THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

SELF-CONCEPT AS A MEDIATING FACTOR IN SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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Norman, Oklahoma

1959

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SELF-CONCEPT AS A MEDIATING FACTOR

IN SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

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PREFACE

This is an essay on the self-concept: its origin and functions. The term itself, self-concept, is in wide use in the psychological literature of today, but this usage is very loose, even confusing. In writing this paper it has been my intent to make explicit what I consider to be the "real" meaning of the term, and then to locate the origin of the self-concept, so defined, in the experience of the person and to trace its development.

It is of course presumptuous for anyone to take a term that is in general use and to state categorically what it "really" means. Technical terms mean what the consensus says that they mean; it is almost completely a matter of convention. However, there are two grounds on which I justify my presumption. The first of these is that the accepted meanings of the two terms, self and concept, and the grammatical significance of their juxtaposition, must be taken into account. One cannot play fast and loose with language. The second is that the meaning must have a concrete referent in mind activities: that is, it must refer to a particular phase of the mind at work. If we cannot find such an activity that meets the demands of language, then the term itself

is meaningless and should be discarded. But I believe that there is such an activity and in my paper I have tried to analyze it in some detail.

My approach to the problem no doubt will be considered unorthodox by many. I have written in a purely theoretical vein, with no reference to the experimental literature, and in an essentially subjective tone. Though such an approach is not in keeping with the modern scientific temper, it has, I feel, peculiar relevance to a problem of this kind. I feel this way primarily because when I first set to work I had an objective study in mind, something on the order of the many studies on the self-concept reported in the literature. But I quickly became convinced that though these studies are interesting in many ways, they all fall short of measuring what I have called the self-concept, and I was unable to develop any other technique that could satisfy my own criteria. The weakness of these studies, as I see them--that is, the ones that employ a Q sort or inventory, or the like--is that they equate self-concept with recognition of one's own traits or characteristics. Of course, one <u>can</u> define the self-concept in these terms, and be quite operational about it. But it is easy to show, I think, that such a definition has little meaning. For example, if you ask a man whether a statement about honesty applies to him, he may say that it does, and he may even go so far as to rate himself at a given point on the continuum of honesty that you provide for him. But there

is no evidence in this self-rating that honesty is at all an issue with him--that in the course of the day's activities, when not confronted with a questionnaire, he gives time and energy to conceptualizing himself in this light. And here is the crucial point. If a test of the self-concept is to amount to anything, it must reflect a concrete aspect of the living person. Perhaps some day such a test will be developed, but I do not know of any now available. And so, lacking such a test, I have taken to a theoretical paper out of necessity.

I originally became interested in the notion of the self-concept, almost casually to begin with, out of frequent contact with the term in the therapeutic practicum that I attended my first year in the clinical program at the University of Oklahoma. Both the vague way in which the term was used and the impression, apparently shared by everyone, that it referred to something important within the self, aroused my interest and set me to thinking. However, I still would not have written a theoretical paper at all if this had not been suggested to me by Dr. Muzafer Sherif, who at the same time encouraged me to make the effort, and who in his concept of ego-involvement, provided me with a starting point. All of what I have written can be taken, in a sense, as an attempt to analyze this rather generalized concept. I am grateful to Dr. Sherif for having launched me. I must thank Dr. William B. Lemmon, too, for having whetted my curiosity

about the place of the self-concept in the personality and for some suggestions as to how it operates. And most of all I must thank Dr. Louis B. Hoisington for his infinite patience and consideration, and for his general influence on my thinking in psychology. I did not know that speculative thinking was respectable in general psychology until I met him. Finally, I must thank each member of my dissertation committee--Dr. Hoisington, Dr. Lemmon, Dr. Carlton W. Berenda, Dr. Carl R. Oldroyd, and Dr. Richard G. Cannicott--for his generous consent in permitting me to write a purely theoretical paper. They have given me the opportunity to develop my thinking in this area in a way that would have been impossible had I been restricted to an experimental investigation.

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SELF-CONCEPT AS A MEDIATING FACTOR IN SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The self-concept is a part function of the self--one that is generally of rather central importance, but not necessarily so. It is not, of course, an entity as such, but an activity. Self-concept, the noun, is a convenient way of referring to self-conceptualizing, the verb, but the use of words should not obscure the facts. The real subject of this paper is an activity of the self.

Certain features of the activity are obvious in the term itself: it is a conceptualizing of the self, thus a cognitive activity. However, it is never an accurate representation of the self. It is evaluative, dramatic, and idealized, and it carries with it a unique class of feeling states which have been called self-feelings (Cooley, 1910; McDougall, 1918). These play a unique and powerful role in the motive system of the individual, and in an important way set the course of his personal development.

Self-conceptualizing represents a kind of corruption

of the original, spontaneous, un-selfconscious mental activity that the infant is endowed with. It is not a "natural" or inevitable modification of the original structure but arises out of a particular kind of relationship with another person; one in which the self is made to feel humiliated, small, or inadequate, or the like. These are the original self-feelings--negative self-feelings--which arouse the self-conceptualizing activity. This activity, then represents a passive and defensive maneuver in the mind; one which brings satisfaction to the person in fantasy as a balm for his wounded feelings. This is why the self-concept is never truly representative of the self. Though it is a cognitive structure, it is seriously distorted by the person's needs to hold on to a glorified and dramatic conception of himself, a conception which is itself only a reflection of his need to present himself in the same light to others. It is because of this fact that the self-concept plays such a vital role among his psychic processes and that it serves, in one sense, as a repository for his personal values.

Though a person's total self-concept can be described, for practical purposes it is usually necessary to describe it at a particular moment. This is because there are times when the self-concept is functioning and times when it is not; and times when now one facet of it is functioning, now another; all as part of the person's response to a particular situation, with particular pressures, dangers, and demands. The

total self-concept can be considered as potential at any moment, but only that aspect or aspects which have been activated play any part in the person's life.

With all this, too, it must be recognized that the self-concept is not a necessary feature of the self. Not only are there times when each person is free of such activity, but there are some persons who remain relatively free of it day in day out. In this regard there are wide individual variations.

My paper is in four sections. In the first I have presented the views of four source writers: James Mark Baldwin, William McDougall, Charles Horton Cooley, and George Herbert Mead. In the second I have set down my personal contribution to the theory of the self-concept. In the third I have brought in for comparison with this view, the relevant theories of various modern psychological and psychoanalytical writers. And in the last section I have applied the notion of self-concept to the therapeutic relationship.

With regard to my source writers, my choice no doubt will appear unusual, to say the least, for none of the four are represented in any significant way in current psychological theory. This, I feel, is unfortunate, and is due, I dare say, to the "behavioristic revolution" that took place in psychological thinking in the early part of the century and which has not fully run its course to this day. These men decidedly are <u>not</u> behaviorists--representing, in fact, the

very subjective, introspective tradition against which the revolution was launched. This is true of Mead as well as of the others, even though he calls himself a "social behaviorist"--witness his analysis of the "I" and the "me." Nonetheless, all were very careful and thorough writers, and though they were "subjective" in their approach according to today's operational standards, they were quite thoroughly empirical. And their detailed analysis of the self and the idea-of-self, and of its origins in social experience, is unmatched today in the intellectual standards maintained except for the writing of certain isolated, outstanding individuals.

Much of what these men wrote about seems strangely old-fashioned today and as having little relevance to the problems that interest us. However, the social theory of self, which they so carefully and elaborately developed, strikes me as being basically sound and as providing a firm foundation for further theoretical excursions. It should be noted that this "theory" that I refer to is by no means a single, unified structure. Each of these men developed his own unique view. They formed no school or system and they can be brought together in this manner only insofar as they represent a more or less continuous intellectual tradition.

I have not, of course, presented the respective theories of these men in their entireties, for such a presentation would carry us far beyond the scope of my particular problem. However, I have gone to some pains to present in

detail those aspects of each theory that I have deemed relevant to my problem. This has amounted to a good deal of theory. Because of this, and because I have made no effort to fully integrate the individual contributions, and, further, because I suspect that the contributions themselves will prove puzzling to the reader who has been brought up on modern psychological writing--I present the following brief resume to orient the reader for what is to come.

The social theory of self is a theory of self-other. That is to say, the basic consideration is that of the self-other relationship. Self develops only in relation to others, in a process whereby these others are internalized, or carried along in the imagination as invisible companions. Thinking, according to this theory, is nothing more than silent conversation with these others, and self itself matures by making successive accomodations to them.

This is a strictly <u>subjective</u> theory, in that the other is real only as he exists in the imagination of the self; imagined existence is the only criterion of reality. Self creates other in the imagination (which includes perception) and responds to its own creation. This is the essence of self-activity.

Naturally, others are internalized out of social experience. The kind of others that exist in a man's mind reflect the character of the people he has consorted with, though of course the reflection is never a mirror image.

But the self is active and creative, and out of the raw material presented to it--concrete others, immediately present--it fashions highly generalized and ideal others which serve then as internal representatives of society-at-large and the moral order.

One thing is of special importance about these others: the attitudes they hold toward the self, for and against. These are the source of self-feeling--a unique class of feeling states distinguished by their reference to self, or what is called self-consciousness. These feelings can be either pleasurable or painful, but in either instance they are all of a kind, and distinct from spontaneous, or un-selfconscious feelings. Self-feelings are intensely impelling and are the moving force behind most of what we usually refer to as social motives. Pride and humiliation (positive and negative self-feeling, respectively) are examples.

Idea of self evolves as a part of the self in the context of the self-other relationship as these ideas and attitudes of the others are internalized. It is a reflection of the ideas held by the others about the self, reinforced by the accompanying attitude. This produces within the self a self-conscious, reflexive agency which Mead (1934) calls the "me." It is the cognitive side of self-feeling.

In Baldwin's analysis special emphasis is placed on a particular facet of the self-other relationship, which he calls the dialectic. This is a very simple consideration,

yet one basic to the growth process. According to this notion, the relationship between self and other is generally one of power. There is an ascendent party and a receptive one. This relationship is established naturally, at least for the child, who by his nature assumes a receptive attitude in the presence of anyone who goes beyond his understanding and an ascendent one when faced with an other whom he can grasp fully. The receptive attitude is that of humility and is the first step in the dialectic process leading to personal growth. The dialectic progresses as the person strives by active imitation to experience for himself what is unknown in his ascendent other and ends when he has expanded his experience and is able to read back into others this new meaning. There is a natural humility, then, at the beginning of the dialectic and a natural assertiveness at its end; and the growth of the self continues in this same manner throughout life.

For McDougall the main organizing force within the self is the self-regarding sentiment, which is nothing more than the person's feelings about himself, taken as an organized whole. McDougall's contribution is to show how the self develops as it is made sensitive to successively higher forms of social discipline, beginning with physical punishment and ending on a moral note with praise and blame. Each stage marks a development in the self-regarding sentiment and is characterized by a particular kind of self-feeling. And at

each stage, of course, the self is especially sensitive to certain attitudes and holds itself to certain standards. At each stage the dependence of self on other is clear and unmistakable.

Cooley is perhaps the most articulate of all the four men in his analysis of the self-other relationship, and especially so in describing the internalizing of conversations with others and in his accounting of the "looking glass self." The latter is a very simple but very important conception of a very common kind of self-other relationship in which the attitude of the other works its effects on the self. One looks for one's reflection in the mirror of the other, sees too how well or poorly it is received, and responds according to the reception with the appropriate self-feeling. Cooley emphasizes that this can go on in a more or less conscious way, but that by and large the person is not aware of it except for the resultant self-feeling. We do not very often consciously pose before the mirror, but we are concerned with our image more than we care to admit.

As for Mead, his work is profound and many-sided, but there is one aspect that is especially relevant to the topic at hand. This is his distinction between the "I" and the "me," as more or less distinct but interdependent aspects of the self. The "me" represents within the self the internalization of attitudes that others hold or have held toward the self. It is reflexive: the self objectifying itself, so to

speak. Whereas the "I" is subjective, spontaneous, and naive. According to Mead, the "I" responds to the "me," but it is an unpredictable and wholly un-selfconscious response. And this is the basis for the distinction: the "me" is objective, reflexive, self-conscious; the "I" is spontaneous, un-selfconscious, free. Of course, the self-concept is to be found among the reflexive, "me" activities.

CHAPTER II

THE SOCIAL THEORY OF SELF

James Mark Baldwin

The core of Baldwin's analysis of the "social self" lies in what he calls a "dialectical" process involving a self-other relationship. This is an endlessly continuing process, for we are always involved in some relationship with an "other," whether he be a concrete person in our immediate neighborhood or an idealized version of a person, real or hypothetical, which serves us as a model, or the like. But the dialectic is not just a self-other relationship; it is a principle of growth. It consists of three stages, the first of which is called the "projective."[1] This stage is marked by the person's recognition of the other as in some way going beyond him, as having qualities that he does not possess himself, and, thus, as being unpredictable in some ways. It leaves him feeling very uncertain about the

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[1] Projective is used here in a way almost diametrically opposite to that in which it is commonly used today. Today we say that we are "projecting" when we read our thoughts or feelings into somebody else, with the connotation of hidden motivation. Divorced from the implication of motive, this is much like what Baldwin describes as characteristic of the third stage of the dialectic, the "ejective."

way he stands with this other person and arouses in him what Baldwin calls a "receptive" attitude. Another word for this is humility.

Thus begins the dialectic; the recognition in the other of something that goes beyond the self is the signal for the beginning of an active effort to overcome the uncertainty. According to Baldwin this activity is essentially one of imitation, through which the person comes to know experiences previously unknown to him. Somehow, by imitating the other, the person gains a fuller understanding of the activities he throws himself into, and he succeeds, finally, in enlarging his experience to the point that he can grasp this other. This stage, the second in the dialectic, is called "subjective."

The third stage follows immediately, and is called "ejective." After expanding his experience, the person now turns around and ejects his experience onto others. He reads thoughts and feelings into them in this way, and being certain of himself now, takes on an assertive attitude toward them. He now knows how they feel and what they think and can predict what they will do, and is in a natural position to dominate just as in the first stage he was in a natural position to be dominated. The dialectic is now over; the person's growth experience has ended--though of course it will be resumed once again the moment he is thrown into the the receptive attitude.

