength, extension, and power of resistance.

We will now turn to the phenomena of morbid variations of bodily ego feeling, that is to say, to the pathology of peripheral narcissism. The strength of the cathexis differs with individuals and forms an important component in the temper or mood of a person. When increased to a pathological degree we have the difference between manic and melancholic states. The maniac feels his breast and limbs to be sound and filled out, the melancholiac feels them to be unsound and as if emptied out. States of estrangement are particularly frequent in melancholia.

We will now consider without theoretical preface some examples of the pathological differences in the extension of bodily ego feeling. I found with a hysterical patient that in the periods in which he was free of his symptoms the bodily ego feeling was normal; when his mood got worse, it was reduced especially at those parts of the body where hysterical symptoms showed themselves; but immediately before the appearance of the symptoms, it was intensified.

We find that in other pathological cases, either the bodily

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⁵Mickiewicz, *Forefathers' Eve* (*Dziady*)—classical Polish poem.

ego feeling is withdrawn towards the head (often not extending beyond the forehead or the mouth, or extending only down to the neck or halfway down the breast, etc.) or its general intensity is reduced. In the first instance the parts that have remained in a state of cathexis have, from time to time, an intensified bodily ego feeling. The eyes remain charged with cathexis unless optical impressions are intensively estranged. The mouth zone is still more resistant.

In male psychical impotence the genitals are for the most part without any bodily ego feeling. In cases of fixation where, along with the repression of the genital libido, the entire libidinal personality seems to have remained in the pregenital stage, while the intellect is fully developed, the bodily ego feeling also is ready to regress to a reduced extension. Thus, in the bodily ego feeling we have an ascertainable symptom of ego regression. It is as if the narcissistic cathexis of the bodily ego boundary, i.e., its psychical representation, has continued at an earlier stage or else easily withdraws into it. At our congress in Homburg, Pierce Clark investigated such cases among narcissistic neuroses and psychoses by means of his phantasy method, and he also spoke, though with no special emphasis, of the bodily ego feeling.

As an example I will describe a case with varying bodily ego feeling. The patient was being treated by me for homosexual impotence and depressive inhibition. In those periods when his attitude was actively homosexual, or was heterosexual, he possessed a full bodily ego feeling and adapted well to reality in respect to object libidinal gratification in his professional and social life. In those periods when his attitude was passively homosexual, which corresponded to his puberty period, the bodily ego feeling did not reach beyond the middle of his body; at such times he also felt a resistance against picturing to himself more than the upper part of other people's bodies. Thus the rejection of genital activity went along with a reduction of the narcissistic cathexis. But there were also periods of severe estrangement, and in these the bodily ego feeling invested only the mouth and the pharynx. This limitation, which must correspond to the period of infancy, was accompanied by depression and libidinal indifference. Finally, there were periods

in which the attitude was corresponding to that of the third and fourth year of life, in which he felt his bodily ego as corresponding to this age. Here the libido was directed passively towards the father and actively towards the mother. For these periods one would have to assume not only rejection and repression of mature genital activity, but also the affirmation of genital infantile sexuality. The real outer world was estranged and the mood was excited, almost ecstatic, with anxiety-preparedness. All these particulars came to me as a surprise and were uninfluenced by me.

Another problem is whether there are qualitative differences in the bodily ego feeling and whether these differences are dependent on the quality of the component instincts, whose libido feeds the narcissistic cathexis. You will understand me better if I remind you of Freud's "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis."⁶ Freud tells us of a patient who alleged that he always saw the world as if through a veil. Though the author does not say so, this complaint clearly betrays the state of estrangement. Freud lays stress on the fact that until the treatment this condition used to yield only when the patient had an enema. As we are concerned with an anal character and passively homosexual fixation, this case is analogous to the case mentioned above, in which the patient lost his estrangement only during masturbation in his bath. The difference is that in my case the restoration of the narcissistic cathexis was provoked by genital excitation, and in Freud's case by anal passive excitation.

