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Freud's Teaching on Shame

In order to discuss Freud's teaching on shame we must first distinguish it from anxiety and guilt, since both of these have important places in his system, and since the three words are commonly used as synonyms. Freud holds that guilt is a species of anxiety and shame is a result of anxiety — hence anxiety will be considered first, then guilt, and finally shame. We shall conclude with a few reflections on some aspects of his teaching.

ANXIETY

Anxiety appears as a constant theme in Freud's writings, being mentioned even in his nineteenth-century works as the most distinctive mark of one of the two main types of neurosis. But it is only in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (completed in 1925 and published in 1926)¹ that he attained his definitive position, which he restated without modifying in Lecture XXXII of the *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1933).² Relevant material is also to be found in Anna Freud's *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*.³

The Nature of Anxiety

Freud conceives of anxiety as an affect or affective condition, and this he describes as "a combination of certain feelings in the pleasure-unpleasure series with the corresponding innervations of discharge and a perception of them."⁴ In *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*

1. In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, translated under the general Editorship of James Strachey, with the collaboration of Anna Freud and the assistance of Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson; 24 vols.; London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1954-66; vol. 20, pp.77-177 [1926], especially pp.132-56, 160-68. *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* will be cited as *ISA*. . . . Most of the citations from Freud are from the *Standard Edition*, hereafter referred to as *SE*. Numbers before a colon (e.g. *SE* 20:77-177) refer to the volume number of this edition. Dates of original publication of Freud's works are given in brackets.

2. *SE* 22: 1-182 [1933]), esp. pp.81-94. This work will be cited as *NIL*. . . . At the beginning of Lecture XXXII he speaks of "a great deal of new information" about anxiety. This information is new, however, not with reference to *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (where it was first presented); the reference is rather to *A General Introduction to Psycho-Analysis*, a collection of public lectures delivered in 1915-17 — of which *New Introductory Lectures* was, in his mind, merely a continuation.

3. Trans. C. Baines (New York: International Universities Press, 1946), esp. pp.58-67. This work will be cited as *EMD*.

4. *NIL*, *SE* 22: 81. — "Innervations of discharge" or "efferent innervations" are medical terms referring to nerve impulses which run outwards from the brain or a nerve center (as opposed to afferent innervations, which run inwards.)

he speaks of anxiety as a painful affect which seeks relief through physical discharge, most notably through increased activity of the respiratory organs and of the heart — together with a perception of these acts of discharge.¹ It arises in the first place from a painful situation which one is powerless to escape, and thereafter from the mere threat of such a situation.²

A painful situation is one in which we experience intense excitation or pain, and are unable to relieve it by discharge.³ The magnitude of the excitation, if great enough, makes the painful situation traumatic.⁴ The prototypical traumatic situation is birth, where one experiences shock and pain without being able to do anything about it.⁵

Thereafter the mere threat of a traumatic situation is sufficient to provoke the same affect. This sort of threat is what we call danger. When this danger-situation or expectation of trauma occurs, the "state of increased sensory attention and motor tension" which Freud terms "anxiety-preparedness" can produce one of two results. Either the imagined re-experiencing of the traumatic situation serves merely as a *signal*, alerting the subject to the danger so that he can meet the situation by defense or by flight; or the reaction continues to the point where the subject is paralyzed, unable to adapt.⁶

Every stage of development has its own particular danger, its peculiar conditions for anxiety. The danger of mental helplessness corresponds to the stage of the early immaturity of the ego; the danger of loss of object or of love to the dependence of the early years of childhood; the danger of castration to the phallic stage; and finally, fear of the superego to the period of latency.⁷ Ideally the old conditions for anxiety should disappear as development proceeds, but this happens only to a very incomplete degree. Many people do not outgrow antiquated conditions for anxiety.

The reasons for this are complex. In examining them we are led to consider the various types of anxiety; and here we encounter

1. *ISA*, *SE* 20: 132-33.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 134. — It is interesting to note that Aquinas would probably recognize two passions here, distinguished by the presence or absence (but anticipated future presence) of pain in the face of which one is helpless. The first would be sadness, the second fear. So long as Freud is speaking about later occurrences — those which proceed from the *threat* of helplessness in the face of pain — his "anxiety" would seem to be synonymous with the *timor* of St. Thomas.

3. *NIL*, *SE* 22: 93; *ISA*, *SE* 20: 137, 166-67.

4. *Ibid.*; *ISA*, *SE* 20: 166.

5. *NIL*, *SE* 22: 81, 87; *ISA*, *SE* 20: 166. — "Pain" is the translation of the German *unlust*, antonym of *lust*, pleasure. *Unlust* is also sometimes translated as "un-pleasure."

6. *NIL*, *SE* 22: 82; see also *ISA*, *SE* 20: 162, 165.

7. *NIL*, *SE* 22: 88. Cf. *ISA*, *SE* 20: 142.

difficulties. Freud gives several classifications of the types of anxiety, and it is not easy to see how these divisions are related to one another.

Types of Anxiety

In *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926) Freud proposes a distinction between realistic and neurotic anxiety:

Anxiety [*Angst*] has an unmistakable relation to *expectation*: it is anxiety *about* something. It has a quality of *indefiniteness and lack of object*. In precise speech we use the word "fear" [*Furcht*] rather than "anxiety" [*Angst*] if it has found an object. . . . Real danger is a danger that is known, and realistic anxiety is anxiety about a known danger of this sort. Neurotic anxiety is anxiety about an unknown danger. Neurotic danger is thus a danger that has still to be discovered. Analysis has shown that it is an instinctual danger.¹

This text is not as lucid as we might wish. If the affect has a known object, are we to call it realistic anxiety? Or should we rather term it fear, and distinguish it from anxiety? I have chosen to regard the words "fear" and "anxiety" as synonymous, and to name the affect realistic or neurotic according to whether its object is real and known, or instinctual and unknown. Admittedly this is not completely clear in the text just cited, but I think it the most reasonable interpretation.²

A person can be subject to both realistic and neurotic anxiety simultaneously. In such a case the danger is known and real, but the anxiety it inspires seems excessive. The surplus of anxiety betrays a

1. *ISA*, SE 20: 164-65. Author's italics.

2. This reading of the text is supported by a note of the editor:

"It has not been possible in translation to render the German *Angst* invariably by "anxiety." In this volume, and throughout the *Standard Edition*, the word has sometimes been translated by "fear" or by phrases including the word "afraid," where English usage required it and confusion seemed unlikely. Some remarks on this will be found in the Introduction in Volume I." (*Ibid.*, p.165 n.)

Volume I refers us to Volume III, where we find:

Editor's Note: The term *Angst* and its English translation.

"Though [Freud] stresses the anticipatory element and absence of an object in *Angst*, the distinctions he draws are not entirely convincing, and his actual usage is far from invariably obeying them. And this is scarcely surprising, since *Angst* as a word in common use in ordinary German speech and by no means exclusively a technical psychiatric term. It may on occasion be translated by any one of half a dozen similarly common English words — "fear," "fright," "alarm" and so on — and it is therefore quite impractical to fix on some single English term as its sole translation. . . .

"The English translator is thus driven to compromise: he must use "anxiety" in technical or semi-technical connections, and must elsewhere choose whatever everyday English word seems most appropriate. Incidentally, the solution adopted in many of the earlier Freud translations of rendering *Angst* by "morbid anxiety" seems especially ill-judged. One of the main theoretical problems discussed by Freud is precisely whether, and if so why, *Angst* is sometimes pathological and sometimes normal (see, for instance, Addendum B to *ISA*, SE 20: 164 ff.). (*SE* 3: 116.)"

neurotic element; analysis shows that to the known real danger an unknown instinctual one is attached.¹

The distinction between the two types, however, is not perfectly sharp. Insofar as the instinctual demand which occasions anxiety is something real, neurotic anxiety can be said to have a realistic basis. Indeed, demands of instinct often seem dangerous only because they might bring on a real, external danger. On the other hand, no real danger is significant for the ego until it has become internalized — that is, related to some previously experienced situation of helplessness. Hence:

In relation to the traumatic situation, in which the subject is helpless, external and internal dangers, real dangers and instinctual demands converge. Whether the ego is suffering from a pain which will not stop or experiencing an accumulation of instinctual need which cannot obtain satisfaction, the economic situation is the same, and the motor helplessness of the ego finds expression in psychical helplessness.²

We conclude that realistic anxiety can be distinguished from neurotic because its object is real and known to the subject — but also that this distinction is not perfectly clear-cut. The causes of the two types overlap, and the resulting state of anxiety seems to be the same in both cases. Can we be sure that the two really are distinct? Is every anxiety arising from the demands of instinct to be characterized as neurotic?

* * *

In the *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1933) Freud begins his consideration of anxiety with the same distinction between realistic anxiety (called "objective anxiety" in some translations) and neurotic anxiety, "of which the former was a reaction, which seemed intelligible to us, to a danger — that is, to an expected injury from outside — while the latter was completely enigmatic, and appeared to be pointless."³ But clinical experience reveals that neurotic anxiety is caused by undischarged excitation. Libidinal energy is aroused but not satisfied; this blocking-up of libido is followed by the appearance of anxiety.⁴ In the case of neurotic anxiety a person fears his own libido. "The difference between this situation and that of realistic anxiety lies in two points: that the danger is an internal instead of an external one and that it is not consciously recognized."⁵

1. *ISA*, SE 20: 165-66.