The notion of the dialectic, then, provides a simple little paradigm for personal growth, but it has implications that belie its simplicity. For it implies not only that self and "other" are social products but that each is essential to and contained within the other.

> The 'ego' and the 'alter' are thus born together. Both are crude and unreflective, largely organic. And the two get purified together by this two-fold reaction between project and subject, and between subject and eject. My sense of myself grows by imitation of you, and my sense of yourself grows in terms of my sense of myself (Baldwin, 1899, p. 15).

Thus it is impossible, Baldwin writes, to isolate a person's thought of himself, and to say that in thinking of himself he is not essentially thinking of the other also. The way in which he thinks of the other automatically determines the way in which he thinks of himself.

In any event, the child learns to be submissive, receptive, imitative when in the presence of certain people, and assertive, controlling when in the presence of others. But this state of affairs is obviously the simplest possible case and one which in life is probably never realized. Ordinarily we are not as stereotyped as this scheme implies, neither in our behavior nor in our perception, or conception, of others. With any given other we may be on one occasion assertive and on another receptive, as on different occasions he presents himself to us in different ways. As an example of this, Baldwin cites the child and his mother. "Sometimes he tyrannizes over his mother and finds her helpless; at

other times he finds her far from submitting to tyranny, and then he takes the role of learner and obedient boy" (Baldwin, 1899, p. 28).

In this way there is introduced a kind of flexibility, which carries over to all of social intercourse. For this advance is in itself only the first stage of another dialectical process. The child adjusts to the varying aspects of the others, but then he turns around and reads his own variability back into them. As an upshot of this, it becomes his business to classify not persons but actions. "He learns the signs of wrath, of good humor, of sorrow; of joy, hope, love, jealousy; giving them the added interpretation all the time which his own imitation of them enables him to make by realizing what they mean in his own experience" (Baldwin, 1899, p. 29).

Now it can be seen that this adaptation too takes place within the dialectic as originally outlined. As far as the process goes there has been no change, but the self itself has changed--has <u>developed</u>, we say. To put it simply, the self has grown increasingly sensitive to changes in the social situation, and thus increasingly flexible in its adaptations to it. It is no longer that father as other evokes one kind of self, mother another kind, and little brother still a third kind; it is now that stern father evokes one kind of self, lenient father another, and so on with all the attitudes that father typically assumes. And of course, so

with all remaining others.

But development continues. Up to this point we see our child as possessor of two selves, which we have labelled the assertive and the receptive, depending upon whether the self or the other is dominant. He is, in short, a two-sided creature; both terms of the dialectic play their role on the proper occasion as they are called out by the other of the moment. There is no sense of unity here; the child vacillates with each passing influence. He assumes one self one moment and the opposite self the next; he is, in a sense, the slave of his immediate companions. But conditions conspire to a further development.

To get at this development we must bring in what Baldwin calls the "socius." This is nothing more nor less than the child's awareness, however dim, of a kind of social presence which goes beyond the persons with whom at any moment he is in contact. He gains this awareness when he finds that they relate to him in a manner that is neither purely assertive nor purely receptive. Thus the child

> sees the father pained when he has to administer punishment, . . . He finds the mother reluctantly refusing to give a biscuit when it is her evident desire to give it. He sees those around him doing gay things with heavy hearts, and forcing themselves to be cheerful in the doing of things which are not pleasant. He sees hesitations, conflicts, indecisions, and from the bosom of them all he sees emerge the indications of something which stands toward these higher persons from whom he learns, as the family law, embodied possibly in the father, stands toward him (Baldwin, 1899, pp. 50-51).

Of course the child doesn't really "see" anything,

the matter isn't nearly so clear-cut as this. In Baldwin's terms, "he simply feels puzzled at the richness of the indications of personal behavior which pour in upon him" (Baldwin, 1899, p. 51). And the fact that he is puzzled means, of course, that the two opposing thoughts of self which at this time exhaust the possible kinds of behavior he is able to depict to himself in thought, are inadequate. Thus he is once again faced with projective material, behavior which he cannot understand. And so the dialectic is once again set into motion. "The self of habit no less than the self of accommodation[2] is thrust aside, as he sees his mother's sorrow when she refuses him the biscuit; he cannot act aggressively toward her nor yet sympathetically" (Baldwin, 1899, p. 51). But now we must take into account the active intelligence of the child. From the puzzling evidence given to his senses he is literally forced to generalize a "higher law" governing human affairs; otherwise he will be lost in the confusion. And he comes to embody this "law" in the thought of an "ideal person," in a generalized thought of an other who behaves in this way. And because this new, ideal thought of other now serves as "project," the dialectic that follows is thereby modified. That is, the progression is no longer from receptive self (when the material is projective) to habitual or

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[2]"Habitual" and "accommodating" selves are the terms that Baldwin finally settles on to designate the polar aspects of self. For habitual you can read "assertive" or "selfish"; for accommodating you can read "receptive," "accepting," "imitative," or the like.

assertive self (when the material has been subjectivized and ejected). Instead it is from the partial selves (both the receptive and the assertive) to a unified self. And having attained such unity the child is thenceforth prepared to display the so-called "higher" forms of social and moral behavior.

This "higher law" or "ideal person" is given the name socius, and it is embodied in the child in the form of an awareness of "something always present, an atmosphere, a circle of common interest, a family propriety, a mass of accepted tradition" (Baldwin, 1899, p. 53). In this way is constituted a new "other" in the self-other relationship, and with it, of course, a new self; there cannot be the one without the other. And just as the new other is a generalized, ideal other, so too, and because of it, is the new self a generalized, ideal self. Now, this new self is a "receptive" self; the child cannot understand the idealized other--not fully, at any rate--cannot anticipate it, cannot find it in himself. And so it serves him as a "copy" for imitation just as any "project" does. The child, says Baldwin, thinks of the copy in this way:

> It is not I, but I am to become it. Here is my ideal self, my final pattern, my 'ought' set before me. My parents and teachers are good because, with all their differences from one another, they yet seem to be alike in their acquiescence in this law. Only in so far as I get into the habit of being and doing like them in reference to it, get my character moulded into conformity with it, only so far am I good (Baldwin, 1899, p. 36).

In this way, presumably, the self reaches what can be called the "ethical" level. The child now has an idea of what is "good" and feels obliged to behave according to that idea. In a sense this is nothing more than what, in the dialectic involving only the partial selves, is called his tendency to imitate. The difference is that now it is not that the child is faced by a concrete person whom he cannot understand (though of course he continues to come upon these, too), but rather that he is faced by his own idea of what the "ideal" person ought to be like. In the former case we say that the child is impelled to imitate the other; in the latter that he feels obligated to behave in accord with the ideal.

To summarize: in all of the above I have tried to present the general outline of Baldwin's theory of the growth of self-consciousness in as brief a manner as possible. Basic to his theory is the self-other relationship, and, within this relationship, the endless dialectic according to which personal-social growth is attained. According to this view, growth of the person is carried in the development of self-thought, or self-consciousness, which, in turn, progresses from its organic origins, through the stage of the partial selves--receptive and assertive--to the highest degree of the ideal or generalized self.

William McDougall

As a social psychologist, McDougall is much more modern in temper than is Baldwin. Whereas Baldwin's writings reflect a curiously rationalistic approach to the human psyche, McDougall's writings reflect the striving, impulsive, instinctive aspects which we are still so much concerned with today. But aside from this difference the psychological theories of the two men are much alike, at least in regard to the origins of the concept of self. In fact, McDougall acknowledges his debt to Baldwin on this score and draws from his freely. There are differences, though; on the one hand McDougall's analysis of the growth of the self-idea is not as deep or as detailed as is Baldwin's, whereas on the other hand he gives more attention to the problem of showing how this concept (the self-idea) contributes to an understanding of social behavior, and, in largest context, of the social structure itself.

McDougall's full social theory is carried in two books--the one here considered, and a later, and companion, volume called The Group Mind. However, much of this theory has little or no bearing on the problem I have set for myself, so I disregard it. Actually, the section that follows is drawn almost entirely from one chapter of the Social Psychology: Chapter 7, "The Growth of Self-Consciousness and of the Self-Regarding Sentiment."

Self-consciousness we can take to mean the idea of

self and as equivalent to Baldwin's "thought of self." But the "self-regarding sentiment" requires some elaboration. To begin with, a sentiment, in McDougall's thought, is an organization of emotions or, better of emotional dispositions around an object or a class of objects. Note that a sentiment is not an emotion as such or even a compounding of emotions; it is not a fact or a mode of experience at all, but rather an inferred feature of the organization of mental activities. Thus, when a man has developed the sentiment of love for a person or object, "he is apt to experience tender emotion in its presence, fear or anxiety when it is in danger, anger when it is threatened, sorrow when it is lost, joy when the object prospers or is restored to him, gratitude towards him who does good to it, and so on" (McDougall, 1918, p. 128). In a sense, then, sentiments mediate emotional experiences, but they are not the emotions themselves.

Now the self-regarding sentiment is just one among the person's repertoire of sentiments, with this difference: that the object around which it forms is the self--or, to be more precise, the <u>idea</u> of self. In this sense it is unique, and it plays a unique role in the social development of the individual. At the same time, both the sentiment and the idea of self around which it is organized are themselves social products. They develop as a result of constant interplay between personalities, between the self and society, and because of this, "the complex conception of self thus attained

implies constant reference to others and to society in general, and is, in fact, not merely a conception of self, but always of one's self in relation to other selves" (McDougall, 1918, p. 185).

It must be kept in mind that it is not the idea of self and the self-regarding sentiment as such that McDougall is primarily concerned with, but rather the way in which they serve to regulate the individual's conduct as he grows into a social being. In this growth McDougall distinguishes four levels of conduct, which, though not clearly delineated, seem to follow in invariable sequence, in a rough way, with passage through each necessary before the individual can reach the next higher. These four stages are: (1) the stage in which instinctive behavior is modified only by the experience of pleasure and pain incidentally met with in the course of instinctive activities; (2) that in which instinctive behavior is modified by rewards and punishments meted out more or less systematically by the social environment; (3) that in which conduct is controlled mainly by the anticipation of social praise and blame; and (4) the highest stage, that in which conduct is regulated by an ideal that enables a man to act according to his own notion of "right" regardless of the praise or blame of his immediate social environment.

It should be clear that there is no implication of "idea of self" in the first two stages of this progression; there is nothing more than a kind of hedonic modification of

behavior, which is just as characteristic of lower organisms as it is of man. For this reason I have chosen to skip over McDougall's discussion of these stages and to pick up the chain at the point at which the idea of self becomes a factor, at the point of transition between the second stage and the third.

But the idea of self does not emerge full-blown at this point; it too has its origins and development, and these must be located and traced if we are to grasp the role that the idea later plays in social behavior. To begin with, the first step, it seems, is for the child to learn to distinguish between "self" and "not-self." McDougall doesn't stop to inquire how this is achieved; he simply accepts it and proceeds. Going beyond this stage, however, he notes that those experiences that are not in some way referred to an external world of reality remain to constitute the nucleus of the child's conception of himself. But, though in a sense these experiences are basic to the self-concept, they nonetheless provide only the primitive beginnings of it, which, presumably, would remain in this state if it were not for the child's subsequent social intercourse.

In any event, after the child has come to distinguish between self and not-self he learns further distinctions among the latter objects, primarily that between persons and inanimate objects. And going further, he learns to distinguish different expressions and gestures of people, and, more

important, to understand them. In McDougall's view, this comes about because of a purely instinctive reaction of imitation excited in the child by the expressions of others. These are "doubtless accompanied in some degree by the appropriate feelings and emotions . . . /and in this way the child/ learns to understand in terms of his own experience the expression of others, learns to attribute to them the feelings and emotions he himself experiences" (McDougall, 1913, p. 189).

As his imitations continue the child learns better to differentiate the behavior of others, and at the same time he grows more aware of the feelings and emotions that prompt it. Eventually he becomes aware that he can play upon these, to a certain extent, and his interest in understanding them grows accordingly, and especially his interest in attitudes directed toward himself. In this scheme McDougall describes the same kind of "dialectic" process that is basic to Baldwin's thinking.

Now it so happens that at this early age the attitudes of other persons towards the child are rather freely expressed, as in praise, reproof, gratitude, anger, and the like. Hence, and this is the important point,

> as he rapidly acquires insight into the meaning of these attitudes, he constantly sees himself in the reflected light of their ideas and feelings about him, a light that colors all his idea of his self and plays a great part in building up and shaping that idea; that is to say, he gets his idea of his self in large part by accepting the ideas of himself that he finds expressed by those about him (McDougall, 1913, p. 191).

So much, then, for the genesis of the idea of self. Having come this far we are now, according to McDougall, in a position to consider the transition from the second to the third stage of conduct, from that "in which conduct is regulated chiefly by the expectation of rewards and punishments . . . to that in which the mere expectation of social praise suffices to regulate conduct" (McDougall, 1913, p. 192).

McDougall asks:

> Why is our conduct so profoundly influenced by public opinion? How do we come to care so much for the praise and blame, the approval and disapproval, of our fellow-men? This is the principal problem that we have to solve if we would understand how men are led to control their impulses in a way that renders possible the life of complexly organized societies. For the praise and blame of our fellows, especially as expressed by the voice of public opinion, are the principal and most effective sanctions of moral conduct for the great mass of men; without them few of us would rise above the level of mere law-abidingness, the mere avoidance of acts on which legal punishment surely follows (McDougall, 1913, pp. 193-194).

But it obviously isn't enough to say that a man's conduct is regulated by his idea of self and that this in turn is shaped by the opinion that others have of him. Idea of self is a purely cognitive thing, and no one pretends that cognitive states, of themselves, prompt us to do anything, much less to conform to the norm established by a public external to us. Rather, it is because the idea of self is so inextricably bound up with the self-regarding sentiment that it has any effect on our behavior. The self-regarding sentiment provides the motive power that the idea of self

lacks, and it is in this that McDougall finds the answer to his question.