We can understand that two people are bound to feel and behave differently if their bodily ego feeling comes from such different sources. Nevertheless, I consider it to be still uncertain whether one can assume a different quality in the narcissistic cathexis itself. Even without so bold an assumption, we can explain the distinction in the bodily ego feeling according to its component source in the following way: When we observe in perverts the distribution and extension of the bodily ego feeling, and also its intensity, we find the narcissistic cathexis distributed with unequal strength on the surface of

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⁶Freud, *Collected Papers*, III, 473.

the body, with a preference for the erotogenic zones. With male sadists the specifically erotogenic zones, the mouth with the teeth, the eye, hand, and penis, are not only more strongly sexualized during sexual excitation but have a permanent increase in ego intensity. The masochist, on the other hand, has not incorporated his genital in his corporal ego feeling at all. People who blush have invested their particular exhibitionistic zones, such as face, genitals, buttocks, and, in the case of women, the breasts, with a permanently stronger ego feeling. Thus the influence of the component instincts, which come to the fore in narcissism, is manifest in the distribution of cathexis. This perverse ego feeling also explains—apart from the wishes that are only dormant—how it is that such individuals regularly feel their perversity and are always prepared to be recognized or persecuted as perverse.

It is self-evident, but for the sake of clarity it should once again be expressly stated, that no variation of the sense functions accompanies all these changes; only by some one or other conversion mechanism may physiological functional changes supervene.

III

We will now leave the estrangement of the outer world and turn to the estrangement phenomena of the ego—to real depersonalization. In estrangement of the outer world, we could always establish the narcissistic cathexis, or its lack, through the patient's bodily ego feeling. We lack this index for our inquiry into estrangement of the inner world, and need to develop a working hypothesis.

All feelings of estrangement have something so specific in common that we must assume for all of them one and the same specific cause, whichever psychical function the alienation may attack. Since we have ascertained that in regard to the external perceptions, the cause lies in the loss of a normal narcissistic cathexis, we are bound to assume a loss of narcissistic cathexis in every case where estrangement occurs, thus in the estrangement of feeling, thinking, remembering, wishing, etc.

The evidence of a function is only regularly lost, i.e., estranged, when its narcissistic cathexis is lost. But in order for it to have got lost it must have been present in the normal state. We can only infer, we cannot observe, at least so far, the part played by narcissism in normal functions. By its absence in pathological states we learn where in the normal state an ego boundary with a narcissistic cathexis permanently exists. By this method we are able to find narcissism in the ego structure even within the external ego periphery, that is, the psychical representation of the periphery of perception. To put it briefly: Where estrangement occurs, a narcissistic cathexis exists at that point in the normal ego structure.

We shall hold all the more firmly to this hypothesis in proportion as it is confirmed by existing psychoanalytic conclusions regarding the theory of the ego libido. Where it leads to other conclusions, further inquiry is called for.

We may go still further and say: Where estrangement never occurs, there should not be any question of the participation of narcissism in this function. We can now demonstrate the existence of narcissism, but of narcissism alone, as it were, through a reagent. We must not actually decide from our results that it alone builds up the ego; perhaps where any estrangement is lacking, our attention will be drawn to yet other factors in the ego structure.

I think that our working hypothesis promises us an extensive program of work, which with severe ego disturbances, psychoses, will take us into the depths of the ego structure. Certainly in the case of severe narcissistic ego disturbances, we must be prepared to encounter the great difficulty that severe cases of insanity will not supply us with as clear an account of their estrangement feelings as do the intellectually intact victims of depersonalization whom I have so far examined. A similar difficulty exists with regard to dreams, for self-observation during dreams is difficult and is still more difficult to retain correctly in memory.

At present we will only test by our method, in a quite general way, the estrangement of some psychical functions. We will turn first to the affects. Estrangement seldom extends in the same degree to the whole emotional life. The patient behaves like a

person who possesses feelings and yet he complains of an impoverishment of his feelings. This is a symptom of "pathological" mourning that has not yet been noticed; estrangement of the mourning affect always occurs in this case. Yet, self-reproaches, complaints, and guilt feelings hold entire sway over the patient who, however, often complains even of them that he does not feel them, and who accuses himself of being blunted in feeling. Similarly, in all other cases of estrangement of affects, these feelings of the patient do not seem to him genuine or evident; he feels them to be different, just as he feels his perceptions to be different. But the affects are not in any way unconscious, for the patient observes and laments the affects (e.g., shame, ambition, and love) which he feels not to be genuine.