2. *Ibid.*, pp.167-67.

3. *NIL*, SE 22: 81-82.

4. *Ibid.*, p.82.

5. *Ibid.*, p.84.

(6)

On the next page, however, a third type makes its appearance. After stating that anxiety, as an affective condition, has its seat in the ego (rather than in the superego or in the id), he maintains that

the three main species of anxiety, realistic, neurotic and moral, can be . . . easily connected with the ego's three dependent relations — to the external world, to the id and to the superego.¹

Since anxiety is itself a painful state we attempt to avoid it, and in cases of neurosis this is done by repressing the dangerous instinct and forming substitutive neurotic symptoms. The ego uses these mechanisms to prevent the return of anxiety.²

In neurotic anxiety, the instinct appears dangerous not by reason of itself, but because some external danger seems to be attached to it. In an Œdipal situation, for example, a boy

felt anxiety in the face of a demand by his libido — in this instance, anxiety at being in love with his mother; so the case was in fact one of neurotic anxiety. But this being in love only appeared to him as an internal danger. . . because it conjured up an external situation of danger.”³

Realistic anxiety is therefore the basis for neurotic anxiety. But again we must ask: Is all fear of instinct neurotic? How is “moral” or superego anxiety related to the other types? Can moral anxiety ever be neurotic?

* * *

Anna Freud's book, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (1946), is concerned with the various means used by the ego to ward off the onslaughts of instinct. Anxiety serves as the signal of a danger-situation which in the cases she deals with is a danger in some way attached to instinctual drives. The instincts may appear dangerous and provoke anxiety for three reasons:

a) *Superego anxiety* in the neuroses of adults. In this case the ego does not itself regard the impulses it is resisting as dangerous; it is the superego which disapproves. Gratification of the impulse will stir up trouble between the ego and the superego. “Hence the ego of the adult neurotic fears the instincts because it fears the superego. Its defence is motivated by superego anxiety.”⁴

(b) *Objective anxiety* in infantile neurosis. The infantile ego, like that of the adult, is not itself hostile to instinct. But parents or others in authority have threatened punishment if the instincts are allowed free expression; again a force outside the ego intervenes.

1. *Ibid.*, p.85.

2. *Ibid.*, pp.83-84, 86.

3. *Ibid.*, p.86.

4. *EMD*, pp.58-59.

Castration-anxiety produces in young children the same result as that produced in adult neurotics by anxiety of conscience; the infantile *ego* fears the instincts because it fears the outside world. Its defense against them is motivated by . . . objective anxiety, . . . which causes the infantile ego to develop the same phobias, obsessive neuroses, hysterical symptoms and neurotic traits as occur in adults in consequence of their superego anxiety . . . Whether it be dread to the superego or dread of the outside world, it is the anxiety which sets the defensive process going.¹

(c) *Instinctual anxiety* (dread of the strength of the instincts). The ego arises from the id, and can be overthrown — can lapse back into id — if libidinal impulses become too strong. Hence the ego has what might be called an innate hostility to instinct, which is

lost sight of in the much more tumultuous warfare waged within its domain by the superego and the outside world against the impulses of the id. But, if the ego feels itself abandoned by these higher powers, or if the demands of the instinctual impulses become excessive, its mute hostility to instinct is intensified to the point of anxiety.²

Freud himself hints at this "libidinal danger" which is "in the nature of an overthrow or of extinction;"³ it is not exactly the same as any of the types of anxiety mentioned in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* or in the *New Introductory Lectures*. Another analyst describes it as "the danger that the ego's whole organization may be destroyed or submerged."⁴

It must be kept in mind that Anna Freud intends here to describe types of *neurotic* anxiety, anxieties that give rise to neurosis.⁵ Thus her "objective" anxiety, a fear of instinct which occasions the infantile neuroses, is not to be identified with the realistic anxiety delineated in the two works of Freud examined above — that is, the anxiety the object of which is a known, real, external danger.

Each of the three types she mentions is an unconscious dread of instinct, but each has a different reason for fearing it. How are these three kinds of anxiety to be aligned with the types previously described? And for the third time we are led to ask whether all anxiety about instinct is to be classed as neurotic.

* * *

1. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

3. *The Ego and the Id* (SE 19: 1-67 [1923]), SE 19: 57; cited by A. Freud, *loc. ult. cit.*

4. R. WALDER, "Das Prinzip der mehrfachen Funktion," *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, Bd. XVI (1930), S. 287ff; cited by A. Freud, *loc. ult. cit.*

5. The effect of the anxiety experienced by the ego because of the strength of the instincts is the same as that produced by the superego anxiety or the objective anxiety which so far we have been studying. Defense-mechanisms are brought into operation against the instincts, with all the familiar results in the formation of neuroses and neurotic characteristics. (A. FREUD, *EMD*, p.64.)"

As previously stated, the three varieties of anxiety mentioned by Anna Freud are clearly instances of neurotic rather than realistic anxiety, because in each case it is an *internal, unknown danger* — the pressure of libidinal urges seeking expression — which provokes the anxiety. But she is unclear as to whether these anxieties must necessarily produce a neurotic condition. Furthermore, superego anxiety is for her a type of neurotic anxiety, whereas Freud himself distinguishes between moral (i.e., superego) and neurotic anxiety.¹

The question might be put this way: Is it ever healthy and normal to fear instinct? Freud's answer to this depends upon his doctrine of the changing conditions for anxiety, changes which accompany the development of the personality.² He holds that as the ego becomes more firmly established, more clearly differentiated from the *id*, danger-situations corresponding to earlier, weaker stages of the ego's development should vanish, should cease to pose a threat. This however actually happens only to a very limited degree: "Many people are unable to surmount the fear of loss of love; they never become sufficiently independent of other people's love and in this respect *carry on their behavior as infants*."³ Here is the clue to the problem's solution. "... The people we describe as neurotics remain infantile in their attitude to danger and have not surmounted *obsolete determinants of anxiety*."⁴ Again: "A great many people remain infantile in their behavior in regard to danger and *do not overcome determinants of anxiety which have grown out of date*.... It is precisely such people whom we call neurotics."⁵

From this it follows that it is *not* neurotic to fear instinctual drives which actually *are* a present danger at a given stage of development. Freud holds explicitly that "fear of the superego should normally never cease, since, in the form of moral anxiety, it is indispensable in social relations. . . ."⁶ This anxiety is to be considered neurotic only when it is "unduly strong."⁷

We may then conclude that not all fear of instinct is neurotic, but only that which is provoked by a danger from instinct which the ego should have become strong enough to resist with ease. Why is it that some egos fail to mature properly, and thus become prone to neurosis? Freud offers some tentative explanations, but admits that psychoanalysis has not yet been able to provide a definitive answer to this question.⁸

* * *

1. *NIL*, SE 22: 85.

2. *Ibid.*, p.88; *ISA*, SE 20: 142.

3. *NIL*, SE 22: 88. Italics added.

4. *Ibid.* Italics added.

5. *ISA*, SE 20: 148. Italics added.

6. *NIL*, SE 22: 88.

7. *ISA*, SE 20: 148.

8. See *ibid.*, pp.153-56.

Three distinctive traits of neurotic anxiety have been mentioned: it is infantile, its object is unknown, and this unknown object is actually an internal one — an instinctual drive. Let us now attempt to see how these characteristics are related.

The object of neurotic anxiety (danger from instinct) is unknown because of repression. In order to get rid of the anxiety the ego calls to its aid the defense-mechanism of repression, which pushes the knowledge of the danger out of consciousness. But this means that at one time the danger was known; it had to be known in order to stir up anxiety in the first place. For someone with a properly developed ego the normal reaction to danger from instinct would have been to overcome it by suppression or sublimation, or to gratify the instinct and prepare to face the consequences. But the neurotic represses his awareness of the danger without ever coming to terms with it. Hence the apparent aimlessness of neurotic anxiety.

What Freud means to say, it seems, is that a known instinctual danger should be easy to deal with, at least when the real source of the danger lies elsewhere (in the superego or in the outside world.) Those who cannot handle this sort of danger, who seek escape in repression, are neurotic.¹

In other words, the danger is unknown because the person is anxious about something that should no longer be a danger for him, because instead of handling the danger easily he seeks refuge in the defense-mechanism of repression. The immaturity of his ego is the cause of neurotic anxiety; the repression of its object is its effect.

* * *

Before closing this section it is important to note that the expression "objective anxiety" may have two meanings. In some translations it is used to signify realistic anxiety, the sort that has a known, real object.² But Anna Freud uses it to designate a species of neurotic anxiety, namely the fear of instinct because of some external danger attached to it.³ Furthermore we see that moral or superego anxiety can be either realistic or neurotic: it is neurotic whenever it is "unduly strong"⁴ (whatever that might mean.)

1. Psychotherapy is beneficial when it enables the ego to come to terms with the threats of the superego and of reality on a conscious basis, to see that these threats had perhaps been exaggerated, and to deal with them by learning to tolerate increasing amounts of pain without resort to unhealthy, distorting defensive measures. But when analysis removes defenses which the ego has erected because of fear of the strength of the id, the analyst is weakening the ego in its "most deadly struggle . . . to prevent itself from being submerged by the id," and is actually assisting the progress of the pathological condition. (A. FREUD, *EMD*, pp.68-70.)