But what about the origins of the self-regarding sentiment? Granted that it is bound up with the idea of self, how can we account for the particular organization of emotional dispositions around this idea? This is a difficult problem, but to start on it McDougall takes the view that the constituent emotions are originally given as components of what he calls the two "self-instincts."[3] To put the matter briefly, in man's native equipment there is an instinct of "self-assertion" (or self-display) and an instinct of "self-abasement" (or subjection), and these are accompanied by the emotions of "elation" (or positive self=feeling) and "subjection" (or negative self-feeling) respectively. In McDougall's theory, these are the "givens" out of which, with experience and the growth of the self-idea, eventually emerges the sentiment of self-regard.

There are two principal varieties of the self-regarding sentiment: "pride" and "self-respect." Of these the former is the simpler. It is described by McDougall as an expression of the self-regarding sentiment in which the

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[3]This is an expression of his familiar view that every instinctive process has a particular emotional feature. In an earlier chapter he presents a list of such pairings, and though today we look down on this part of his theory as giving up too much ground to instinct, I don't think that any honest reader can deny that he makes a most impressive case for his view <u>in the descriptive sense</u>.

instinct of self-abasement and the emotion of subjection have not been made a part. And how does this come about, and what are its consequences in social behavior? McDougall answers these questions, more or less, by presenting a hypothetical example of a child with a strong instinct of self-display, with its attendant emotion, who is never checked, corrected, or criticized, but who, rather is allowed to lord it over those about him.

> The self-regarding sentiment of such a child would almost necessarily take the form of an unshakable pride, a pride constantly gratified by the attitudes of deference, gratitude, and admiration, of his social environment; the only dispositions that would become organized in this sentiment of pride would be those of positive self-feeling or elation and of anger (for his anger would invariably be excited when any one failed to assure towards him the attitude of subjection or deference) (McDougall, 1913, p. 197).

Put in terms of that child's experience and character, to say that he has "pride" means that he

> would be incapable of being humbled--his pride could only be mortified; that is to say, any display of his own shortcomings or any demonstration of the superiority of another to himself could cause a painful check to his positive self-feeling and consequent anger, but could give rise neither to shame nor to humiliation, nor to any affective state, such as admiration, gratitude, or reverence, in which negative self-feeling plays a part (McDougall, 1913, p. 198).

This does not mean that such a child would be indifferent to, or immune to, public opinion; far from it. He might well

> revel in the admiration, flattery, and gratitude of others . . .; he would be indifferent only to their moral approval. And on the other hand he might well

> be painfully affected by scorn or ridicule (McDougall, 1913, p. 198)

but at the same time be little affected by moral censure. And all of this because of his incapacity to experience negative self-feeling, for it is this alone that can give him his respect for the superior power of the moral code. In this connection, McDougall notes that "for most of us the admiration and the scorn or ridicule of others remain stronger spurs to our self-feeling than praise or blame, and still more so than mere approval and disapproval" (McDougall, 1913, p. 198).

But most of us--those of us with a "normally developed moral nature"--are not "proud" in this sense; rather we have what McDougall calls "self-respect." That is, our self-regarding sentiment contains an element of negative self-feeling; it is the presence of this feeling that distinguishes self-respect. Now, negative self-feeling (subjection) is normally evoked as an innate disposition of the mind by the presence of "any person who makes upon us an impression of power greater than our own, and . . . its impulse is to assume an attitude of submission towards that person, an attitude that becomes in the child, as his intellectual powers develop, an attitude of receptivity, of imitativeness and suggestibility" (McDougall, 1913, p. 199). This is what is meant by the statement that the disposition to subjection has been incorporated into the self-regarding sentiment.

In this way, then, does McDougall account for the submissiveness that leaves the child open to the influence of those about him. But there are wider implications, too, for what the child learns in one situation he generalizes to others. Thus the attitudes that he learns out of his contact with particular persons (in this case, those who have authority over him) are eventually generalized onto what it is that they represent; namely, society at large. Once the child has grown aware of, or learned to represent, this agency, it continues thereafter to loom up vaguely and largely behind him--and of course it is there behind all of us. Now, because society at large is so indefinably vast it serves better than any individual, or group of individuals, to evoke this emotion and this attitude. For,

> with a collective voice and irresistible power [it] distributes rewards and punishments, praise and blame, and formulates its approval and disapproval in universally accepted maxims. This collective voice appeals to the self-regarding sentiment, humbles or elates us, calls out our shame or self-satisfaction, with even greater effect than the personal authorities of early childhood, and gradually supplants them more and more (McDougall, 1913, p. 201).

In sum, then, the exercise of authority over the child gives to his sentiment of self-regard the form of self-respect that is capable of humility,[4] or negative self-

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[4]The distinction between humility and humbleness must be made clear. The person with humility is one who is capable of "negative self-feeling" but at the same time is one who has achieved "self-respect." The humble person is the diametric opposite of the "proud" one; he has not achieved self-respect but is capable only of negative self-feeling.

feeling, and in so doing it "renders the developing individual capable of profiting by example and precept, by advice and exhortation, by moral approval and disapproval" (McDougall, 1913, p. 202).

But even self-respect does not account fully for our great regard for praise and blame; something more is needed. To find this "something more," McDougall turns to an appraisal of the impact that praise and blame ordinarily have upon us. The effect is complex: praise and blame are not like admiration, which brings only satisfaction to our positive self-feeling. Rather, "insofar as praise is accepted as praise, it implies our recognition of the superiority of him who praises and an attitude of submission towards him" (McDougall, 1913, p. 203). The distinction is brought out clearly in this example. We all feel free in our admiration of a great man. There is no impertinence felt or intended, and he no doubt derives his own kind of pleasure from the attention. However, it would be considered a great impertinence if we were to praise him, and he would resent our attention rather than find pleasure in it. It is always for the "superior" to praise and for the "inferior" to accept praise. And for us, in the role of inferior, "since our acceptance of praise involves the recognition of the superiority of him who praises, praise invokes our negative self-feeling; but since it is an acknowledgement by our superior of our merit it also elates us" (McDougall, 1913, p. 203).

In other words, it produces in us a state that McDougall terms "bashfulness"--a state in which the emotions of the two instincts are imperfectly fused, but one which is highly pleasant because both are being satisfied simultaneously. Moral approval gives us a complex satisfaction of a similar kind, with society serving in the superior role.

Blame and disapproval also produce a complex effect.

> They check the impulse of self-assertion and evoke the impulse of submission. . . . /and the emotional state that results ranges,/ according as one or other of these effects predominates, from an angry resentment, in which negative self-feeling is lacking, through shame and bashfulness of many shades, to a state of repentence in which the principal element is negative self-feeling (McDougall, 1913, p. 204).

Now in all of this we can see a considerable range of emotions, and we can attribute this to the organization of the two orders of self-feeling within the sentiment of self-regard. But again more is needed, McDougall asserts, to explain the magnitude of the effects that praise and blame, or the anticipation of praise and blame, have on us. To put the matter briefly, what is needed is that the sentiment undergo a process of "moralization." And in this process two factors seem to play a part; the first is fear, the second is sympathy.

Fear, of course, is fear of punishment, and it is normally established during the early days of childhood, when, according to McDougall, punishment is the only effective disciplinary force. This is during the second stage of

the person's development, before the idea of self has had much of a chance to form, at which time conduct is regulated strictly by the rewards and punishments meted out by the child's social environment. Later, in the normal course of things,

> punishment is gradually replaced by the threat of punishment in the successively milder forms of the frown and angry word, the severe rebuke, blame combined perhaps with reproach, and moral disapproval. . . . / But / all of these owe something of their effectiveness to the fact that they retain the nature of, because they continue to produce the effects of, the early punishments; that is to say, they evoke some degree of fear. . . . /And so, as a consequence, fear/ enters into and colors our emotional attitude towards authority in whatever form we meet it, renders us capable of awe and reverence in our personal relations, and is one of the principal conditions of the effectiveness of moral disapproval as a regulator of conduct (McDougall, 1913, p. 205).

Sympathy also serves as a moralizing influence. In its primitive form, sympathy is defined as "suffering with, the experiencing of any feeling or emotion when and because we observe in other persons or creatures the expression of that feeling or emotion" (McDougall, 1913, p. 95). It is a kind of induction process and is one of the innate dispositions of the mind.

Out of this primitive sympathy and the "gregarious instinct" arises active sympathy, which is "the tendency to seek to share our emotions and feelings with others" (McDougall, 1913, p. 95). Exactly how this comes about is never made quite clear; but in any event the important thing is active sympathy itself, and specifically its role in the

regulation of social behavior. McDougall admits that this poses a difficult problem, and he makes no suggestion that he has solved it. But as an approach to the problem he describes active sympathy in this fashion:

> It involves a reciprocal relation between at least two persons; either party to the relation not only is apt to experience the emotions displayed by the other, but he desires also that the other shall share his own emotions; he actively seeks the sympathy of the other, and, when he has communicated his emotions to the other, he attains a peculiar satisfaction which greatly enhances his pleasure and joy, or, in the case of painful emotion, diminishes his pain (McDougall, 1913, p. 173).

There are those, even, who cannot bear to suffer affective experiences in isolation; who, in fact, cannot experience any emotional state without at the same time experiencing the powerful desire to share it sympathetically.

In its effects on the person, then, active sympathy impels him

> to seek to bring the feelings and emotions of his fellows into harmony with his own . . . /or, when this is impossible,/ to bring his own into harmony with theirs. Hence he finds no satisfaction in conduct that is displeasing to those about him, but finds it in conduct that pleases them, even though it be such as would otherwise be distasteful, repugnant, or painful to himself (McDougall, 1913, p. 206).

Herein are to be found the primitive and powerful forces that lead to conformity.

In McDougall's view, then, the moralization of the self-regarding sentiment is accounted for by these two influences: the fear of punishment and the impulse of active sympathy. These give us--most of us, anyhow--"that regard

for the praise and blame of our fellow-men and for moral approval and disapproval in general, which is so strong in most of us and which plays so large a part in shaping our sentiments, our character, and our conduct" (McDougall, 1913, p. 207).

To summarize McDougall's views: the central concept is that of the sentiment of self-regard. This sentiment consists in its core of the two self-instincts of self-assertion and of self-abasement; and intimately attached to these are the self-feelings of elation and subjection, respectively. The integration of these polar opposites into the self-regarding sentiment produces self-respect; when the negative side is not integrated along with the positive the result is pride. The former allows for humility and submission; the latter does not. The cognitive side of the self-regarding sentiment is, of course, the idea-of-self, or self-consciousness. The individual pretty much accepts as his idea of himself the ideas expressed toward him by the significant persons in his life.

Once established, the idea-of-self and the self-regarding sentiment govern much of the person's social and moral conduct, making him sensitive to, or resistant to, public opinion. The actual moving forces, however, are the self-feelings, positive and negative.

Charles Horton Cooley

"It is my general aim," Cooley writes in the second sentence of his book, "to set forth, from various points of view, what the individual is, considered as a member of a social whole" (Cooley, 1910, p. 1). This statement sets the general tenor of the book: the individual is the object of attention, but it is the individual as he is played upon by social forces. This amounts to more than just the truism that the individual and his society are inseparable; it is a very careful and detailed analysis of the particular kind of relationship implied by "inseparability." In short, it is a serious attempt to show how society acts on the individual to make him what he is.

Cooley begins his analysis with the child at play, attributing to him the capacity for a vague, undifferentiated kind of feeling state in some way connected with social intercourse. He calls this simply "social feeling," and locates it at the heart of the child's primitive sense of sociability. The child's delight in companionship is said to be an illustration of this sort of thing, and as such is said to be an expression of an inherited tendency. But it is more than just the capacity for such feelings; it is the need for them as well, and this, too, is inherited.

Sociability, then, is by nature joyful to the child; it gives him "an innocent unself-conscious joy, primary and unmoral, like all simple emotion" (Cooley, 1910, p. 51).

And having tasted of this joy it is natural for the child, when left to himself, to continue it, or to re-create it, by means of an imaginary playmate. In Cooley's system of thought this marks an important step forward.

> It is not an occasional practice, but, rather, a necessary form of thought, flowing from a life in which personal communication is the chief interest and social feeling the stream in which . . . most other feelings float. . . . these conversations are not occasional and temporary effusions of the imagination, but are the naive expression of a socialization of the mind that is to be permanent and to underlie all later thinking. . . . Speaking broadly, it is true of adults as of children, that the mind lives in perpetual conversations (Cooley, 1910, pp. 52-54).

Of course there is the problem here of what form these "conversations" take before the child is able to talk. Cooley wonders about this too, briefly, but then passes over it on the grounds that, in any event, "after a child learns to talk and the social world in all its wonder and provocation opens on his mind, it floods his imagination so that all his thoughts are conversations. He is never alone" (Cooley, 1910, pp. 52-53). Later, as the child grows into an adult these imaginary conversations change in character, from the thoughts spoken aloud of the child to the silent reflections of the adult; but the conversation itself never ceases. In this sense, thought remains ever a social process.

But thought, even in this conversational sense with an imagined companion, is not complete in itself; the impulse to communicate is inseparably attached to it. Just wherein

the roots of this "impulse" lie, Cooley doesn't state, but we can assume, I suppose, that it is in the same "social feeling" that we were given to begin with. In this connection, Cooley remarks on the psychological doctrine that "every thought involves an active impulse as part of its nature" (Cooley, 1910, p. 56) and, carrying this over to the socially developed forms of thought here in question, he explains that this impulse "takes the shape of a need to talk, to write, and so on; and if none of these is practicable, it expends itself in a wholly imaginary communication" (Cooley, 1910, p. 56).

In short, the childlike need to think aloud or to somebody never leaves us.

> It is only by imparting that one is enabled to think or to be. Everyone . . . necessarily strives to communicate to others that part of his life which he is trying to unfold in himself. It is a matter of self-preservation, because without expression thought cannot live. Imaginary conversation . . . may satisfy the needs of the mind for a long time. . . . But, after all, the response must come sooner or later or thought itself will perish. The imagination, in time, loses the power to create an interlocutor who is not corroborated by any fresh experience (Cooley, 1910, pp. 58-59).