Thus, we conclude that the ego normally admits the affects with a narcissistically charged boundary, cathexis of which is lacking in the case of the affectively estranged. This conclusion is in complete accord with Freud's theories, both in that the specific quality of every affect is determined by the quality of its dispersal in the psychical, and that they are memories of repeated experiences in the far past. We are not yet able to say whether the estrangement of an affect is due to the fact that, centrifugally, in the process of dispersal, it leaves an ego boundary no longer charged with narcissism, or that the sensation of the affect, centripetally, meets such a boundary. In any case, every feeling that is received by the ego without narcissism is a cold nothing in feeling-experience, no matter how intense it would be in itself if it were to impinge upon the Cs as "part of the ego," i.e., at a narcissistically charged boundary. This conception confirms also the opinions and statements of many non-psychoanalytical authors who speak of "inactivity" feeling in the case of estranged feeling and of "activity" feeling in the case of normal feeling; even the libido theory implies by the word "cathexis" an active reception. "Active reception" sounds like a contradiction in terms; yet it corresponds to the actual process. It will require much individual work to distinguish the particular boundaries for the modes of feeling or to demonstrate the homogeneity of the ego boundary for them. A difficulty in the way of understanding these

conditions lies in the fact that this encounter with the narcissism of the ego is itself homogeneously experienced as feeling-quality together with the feeling, whereas the perceptions, being experiences of a fundamentally different kind, can more easily be separated from it. It resembles the difference between certain goods on which customs duty has to be paid directly and separately, and other goods where the duty disappears in the total price paid for them.

We mentioned before that the affects are subject to estrangement precisely because they are memories of experiences. That is to say, with many cases of estrangement memory participates in the disturbance. The memories enter the Cs rapidly and correctly and they are also clearly differentiated, but yet they enter, if one may so express it, in a remarkably "unegolike" manner. Among psychoanalysts Reich has laid particular stress on the memory feeling. In accordance with what we have been saying we must assume that the memory feeling is lacking when a narcissistic cathexis which is too weak or else non-existent is set up or re-established where the memories enter the Cs. This connects with Ferenczi's remarks on affirmation.

It is remarkable that on its entry into the Cs, what has been truly repressed never, so far as I have observed, possesses the character of estrangement. Here the narcissistic cathexis of the ego boundary is already present. But one must not suppose that an estranged memory is not conscious, that in fact narcissistic cathexis is identical with that mental cathexis which constitutes consciousness. On the contrary, one may here point out the essential distinction between the narcissistic cathexis in question and the object libidinal cathexis that is attached to the remembered representation. In repression, the object libidinal cathexis of the object representation in question was either present in the Ucs and withdrawn from the connecting elements, or else it was withdrawn from the repressed representation itself. The emerging associations restore the object libidinal cathexes. The ego boundary itself may be narcissistically overcharged—in the obsessional neurosis—or else undercharged or uncharged. The memory ego feeling depends only on this narcissistic cathexis or recathexis.

The condition of *déjà-vu*, for which Freud postulated a connection with an unconscious displacement, as far as its economics and contents are concerned, has been rightly attributed to depersonalization by all writers except Freud himself. In this process, which is always felt as a violent disturbance of the self-evident stability of the feeling of one's own existence, an experience, as is well known, is suddenly apprehended as having happened once before; at which point the time feeling is so lost that one does not know whether this "once before" was immediately previously or unimaginable ages ago. With many depersonalization patients, this phenomenon is always recurring and is diagnosed by them as a feeling of estrangement; as these patients are experts in diagnosis, I have no doubt that the *déjà-vu* consists in a very short estrangement. The state of affairs is as follows: quite transitorily a memory in the form of an emerging experience passes the ideational ego feeling boundary, or a perception passes the perceptive ego feeling boundary, in the first place at a moment when the boundary is without narcissistic cathexis, and immediately afterwards when it has again received a narcissistic cathexis. I cannot decide whether in some cases of *déjà-vu* the experience simultaneously passes two ego feeling boundaries of which one is charged with narcissistic cathexis and the other is deprived of it, or whether the same boundary is passed in rapid succession. Thus it resembles the state of diplopia, which can be induced by looking through a prism with one eye or by looking through an amblyoscope (with two indices of refraction). The narcissistically blunted boundary takes away the feeling of the present and the evidential feeling, whereas the narcissistically excited boundary imparts them. Thus the *déjà-vu* appears to be a particularly good illustration of our assumptions. It also confirms the connection with internal shock, for in varying measure this often precedes the *déjà-vu* or appears with it.