2. *ISA*, SE 20: 165; *NIL*, SE 22: 81-82, 84.

3. *EMD*, p.61.

4. *ISA*, SE 20: 148.

* * *

To summarize this discussion of the types of anxiety, we may say that anxiety is neurotic only when it is an *infantile reaction to danger from instinct* — whatever the reason might be for the instinct appearing to be dangerous. And neurotic anxiety always involves an *internal conflict*, because it is actually a fear of instinct. But not every fear of instinct is neurotic, as we have just seen at some length. Any fear based on a mature, realistic estimation of danger — no matter what its source — is normal and natural; in other words, it is realistic anxiety or what is commonly known as fear.

Reactions to Anxiety : The Mechanisms of Defense

How is the danger met? What possibilities are available to the ego once anxiety has signalled a danger-situation? The ego has several mechanisms of defense which it can use to avoid the danger (and the anxiety caused by the danger.) In *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*, Anna Freud deals with these mechanisms, summarizing her father's findings and further developing this area of psychoanalytic theory with the aid of her own clinical experience. On pages 46 and 47 of this work she lists the mechanisms of defense mentioned by Freud in various places.

In the case of repression, the most important of the defense-mechanisms, the ego reacts violently to the danger which (for one reason or another) is thought to be attached to the gratification of instinct. Its reaction takes the form of driving the impulse back into the shadow-world whence it came and, as it were, nailing down the lid. At the same time it acts upon the affective conditions which are the results in the ego of the instinct's action, changing them frequently into their opposites. Thus, for example, a boy's Œdipal aggressiveness towards his father, which is accompanied by the affects of hatred, fear and anger, might be pushed from consciousness; and the affects replaced with feelings of respect and submissiveness. Repression is at once the most efficacious of the defense-mechanisms and the most dangerous:

... From the point of view of efficacy it occupies a unique position in comparison with the rest [of the mechanisms of defense.] In terms of quantity it accomplishes more than they, that is to say, it is capable of mastering powerful instinctual impulses, in the face of which the other defense measures are quite ineffective. It acts once only, though the anti-cathexis effected to secure the repression is a permanent institution demanding a constant expenditure of energy. The other mechanisms, on the contrary, have to be brought into operation again whenever there is an accession of instinctual energy. But repression is not only the most efficacious, it is also the most dangerous, mechanism. The dissociation from the ego entailed by the withdrawal from consciousness of whole tracts of

instinctual and affective life may destroy the integrity of the personality for good and all.¹

In cases of obsessional neurosis, repression is accompanied by another defense-mechanism called regression. This latter is a degradation of the libido, a return to an earlier stage of libidinal organization, a retreat from the genital orientation of libidinal energy to anal-sadistic organization.

In some cases, however, a threatening impulse seems to undergo complete destruction, in which case the energy of the id is permanently diverted into other channels. This, in Freud's view, is what happens when the Oedipus complex is dealt with normally: "... This is what happens when the Oedipus complex is dealt with normally—in this desirable case ... [it is] not simply repressed but destroyed in the id."²

Another defense-mechanism is reaction-formation. This is an habitual affective state, a permanent alteration of the ego in which the affects directly opposed to those associated with the rejected impulse are continually evoked. It is not clear at this point whether, in Freud's opinion, reaction-formations are to be found only when repression has occurred, or also when the offensive impulse has been completely eradicated. The whole subject of reaction-formation will be treated below at greater length, since among the reaction-formations enumerated by Freud one of the more prominent is shame.

Summary

Anxiety is in the first instance the affective reaction to a painful situation one is powerless to escape, and in subsequent stages of psychic development it acts as a signal that such a situation threatens to recur. The ego then reacts with its mechanisms of defense, the more important of which have been mentioned above.

GUILT

Guilt is another psychic phenomenon that interested Freud from the beginning of his psychoanalytic researches. His idea of it underwent change, as did his notion of anxiety; and indeed in common speech the two are frequently not distinguished.

Guilt is of central importance in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, a work of Freud's later years (1930), the intent of which is "to represent the sense of guilt as the most important problem in the development of civilization and to show that the price we pay for our advance in civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of

1. *EMD*, pp.53-54.

2. *NIL*, *SE* 22: 92.

the sense of guilt."¹ It is in this work that his definitive consideration of guilt is to be found. It depends, as we shall see, on the new theory of the instincts which he had proposed in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920).

The Nature of Guilt

Existence of the Sense of Guilt. Freud's researches convinced him that many of his patients were suffering from a sense of guilt, but were unconscious of the fact. The presence of these unconscious guilt feelings he inferred from a need for suffering, a desire for punishment he observed in them. It was as though by suffering they could atone for some evil — as though, indeed, only by such suffering could they find happiness.² He then sought to locate the source of this sense of guilt.

Origin and Development of the Sense of Guilt. Guilt seemed to be the reaction a person has as a result of having done something "bad." It must therefore be determined how one arrives at the judgment that his action is bad.

We may reject the existence of an original, as it were natural capacity to distinguish good from bad. What is bad is often not at all what is injurious or dangerous; on the contrary, it may be something which is desirable and enjoyable to the ego. Here, therefore, there is an extraneous influence at work, and it is this that decides what is to be called good or bad. Since a person's own feelings would not have led him along this path, he must have had a motive for submitting to this extraneous influence. Such a motive is easily discovered in his helplessness and his dependence on other people, and it can best be designated as fear of loss of love. If he loses the love of another person on whom he is dependent, he also ceases to be protected from a variety of dangers. Above all, he is exposed to the danger that this stronger person will show his superiority in the form of punishment. At the beginning, therefore, what is bad is whatever causes one to be threatened with loss of love. For fear of that loss, one must avoid it. This, too, is the reason why it makes little difference whether one has already done the bad thing or only intends to do it. In either case the danger only sets in if and when the authority discovers it, and in either case the authority would behave in the same way.

This state of mind is called a "bad conscience," but actually it does not deserve this name, for at this stage the sense of guilt is clearly only a fear of loss of love, "social" anxiety. In small children it can never be anything else, but in many adults, too, it has only changed to the extent that the place of the father or the two parents is taken by the larger human community.³

* * *

1. *Civilization and Its Discontents* (SE 21: 64-145 [1930]), SE 21: 134. This work will be cited as CD.

2. *Ibid.*, pp.136-39.

3. *Ibid.*, pp.124-25.

Ordinarily, however, a change occurs. The voice of authority is internalized by the establishment of a new psychic institution, the superego. Just as the impact of reality differentiates the ego from the id, which is the source and reservoir of all psychic energy; so the superego is differentiated from the rest of the ego. The parental criticism experienced by the child as a result of his actions tends to separate from the rest of his ego a part which functions as observer, critic, censor; a part set above the ego to judge of the "goodness" or "badness" of its activity, since it falls heir, as it were, to the parental authority—the superego.¹

The child, whose only fear is of authority, may avoid the sense of guilt by avoiding the activities censured by the authority, since the evil consequence (loss of love) will follow only if his action is discovered. There is nothing to prevent his *desire* for the outlawed gratification. But distinction between doing evil and merely wishing it disappears with the advent of the superego, since from it (a part of the ego itself) nothing can be hidden. Indeed in many cases it seems to be demanding punishment constantly, since even when one has ceased to act contrary to its directives the wish for instinctual satisfaction persists.²

* * *

One striking fact which Freud noted, especially in his more seriously disturbed patients, was the extraordinary severity and harshness of the superego's criticism — out of all proportion, it would seem, to any reasonable estimate of the actual harmfulness of the behavior which had provoked the criticism. His explanation of this is rather involved. The instinctive reaction of the child to authority is aggression, precisely to the degree that the authority interferes with instinctual satisfaction. Yet the child, for fear of loss of love, must renounce (or, more accurately, repress) this aggressiveness. The repressed aggressive instinct reappears identified with the superego; and the ego becomes identified, by a process called transference, with the criticizing authority—to be punished as the child would like to punish the authority.

The relationship between the superego and the ego is a return, distorted by a wish, of the real relationships between the ego, as yet undivided, and an external object [i.e., an authority]. . . . But the essential difference is that the original severity does not — or does not so much — represent the severity which one has experienced from it [the authority], or which one attributes to it; it represents rather one's own aggressiveness towards it. If this is correct, we may assert truly that in the beginning conscience arises through the suppression of an aggressive impulse, and that it is subsequently reinforced by fresh suppressions of the same kind.³

1. *Ibid.*, p.125.

2. *Ibid.*, pp.125, 127.

3. *Ibid.*, pp.129-30.

... Conscience (or more correctly, the anxiety which later becomes conscience) is indeed the cause of instinctual renunciation to begin with, but... later the relationship is reversed. Every renunciation of instinct now becomes a dynamic source of conscience and every fresh renunciation increases the latter's severity and intolerance.¹

Freud finds confirmation of this hypothesis in the fact that more virtuous people seem to have stricter superegos:

... When saints call themselves sinners, they are not so wrong, considering the temptations to instinctual satisfaction to which they are exposed in a specially high degree — since, as is well known, temptations are merely increased by constant frustration, whereas an occasional satisfaction of them causes them to diminish, at least for the time being.²

Apart, then, from an inherent biological disposition which may be presumed to be present, two factors operate to produce a severe conscience: "the frustration of instinct, which unleashes aggressiveness, and the experience of being loved, which turns the aggressiveness inwards and hands it over to the superego."³ It follows from this that the absence of a frustrating discipline, or the lack of a love which would ordinarily force the resulting aggression inwards, would lead to the formation of a lax conscience or of none at all.