On the other hand, in a sense all real persons are imaginary creations: "To be imagined is to become real, in a social sense" (Cooley, 1910, p. 60). That is, a person can be real to us, and we can communicate with him, only to the extent that we are able to imagine an inner life (i.e., thoughts and feelings), to attribute to him.

Communication with an imaginary companion, then, is the essence of thought, and the kind of communication we have depends upon the kind of companion we imagine. This imagined person is called a "personal idea." Now, this idea is a cognitive thing, as we have considered it so far, but it cannot be kept divorced from feeling. As the personal idea grows, as our imagined companion grows richer in character, we experience a corresponding growth (or richness, or complexity) in the character of the emotions that it (he) evokes. These higher-order feelings are called sentiments, "these finer modes of feeling, these intricate branchings or differentiations of the primitive trunk of emotion" (Cooley, 1910, p. 80).

With the affective life brought into the picture, now, the personal idea takes on a fuller meaning and a new kind of relationship becomes possible--that which is called sympathy.

> The personal idea in its more penetrating interpretations involves sympathy, in the sense of primary communication or an entering into and sharing the mind of someone else. When I converse with a man, through words, looks, or other symbols, I have more or less intelligence or communion with him, we get on common ground and have similar ideas and sentiments (Cooley, 1910, p. 102).

Thus sympathy is essentially the equivalent of the personal idea, with the feeling quality given added emphasis.

As might be imagined, the personal and social implications of this are great. For, among other things, the person's capacity to imagine others--to create personal

ideas--is a measure of his capacity to understand. "One's range of sympathy is a measure of his personality, indicating how much or how little of a man he is. . . . What a person is and what he can understand or enter into through the life of others, are very much the same thing" (Cooley, 1910, p. 106).

Clearly, sympathy in this sense is a requisite for social existence. Without it we have no contact with others, and the avenues are closed along which we affect and are affected by the lives of others. Thus, social power depends upon sympathetic communication.

> A person of definite character and purpose who comprehends our way of thought, is sure to exert power over us. He cannot altogether be resisted; because, if he understands us, he can make us understand him, through the word, the look, or other symbol, which both of us connect with the common sentiment or idea; and thus by communicating an impulse he can move the will (Cooley, 1910, p. 108).

With this as background, Cooley turns to his central topic: the social self. The reader must keep two things in mind as he reads the next few pages. First, that the "social" modifier of self is redundant; in Cooley's view there is no self that is not a social product, and his ground for adding the adjective is simply that it gives emphasis to this fact. Second, that the notions of the conversational basis of mental activity are understood to apply throughout. Though Cooley is not explicit about this matter, I think it can be said that these are the elemental processes out of which the social self emerges.

But just what is the "social self"? Cooley defines

it as "simply any idea, or system of ideas, drawn from the communicative life, that the mind cherishes as its own" (Cooley, 1910, p. 147). It is, then, an idea, but it has an accompaniment of feeling--it is, after all, a cherished idea--and it is this feeling which appears to be its distinguishing feature. Cooley calls it the "my-feeling or sense of appropriation" (Cooley, 1910, p. 137). In any event it is indefinable.

> There can be no final test of the self except the way we feel; it is that toward which we have the 'my' attitude. But as this feeling is quite as familiar to us and as easy to recall as the taste of salt or the color red, there should be no difficulty in understanding what is meant by it. . . . /Thus,/ one need only imagine some attack on his 'me,' say ridicule of his dress or an attempt to take away his property or his child, or his good name by slander, and self-feeling immediately appears (Cooley, 1910, pp. 140-141).

However, self-feeling isn't necessarily the feeling of hurt or outrage. "Self-feeling of a reflective and agreeable sort, an appropriative zest of contemplation, is strongly suggested by the word 'gloating.' To gloat, in this sense, is as much to think 'mine, mine, mine,' with a pleasant warmth of feeling" (Cooley, 1910, p. 143).

Now, implicit in the idea of self, and thus in self-feeling, is the idea of an other. There would be no "mine" for the gloating man if there were no recognition, at the same time, of a "your" which it serves to offset. In fact, Cooley appears to take the position that there can be no mental activity at all without some reference to an other person. "It is doubtful whether it is possible to use

language at all without thinking more or less distinctly of someone else" (Cooley, 1910, p. 149). This reference to others may be "distinct and particular, as when a boy is ashamed to have his mother catch him at something she has forbidden, or it may be vague and general, as when one is ashamed to do something which only his conscience . . . detects and disapproves; but it is always there" (Cooley, 1910, p. 151).

This brings us to the familiar doctrine of the "looking-glass self." For in what Cooley calls a very large and interesting class of cases, the reference to the other takes the form of an imagination of how one's self appears in the mind of that other, and the kind of self-feeling that is aroused stems from the attitude toward this appearance that is attributed to that other mind. There are three stages to this process. There is, first, "the imagination of our appearance to the other person; /̄second,/̄ the imagination of his judgment of that appearance; /̄and third,/̄ some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification" (Cooley, 1910, p. 152).

Actually, Cooley admits, the looking-glass analogy breaks down at the second stage. It isn't the reflection of ourselves in the mind of the other that evokes our self-feeling, but rather the attitude we impute to him, the imagined effect that our imagined appearance has upon him. That this is so is demonstrated by the fact that the character of

the person in whose eyes we see ourselves reflected has a good deal to do with our self-feeling. Cooley's illustration:

> We are ashamed to seem evasive in the presence of a straightforward man, cowardly in the presence of a brave one, gross in the eyes of a refined man, and so on. . . . /And again,/ a man will boast to one person of an action--say some sharp transaction in trade--which he would be ashamed to own to another (Cooley, 1910, p. 153).

How do we come to be so sensitive to our reflection in the glass? Cooley offers the following genetic explanation.

To begin with, the child naturally observes the movements of the tending adults very closely, and eventually he comes to see a connection between his own actions and changes in these movements. In short, he grows aware of his power over these persons. In Cooley's words, the child then "appropriates" these actions over which he seems to have control and he tries to do things with his new possession. In order to achieve this he soon learns to apprehend personality and to foresee its operations. In the very young child this takes the form of simple and obvious devices to attract attention. In order to do this, of course, the child must first learn to please the adult of his choice, and in doing this he often gives the impression of "affectation"; that is, an undue preoccupation with what the other person thinks of him. By the third year, Cooley states, the child "claims intimate and tractable persons as mine, classes them among

his other possessions, and maintains his ownership against all comers" (Cooley, 1910, p. 156). In this way the social susceptibility of the character is set; the germ of the social self is conceived. And from this time on, "strong joy and grief depend upon the treatment this rudimentary social self receives" (Cooley, 1910, p. 166).

From this point on, development consists essentially in

> a greater definiteness, fulness [sic], and inwardness in the imagination of the other's state of mind. A little child thinks of and tries to elicit certain visible or audible phenomena, and does not go back of them; but what a grown-up person desires to produce in others is an internal, invisible condition which his own richer experience enables him to imagine (Cooley, 1910, p. 167).

And along with this, on the side of social action there is progress from the naive to the subtle.

> A child obviously and simply, at first, does things for effect. Later there is an endeavor to suppress the appearance of doing so; affectation, indifference, contempt, etc., are simulated to hide the real wish to affect the self-image. It is perceived that an obvious seeking after good opinion is weak and disagreeable (Cooley, 1910, p. 168).

In this respect a rather striking difference can be observed between young boys and girls.

> Girls have, as a rule, a more impressible social sensibility; they care more obviously for the social image, study it, reflect upon it more, and so have even during the first year an appearance of subtlety, finesse, often of affectation, in which boys are comparatively lacking (Cooley, 1910, p. 171).

But among boys there are great differences in this regard.

> Some of them have a marked tendency to finesse and posing, while others have almost none. The latter have a less vivid personal imagination; they are unaffected chiefly, perhaps, because they have no vivid idea of how they seem to others, and so are not moved to seem rather than to be; they are unresentful of slights because they do not feel them, not ashamed or jealous or vain or proud or remorseful, because all these imply imagination of another's mind (Cooley, 1910, p. 173).

Cooley describes this kind of child as being "non-moral." He "neither sins nor repents, and has not the knowledge of good and evil. We eat of the tree of this knowledge when we begin to imagine the minds of others, and so become aware of that conflict of personal impulses which conscience aims to allay" (Cooley, 1910, pp. 173-174).

But there is even more to be said about this state of affairs, for though simplicity is a charming quality both in children and in adults, it isn't necessarily an admirable thing, nor is affectation altogether a thing of evil. In order to get along in this world, a person has to have

> that imaginative insight into other minds that underlies tact and savoir-faire, morality, and beneficence. This insight involves sophistication, some understanding and sharing of the clandestine impulses of human nature. A simplicity that is merely the lack of this insight indicates a sort of defect (Cooley, 1910, p. 174).

However, he notes that there is another kind of simplicity, "belonging to a character that is subtle and sensitive, but /which/ has sufficient force and mental clearness to keep in strict order the many impulses to which it is open, and so preserve its directness and unity" (Cooley, 1910, p. 174).

Force of character notwithstanding, the essential feature of social growth seems to be not the ordering and unifying capacity of the mind, but rather its tendency to disequilibrium. Thus, for example, whenever our imagination goes out toward another person's point of view our present equilibrium is disturbed by his influence. "In the presence of one whom we feel to be of importance there is a tendency to enter into and adopt, by sympathy, his judgment of ourself, to put a new value on ideas and purposes, to recast life in his image" (Cooley, 1910, p. 175). That is, in a sense, a "weakness" in our character, for we unconsciously substitute someone else's attitude toward us for a more "independent" self-appraisal; but at the same time it gives us our capacity for growth. In the first instance--with reference to weakness--Cooley illustrates his point with a hypothetical case of what he calls a very "sensitive" person in social contact with another whom he takes to be of importance.

> If the other appears to think him well-informed on some recondite matter, he is likely to assume a learned expression; if thought judicious he looks as if he were, if accused of dishonesty he appears guilty, and so on. In short, a sensitive man, in the presence of an impressive personality, tends to become, for the time, his interpretation of what the other thinks he is (Cooley, 1910, p. 175).

And the same time, and in the second instance, this submissiveness or sensitivity may lead to personal growth.

> So long as a character is open and capable of growth it retains a corresponding impressibility, which is not weakness unless it swamps the assimilating and organizing faculty. . . . Indeed, if one

> sees a man whose attitude toward others is always assertive, never receptive, he may be confident that man will never go far, because he will never learn much (Cooley, 1910, p. 176).

All of the above pertains to our social contacts with particular people, especially those who stand ascendant over us, and to the self-feeling that these contacts generate. But there is, it seems, a kind of "projection" of this same process out onto society at large. This gives us a special kind of self-feeling, "a vague excitement of the social self more general than any particular emotion or sentiment" (Cooley, 1910, p. 176). The mere presence of people and the awareness of their observation of us often arouses "a vague discomfort, doubt, and tension. One feels that there is a social image of himself lurking about, and not knowing what it is he is obscurely alarmed" (Cooley, 1910, p. 176). But Cooley doesn't develop this point any further.

Concluding his discussion, he remarks that social self-feelings remain "the mainspring of endeavor and a chief interest of the imagination throughout life" (Cooley, 1910, p. 177). And this is so despite the fact that many people, perhaps most, "scarcely know that they care what others think of them, and will deny, perhaps with indignation, that such care is an important factor in what they are and do. But this is an illusion" (Cooley, 1910, p. 177), as, he avers, anyone is made keenly aware who has suffered through disgrace or any kind of social failure.

In much the same manner as Baldwin and McDougall, Cooley writes of two self-attitudes: the aggressive or self-assertive and the shrinking or humble. "The first indicates that one thinks favorably of himself and tries to impose that favorable thought on others; the second, that he accepts and yields to a depreciating reflection of himself, and feels accordingly diminished and abased" (Cooley, 1910, p. 199). The manifestations of each of these two selves are varied; for example, there are many "phases" of the aggressive self, which are expressed in the following manner. "First, in response to imagined approval we have pride, vanity, or self-respect; second, in response to imagined censure we have various sorts of resentment" (Cooley, 1910, p. 199). The humble self, he adds, may be treated in a similar manner, but he leaves the matter untouched. The analysis that follows is devoted exclusively to the aggressive forms: to pride (and vanity), self-respect, and self-reverence, which form a kind of hierarchy from low to high, though in a way not made explicit.

To begin with pride: we know pride, according to Cooley, when, in an aggressive attitude we imagine approval of ourselves in the minds of others. Or, under the same conditions, we may react with vanity, depending upon "the more or less stable attitude of the social self toward the world in which it is reflected" (Cooley, 1910, p. 200). Pride, of course, is more stable than vanity. The person who is proud

"feels assured that he stands well with others whose opinion he cares for, and does not imagine any humiliating image of himself" (Cooley, 1910, p. 201). However, his stability easily passes over into rigidity, for "he carries his mental and social stability to such a degree that it is likely to narrow his soul by warding off the enlivening pricks of doubt and shame" (Cooley, 1910, p. 201).

In contrast, vanity indicates a

> weak and hollow appearance of worth put on in the endeavor to impress others. . . . It is the form social self-approval naturally takes in a somewhat unstable mind, not sure of its image. The vain man, in his more confident moments, sees a delightful reflection of himself, but knowing that it is transient, he is afraid it will change (Cooley, 1910, p. 203).

He has, writes Cooley, no stable idea of himself, and

> will swallow any shining bait. . . . [He will] gloat now on one pleasing reflection of himself, now on another, trying to mimic each in its turn, and becoming, so far as he can, what any flatterer says he is, or what any approving person seems to think he is (Cooley, 1910, p. 203).

The vain man is thus rather chaotic in make-up, and emphatically so as compared with the proud one. But in this connection Cooley notes once again that it is disequilibrium that brings social growth. And so, "vanity . . . may indicate an openness, a sensibility, a teachability, that is a good augury of growth. In youth, at least, it is much preferable to pride" (Cooley, 1910, p. 205).