We learn from *déjà-vu*, too, that the time feeling may be estranged. Many depersonalized patients complain of this estrangement. Thus, we must assume that there is also an ego feeling boundary with a narcissistic cathexis which is directed against the time perception. This assumption coincides with the libido-theoretical explanations given by Freud in his paper on

the *Wunderblock*,⁷ and by Hollós, of the double course of cathexis that takes place in the Pcs, or else in the Ucs or Cs, according to whether conscious or unconscious time perception is in question. The real orientation in time, the knowledge of the passage of time, as with all other depersonalization phenomena, is unaltered. An exact inquiry into time alienation should give us still more exact knowledge of *déjà-vu* and of the narcissistic cathexis between Pcs and Cs.

IV

Our new discoveries make a problem in psychosis more intelligible. When an idea which otherwise possesses only an intellectual or imaginative force is felt as real in the outer world, we describe it as a hallucination; a complete projection has taken place. This process is explained by assuming that, just as we found that the bodily ego feeling may regress to an earlier condition (smaller size), so even ego boundaries otherwise abandoned may be charged anew with narcissistic cathexis. The voice, which once really was heard through an ego boundary, lost the character of reality when this ego boundary was enlarged or else replaced by one of wider compass. But if the old smaller ego boundary is once again partially charged with narcissistic cathexis, then the voice again acquires the reality feeling. We do, in fact, find psychotic hallucinations that occur simultaneously with ego regressions. But even without regression an ego boundary, e.g., in delirium, may be transiently charged with a fresh cathexis.

I can do no more than mention here that estrangement processes do occur which lead us to infer a narcissistically charged boundary between ego and superego: the conscience can be estranged.

In connection with the ego-superego boundary, reference must be made to the narcissistic psychoses and neuroses, whose dynamics and topography can probably be much more exactly

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⁷Freud, "A Note upon the Mystic Writing Pad," *Intern. J. of Psycho-Analysis*, XXI (1940), 469-474.

investigated by taking into account the ego boundaries revealed by estrangement feelings. States of depersonalization do not constitute a disease entity but vary clinically in form and intensity in almost normal people, in so-called psychasthenia and other actual neuroses, and in the mild and the most severe cases of schizophrenia and manic-depressive psychosis. I believe that the word "narcissistic" will be used less and less as merely a description of a direction of libido, but will be used to denote qualitatively different typical links in the psyche.

Our further task will consist in the more exact investigation of that psychosis which only the most healthy person avoids during sleep, i.e., dreams. At present I must content myself with stating that the "ego in dreams," so far as bodily ego feeling as well as mental ego feeling are concerned, varies with the individual in different dreams, even in the same night, and varies with different people. These variations have to do also with the dynamics of dreams and with the habitual narcissistic cathexis of the sleeper in his waking condition; the laws governing these matters await further research.

Consideration of dreams suggests many as yet unsolved problems in our present theme, but I shall introduce them into the inquiry only insofar as they have some bearing on the last subject with which I propose to deal: the estrangement of the will. Many of these patients complain of the automatism of their actions, as if they were not aware of any volition. They say that they act as if in a dream. In other contexts, depersonalized patients describe the alienated world as dreamlike. In actual dreams, however, there is no estrangement feeling. Even if the reality test is roused and the dreamer recognizes a process to be altogether surprising and contradictory to his usual experience, e.g., that his dead father is alive, he still submits to it against his better knowledge. Thus, all dream pictures are perceived with a narcissistically charged ideational feeling boundary, if we may in general assume for the dream ego the same ego structure as we do for the waking state. These are questions which have been answered by Freud's theory of dreams, but which ought to be confirmed by fresh observations.

With most dreams, as with estrangement, bodily ego feeling is either lacking or much reduced and time feeling is usually

lacking; in ordinary dreams volition, especially, is lacking—apart from a scanty residue that seldom appears.⁸ Freud has referred to this in his *Traumdeutung*. Janet too, calls *aboulia* the first common element of dreams and estrangement. The estranged patient notices this peculiar kind of *aboulia*, which is not a real one. The dreamer experiences it naively, without noticing it, and without comparing it with volition in the waking state.