Although Freud considered the emergence of the superego to be a normal stage of psychic development, it is hard to see, in this case, that maturity brings any increase in happiness or adjustment: "A threatened external unhappiness... has been exchanged for a permanent internal unhappiness, for the tension of the sense of guilt."⁴

* * *

1. *Ibid.*, p.128.

2. *Ibid.*, p.126. — It is interesting to note that Freud considers it obvious that "temptations are merely increased by constant frustration," whereas the Christian moral tradition holds that experience teaches us exactly the opposite. Perhaps Freud is speaking here of temptations merely repressed (a neurotic condition) and not firmly renounced — although, as we have noted, he does admit the possibility of the latter. It should nonetheless be remembered that he regards religion as a sort of institutionalized obsessional neurosis, and so he would think of the "saints" he speaks of as neurotics.

3. *Ibid.*, p.130n. — Here he follows his usual practice of assigning both inherent physical factors and environmental influences as causes of any given psychic phenomenon.

4. *Ibid.*, p.128. He clarifies his use of terms in a subsequent passage:

"The super-ego is an agency which has been inferred by us, and conscience is a function which we ascribe, among other functions, to that agency. The function consists in keeping a watch over the acts and intentions of the ego and judging them, in exercising a censorship. The sense of guilt... is the perception which the ego has of being watched over in this way, the assessment of the tension between its own strivings and the demands of the super-ego... We ought not to speak of a conscience until a superego is demonstrably present. As to a sense of guilt, we must admit that it is in existence before the superego, and therefore before conscience, too. At that time it is the immediate expression of fear of the external authority... It is the direct derivative of the conflict between the need for the authority's

As a result of his new theory of the instincts, Freud revised his notion of the origin of guilt. Previously he had held that any libidinal instinct could be transformed (by a fear of untoward consequences, were it to be gratified) into a sense of guilt. How he came to feel, largely for reasons of theoretical simplicity and economy, that the sense of guilt was in fact derived from the transformation only of the aggressive instincts, and that future investigation would probably confirm this:

... Neurotic symptoms are ... substitutive satisfactions for unfulfilled sexual wishes. ... Perhaps every neurosis conceals a quota of unconscious sense of guilt, which in turn fortifies the symptoms by making use of them as punishment. It now seems plausible to say that when an instinctual trend undergoes repression, its libidinal elements are turned into symptoms, and its aggressive components into a sense of guilt.¹

The Social Function of Guilt

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, as we noted earlier, Freud modified his theory of the instincts to include the death instincts, manifested principally in aggressive and destructive impulses and in the death wish. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* he developed the idea that the whole history of the race, as well as that of the individual, could be understood as a never-ceasing conflict between life- and death-instincts, between Eros and Thanatos — and that consequently civilization and the sense of guilt were closely connected. Aggressiveness must be restrained; otherwise the Eros-directed tendency to the more perfect unity of the race in civilization could never be attained. How is aggressiveness to be held in check? By the establishment in each civilized person of a strong sense of guilt.

What happens in [the individual] to render his desire for aggression innocuous? ... His aggression is introjected, internalized; it is, in point of fact, sent back to where it came from — that is, it is directed towards his own ego. There it is taken over by a portion of the ego, which sets itself over against the rest of the ego as superego, and which now, in the form of "conscience," is ready to put into action against the ego the same harsh aggressiveness that the ego would have liked to satisfy on other, extraneous individuals. The tension between the harsh superego and the ego that is subjected to it is called by us the sense of guilt; it expresses itself as a need for punishment. Civilization, therefore, obtains mastery over the individual's dangerous desire for aggression by weakening and disarming it and by setting up an agency within him to watch over it, like a garrison in a conquered city.²

love and the urge towards instinctual satisfaction, whose inhibition produces the inclination to aggression." (*Ibid.*, pp.136-37.)

1. *Ibid.*, p.139.

2. *Ibid.*, pp.123-24.

Guilt and Anxiety

At this point one might wonder what relationship exists between guilt and anxiety, since both have been identified as types of fear. On this point Freud is quite explicit: "The sense of guilt is at bottom nothing but a topographical variety of anxiety; in its latter phases it coincides completely with fear of the superego."¹

In brief, guilt is superego anxiety. Since Freud obviously makes reference here to guilt in the strict sense, we might speculate that the primitive sense of guilt — that which exists prior to the formation of the superego — is nothing but realistic anxiety.²

* * *

Thus far we have examined the various forms of anxiety, and seen that Freud identifies the sense of guilt with superego anxiety. We now turn to his notion of shame, and we shall attempt to discern its relationship to anxiety and guilt.

SHAME

The Nature of Shame

Freud refers to shame, in different places, as both an "affect" and a "reaction-formation." In order, therefore, to establish as it were the genus of shame, we must first examine his usage of these two terms.

Generic Considerations. In the *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1933), Freud defines an affect or affective condition as "a combination of certain feelings in the pleasure-unpleasure series with the corresponding innervations of discharge and a perception of them."³ An effect, in other words, is a perceived feeling or combination of feelings, accompanied by some sort of physical change in the organism. It is an ego-phenomenon, since in order for it to exist we must be aware of it.

Anna Freud, writing of the defensive measures the ego takes against incursions of id-impulses, states that the ego must defend itself with equal vigor against the affects associated with these impulses:

When repudiating the claims of instinct, its first task must always be to come to terms with these affects. Love, longing, jealousy, mortification, pain and mourning accompany sexual wishes, hatred, anger and rage the impulses of aggression; if the instinctual demands with which they are

1. *Ibid.*, p.135.

2. The moral philosopher might recognize in the third type of anxiety (instinctual anxiety or dread of the strength of the instincts) the continent man's fear of his disorderly passions; while the Christian might experience it as the guilt of original sin — that is, fear of the strength of the passions, which as a result of original sin are no longer under the control of reason.

3. *NIL*, SE 22: 81.

associated are to be warded off, these affects must submit to all the various measures to which the ego resorts in its effort to master them, i.e., they must undergo metamorphosis.¹

From this we see that some affect, arise in the ego under the stimulus of and concomitant to libidinal impulses, and that others result from the transformation of the original affective conditions as a result of the operation of the ego's mechanisms of defense.

* * *

Reaction-formation is one of the means used by the ego to defend itself against the incursions of libidinal impulses, "one of the most important measures adopted by the ego as a permanent protection against the id."² When the ego is threatened by the libidinal cathexis and responds with the mechanism of repression, the repression "acts once only, though the anti-cathexis, effected to secure the repression, is a permanent institution demanding a constant expenditure of energy."³ Freud explains that "it is because instincts are continuous in their nature that the ego has to make its defensive reaction by a permanent expenditure of energy."⁴

He explains this more fully in the *New Introductory Lectures*, when he discusses what occurs in the ego during the process of repression. If the ego does not withdraw entirely from the objectionable excitation, it "opposes the excitation with an anticathexis, and this combines with the energy of the repressed impulse to form a symptom; or the anticathexis is taken up into the ego as a *reaction-formation*, as an *intensification of certain of the ego's dispositions*, as a *permanent alteration of it*."⁵

Anna Freud sums up the relation between repression and reaction-formation by saying that "repression gets rid of instinctual derivatives," while "reaction-formation secures the ego against the return of repressed impulses. . . ."⁶

We may therefore define reaction-formation in the following terms: it is a *defense-mechanism of the ego, an anticathexis which takes the form of a permanent alteration of the ego enabling it to reject more quickly and firmly libidinal impulses and their concomitant affects*.

Many examples of reaction-formation are given in Freud's writings. He considers the superego itself to be one of them: "The superego is . . . not simply a residue of the earliest [Edipal] object-choices of the id; it also represents an energetic reaction-formation against these

1. A. FREUD, *EMD*, p.34.

2. *Ibid.*, p.9.

3. *Ibid.*, p.53.

4. *ISA*, *SE* 20: 157.

5. *NIL*, *SE* 22: 90. Italics added.

6. *EMD*, p.190.

choices.”¹ Obsessional neurosis is characterized by certain kinds of reaction-formation, which are “effected by the reinforcement of the attitude which is the opposite of the instinctual trend that has to be repressed — as, for instance, in pity, conscientiousness and cleanliness.”² There are reaction-formations not only against libido, but also against aggressive impulses. Thus he holds that the social instinct was probably developed in childhood as a reaction-formation against hostile attitudes of rivalry.³

Anna Freud also proffers examples of it: “A child who has been aggressive towards her mother develops an excessive tenderness towards her and is worried about her safety; envy and jealousy are transformed into unselfishness and thoughtfulness for others.”⁴

In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), Freud puts reaction-formation into temporal perspective by explaining its role in the development of personality. He states that during the period of latency sexual inhibitions are built up, “mental forces which are later to impede the course of the sexual instinct and, like dams, restrict its flow — disgust, feelings of shame, and the claims of aesthetic and moral ideals.” The construction of these “dams,” he feels, is not due entirely to education, but is “organically determined and fixed by heredity,” and can occur at times without any help from education.⁵

The origin of these constructions, “so important for the growth of a civilized and normal individual,”⁶ is the infantile sexual impulses themselves, whose energy is wholly or largely diverted from sexual use and directed to other ends. He draws a parallel between the diversion of sexual energy of civilized people for the accomplishment of the tasks required for the maintenance of civilization, and the same process in the individual.