In any event, what is called self-respect incorporates both these tendencies. The self-respecting man is

> more open and flexible in feeling and behavior than one who is proud; the image is not stereotyped, he is subject to humility; while at the same time he does not show the fluttering anxiety about his appearance that goes with vanity, but has stable ways of thinking about the image, . . . and cannot be upset by passing phases of praise or blame (Cooley, 1910, p. 205).

Because of the stability and continuity of his character, "he always feels the need to <u>be</u>, and cannot be guilty of that separation between being and seeming that constitutes affectation" (Cooley, 1910, pp. 205-206).

Self-reverence is the highest form of self-respect; it is self-respect when the idea of self is that of a higher or "ideal" self. Reverence for this self implies resistance to any influence that the mind considers to be inconsistent with itself. This is illustrated in the man who "must feel that the final arbiter is within him and not outside of him in some master, living or dead" (Cooley, 1910, p. 211). In a sense, then, the self that is revered is a private rather than a social self, but in a sense only. For, looking at the matter closely, we see that our ideals of character are built up out of thoughts and sentiments developed in social intercourse, largely

> by imagining how our selves would appear in the minds of persons we look up to. These are not necessarily living persons; anyone that is at all real, that is imaginable to us, becomes a possible occasion of social self-feeling; and idealizing and aspiring persons live largely in the imagined presence of masters and heroes to whom they refer their own life for comment and improvement (Cooley, 1910, pp. 211-212).

In time, however, the original models disappear: "the personal element in these ideals, having performed its function of suggesting and vivifying them, is likely to fade out of consciousness and leave only habits and principles whose social origin is forgotten" (Cooley, 1910, p. 212).

In sum: Cooley makes most clearly explicit the self-other relationship as the basis of development, and describes growth and resulting character in terms of internalized conversations with imagined others. Like McDougall, he posits polar opposites of self-feeling, aggressive and humble, which, apparently, arise naturally with the establishment of the idea of self. One very common way in which the relationship between self and other is structured is expressed in the notion of the looking-glass self. This term implies a three-stage process whereby self first imagines how it appears to the other, then imagines how that appearance is judged, to which, finally, it responds with self-feeling. Self-feeling is the central issue with Cooley; he considers it "the mainspring of endeavor and a chief interest of the imagination throughout life" (Cooley, 1910, p. 177). In his view we are thoroughly and deeply immersed in an effort to preserve a respectable self-image and are constantly and anxiously appraising our reflection in the "mirror."

George Herbert Mead

Mead is usually connected most intimately with Cooley in his point of view, and I think that the grounds for this

will become apparent to the reader in what follows. There are, of course, differences between them, but for the most part Mead seems to accept the notion, put forth by Cooley, of the continuing conversation of gestures, and of the "looking-glass self." In fact, he devotes much of his thought to an elaboration and modification of these notions. But whereas Cooley is typically discursive and empirical, Mead is systematic and profound--characteristics which one might expect of a man who is perhaps more the social philosopher than the psychologist.

The book itself is divided into three parts, according to the headings in the title: Mind, Self, and Society. Here we shall take up only the first two of these, beginning with Mind.

Mind is a social product; it presupposes social interaction, without which it would not take form.[5] This is Mead's message throughout. Now, social interaction means "communication," in one form or another--or rather, it demands or establishes the conditions for communication. People have contact with one another; that is what is meant by social interaction in the most primitive sense. And people in contact with one another must inevitably develop some sort of

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[5]There would be some kind of mental activity, of course; we must assume this as an inherent characteristic of the human animal. What Mead means is simply that this activity would not take the form, or follow the pattern, of mental activity as we, with our "minds" know it--without benefit of social interaction.

communicative system. One person makes a "gesture" and others about him respond to it; this is the simplest form of communication, and the meaning of the gesture is given by the response to it. Thus, a man may raise his hand in anger, and the meaning of this gesture, at this level, is the response to it that the threatened man makes, whether it be fear, anger, or what not. Communication of this sort goes on without language, of course, but for human social life it has serious shortcomings; in fact, without language, social life as we know it--and socialized people as we know them--would be impossible.

But a distinction must be made between a gesture and a significant gesture. A gesture can be defined simply as the beginning of a social act which serves as a stimulus for the response of another person involved in that act. For a gesture to be significant, however, it must be such as to call out the same response in the person making it as it does in the one to whom it is made. The importance of such a gesture is at once apparent, for it puts the two parties to the communication on the same ground--leaves them with a more or less identical stimulus to respond to--and thus it is the source of what we call "understanding," "sympathy,"[6] and the like.

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[6]In fact, sympathy as we usually use the term, and significant communication, amount to about the same thing. We sympathize with another, we say, when we in some way experience as he does, or when we have "access" to the state he is in. This is essentially what distinguishes significant communication.

To give an illustration from Mead:

> If somebody shakes his fist in your face you assume that he has not only a hostile attitude but that he has some idea behind it. You assume that it means not only a possible attack, but that the individual has an idea in his experience. When, now, that gesture means this idea behind it and it arouses that idea in the other individual, then we have a significant symbol (Mead, 1934, p. 45).

In other words, "we have a symbol which answers to a meaning in the experience of the first individual and which also calls out that meaning in the second individual. Where the gesture reaches that situation it has become what we call 'language'" (Mead, 1934, p. 46).

Language and significant gesture, then, are one and the same thing; it is language that carries these ideas that exist in both the gesturer (speaker, writer), and the one to whom the gesture is directed (listener, reader). And this is so, Mead tells us, because language, or the vocal gesture, is the one form of gesturing which comes back to the gesturer. When we talk we hear ourselves talk, and in this way we are put into the position of the person to whom we are talking. Therefore, "the import of what we say is the same to ourselves as it is to others" (Mead, 1934, p. 62).

Now there is consciousness and there is <u>self</u>-consciousness, and it is important to keep the difference between the two clearly in mind. Consciousness refers simply to that which is subjective--or to experience itself--and is as characteristic of the infant, and, presumably, of the dog and cat,

as it is of the socialized adult. However, self-consciousness is another matter altogether, and it arises, with "mind," when we have learned to respond to our own gestures in the same way that we respond to the gestures of others (or in the same way that others respond to them). As noted above, this constitutes reflective thinking, or reason. "Reason cannot become impersonal unless it takes an objective, non-affective attitude toward itself; otherwise we have just consciousness, not self-consciousness" (Mead, 1934, p. 138).

The importance of this distinction lies in the fact that in our social life we generally experience this "reflected" kind of consciousness rather than the "direct" kind.

> The individual experiences himself as such, not directly but only indirectly, from the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same social group, or from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs. For he enters his own experience as a self or individual, not immediately, not by becoming a subject to himself, but only in so far as he first becomes an object to himself just as other individuals are objects to him . . .; and he becomes an object to himself only by taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself (Mead, 1934, p. 138).

Thus, our experienced selves arise out of significant communication, in the same process that gives us reflective thinking, or "mind."

The process of thought--or mind--can be described as a kind of internalization of the conversation of gestures. In the beginning we talk to others, and hear what we are saying, and, because we have been brought up with the same

values as have the others, we respond implicitly to what we are saying in much the same way as the others respond explicitly. In this way we build up an organization of responses within ourselves, and this organization gives us our capacity for thought.

> Only in terms of gestures which are significant symbols can thinking--which is simply an internalized implicit conversation of the individual with himself by means of such gestures--take place. The internalization in our experience of the external conversation of gestures which we carry on with other individuals in the social process is the essence of thinking (Mead, 1934, p. 47).

Thinking, then, or "mind," is characterized by what Mead calls reflexiveness; the individual, in his mind's eye, sees himself as others see him. In this way he "objectifies" himself, or puts himself in the place of others and assumes their attitudes towards himself and his behavior.

Clearly, too, reflexiveness is the essential condition for the development of self-consciousness as well, or of what Mead calls, simply, the self. This, in fact, is definitive of self: it is an object to itself, a meaning that the word, self, is said to imply; for self is reflexive, Mead notes, and means that which can be both subject and object. The individual with a "self," then, is an individual who can "get outside" himself in such a way as to become an object to himself. This is achieved, of course, in the way described above, with the development of language and significant communication.

It should be noted that there is in all of Mead's writings an emphasis on the cognitive element of self-consciousness, as opposed to the feeling element emphasized by Cooley. In this Mead is quite explicit.

> Emphasis should be laid on the central position of thinking when considering the nature of the self. Self-consciousness, rather than affective experience with its motor accompaniments, provides the core and primary structure of the self, which is thus essentially a cognitive rather than an emotional phenomenon (Mead, 1934, p. 173).

In fact, emotion, when it enters the picture, seems only to interfere with significant communication. Ordinarily, when we are in an emotional state we do not use language to call out in others the state we are in. When we shout angrily at someone, for instance, we do not intend to call up anger in him; and conversely, we are not frightened by a tone which we may use to frighten somebody else. In brief, "on the emotional side, which is a very large part of the vocal gesture, we do not call out in ourselves in any such degree the response we call out in others as we do in the case of significant speech" (Mead, 1934, p. 149). The emotional response is the antithesis of rationality which requires that we "know what we are saying, and /t͞hat/ the attitude of the other which we arouse in ourselves should control what we do say" (Mead, 1934, p. 149).

Now the self as it has been described so far consists essentially of the organization of social attitudes, the attitudes that the individual takes toward himself for

having taken the position, or role, of the generalized social other. However, this is not the whole story; the full self is a larger organization than of just these attitudes; there is in addition, at least under certain conditions, a response by the person to them. This response is what Mead calls the "I" as over against the organization of attitudes, which constitutes the "me." The "me" is the self-conscious person, or, in other terms, the objective phase of the full self; the "I" is the further response of the individual to his objective self, or the subjective phase of the full self.

The "me" is the experienced part of the self; it is the self-conscious part; and it is, moreover, the predictable part inasmuch as it is the incorporation of the attitudes, values, etc., of the social group, or groups, of which the person is a member. But the "I" goes beyond this; it is the person's response to what he has incorporated into his self-consciousness, and it is not predictable, not even by the person himself. The "I" is always coming into being, and since it is the person as "subject" rather than as "object," it never comes into consciousness in the same way that the "me" does. It is only after the "I" has acted that it comes into experience at all, and then in the form of a memory.

We can say, then, that the "I" and the "me" are distinct but inseparable phases of the self. The "I" responds to the "me," and thus it is the latter, the particular organization of attitudes, that gives the basic structure to

the self, to which the "I" adds the element of novelty or freedom. The "me" is conventional by definition; the "I" unique. But the "I" would never arise at all without a "me" of some kind to respond to. "Taken together they constitute a personality as it appears in social experience. The self is essentially a social process going on with these two distinguishable phases" (Mead, 1934, p. 178).

To summarize: Mead's main contribution I take to be his concept of the "significant gesture" and his distinction between "I" and "me." The former designates gestures which call out similar responses in both the one making the gesture and the one to whom it is directed. This is a necessary condition for real communication and sympathy, a condition which is realized most effectively through use of the spoken word. It is for this reason that the word is so important in human and social development.

The "I" is the subjective self; the "me" is the objectified self. The "me" is constituted by the attitudes of others toward self that have been internalized. It is the socialized side of the self, the side in which the conventional social values are carried. It is the part of the self that is under view in the state of self-consciousness. The "I" is spontaneous and unself-conscious. It is the response that the self makes to the "me." The "me," then, provides the basic structure of the self; the "I" provides the individual variation and gives the sense of personal

freedom.

Summary

On the preceding pages I have presented selected aspects of the self-theories of my four source-writers. My own ideas about the self-concept are derived in their general measure from these theories, and are to be taken as a modification and, I hope, as a development of them. I think that there is much in these theories to recommend them despite their old-fashioned flavor and their obvious inadequacies when viewed in the light of present day "dynamic" literature. The following points, especially, I take to be valid and significant.

1. The self-other relationship and the internalized conversation of gestures. This is perhaps the most basic concept in the theory of the social self. According to this concept, the self is constituted by a pattern of internalized self-other relations, carried on within the mind as a conversation. In these conversations the other may be explicitly recognized or he may be only vaguely implied; he may be a concrete presentation of a real other, or a generalized and ideal representation of one. The self internalizes and creates its others in its imagination and proceeds to carry out its life in intimate relationship with them. In one form or another the other is always present to self; self implies other.

2. The power relationship: assertion and receptivity. Typically, self-other relationships are structured in a hierarchical way with either self or other ascendant, the other party receptive. This is a natural structuring based upon the perception of the other either as "going beyond" the self in his qualities or as being readily comprehensible. Power, in this sense, means only the extension of influence, and of course it proceeds from the ascendant party to the receptive.

3. The dialectic process and humility. Personal growth proceeds according to a dialectic process whereby felt inadequacies are overcome and the experiential range of the person is extended. The dialectic originates in the state of humility, or the recognition of one's own limitation with respect to the "other" or to the situation. Without humility, which is the experiential counterpart of the receptive attitude, there can be no growth.

4. The "looking-glass self" and self-feeling. These concepts place special emphasis on certain rather powerful effects that are worked on the self in relationship with its other. It is a three-stage process: self perceives its appearance as mirrored in the other; it perceives also the other's judgment of that appearance; and to this judgment self responds with the appropriate self-feeling, either positive or negative. The term self-feeling designates a unique kind of affective state which has powerful effects on the

workings of the self-machinery; it is self-conscious feeling.

5. The "I" and the "me." These terms convey the fact that self is expressed both as subject ("I") and as its own object ("me"), and brings to point a basic distinction among self-activities and modes of experience. "I" is spontaneous and free, and unaware of its own activities. "Me" is self-conscious. "Me" is constituted by the attitudes of others towards the self, and gives the self its basic structure. "I" is the self's response to the "me," and cannot be said to be structured at all. The distinction between "I" and "me" can perhaps best be conveyed in the distinction between consciousness ("I") and <u>self</u>-consciousness ("me").