It does not contradict our explanation of estrangement that, in dreams, the corporal ego feeling is so often lacking without estrangement being felt by the dreamer. The dreamer is not faced with an outer world; however insofar as he dreams, he is awake and receives the emerging representations with a narcissistically charged boundary which precisely determines the relative evidence of the dream-images. We are bound to assume that it is not the perceptive boundary with which he receives the images. We do not know whether the feeling that one is dreaming, which so often occurs, corresponds to the awakening of this boundary and to a feeling of estrangement. Nor do I yet know whether the bodily ego feeling appears in such dreams. We psychoanalysts are accustomed to recognize small indications in the manifest dream as representing important processes paralyzed by sleep. Now we find one such indication in a dream when an action of the will has occurred without the dreamer being aware of the will. Instead of his volition, the dreamer has a quite momentary accentuation of the bodily ego boundary, i.e., of a part of the bodily ego feelings which has hitherto been lacking. In a dream in which there is no memory of any bodily ego feeling at all, the arm is felt when it carries something. This bestowal of narcissistic cathexis is what corresponds in the dream to an act of will. Similarly, in the case of an estranged person who succeeds in feeling the voluntariness of his action, the bod-

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⁸ Even in such typical dreams, for example, as one in which the dreamer wants to catch a train, we seem to have to do with, not an exceptional awakening of the will, but only with will-memories. Even these will-impulses run off uncontrolled in the dream. Somnambulists' dreams need to be more particularly investigated. In any case, the above remarks do not relate to such abnormal dreams nor to the rare dreams in which volition is experienced.

ily ego feeling for the parts concerned is likewise re-established.

Thus we see that for an act of will, as for attention, the narcissistic bodily ego boundary cathexis, apart from the libidinal object cathexis, is necessary. But neither the object libidinal cathexis alone, nor it and the narcissistic bodily ego cathexis together, suffice for the act of will; indeed these are present even in dreams and yet no volition appears. Nor are they—as we have already learned—specific for volition. We find object libidinal cathexis in every wish, as well as in passive predilection; narcissistic bodily ego feeling cathexis belongs to the normal complete ego, even when the will is not felt.

It is self-evident that in the experiencing of the will, the mental representation of muscle action supervenes. But there is also volition with deferred innervation. For volition to take place, a particular process is essential which is invariably absent in dreams and is disturbed in those more severe states of ego disorder which exceed mere estrangement in the volition and increase into the “dreamlike” character of the action. Freud has revealed this process in his theory of consciousness in the *Traumdeutung*. We may describe it as a regulation of the dispersal of quantities of object libido.

Let us consider in what the real dream quality in dreams consists: usually, the images pass by the sleeper who is not in a position to retain or call back a dream image, as he can in waking. In dreams, the ego is at the mercy of the dream elements which have emerged from the Ucs; there is no “backwards,” no tarrying, in dreams. Thus, this act of tarrying, which is common to thought and will, belongs to a part of the psyche that is paralyzed in dreams. As this latter does not pertain to the already familiar narcissistic cathexis, the retention of the object libido in the waking state must proceed from another source of power. As volition belongs unquestionably to the ego, this force proceeds from the non-libidinal part of the ego, from that instinct which Freud has called the death instinct. (Not only because it ultimately leads to death, but also because, as the instinct of attack and defense, it would in the first place like to kill.) Thus, by a process of elimination we have arrived at the point where we can recognize the will as a non-libidinal part of the ego. As

psychoanalysis has occupied itself chiefly with the unconscious and the libido, the investigation of the will has so far played only a small part in it.

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Now that we have found confirmation even for the bisection into love and death instincts, we will point out, in a brief retrospect, what seems to be the nature of the advance we have made in this inquiry. We have found those ego disturbances through which the psyche is rendered unable to withstand the traumatic or otherwise injurious effect of the demands on the libido. They are: the shock experience and the withdrawal of the narcissistic ego boundary cathexis. We have thus given a quite specific metapsychological content to Janet's "*fonction du sentiment du réel*" as well as to Minkowski's "*notion de perte de contact vital avec la réalité.*" By observing the actual psychosis which appears in the guise of estrangement, we have demonstrated anew the function of the libido in building up the ego. Our observations seem, too, to open a new path for investigating the ego structure.