Another reason can be given for the development of these defense-mechanisms, a causal factor not dependent on a civilized environment — namely the organic determinant mentioned earlier. First of all, these sexual impulses cannot be utilized, since the child will not be sexually mature and capable of reproduction for years to come. And secondly, these impulses would seem in themselves to be perverse — that is, to arise from erotogenic zones and to derive their activity from instincts which, in view of the subject’s development,⁷ can only arouse unpleasant feelings.

1. *The Ego and the Id* (SE 19: 1-67 [1923]), SE 19: 34.

2. *ISA*, SE 20: 157; see also *ibid.*, pp. 114-15.

3. Enc. art. “The Libido Theory” (SE 18: 255-59 [1923]), SE 18: 258.

4. *EMD*, p. 51.

5. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (SE 7: 123-243 [1905]), SE 7: 177. This work will be cited as *3 Ess.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. It is not clear whether this means “in view of the ensuing period of latency” or “in view of social determinants of the course of development.” Probably both are intended.

They consequently evoke opposing mental forces (reacting impulses) which, in order to suppress this unpleasure effectively, build up the mental dams I have already mentioned — disgust, shame and morality.¹

These citations make clear not only the role of reaction-formations in the development of the normal personality and their organic or natural as well as social origin, but also that shame is among their number. It can also be seen that reaction-formation can take the form of a permanent intensification of a previously existing disposition of the ego to evoke certain affects — affects which aid the ego in reacting against instinctual impulses and against the affects which accompany them. An urge for sexual gratification, for example, might be effectively combatted by a feeling of disgust with regard to the intended action.

* * *

Shame, then, is an affect — that is, a conscious feeling situated in the ego, resulting from the perception of some object and accompanied by some physical change in the organism, and which is either pleasurable or painful (pleasure and pain being the generic types of affect.) It seems evident that shame is a painful affect. It is also described as a reaction-formation, but it would be more accurate to say that this reaction-formation is a defensive modification of the ego which takes the form of an intensified disposition or readiness to produce the affect of shame.

The Specific Nature of Shame. After having seen in a general way the nature of shame, it now becomes necessary for us to distinguish it from other affects and reaction-formations. We must attempt to delineate the sort of object, the perception of which would give rise to this particular affective condition.

In one of his earliest psychoanalytical works, *Studies in Hysteria* (1895),² written in collaboration with Joseph Breuer, Freud speaks of the pathogenic ideas at the root of neurosis, the ideas that are repressed and replaced by hysterical symptoms functioning as substitutive satisfactions. He goes on to say that he

recognized a universal characteristic of such ideas: they were all of a distressing nature, calculated to arouse the affects of shame, of self-reproach and of psychological pain, and the feeling of being harmed; they were all of a kind one would have preferred not to have experienced, that one would rather forget.³

Here we see shame associated with pain produced by something that is actually damaging, at least psychically, to the subject in some way,

1. *3 Ess.*, SE 7: 178.

2. *SE*, vol. 2.

3. *SE*, 2: 269.

and which is of such a nature that the subject tends to blame himself for the damage or harm being done him.

* * *

What sort of object or objective situation gives rise to this affect? An indication may be found in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), where Freud gives us what he considers to be an almost exhaustive list of the principal dream-types, together with an interpretation of each. In his analysis of dreams of being naked, which were in his view dreams of exhibiting the sexual organs, he explains the distress in the form of anxiety and shame which almost always accompany such dreams as being a protest by the superego against the desire for exhibition having found expression under the cover of some unobjectionable situation, in spite of the ban against it.¹

An example of such a situation is given by Gottfried Keller in his work *Der grüne Heinrich*, where he evokes the feelings of Odysseus cast up out of the sea before Nausicaä:

. . . Suddenly you will become aware that you are in rags, naked and dusty. You will be seized with a nameless shame and dread, you will seek to find covering and to hide yourself, and you will awake bathed in sweat. This, so long as men breathe, is the plight of the unhappy wanderer; and Homer has evoked the picture of his plight from the deepest and eternal nature of man.²

Freud identifies "the deepest and eternal nature of man" with impulses whose origin is in a childhood which, for the adult, is "prehistoric" — that is, not part of conscious history or memory. Forbidden impulses from childhood find expression in the dream behind "the exile's unobjectionable wishes; . . . and that is why the dream which finds concrete expression in the legend of Nausicaä ends as a rule as an anxiety-dream."³

Shame is seen here as a painful reaction of defense against repressed impulses, in this case the desire to exhibit. In a note to a passage in one of his shorter works Freud associates shame with involuntary urination, "and not equally so, as one would have expected, with incontinence of the bowels. Experience leaves no room for doubt on this point."⁴ However he also insists that pressure is exerted in the educative process to make the child feel ashamed of his excreta. And he explains that we use the name of the dog — our so-called best friend — as a term of abuse precisely because it has no horror of excrement and no shame of

1. *The Interpretation of Dreams* (SE, vols. 4 & 5 [1900]), SE 4: 246.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 247.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis* (SE 17: 3-121 [1918]), SE 17: 92-93.

its sexual functions.¹ He also states that "though a long series of generations the genitals have become for us the *pudenda*, objects of shame, and even (as a result of further successful sexual repressions) of disgust."²

* * *

The sexual functions and organs and the pleasures connected with them, urination and excrement — these are the things of which people are ashamed. But shame is not a purely interpersonal or intrasubjective phenomenon; it seems always to involve a reference to others, to "the people in whose presence one feels shame."³ Thus it is precisely because he is naked *before Nausicaä* that Odysseus is ashamed. In his treatment of dreams of nakedness Freud notes that frequently the onlookers seem to be indifferent to the plight of the dreamer, a "contradiction," since "it would after all be more in keeping with the dreamer's feelings if strangers looked at him in astonishment and derision or with indignation."⁴ Shame is thus seen to be a fear of the disapproval of others because of certain kinds of conduct, hence a fear which tends to inhibit or completely prevent this conduct.

* * *

Let us summarize what we have thus far discovered concerning the specific nature of shame. It is a painful affect; it is concerned with sexual matters and with the evacuation of the bladder and bowels — precisely to the extent that these things evoke, or threaten to evoke, the disgust and contempt of others, and to the extent that such a consequence is something to be feared.

The Causes of Shame

Several factors operate to produce shame. We shall consider first subjective causes — that is, those inherent in the person who is ashamed. Then we shall discuss extrinsic, social influences.

1. *CD*, *SE* 21:100n.

2. *Leonardo da Vinci: A Study in Psychosexuality* (*SE* 11:63-137 [1910]), *SE* 11:96. He goes on to make the interesting assertion:

"If one makes a broad survey of the sexual life of our time and in particular of the classes who sustain human civilization, one is tempted to declare that it is only with reluctance that the majority of those alive today obey the command to propagate their kind. They feel that their dignity as human beings suffers and is degraded in the process." (*Ibid.*)

3. *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *SE* 4:242.

4. *Ibid.*, p.243. — The indifference of the onlookers, and the fact that they are almost always strangers, are devices used to circumvent the usual reaction of shame to such conduct, since shame would seem to be a fear of others' disapproval — especially of the disapproval of those who are not strangers, of those with whom we are in frequent contact and whose good opinion of ourselves we value.

Subjective Causes. Among the internal causes of shame some are the result of the individual's experience with himself and his environment; while others are phylogenic, inherited from circumstances attending the very dawn of human social life. We will commence with the latter.

* * *

Freud admitted frankly that his notions on the origin of civilization were no more than conjectures,¹ but nonetheless hoped that anthropology and the study of the animals most closely related to man would confirm them. The fateful first step in the process of civilisation, in his view, was man's adoption of an upright posture. This made his genitals, previously concealed, visible and in need of protection, and so provoked in him feelings of shame which serve to protect these organs.

In time sexual excitation came to depend more on visual stimuli than upon olfactory, as had previously been the case; this would account for the fact that the human sexual urge is strikingly free from the periodicity one would expect from the well-marked periodic functioning of the female's reproductive organs, since visual stimuli were able to maintain a more or less permanent excitation. When this happened, the male had a motive for keeping his sexual object near him at all times, while the female would tend to remain near him in the hope of protection for her helpless young: thus the origin of the family.

So the chain of events would be as follows: upright posture and the consequent exposure of the genital organs, the replacement of odors as sexual stimuli by the sight of the female's body, the relatively permanent presence of the sexual urge, the commencement of family life, and then the final steps to the threshold of civilization.

After man had passed beyond the stage of olfactory sexual stimulation, Freud speculated that there would be a repudiation of these stimuli and a repression of any pleasure aroused by them. This would be a consequence of the "organic repression" (i.e., the superceding) of the odors as sexual excitations; and would serve as a defense against regression to a stage of development that had been surmounted. This accounts for the wide-spread taboo on menstruation and the disgust aroused by excrement. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of this organic repression, for although civilization impedes in many ways the gratification of sexual impulse, "the deepest root of the sexual repression that advances along with civilization is the organic defense of the new form of life achieved with man's erect gait against his earlier animal existence."²

1. *CD*, *SE* 21: 99.

2. *Ibid.*, p.106n. This leads him to conclude that perhaps there is "something in the nature of the sexual function itself which denies us full satisfaction and urges us along other paths. (*Ibid.*, p.105.)" — The rest of this material on phylogenetic factors is taken from *ibid.*, p.99, and a long footnote on pp.99-100.