CHAPTER III

THE SELF-CONCEPT: ORIGIN AND FUNCTIONS

In the section that follows, I have presented my views on the self-concept, taking as a starting point the general theory of self as propounded by the four source writers. In essential features, though not in all details, I hold to the theory they have developed; my notion of the self-concept serves only to modify and extend it.

Of course the term self-concept is roughly equivalent to what they have called the idea-of-self. It is my position, however, that the self-concept does not arise naturally and inevitably out of the self-other relationship, as they imply, but out of a more or less clearly defined kind of self-other relationship. I hold that the self-concept arises specifically and only as the self perceives in a significant other an attitude held by that other toward the self.

According to the four source writers, the self is born unself-conscious, or spontaneous, and grows reflexive, or self-conscious, out of social contacts. In this view of the matter, spontaneity is taken as the primitive, raw material, and the reflexive as the more developed and mature state. Mead is the only one of the four who takes the

spontaneous aspect of the self seriously (his "I"); the others remain engrossed with the reflexive aspect and thereby present a one-sided picture of the self.

It is my thesis that the self develops along its spontaneous course until it has to contend with attitudes from its significant others. Faced with these attitudes the self cannot hold on to its spontaneity, for these attitudes arouse self-feeling, or, what is the same thing, make the self self-conscious. Self-feelings are of two rather distinct kinds--feelings of heightened self-esteem (as pride) and feelings of self-abasement (as humiliation). The prototype of self-feeling is the latter--self-debasement--which is the natural response to the rejecting attitude of the other.

The self concept arises in response to this feeling of debasement. The self creates a conceptual self possessed of whatever qualities are required for it to gain in fantasy the satisfactions denied it in real life. The self-concept, then, is a compensatory device, created out of a debased self-feeling and giving rise to self-satisfaction. It is necessarily a glorified and dramatic conception of the self.

Once it is established the self-concept serves as an objectified, and, in a sense, "ideal" version of the self. It carries with it the most intense personal values and for this reason serves to regulate the person's moral and social life. At the same time, and in so doing, it destroys his natural spontaneity, because it creates within him an

objective standard to which he must refer his thoughts and impulses and by which he judges his conduct. This introduction of a reflexive process in the workings of the mind I take to be a very basic modification in the self-structure.

It is part and parcel of the same view that self-concept is not an inevitable outcome of the social process. It is at least theoretically possible for the person to attain maturity still preserving his original spontaneity; moreover, it is apparent that some people do in fact preserve a good deal of it, others less. The secret of spontaneity is an internalized accepting other--that is, one devoid of attitudes. So long as the person grows up in such an atmosphere and carries around within him only the image of such others, he literally does not have the raw material out of which to create a self-concept. This is a fact with interesting personal and social consequences.

The Self-Concept

What, then, is the self-concept? First and foremost, it is a conceptual representation of the self: a word picture created in its imagination by the self and to which it attends with warm personal interest. It is, obviously, an objectified version of the self, even though very much a subjective creation. The self-concept is the object of attention in those states that we refer to as self-consciousness. It is interesting to note that in fact it is <u>not</u> consciousness of self that is realized in these states, but

consciousness of a conceptual representation of self instead. Consciousness of self, pure and simple, in the sense of self-awareness, is a spontaneous state and a different matter altogether. This latter state is more accurately described as consciousness, with no self-reference, even though, of course, the experience is all a creation and a constituent of the self.

In this, two features of the self-concept immediately show. The first is that it is a cognitive entity; the second, that it is reflexive. It is cognitive in that it is descriptive of the self: a word picture carrying with it certain qualities held as important by the self. And it is reflexive in that the self thereby turns around on itself in the sense that it makes this representation of itself its own object. The self first creates the representation and then fastens its attention on it. With this, thinking, feeling, and acting continue apace, but all in the context of, and affected by, a continuing reference to the objectified self. This creates the effect of the self as spectator, watching its own performance.

The self-concept is a cognitive entity, then, and it is reflexive. A third feature is that it is evaluative. It is not simply a description of the self as, say, a disinterested observer might describe it. It is a distorted picture: the self made dramatic, noble, romantic. It is an imagined self possessing all of the qualities that the self

most dearly would love to possess. It is the kind of self that would bring from its audience the admiration and approval that the real self finds vital to its self-esteem. In this intensely personal, egocentric way the self-concept thus represents the person's version of the ideal self--though it may not accord in any respect with the ideal that he acknowledges in public or the ideal that, even in private, he may sincerely feel that he upholds. It is the self of wish-fulfillment and fantasy and it is the source of deep self-satisfactions. Thus, though it is a cognitive thing it has close ties with the emotional life.

Considering these three points together, then, we can say that the self-concept represents a unique kind of mind activity: the self conceptualizing itself. There are various guises that this activity takes. The most clearly discernible, perhaps, is what is ordinarily referred to as self-styling. By self-styling we refer to the trait of labelling the self according to supposed qualities and then advertising it is this way. For example, a man may be a self-styled individualist, a liberal or progressive, a he-man, a Don Juan, a good sport, and so on--even a self-styled ne'er-do-well, isolate, or fool. The range of styles a man may assume for himself extends full across the range of human values, but in one sense all styles are the same: they are all more or less transparent devices intended to appropriate certain qualities to the self. That a good deal of personal

value is attached to these qualities can readily be determined, for the style that the person sets for himself is his most sensitive point, and he will be intensely disconcerted if you are not duly impressed by it and either crushed or enraged if you shatter, or even threaten to shatter his pretensions.

But self-styling is only one of the guises that the self-concept takes, and the most naive. The self-styled person is under the illusion (perhaps a forced one) that others take him seriously in his pretentions. A more perceptive person would only be embarrassed by such self-exposure, and even though he may entertain the same fine concept of himself, and gain the same self-satisfaction from revelling in it, he is restrained from advertising the fact by his premonition of what would happen if he did. He would become the laughing stock of all who knew him. And so, with this to face, the concept goes underground, so to speak. That is, it finds expression in more covert, less easily detected mind activities. Daydreaming is one of these activities, and probably the most common. The usual daydream, I take it, is a fairly simple kind of fantasy which follows a more or less typical pattern. James Thurber's The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (1942) is probably as good an example of this as can be found. Subject to continued snubs and real and fancied abuses from his wife and passers-by on the street, Mitty fills his free time with fantasies of himself as a courageous ship's captain, a cool

and expert marksman, a distinguished surgeon, and so on--all figures of gallant proportions in marked contrast to his own humble and inadequate character. And in these roles Mitty does great deeds; and, an important point, he does them in front of an audience; and this audience recognizes his great character for what it is and defers to him with the deepest respect and admiration, even with awe and reverence.

But the daydream is still a relatively open expression of the self-concept: if not to the public, at least to the self. There are other forms which are more deeply rooted in the self and which do not appear to be at all closely related to these rather fanciful and amusingly infantile forms of self-indulgence. Thus, the self-concept is to be found at the bottom of many of the moral principles by which so much of our daily lives are regulated. The man of principle is a man with a self-concept, a self-concept that is so well-integrated and is so "deep," as we say, that for the most part it serves its guiding purposes without drawing attention to itself. Also it is individualized, so to speak, in the sense that the audience, so visible and important in self-styling and daydreaming, has disappeared. It is the person's own values that he expresses. And yet, to the extent that a man's moral values are bound up in moral principles to which he must adhere on the pain of losing his self-respect, to this extent is he only reflecting the moral attitudes of the others who are or who once were significant to him. Much

that is found in the open self-conceptualizing of the self-styler or the daydreamer is abridged in this moral activity; yet it is in essence the same process, with the same social origin and the same function within the self.

As an example of this, consider the man who is honest out of principle. He is honest because his self-respect demands it; because, in the last analysis, he conceives of himself as an honest man, and any falling away from his standard, either in thought or deed, fills him with anxious unrest; his self-esteem is lowered. This appears to be purely a private matter; it is only the person's self-respect that is involved; there is no visible audience. And yet the audience is there, even though hidden; for self-esteem based on honesty is only the internal reflection of an earlier self-other relationship in which the attitude (esteem) of the other toward the self hinged on honest behavior. In the last analysis the principle of honesty, however well internalized and accepted as a personal value, always has its origins in a social relationship and always operates in exactly the same manner as other aspects of the self-concept.

So much for moral principles. From these, one could go on into the field of social conduct--etiquette, propriety, etc.--and show that the same kind of analysis holds, with, of course, the appropriate substitution of social for moral values, and an adjustment for the special qualities of self-feeling which distinguish the social from the moral sphere.

And no doubt one could go even further to find other expressions of the self-concept, but for present purposes we can be satisfied with those I have mentioned. They should give the reader a concrete idea of what I have in mind when I use the term, and that is all I am concerned with at this point.

In passing, it should be emphasized that self-conceptualizing is a concrete mind activity, and, like all mind activities, that it has temporal boundaries and is never exactly the same from one moment to the next. The self-concept does not exist as an abstraction or as a permanently fixed, continuously functioning agency of the mind. Though of course a man's concept-of-self will show a more or less consistent pattern over a period of time, the particular form that it takes at any particular moment depends in good part on the situation he finds himself in--its pressures, dangers, and demands. Thus, though it is permissible to speak of a man's self-concept, taking it as a whole, what is self-concept at any particular moment is generally only a relatively small portion of the whole, or he may have none at all. From moment to moment the content of the self-concept changes, and it may disappear altogether. The "he-man" may give up his pretensions temporarily; the self-righteous person may occasionally relax; and the "he-man" of one moment may be self-righteous the next. There is pattern in this, but there is also constant change, so that it is always necessary to describe the person's self-concept at

the moment in question if its function within his personality and if his behavior are to be understood.

As a final point here, it is important to note that in this view the self-concept is always a positive thing: always a concept that raises the self-esteem. One often hears it said that a person has a terribly poor picture of himself--that he conceptualizes himself as weak, debased, unworthy--and observations such as this may be offered to refute my contention. In fact, there are philosophies of psychotherapy which hold that the goal in therapy is to help the client progress from a negative self-concept to a positive form. Rogers, for example, seems to hold this view. However, the words here are misleading. Of course people do feel weak and inadequate and do belittle and berate themselves, but these do not constitute their self-concept; rather, these are the internalizations of the way that their others conceive of and feel about them. These are the negative self-feelings out of which the self-concept arises, but they are not the self-concept itself. The latter has a particular place in the self-structure; it arises in response to a particular condition and serves a particular purpose and it is always positive.

Attitudes

In current psychological parlance the term attitude is used in the most general sense to denote a disposition,

or "set," to act in a particular way, or in another sense as any kind of orientation toward a person, event, idea, or the like. But the term is to be used here in a much narrower and more specific sense.

First of all, attitudes attach only to people or to their institutions or values and are either for or against. A so-called neutral attitude is no attitude at all; it simply bespeaks a man's indifference, or his inability to commit himself one way or the other. But beyond this, attitudes are for or against in a rather unique way. One can be for a person--as in love--or against him and still not hold an attitude toward him. We have our likes and our dislikes and not all of these are attitudes by any means. What is unique about an attitude is that it conveys either approval or disapproval. It is, then, a special way of being for or against, and it has a special significance both to the self and to the self-other relationship.

An attitude is always directed at the self, or ego, of another person (or indirectly, at his values and institutions); it is a judgment which in its intent either tears down that self or builds it up. Attitudes are either derogatory or enhancing, a debasing of the other or an uplifting. In the negative sense the best illustration of what I mean is the attitude that whites traditionally hold toward the Negro, or, to generalize, the feeling that any prejudiced or bigoted person has toward the object of his prejudice. This is not

just a feeling of "being against"; there is hostility in it, and rejection. The negative attitude has about it the air of sneering or contempt; it belittles the other, and, by comparison, aggrandizes the self.

On the other hand, positive attitudes, so-called, serve to aggrandize the other--to enhance or support his self. In this they are simply the converse of negative attitudes. It is a point worth noting, however, that the enhancing of the other is not achieved at the expense of the self. On the contrary, it serves the self in exactly the same way as does the negative attitude: the enhancing of the other reflects back and enhances the self. One simply cannot hold a positive attitude toward a person who embodies qualities which, if given appreciation, imply a de-preciation of the self: that is, a person who threatens the self. The person who threatens our self-esteem is never welcome; our attitude toward him must be negative; to pretend that it is otherwise is hypocricy. On the other hand, we express a positive attitude toward the person who has been, or is, responsible in some way for the raising of our self-esteem. Thus we may feel flattered by something he has said to or about us, or, in a more complicated way, we may feel that he represents the triumph of certain social or moral virtues which we like to ascribe to ourself, or the triumph of a point of view that we identify with. In the former instance, the enhancement of self is clear and direct; in the latter

it comes back to us by reflection, out of identification.

It appears, then, that despite the obvious fact that positive and negative attitudes are opposite in nature, they have as a common bond the fact that they serve the self in much the same way. And their partnership extends beyond this, too, for in one important way they are alike in the effect they have on the self-other relationship. Both bring to this relationship the atmosphere of threat and struggle. With regard to negative attitudes the effects are striking and obvious. It is against human nature to be unaffected by scorn and contempt, and especially when it issues from a person who is held in high regard or who is in a position of authority. Thus the child who is attached to and dependent upon his parents cannot face their expressions of disapproval with equanimity. Their attack on his self, however unintentional or disguised it may be, is a catastrophic experience to him. It is not merely an intensely unpleasant or painful experience: it is intolerable. And though for the adult the effect of such a blow is generally lessened by reason of his greater independence and wider attachments, he too must find something intolerable in this kind of relationship. Sorrow and suffering and disappointment, however acute and painful, nonetheless have nothing about them of this order. They can be accepted, faced up to. They do not leave the self feeling demeaned or debased; thus they do not arouse within the self any frantic measures for

defense or retribution. Attitudes do.

Positive attitudes are, of course, much easier for the self to accept. To be approved of, praised, especially by someone who is important to the self, is an exalting experience, and one that is far from intolerable. So obvious is this that it is easy to overlook the fact that the positive attitude, too, has certain unsettling effects on the self. For though we may bask in the warmth of approving glances now, we do not find security in this way, for approval implies disapproval. This is not a matter of logic but one of fact, and a fact that sooner or later makes its imprint on every consciousness. The approving person under one set of circumstances is the disapproving person when these circumstances are not met. The two are simply opposite sides of the same coin. Approval and disapproval are psychologically the nearest of kin, and in the heady experience of being approved there is always the lingering doubt that it will last and the vague apprehension or dread that disapproval will follow.

In short, though positive and negative attitudes may in some ways be as contrasting as black and white, they produce certain effects in their object which are much alike. When we are subjected to negative attitudes we suffer what is called <u>rejection</u>; to positive attitudes, a more subtle <u>insecurity</u>.

It is worth noting in passing that what we ordinarily

refer to as acceptance stands in contrast to both positive and negative attitudes. Acceptance is like love: an extraordinarily difficult state to put into words. But the accepting person does not attack or demean the other's self, nor for that matter does he enhance it (though he may give it support), nor does he put it under any pressure to perform in an acceptable manner. In effect, the accepting person is free of attitudes of any sort. This does not mean that he is lacking in values or standards or that he uncritically accepts all behavior as good, or to his taste. It means only that he does not have to preserve or defend his values by debasing someone else. One can be opposed to the conduct of another person, resent it, feel that it is silly or stupid, and still relate to that person in an accepting way. One can, in fact, berate him soundly, criticize him with vigor and heat, and still, so long as one has no scorn or contempt for his self, continue to accept him. One does not reject a man simply for thinking him a fool, or a heel, or even an ass. One rejects him only when the judgment is accompanied by a derogatory attitude, and it is important to note that judgment and attitude are quite independent of each other.

Self-Feeling

Self-feeling is the natural response to the perception of an attitude-toward-self. This holds whether the attitude in question is positive or negative.

By self-feeling I refer to a unique class of feelings, different from what can be called spontaneous feelings in origin, in quality, and in their effects on the self. As with attitudes, we can speak of positive and negative forms of self-feeling. Characteristic of the former is pride, of the latter, humiliation.

Spontaneous feelings are those in which there is no self-reference, as in anger, joy, satisfaction, and the like. In these states the welfare of the self, the way it is being received by others, is not at stake. The self is neither seeking glory nor praise, nor fearful of humiliation. It is unself-conscious, given over completely to participation in life's affairs, totally unconcerned with whatever impression it may be making on others, not at all involved in building up or preserving a good picture of itself either in the minds of others or in its own mind. Spontaneous feelings are experienced by the self only when it "loses itself" in life, as we say, when it abandons its need for self-conscious control and exposes itself--its ideas, feelings, impulses--freely to the world.

Self-feelings, on the other hand, always bespeak an awareness of the self as it is perceived by, and received by, others. And there is in self-feelings always an element reflecting this awareness. The self is elated, proud, humiliated, smug, ashamed, etc., according as it senses the reception it gains. Self-feelings always are either an inflating

of the self-esteem, or a deflating, and they accompany what is often referred to as ego-involvement. Self-feelings are aroused only by the successes or failures of the self in its social struggle with others: its struggle to be recognized as outstanding, noble, grand, and the like--as better than the next fellow, or at least as good. In short, they are egotistical feelings, the feelings of personal worth or worthlessness, personal adequacy or inadequacy, personal triumph or defeat. They are the essence of self-consciousness.

Perhaps the difference between the two classes of feelings can be shown most clearly by a simple comparison. Take, for example, anger, which is spontaneous, and compare it with indignation, which is self-feeling. Or compare joy with elation, or, perhaps most revealing of all, satisfaction with self-satisfaction. These are comparisons between states which are roughly equivalent in their feeling-quality except for the presence or absence of self-reference.

Consider satisfaction and self-satisfaction. Typically, we are satisfied when we have achieved some sought-for goal. We have worked hard and we have succeeded, and we have gained the object of our desire. It is a good feeling, one of purest well-being. This is satisfaction, not self-satisfaction. It would be self-satisfaction only were we to take the successful completion as a symbol of our competence and worth. We are self-satisfied when we appreciate not our achievement and the pleasure it brings us, but ourselves for

having achieved. Self-satisfaction is a feeling of self-enhancement, a pleasure derived from a contemplation of the self as a commendable figure. It is, then, a self-centered feeling in the strictest sense of the term. Pure satisfactions, on the other hand, contain no reference to self at all.

In a sense, then, self-feelings are richer in content than are spontaneous feelings, and, when positive, add a pleasurable excitement that spontaneous feelings cannot provide. Unhappily, though, self-feeling always is contaminated with a kind of uneasiness which can best be described as apprehensive: <u>always</u>--even in its most intensely positive forms, as, for example, elation. Self-feeling and anxiety go hand in hand.

I do not refer here to anxiety in the sense of a vague fear, but very specifically as an anxious anticipation that the self is going to be debased and rejected. This gives to self-feeling a peculiar quality than can only be described as <u>intolerable</u>. Such an effect is most clearly seen, of course, in negative self-feelings--as the feeling of humiliation--but it pervades all self-feeling with a greater or lesser intensity. This is psychic pain of a unique and powerful sort, and it has unique and powerful repercussions on the workings of the mind.

Of course, spontaneous feelings can be painful, too. Sorrow, fear, disappointment, grief--all of these are states

of suffering, but the self can accept them, face up to them, with relative equanimity. Self-feelings, on the other hand, do not sit so easily. Humiliation, as an example, simply cannot be accepted. The self must do something to assuage the smarting; it cannot sit by quietly and suffer such abuse; the depreciation of the self must be met with some attempt at self-defense, self-enhancement, or retribution.

Naturally, positive self-feelings are not such acute states of anguish. Nonetheless they too have their unsettling effects. Thus elation--perhaps the most intensely positive form that self-feeling can take--is distinguished from joy specifically by the load of apprehension that it carries. The elated person is as intensely anxious as he is pleased with himself, for he is aware that the glorious self-feeling of the moment is a precarious thing, and that the unstinting approval he is revelling in may quickly and unaccountably change to outright rejection. This awareness is always part and parcel of positive self-feeling. It is what contaminates the feeling and what distinguishes it so strikingly from pure, or spontaneous feelings.

I have stated that self-feelings have a unique and powerful effect on the workings of the mind. I shall have more to say about this on subsequent pages--beginning in the section that follows--but for now let me point out just a few things in passing. First, self-feelings are implicated always in what are referred to, in the clinical world, as ego

defenses. Pure feelings, on the other hand, never are associated with these mechanisms. Second, self-feelings provide the internal force for the social motives of convention and conformity. Again, pure feelings never serve in this way. Third, self-feelings give rise to the self-concept, and this, once established, is responsible for the evocation of subsequent self-feeling. In the next section we turn to a statement of how this comes about.

The Self-Concept: Origins

I have stated that the perception in an "other" of an attitude-toward-self gives rise to self-feeling. This sequence continues as self-feeling in turn gives rise to the self-concept. In the present section I shall try to describe this sequence, putting it in the general terms of a hypothetical--and more or less typical--youngster responding to the socializing influence of his parents and the adult world.

We go back again to the self-other relationship: the child as self, and his parents (or other adults, or society-at-large) as other. In this relationship the child is almost continuously at the receptive pole and thus is subject to influence. That is to say, his self is in large part what is "called up" by these others; what he is at a particular moment is in response to, and thus is determined by, the features that they present to him. He is, then, in a very dependent and vulnerable position, and he is necessarily sensitive to the way these others relate to him. In turn,

these others are usually a good deal concerned with the task of molding his young self into the approved social form. For parents, this task often raises ticklish issues, especially insofar as they construe it as a moral one. Parents vary widely in this matter, but in general--at least in our society--they perceive a good deal of their child's behavior as having moral implications, and they bring their heaviest forces to bear on him to see to it that he grows up "good." There are, too, a great many issues not exactly moral in nature--more properly, social--which nonetheless arouse much the same feelings in and much the same efforts from parents. Thus, their child must be socially acceptable, he must not appear odd, or inadequate, or uncouth, and the like. Parents on the whole feel obliged to implant certain values, certain standards of conduct, in their children, and whether these be moral, in the usual sense, or more generally social, they must implant them or face censure from neighbors and society at large, and feelings of shame and guilt from within.

Parents are deeply involved, then, in the decency and propriety of their children. Their self-esteem rises and falls in good part with their child's conduct, either as it meets or surpasses the moral and social standards of their community, or as it more or less flagrantly violates or falls below them. Clearly they perceive their child's potential for indecency and impropriety as a grave threat, and they muster all of their resources to keep it in check.

One of the most powerful of these "resources" is the attitude that is called forth by their child's behavior and brought to bear against him. I think that it is safe to state that on no other issues are attitudes so universally aroused in parents as they are on these issues of moral-social behavior. Just why this is so is beyond the scope of this paper; we can be content here with the simple observation.

In any event, the child ordinarily does have to contend with the attitudes of his parents; and as I have noted above, he naturally and inevitably responds with self-feeling. Praise and blame, admiration and belittling, applause and derision--any glimpse that the child may get of his parents' approval or disapproval of him, whatever guise it may take, arouses his self-feeling, positive or negative.

The self-concept arises directly out of negative self-feelings. In order to find relief from the intolerable apprehension that they cause him, the child turns to the world of imagination and creates a conceptual version of himself--a version in which he finds a measure of self-satisfaction. It is a simple and relatively straightforward sequence. Negative self-feeling gives rise to self-concept, which in turn elicits positive self-feeling. It is all an imaginative, creative bit of mind-work, with no regard for the hard facts of reality. The self creates the kind of conceptual version that suits its fancy, and naturally the

qualities it attributes to itself vary with the nature of the self-feeling that it suffers. In a sense, the self-feeling creates a need, and the self-concept satisfies it. Thus, the feeling of inadequacy gives rise to a self-concept that is gloriously adequate; the feeling of humiliation to one that is grandly triumphant; the feeling of shame to one that is dramatically vindicated; and so on. Thus, the self-concept is in a sense directly the opposite of the real self, and it serves as a more or less adequate cover-up for what the latter feels most acutely as its real defects.

It should be noted that in all of this one can detect the presence of an audience. The entire sequence revolves around one, and is a more or less deliberate play at winning its applause. At first this audience is the immediate presence of the parents, or other significant adult figures, but as these are internalized, and as other persons take on significance to the child, the audience itself grows imaginary and increasingly complex. The other then becomes a <u>pattern</u> of others, some real, others generalized and ideal, some immediately present, others removed, and sometimes present only in the form of vague injunctions and demands. Nonetheless, despite the very elaborate growth in the structure of the audience, and thus in the particular qualities assumed in the self-concept, the nature and the function of the latter remain constant. And so long as the child--and later the adult--has to contend with an audience which disapproves,

he will resort to it. Naturally, the person who is saddled with others all of whom continuously and stridently express their disapproval will resort to it most of all.

In this sequence it is important to note the crucial role of the attitude. It is the perception in the other of an attitude-toward-self that originally creates this sequence, and which precipitates it later on (though in the latter instance it often is the imagined attitude of internalized others). Should, then, a child be fortunate enough to grow up among adults, all of whom accept him without qualification, such a sequence should never be established. Thus it is conceivable that a child could grow into manhood entirely lacking in self-concept, with a mental life totally free and spontaneous. But of course the chances of anyone meeting with such charmed circumstances are highly unlikely, to say the least.

Personal and Social Implications

Once established, the self-concept serves as a powerful regulatory agency within the self. Whatever the self does, whatever its thoughts, feelings, impulses, or actions, it does with one eye on its idealized version of itself; and the quality of the self-feeling that it experiences is determined by how well these standards are met. Self-concept, then, places the self under obligation to comply with its own demands, and the punishment that it metes out to itself should it fail is severe: shame, humiliation,

guilt, self-contempt, and the like. The danger of punishment then remains a constant threat and it keeps the self always on the alert lest it should impulsively incriminate itself.

The self-concept works thus from within. But it also makes the self quite sensitive to public opinion and thus serves in a second way as a form of socialized self-control. For the self, issues relevant to the pretensions of the self-concept are especially touchy, and criticism in these areas has especially devastating effects. This is so because all of the qualities attributed to the self in the conceptualized version actually cover up sore spots; where the person pretends to be strongest he is actually weakest, so that even a hint of criticism or suspicion is enough to cause him great alarm and to make him re-double his efforts to demonstrate to himself and his public that his pretension is the real thing.

In sum, then, the self-concept applies a more or less continuous pressure on the self to control its activities on pain of self-disapproval: shame, self-contempt, and the like. However, the control it achieves is a very shaky thing, for the pressure exerted in this way often is not great enough to exact compliance. In the determining of self-activities other factors play a role, and often they are so impelling that the self-concept may appear completely ineffectual.

One of these factors is shame, or modesty. Much of the time what we like to think about ourselves in private we modestly declaim in public. Part of this, no doubt, is due to a realistic appraisal of ourselves and a recognition that however much we may like to see ourselves as noble and dashing or otherwise impressive, in day to day actuality we are usually anything but. But there is more to the matter than this, for often there is something surreptitious about the way we hide the concept which we hold. We would be embarrassed if we were found out, for we know that if others were aware of our pretensions they would greet us with hoots of laughter. And so for the most part the self-concept is kept pretty well hidden from prying eyes, even though, paradoxically, in the imagination it flourishes most virogously in public view.

Another factor working to undermine the regulating effects of the self-concept is our remarkably well-developed capacity to see ourselves and our behavior according to our idealized conception of ourselves, no matter how poorly we may act. It must be emphasized here that the self-concept is a subjective thing, and that it is not our behavior--as seen objectively by others--that must accord with it, but rather our private accounting of our behavior; which is another matter altogether. There is a subjective cycle established in this. The same forces that originally led to the creation of the self-concept continue to operate within us

to distort our self-observations so that from our own point of view our behavior usually seems to give credence to our cherished views.

It so happens, then, that grandiose self-concept and patently inadequate and shabby behavior may co-exist within the same self with surprising comfort. And of course to the extent that this is true, the controlling and directing force of the self-concept is weakened, and no doubt there are some people in whom it has almost no effect whatever. Nonetheless, despite this important qualification it remains true, in general, that to some degree the self-concept does have a regulating effect on the self-activities and that in most instances this effect is considerable.