There are some difficulties with regard to this account, especially as it concerns the origin of shame; these will be considered shortly. We should remember, however, that he proposes these ideas only as conjecture and "theoretical speculation."¹

* * *

Within the individual's own lifetime there are, in Freud's opinion, both social and organic factors operating to produce shame. The social or extrinsic factor will be treated below; here we consider the organic basis for shame, which is twofold.

First, there is what he considered to be the distinctive characteristic of human sexuality — its diphasic onset. Sexual impulses appear long before there is any possibility of gratifying them in a normal way. Consequently the early efflorescence of sexuality ordinarily withers away and is succeeded by a period of latency. This occurs, he feels, because the early sexual impulses have been "recognized as being unutilizable."² Since they are doomed to frustration, their presence can only be unpleasant or even painful. Their energy is consequently directed against themselves, being diverted into the construction of "dams" or reaction-formations in the ego which tend to prevent the free expression of these impulses; and among these reaction-formations is shame — the fear of what others would say or do were such instincts to be allowed expression.

The other organic factor which acts to develop shame is the "polymorphously perverse"³ disposition of children. In Freud's view, sexuality was something consisting of a number of component instincts, in which it first manifests itself — each instinct being dependent on one of the erotogenic zones of the body. Ordinarily there occurs a series of syntheses of these instincts, under the domination of one or another of the erotogenic zones: the oral and anal-sadistic stages, and at the ages of four and a half or five the genital stage.⁴

This progression, however, is by no means inevitable, since "under the influence of seduction children . . . can be led into all possible kinds of sexual irregularities. This shows that an aptitude for them is innately present in their disposition. . . ." Hence "... it becomes impossible not to recognize that this same disposition to perversion of every kind is a general and fundamental human characteristic. . . ."⁵ This "disposition to perversion of every kind" is precisely the lack of unity of the component instincts of sexuality during child-

1. *Ibid.*, p.100n.

2. *3 Ess.*, SE 7: 239.

3. *Ibid.*, p.191.

4. *An Autobiographical Study* (SE 20: 7-74 [1925]), SE 20: 35.

5. *3 Ess.*, SE 7: 191.

hood; since they are not unified the child can be led in almost any direction.¹

It is obvious that perversion is not socially desirable. But would Freud regard it as unnatural? An answer to this question would require a lengthy investigation of Freud's understanding of human nature — an investigation which is beyond the scope of this essay. In any event, the reaction-formations developed during the period of latency are more or less effective barriers to perversion. Perversion is possible, he states, because "the mental dams against sexual excesses — shame, disgust and morality — have either not been constructed at all or are only in the course of construction."² Again, after observing that small children are "essentially shameless" and enjoy exposing their sexual parts, he notes that the counterpart of this inclination, the desire to see other people's genitals, "probably does not become manifest until later in childhood, when the obstacle set up by a sense of shame has already reached a certain degree of development."³

Shame functions, then, to control instincts that are perverse and to hinder these that are unutilizable. These instincts result from man's organic complexion; and the sense of shame, a reaction against them, can thus be said to owe its origin, at least indirectly, to organic causes.

Social Causes of Shame. That shame is also a product of social forces seems too obvious to call for much comment. Freud frequently speaks of the role of education in the genesis of shame and the other reaction-formations developed during the period of latency.⁴ Indeed the very nature of shame would seem to indicate this: in order for us to fear the disapproval of others we would first have to discover the type of activity likely to be disapproved of, and we would also have to learn that such disapproval could have painful consequences for us. This learning is obviously a form of education, obviously a form of social pressure.

This raises another question: why does society exert this pressure? We shall now consider the purpose or usefulness of shame, both for the individual and for society.

The Utility of Shame

For the Individual. The utility of shame for the individual has already been indicated. Perverse and unusable instincts are for one reason or another painful. The individual relieves himself of this pain by denying expression to such instincts, and shame is one of the mechanisms used in this denial.

1. *Ibid.*, p.231.

2. *Ibid.*, p.191.

3. *Ibid.*, p.192.

4. E.g. *ibid.*, p.177; *An Autobiographical Study*, SE 20: 37n; CD, SE 21: 100n.

Another indication of the beneficial nature of shame springs from the fact that Eros, as Freud conceives it, is essentially a tendency towards unification, oneness. Now shame and the other reaction-formations of the latency period aid the development of the personality by restricting sexuality until such time as it is able to be directed towards its normal object — a mature person of the opposite sex. Shame therefore tends to promote the unity of the individual's psychic and somatic sexuality, a necessary condition for a well-integrated personality.¹

Furthermore, shame and the other reaction-formations exert an influence during puberty and adolescence: they are "destined to stand up against the later tempest of puberty and to lay down the path of the freshly awakening sexual desires."²

* * *

We often speak of "character" and of the influences that contribute to its formation. In Freud's view character is the sum of all the relatively permanent dispositions of the ego, the ways we have of reacting to influences from the id, the superego and the external world.

Among the most important factors in forming character are the reaction-formations, including shame. In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud states:

... What we describe as a person's "character" is built up to a considerable extent from the material of sexual excitations and is composed of instincts that have been fixed since childhood, of constructions achieved by means of sublimation and of other constructions, employed for effectively holding in check perverse impulses which have been recognized as being unutilizable. The multifariously perverse disposition of childhood can accordingly be regarded as the source of a number of our virtues, in so far as through reaction-formation it stimulates their development.³

By speaking of "virtues" he implies that the formation of character is something desirable; hence shame and the other reaction-formations are useful because they promote it. And in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* he speaks of the reaction-formations typical of obsessional neurosis as "exaggerations of the *normal traits of character* which develop during the latency period."⁴

The Social Utility of Shame. This brings us to the social utility of shame. Why does society seek, in so many ways, to divert sexuality from its specific aims? In brief, because civilisation could not survive

1. *3 Ess.*, SE 7: 231.

2. *The Question of Lay Analysis* (SE 20: 183-256 [1926]), SE 20: 210.

3. *3 Ess.*, SE 7: 238-39.

4. *ISA*, SE 20: 160. Italics added.

without a great many types of activity being carried on which have no relation to sexual goals or which may even be contrary to them. And the psychic energy needed to perform these tasks can come only from a diversion of libidinal energy from its normal channels:

Historians of civilization appear to be at one in assuming that powerful components are acquired for every kind of cultural achievement by the diversion of sexual instinctual forces from sexual aims and their direction to new ones — a process which deserves the name of "sublimation."¹

Summary: The utility of Shame. We conclude then that shame is useful to the individual because it favors the development of an integrated personality and of a normal character; and that it serves society by directing sexual energy to the tasks necessary for its preservation (just as the sense of guilt, in a complementary manner, protects civilization by diverting the aggressive impulses which would otherwise tend to destroy it.)

Shame Compared to Guilt and Anxiety

One last task remains, and that is to see the relationship that shame bears to guilt and anxiety. Neurotic anxiety is a fear of the danger involved in gratifying the instincts, and is divided into superego anxiety, instinctual anxiety and objective anxiety — depending on the location of whatever it is that makes gratification appear dangerous. The anxiety which is here described and divided is neurotic, since it is abnormal to the extent that it does not seem to correspond to any threatening external danger. Anxiety as a normal state is simply a fear of some objective danger-situation, easily recognizable as such; this affect, when not merely called fear, is usually termed "realistic"² anxiety. It is easy to be misled here, since we find the term "objective" designate both a species of neurotic anxiety³ and, in some translations, normal realistic anxiety.⁴

Perhaps an example will help to clarify this point. A male child may come to believe, perhaps through remarks made half in jest, that any display of interest or pleasure in his genitals will lead to castration. This would naturally cause fear, i.e., realistic anxiety. He might then come to fear any sort of instinctual impulse connected with these

1. *3 Ess.*, SE 7: 178.

2. E.g.: "We . . . started off from a distinction between realistic anxiety and neurotic anxiety, of which the former was a reaction, which seemed intelligible to us, to a danger — that is, to an expected injury from outside — while the latter was completely enigmatic, and appeared to be pointless. (*NIL*, SE 22: 81-82.)"

3. Especially in A. Freud, *EMD*, pp.58-67.

4. E.g. in an earlier translation of *NIL* by W. J. H. Sprott (New York: Norton, 1933), p.114. Here in the very same text quoted above in note 2 of this page, we read of "the distinction between objective anxiety and neurotic anxiety . . ."

organs, because of the dangerous consequences that — in his imagination at least — any expression or gratification of these impulses might have. This fear of the impulses themselves would be *neurotic* anxiety, since its object is not immediately evident and it therefore seems to be without a proportionate cause. As a species of neurotic anxiety, however, it would be termed objective, since the *ultimate* source of the danger lies in the external world.¹

* * *

Guilt was previously identified as superego anxiety, resulting from a transformation of aggressive instincts. And we have seen that shame is a fear of a danger coming from the outside world — namely, the disapproval which others manifest regarding any open expression of sexual impulse. Since we have understood fear to be the equivalent of anxiety, it seems reasonable to suppose that shame is, in some way, an “objective” anxiety.

But which kind of “objective” anxiety are we dealing with in the case of shame — realistic or neurotic? It would seem that frequently, at least, what is feared is not the instincts themselves, but rather the disapproval of others — obviously an external danger. Indeed a person might well feel that the gratification of instinct would be delightful, not at all to be feared for its own sake — while at the same time being afraid that the reaction of others to his action or expression *would* be dangerous. Since in this case the *proximate* object feared is something external, such shame would be an instance of realistic anxiety and not a neurotic affect. If, however, the fear were to be transferred from the external danger to the instincts themselves, and if these instincts were to appear dangerous at a time when the ego should normally have become strong enough to master them with ease — then that sort of shame would have to be classified as neurotic anxiety.

* * *

Shame regarded as reaction-formation (rather than as affect) is a product of the neurotic anxiety that leads to repression and to the other defensive operations of the ego, among which is reaction-formation.

REFLECTIONS

Having examined what Freud had to say about shame, we shall now proceed to look at some difficulties and objections to his ideas. First we shall consider problems arising from his accounts of the nature and origin of shame. Then we shall ponder the implications of his asser-

1. *NIL*, SE 22: 86.

tion that shame is a *permanent* feature of the fully developed psyche. And finally we shall set down a few reflections on the value of his teaching on shame, and on the influence not only of his ideas but also of his personality on contemporary civilization.

Problems with Freud's Accounts of the Nature of Shame

Here we shall consider first his phylogenetic explanation of the origin of shame, and then some inconsistencies in the various accounts of the nature of shame which he gives.

The Phylogenetic Explanation. The problem here arises from his view that "organic repression" is the root of psychic repression, as we noted above.¹ This organic repression is a defense against reversion to an earlier stage of development — the previous horizontal posture and reliance on olfactory sexual stimulation. It is something in man's physiological constitution rather than a defense on the psychic level, as is evident from the term itself.

Now shame is supposed to have arisen *after* the adoption of an upright stance, because of the resulting exposure of the genitals.² The exposure belongs to the later state of human evolution; the organic repression is a defense against the earlier stage. Why, on this basis, should we expect to find shame associated with exposure? On Freud's own premises, shame ought to be found connected with something suggesting regression to the earlier state, not attached to something belonging to the more advanced human condition.

Freud himself proposes one solution to this difficulty. He says that the genital organs, once exposed become vulnerable and in need of protection.³ Thus shame, while ostensibly concerned with the evil of exposure, is actually a way of seeing that the genitals are covered and hence protected. If this were the case, however, we should expect to find that nudity would always and everywhere be regarded as shameful — and, as we shall see, that is simply not true.

Another explanation consonant with Freud's thought might run something like this: While the various repressions and mechanisms of defense might all have one origin, namely organic repression, they nonetheless manifest — due to the course of later evolution and to the differing experiences of each individual — a tremendous variety of forms. Hence none of them, including shame, can be understood solely in terms of the one unvarying physiological factor. The psychic energy generated by such a physical disposition can find release and expression in many different ways; blocked in one direction it flows in another. So perhaps one might say that shame was first experienced

1. See above section on the subjective causes of shame.

2. *CD*, *SE* 21: 100n.

3. *Ibid.*

in connection with some relic of the earlier state of development — such as olfactory stimuli of all sorts¹ — and was later transferred to the genitals. Thus shame might first have been connected with urination and then later transferred to the organ's sexual function and to the organ itself.²

This, if true, might explain how shame, supposedly associated with whatever remains from the more primitive state of man's development, come to be connected with the exposure of the genitals proper to a later stage. But this explanation suffers from a defect common to many others proposed by Freud and his disciples. It assumes that the basic cause of any psychic phenomenon can be found only in some part of the physical make-up of man — in this case, in the hypothetical organic repression. And it gives no very convincing reason for the link between shame and the genitals; the link is purely accidental, the result of the chance occurrences to which instinctive drives have been subject during the course of man's development.³

Freud did express the hope that the further progress of anthropology would confirm his speculations about the early states of human evolution.⁴ Let us then turn for a moment to some relevant anthropological data.

A study of some of the more primitive peoples has shown that shame is not necessarily connected with nudity. Primitives in the central parts of South America, Africa, the East Indies and the islands around Australia, who live "without any clothing whatsoever," nevertheless

possess a well-developed sense of shame, thus giving convincing proof of the universality of this sense among mankind. In the hard struggle for existence which is forced upon these people by their primitive condition, the

1. *Ibid.*

2. "It is very remarkable that the reaction of shame should be so intimately connected with the involuntary emptying of the bladder . . . It is possible that these reactions and relations represent precipitates from the history of human civilization derived from a lower stratum than anything that is preserved for us in the traces surviving in myth and folklore. (*From the History of an Infantile Neurosis*, SE 17: 92-93.)"

3. A general remark is perhaps in order at this point on the value of explanations of this sort, which depend on a hypothetical reconstruction of man's prehistory. While many of them do not appear to be very plausible, it should be kept in mind that they are not of central importance in the Freudian system. Freud himself admitted that his phylogenetic hypotheses were only conjectures ("theoretical speculations" (*CD*, SE 21: 100n.)); he never indicated that he believed that psychoanalysis would stand or fall merely on their strength. As a contemporary psychoanalyst has written, "The whole structure of Freudian metapsychology is unaffected by his incursions into the region of phylogenetic speculation. (E. Glover, *Freud or Jung?* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1956), p. 43.)" So problems connected with this account of the origin of shame do not necessarily invalidate his other ideas about it — except insofar as mistakes about the origin of shame might lead to mistakes about its nature.

4. *CD*, SE 21: 100n.

mere sight of the nude body is not enough to cause sexual excitement. . . . The important fact is that among these peoples, the *exercise* of the sex instinct occurs in absolute privacy, and is an entirely personal matter removed from observation. . . .

The *exercise* of the sex instinct, and every development leading up to it, is protected and safeguarded by the sense of shame. [But if and when] the natural resistance against the stimulation of the sex instinct is lowered through cultural advancement, man is forced to obviate this danger by covering his body with clothes. The sense of shame now demands not only a concealment of the *function* but of *parts* of the body as well, either of the sex organs only, or of other parts as well.¹

We are thus able to distinguish between "a *functional* and a *local* sense of shame."² And we can see also that while shame is a constant, the presence or absence of clothing is a cultural variable.

It seems, then, that Freud's conjecture that shame originated in a need for protection of the sexual organs is not born out by the available evidence. As a matter of fact he never does give a satisfactory reason for the existence of shame, whether functional or local. It is true that he discusses *how* shame arises in the individual, but he does not tell us, in terms of the nature of man, *why* this reaction, rather than some other, occur.

The assertion that Freud nowhere gives a satisfactory account of shame might seem gratuitous. Let us therefore look at some of his other should explanations of it.

Other Accounts of the Nature of Shame. Many problems arise when one attempts to reconcile the various explanations of shame which Freud offers. At times he seems to consider it as a result of social causes: the young child, who is essentially without shame,³ is taught of his sexual organs, excrement, etc.⁴ The function of shame, according to this view, is to reduce the painful consequence of socially unacceptable behavior by inhibiting the instincts which cause such behavior. Shame enforces conformity to the society's norms of behavior by making deviations painful; it is, in short, an instrument of social pressure.

In other places Freud explains shame in terms of the individual's inherited nature. Here also we find more than one account of shame. In earlier writings stress is given to the part shame plays in the normal development of personality. Before sexual maturity the sexual impulses and excitations, which are always present, can only give rise to pain, since they cannot be utilized. Their energy is therefore diverted

1. L. RULAND, *Pastoral Medicine*, p.258; quoted in *Two in One Flesh*, by E. C. Messenger (3 vols.; Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1948), vol. 2, p.185.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *3 Ess.*, SE 7: 192.

4. *CD*, SE 21: 100n.

into the construction of "mental dams" — reaction-formations — which function to prevent their free expression. If for any reason these dams are not constructed we find perversion, since physical maturation of the sex organs is necessary before the component instincts of sexuality can be integrated to form the normal sexual drives of the adult. Shame, which is one of these "mental dams," thus serves a good purpose — at least until sexual maturity is reached.¹

Twenty-five years later (in 1930) we find a third explanation of shame, this time in terms of the history of man's evolution. In this account, which we have just examined at some length, the fundamental cause of shame would be "organic repression," the rejection of everything connected with an earlier stage of development (in order to prevent evolutionary backsliding.)²

It is not easy to see how these three accounts of shame are to be harmonized. Perhaps the first two could be reconciled by the following interpretation of Freud: Shame is good and beneficial insofar as it aids the development of a normal personality — that is, up to the time of sexual maturity and the genital integration of the sexual instincts characteristic of adults. After this shame is bad, because it is merely a social restriction of instinct. Since Freud views human nature as simply the sum of the instinctual drives, anything — including society — that restricts these drives is in a very important sense unnatural and evil. To the extent that shame is *merely* an instrument of social pressure, it is therefore bad and unnatural.

If it is true that Freud would hold that shame is beneficial to man until sexual maturity is reached, but not thereafter, then his position (though not the reasons for it) shows some similarity to Aquinas' teaching on shame.³ His third account of shame, however, seems to have internal contradictions, and bears little or no relation to what he says about shame elsewhere.

Still a fourth explanation of shame may be found in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*:

Two people coming together for the purpose of sexual satisfaction, in so far as they seek for solitude, are making a demonstration against the herd instinct, the group feeling. The more they are in love, the more completely they suffice for each other. The rejection of the group's influence is manifested in the shape of a sense of shame.⁴

This notion of shame is not developed at any length, and it is not central to the argument of the book. But it is interesting to note that the

1. See *3 Ess.*, *SE* 7: 176-78, 232, 238-39.

2. See *CD*, *SE* 21: 99, 99n, 105, 106n.

3. In *IV Ethic.*, lect. 17, nn. 872-879, ed. Spiazzi (Turin: Marietti, 1959), ed. P. Caramello (5 vols.; Turin: Marietti, 1952); *Ila Ilae*, q. 144, a. 1, ad 5; a. 4, ad 4.

4. (*SE* 18: 69-143 [1921]), *SE* 18: 140.

conception of shame as "rejection of the group's influence" directly contradicts the first account of it, in which shame appears as *submission* to social pressure.

It should be evident that there are serious difficulties merely in understanding what Freud says about shame, difficulties which complicate any attempt to judge the value of his teaching.

Shame as a Permanent Feature of the Psyche

Any question about whether shame remains in the mature personality is, it would seem, a question about the disposition to shame rather than about the affect itself. In Freud's terminology, it is a question about shame as a reaction-formation, and about the role played by reaction-formations in the development of the psyche.¹ Is the disposition to produce the affect of shame in appropriate circumstances a permanent modification of the normal adult ego, or does it function only during the development of the personality and disappear when maturity is reached?

Reaction-formations are defenses against instinctual incursions into the ego; these instincts may be either repressed, or suppressed (completely destroyed). Are these constructions in the ego to be found only in connection with repressed instincts, or do they remain even when suppression has occurred?

It would seem that they remain, since Freud always speaks of them as *permanent* alterations of the ego. And in the *New Introductory Lectures* he states that the ego acquires them "to begin with in making its repressions and later, by a more normal method, when it rejects unwished-for instinctual impulses."² This passage is concerned with reaction-formation as a factor in the development of character; hence it would seem that the reaction-formations remain, although they function in a different manner once the character develops a certain stability or integration as the result of maturity. They are still ready to react vigorously should any unwanted instinct attempt to gain entry into the ego, but now the possibility of such an occurrence is less and they would have little difficulty in resisting it.

For Freud, what we call character is simply the collection of reaction-formations, permanent modifications of the ego, which we have acquired in the course of reaching maturity. His conception of human nature does not allow him to admit the existence of virtue, a rational habit of choice. Hence he is unable to distinguish between virtuous and neurotic patterns of behavior. Reaction-formations are quasi automatic, almost mechanical, in their operation — they are certainly not under the control of reason. Hence they are not flexible or adaptable;

1. For the nature and function of reaction-formations, see above section on the nature of shame (generic considerations).

2. *NIL*, SE 22: 91.

whereas habit — or more precisely the rational habit called virtue — *because* it is rational, is quite adaptable to varying circumstances and is not rigidly determined to react against the urgings of appetite. Because he does not appreciate the distinction between the rigidity of reaction-formations and the free nature of virtuous action, he regards all character traits simply as pieces of psychic machinery that produce certain emotions when the right button is pushed; he never sees that they could actually, in some cases, be dispositions to follow the varying requirements of reason in the exercise of appetite.

Now we see why Freud considers shame to be a reaction-formation — that is, a *permanent* character trait. He is unable to distinguish it from the virtue of temperance, more exactly, from *pudicitia*.¹ Were he to observe someone exercising rational restraint and moderation in the signs and symbols of sexual inter-course, he would immediately attribute it to an ingrained, mechanical reaction to a potentially painful situation. The all-important factor, the rational guidance of the act, would simply escape him.

It should be clear that my criticism of Freud's teaching is based on the view of the nature and function of shame which Aquinas takes from Aristotle. In brief, they hold that shame, which they define as fear of a disgraceful act (more precisely, fear of the disgrace itself, fear of being held up to public contempt), is appropriately found in the adolescent, where it functions to restrain appetite at a time when stable character traits or virtues — including temperance — have not yet had a chance to develop. Indeed they consider it a normally necessary stage on the way to the acquisition of temperance. But they say that shame has no place in the morally mature (i.e., virtuous) person — because the temperate appetite no longer needs that sort of external restraint, because shame implies a moral imperfection or immaturity which is incompatible with the notion of virtue, and because the mature person determines his own course of action without worrying that much about the approval or disapproval of others (he is “inner-directed,” to borrow a contemporary term.)²

The following somewhat different line of thought leads, I believe, to approximately the same conclusion (namely, that a strong disposition to shame is merely a temporary condition in most people): The person who fears reproach or disgrace naturally seeks to flee from it. But if he has actually done something shameful, his only defense against the evil of disgrace is secrecy — somehow he must prevent the knowledge of his misdeed from coming to the attention of those who would reproach him. If a person continues to fear reproach and yet refuses

1. See AQUINAS, *IIa IIae*, q.151, a.4.

2. ARISTOTLE, *Nicomachean Ethics* (in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. R. McKeon (from the Oxford translation; New York: Random House, 1941), pp.935-1111), Bk. IV, 1128 b 10-36; Aquinas, *In IV Ethic.*, lect. 17; *IIa IIae*, q.144.

to renounce the acts which make him liable to it, secrecy must become almost a way of life for him. Thus he gradually becomes alienated from his fellows, living a life that cannot be shared with them. And many contemporary psychologists think that it is precisely alienation which is the root cause of most mental ills: "Essentially, all mental illness must be a reaction to some kind of feeling of rupture with the social environment."¹

It seems to me, then, that the reason why a disposition to shame is not a permanent condition in most people is that a well-balanced person, even one who is not actually virtuous, is very likely to realize more or less intuitively that persistence in this condition is unhealthy — merely because it distorts one's whole relation to other people, apart from any consideration of moral values. Most people will therefore resolve the conflict between the desire for the pleasure resulting from the shameful act and fear of disgrace by renouncing either the shameful activity or the love of honor — by becoming either temperate or intemperate, rather than by retreating into the closed, distorted world of the man who can bring himself to reject neither.

From all this we conclude that Freud was mistaken in regarding the reaction-formation of shame as a permanent character trait. And we see that the root of his error lies in the fact that his way of thinking about man leaves no place in his system for the concept of virtue.

The Value and Influence of Freud's Teaching

My purpose in this final section is to attempt to account for my impression of Freud, after having had the experience of working carefully through one area of his thinking. I have much greater respect for him than my critique of his teaching on shame would suggest, and now I want to try and say why this is the case.

First of all, I would say that Freud was a man of intuitive genius, but not terribly successful at explaining and systematizing his own insights. His conceptual and synthetic apparatus often do not seem able to bear the weight of expressing adequately what he has perceived. It is a case of moving away from realities grasped with certainty but confusedly, in an effort to achieve clarity of expression.

Secondly, the view of man which we find in his systematic, theoretical works is undoubtedly rigid, mechanical, deterministic. Yet considering the 19th century intellectual and scientific traditions in which his intellectual formation occurred, it would have been truly remarkable had he conceived of human nature in any other way. And even so I think that his clinical writings, reports of his experiences in attempting to aid people by means of psychotherapy, reveal a genuine

1. Karl MENNINGER, personal communication to O. Hobart Mowrer, quoted in the latter's book *The Crisis in Psychiatry and Religion* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1961), p.90.

respect for the freedom and responsibility of the particular patients he worked with. This humane approach is undoubtedly inconsistent with his theories about man — but perhaps it is more important to acknowledge and honor his humanity, than to chide him for his inconsistencies.

In fact, it is not at all difficult to uncover numerous inconsistencies in the writings of Freud. He admitted himself that he changed his mind on various points of psychoanalytic theory. We should not forget, in trying to evaluate the importance of these inconsistencies, that his writings appeared over a span of almost forty-five years. And during all of that time he was gathering new clinical data, attempting to revise his theories to accommodate the new data, and essaying speculative projection of his theories into fields not properly psychological at all.¹

Now if a person offers us a series of profound insights and suggestions, which later prove extraordinarily fertile and productive as others unfold their implications — and Freud does in fact provide us with many such stimulating insights — then I think we are entitled to regard whatever inconsistencies might be revealed by a careful examination of texts as not of central importance in assessing the total worth of his work.

Here we have a man who has given us psychological insights of lasting importance — repression, the unconscious, infantile sexuality — a man who has provided us with valuable descriptions of numerous types of psychological malfunction as well as suggestions for their cure, and with penetrating and often justified criticisms of religion and of civilization itself — a man who is practically the founder of contemporary psychology. Here is a man of such creativity, intellectual vigor and devotion to his work that, though ravaged by cancer for the last twenty years of his life, he would take no drugs for the pain because he found that it interfered with his professional activity.

Admittedly his theory of shame is both incomplete and inconsistent. But to base one's evaluation of Freud solely or chiefly on a weak and really peripheral part of his thought, to place major emphasis on lack of consistency and philosophical inadequacy in an author whose main contribution has been a series of penetrating and fruitful insights — in short, to concentrate mainly on his weaknesses and ignore his strengths — would be, in my judgment, to make a serious mistake.

Paul Alfred HAZARD.

1. "The deeper we penetrate into the study of mental processes the more we recognize their abundance and complexity. A number of simple formulas which to begin with seemed to meet our needs have later turned out to be inadequate. We do not tire of altering and improving them. (NIL, SE 22: 92.)" — Freud was 76 years old when he wrote this.