On the social scene, a significant part of this self-regulation goes under the names of convention and conformity. The internalizing of social conventions and the disposition to conform to the current norm provides much of the cement which holds societies together in the day to day contacts of their peoples. These are the hidden--for the most part--values and the basic psychological agreements which not only permit social affairs to run smoothly, but also serve as the grounds for much of society's common emotional life.

In ordinary usage the terms conventional and conformist are often used interchangeably, and, from the strictly social viewpoint there is perhaps some justification for this. Any attempt at psychological analysis, however, must

begin with a clear distinction between the two.

As applied to the psychological make-up of the individual, the term conventional implies a rather thorough identification with the traditional values of society. The conventional person accepts these as his own, believes in their ultimate validity or meaningfulness, and commits himself to their support. The essence of conventionality, then, is a subjective state, something not readily visible from the outside. It is a particular kind of internal dynamics, and not to distinguish between it and the external manifestation only blurs the issue. Thus, the man who dresses according to the prescribed "convention" and who follows the typical daily routine of business and social activities is not necessarily conventional for so doing. What decides the issue is the motivation that underlies the behavior, and the feeling that accompanies it. The truly conventional person gains a certain feeling of security and of self-satisfaction out of the socially conventional act just in knowing that it is conventional, and, what is perhaps even more important, is made uneasy at the thought of any deviation from it, or any impulse toward the unconventional. He is self-conscious about the act and feels, though usually in only the vaguest way, that his self-respect depends on it. In short, he is tied down to his conventional behavior by powerful forces within him from which he cannot easily escape.

Once a particular convention has been accepted it

persists with great vigor, even though the person may change social circles and live among those who hold to different standards. The conventional person has a certain strength of character; he can hold to his convictions against the force of public opinion. It is not a life-or-death matter that those around him give allegiance to different values. He may not enjoy his predicament; he may feel uncomfortable and resentful, and may harbor great prejudice against the outsiders; yet he does not feel crushed by his isolation nor feel self-contempt for his seeming oddity. He maintains his old standards, holds on to his "principles," and does not suffer undue temptation to compromise.

The conforming person, on the other hand, has no such enduring qualities. To conform is to take on the qualities appropriate to the immediate situation, with no other consideration. The only standard to the conforming person is consensus. The act of conforming is one in which the mind process is dominated by the need to have reached certain conclusions, to have identified with certain values or opinions or feelings; in short, to have taken on an appearance of accord with those significant people who are on the scene <u>now</u>. This is not merely a superficial accord, for the appearance deceives the self as well as observers. Real conformity is a deep and pervasive way of responding to a social situation; it engulfs the self; the self is what it pretends to be, heart and soul. Thought, feelings, impulses:

all of these are subjected to amazing transformations, without any seeming disturbance in the psychic apparatus. The critical faculty is suspended and consistency with the past is never even considered. In a sense, the conforming person has no history; he is what the situation of the moment makes of him.

Actually, then, the difference between the conventional person and his conforming brother is striking. The conventional person is strong, in a sense, but rigid. The conformist is weak but flexible. But the difference goes deeper than this: the conventional person is strong but rigid and the important issues in his life are moral; the conforming person is weak but flexible and the important issues in his life are social.

The difference, then is profound, amounting almost to an opposition in the person's orientation to life and its values. The conventional person lives in a world of right and wrong and tries to tread the straight and narrow path of righteousness. Everything he does has some moral implication and he remains always more or less aware of this fact even though he often may be unable to state just what the issue is. The standards he has internalized are arbitrary and absolute and he does not challenge them. He is conscience-driven, and suffers his worst punishment--self-condemnation --when he fails to obey its demands.

On the other hand, the conformer has little problem

with his conscience. Righteousness is not an issue with him. He is a social animal; his standards are social standards, and his joys and displeasures all are social in origin and character. The conventional person is, of course, a social being too, but his is a social world shot through with moral commands and sanctions, and relative to the conformer he is much more concerned with his moral principles than with social rewards. The conformer, on the other hand, is relatively free from the moral problem, and thoroughly engrossed in the quest for social approval. Naturally, this freedom relieves him of much of the burden that the conventional man carries. Yet it is doubtful that he enjoys an easier life, because in escaping the moral predicament he creates a new one in the social sphere. In a sense, he "moralizes" his social life. That is to say, he interprets his social experience in a way analagous to the moral interpretation that the conventional person makes of his experiences. His social life becomes not just a means for attaining pleasure and relaxation, but a means for proving himself or for finding security. His self-feeling hangs in the balance, attached to his social prowess--his popularity, his belongingness--just as in the conventional person it is attached to moral achievement. Thus, the conventional person who is isolated or unpopular may be lonely and uncomfortable, but that is all. The conforming person in the same predicament suffers acute distress, bordering on the catastrophic.

Such a state is analagous to guilt in its impact on the sufferer and in its repercussions on his mental life, though of course the strictly moral quality is lacking. Thus, though the conforming person in his rampant sociability makes himself relatively free of moral issues and moral pressures, his freedom is illusory. The very emphasis he places on social life transforms it into something that is more than social, and makes him prisoner to it. And so, in one way at least, the conventional person actually has the easier time of it, for though he has absolute and arbitrary standards to live up to, he knows what they are, for the most part, and gains a measure of security in his awareness that they will never change. And once he has established the proper controls over his impulses he can usually live a fairly free life, without fear of consequences. He knows security. But the conformer has no security, and by the nature of things never can have it. His only standard is consensus, and as this shifts with each change in fashion so too must he if he is to avoid rejection, or being left out. His, then, is a life of eternal and anxious vigilance.

It is my contention that both conventional and conforming behavior is mediated by the self-concept, and that the differences between them stem from a difference in the structure of the self-concept and in the experiences through which it was internalized.

With the conventional person, the self-concept is

relatively solid and enduring. Though in its particular qualities it is dependent upon the stimulation of the immediate situation, in its general features it is well-established, and independent of the situation. This means simply that for the person in question the others whom he has internalized, and his general and idealized version of the other, dominate his mind. They are the ones he must please, the ones whose response to him is most responsible for the rise or fall of his self-feeling. The other immediately present is less important. Probably no one can ever be completely immune to the attitude that any other person may express toward him, yet for the conventional person the effect that the immediately present person has can be understood only in the larger context of his relationship with his internalized, generalized others. Thus, being sneered at is never a pleasant experience; however, if the person who sneers is one whom the internalized others themselves would sneer at, the effect of his attitude is significantly altered. In fact, the experience may be taken as evidence to be presented to the internalized others that the self does in fact have the qualities that they desire him to have. This does not make the sneer a pleasurable thing to bear, but it does lessen the sting and it even provides support for the self-esteem.

In any event, the conventional person has internalized a generalized other, or a pattern of others, who

represent very definite values and who play a very active part in his mental life. They are important to him, and his self-concept has been shaped in accord with their standards. It must be assumed that their standards have been conventional standards, for the most part, and that they ordinarily expressed their disapproval of him on evidence of unconventional behavior. Out of repeated expressions of this kind arises a self-concept claiming, and proclaiming, just those conventional qualities for the self as had earlier been so frequently questioned and under suspicion. In this way is a more or less conventional self-concept handed down from generation to generation, and convention itself perpetuated.

What is characteristic of the conventional person, then, is the persistence in his mind of a powerful other, or group, or pattern, of others, on whom he remains dependent; that is, to whom his self-feeling is most profoundly sensitive. It is this internalized relationship, this essentially unchanging conversation with respected superiors who know where they stand, that gives him his consistency and his convictions. Because they remain important to him his self-concept remains through his life essentially as it was originally cast.

With the conforming person the development clearly follows a different course. The act of conforming obviously indicates the enormous power of the person immediately

present, and the relative lack of influence of the internalized others. The self-feeling of the conforming person seems to hinge directly on how he is received by the person in front of him now, or the particular group he is in at the moment. It is not that he is any more sensitive to, or responsive to, the person immediately present than is the conventional person, rather, it is that his self-feeling is more directly and more exclusively determined by the concrete presence. The matter here is quite a bit simpler than with the conventional person. The latter, I have said, takes final refuge, finds ultimate support and justification, in his internalized others, and the scorn of the person immediately present, if he is of the wrong sort, may only add to his self-justification. The righteous man who is laughed at by the sinner is more than ever convinced of his righteousness, and his virtuous self-concept is only strengthened.

The conforming person, however, has no such remote and basic support. He depends almost completely upon the person available to him at the moment; his self-feeling is almost altogether at the mercy of this person. He has no stable self-concept with definite and usually virtuous qualities; rather it is indiscriminately and amorphously social. Any sign of disapproval from anyone will touch it off, and it will assume whatever guise appears acceptable to the particular audience. This is a very infantile stage, in a sense; it is as if the conforming person has never attached

himself to any one person or group, never given himself over to anyone to be shaped, never committed himself to anyone. In any event, his self-concept shows no indelible imprint from any particular relationship. It has no individuality, no striking emphasis or dominant theme.

As a result, the self-concept of the conforming person serves as a regulating agency only in a most irregular and "unstable" way. As the qualities of the self-concept change more or less willy-nilly with changes in the qualities of the others immediately present it naturally cannot promote consistency or adherence to lasting standards. The potential self-concept of the conforming person is almost limitless; whatever value is adopted by or accepted by his group is quickly reflected in his self-concept. In its workings, the self-concept of the conforming person serves in exactly the same way as does that of the conventional person; it differs only in its chaotic lack of structure, its indiscriminate responsiveness to all others and all values.

But this statement is obviously an exaggeration, and so is much of what else I have written about the conventional and conforming character. I have written so far about hypothetical persons, and of course no such persons exist. In the case of conventionality, no one ever internalizes a conventional code for every single aspect and incident of life. His self-concept never incorporates all of the qualities referred to in his society as conventional. He may be utterly

conventional in one sphere of life and yet completely free from the conventional in others. Some situations may arouse the self-conceptualizing activity within him, whereas others do not, the pattern, of course, being an individual matter. What the particular pattern is depends upon the values that the person has internalized, on how he has taken his experiences with the various people who have been important to him, resolving the conflicts between their respective points of view and integrating them into a unity of his own. It is a unity for the person, but from society's point of view it invariably will be incomplete, and full of gaps, and contaminated with distortions. This is a process that depends upon the attitudes of others for its raw material, and naturally the specific content of the self-concept, the particular range of values that it covers, depends upon the particular set of attitudes that the self has had to contend with. Thus, even the most convention-bound person, the one most thoroughly indoctrinated with the traditions of his society, one whose self-concept most nearly represents the conventional values of that society--even such a person will have his individual side, his non-social quirks and unconventionalities.

Similarly with the conforming person. No one is completely flexible in his standards, completely indiscriminate in his sensitivity to others. The notion of a person whose self-concept changes chameleon-like with every change

in social context is of course absurd. For one thing, probably no one grows into any culture without undergoing some of the experiences that create the stable self-concept of conventionality. Compared with the fully developed concept of the truly conventional person, this may appear as only a primitive or infantile remnant, yet to the extent that it has been incorporated, certain absolute standards will be maintained and complete social relativity avoided.

But beyond this, even the full-blown conformer has his limits. He is sensitive to the fashions of the times; this is his support and justification and the social model for his self-concept. He is, therefore, relatively independent of the attitudes of those who are out of fashion. In fact, to the extent that his self-feeling is attached to the fashionable he will have disdain for the unfashionable. This is simple prejudice, but it serves the useful purpose of providing the conforming person with some standards, some values to which he can commit himself, even if the standards are temporary and the commital subject to immediate withdrawal (with the change in fashion). The conforming person characteristically is loyal to the group in which he achieves his identity--and for this reason--but he is more or less indifferent to outsiders.

Non-Conformity, Un-Conventionality

The terms, nonconformity and unconventionality, describe the social rebel, the person who refuses to be cast

in the usual social mold: who, in fact, chooses a social mold of a strikingly different nature. Thus, non-conformity is not simply the absence of the impulse to conform; it is the impulse to behave in an unfashionable way. Unconventionality is not simply the absence of the impulse to accept and support tradition; it is the impulse to oppose them and to set up new standards against them. In both there is a reaction against the socially accepted, and this reaction is so striking--in many instances even flamboyant--that it is easy to overlook the fact that in his reaction the rebel is still as much governed by the code he rejects as are those who accept it without a murmur. The dynamics of the rebellion--at least of this kind of rebellion--are thus not the dynamics of freedom. Real freedom is another matter altogether, one which we shall turn to in the next section.

Here our concern is with the two forms of stereotyped social rebellion: non-conformity and unconventionality, and in particular with the specific qualities of the respective self-concepts which distinguish the one from the other. With the out-and-out non-conformer these are not any set qualities, but are those which, at the moment, set him apart from (and in his own mind--above) the crowd. His self-feeling is invested in uniqueness; his greatest pride is in his individuality, which is the dominant theme of his self-concept. This is so strong in him that the thought of being absorbed into, or identifying with, a popular cause or with

commonly held values threatens his very existence. The obsession with differentness is such a powerful force in his makeup that he is impelled to reject any idea or value he has held--any concept-of-self he has stood by--should it be accepted by the general populace. This is a most amazing reaction, and it indicates the depth of his involvement in a kind of relationship that demands isolation from others as the price for self-esteem. His self-concept thus forbids real contact with people.

The truly unconventional person has a different outlook. He lives by principle, just as the conventional man does; they are part of his self-concept, too. It is just that his principles are anti-conventional principles. However, unlike the non-conformer, the unconventional person takes his pride in his principles as such, not in their uniqueness, and he would find great self-satisfaction should his principles gain general acceptance; he would not be impelled to change them. Thus, he is not a self-perpetuating recluse; he continues to seek the approval of the public, even though he makes no concessions to them.

Because of this, the non-conforming person suffers less from his isolation than does the unconventional person. In fact he really isn't seeking to gain general approval, and actually is repelled by the very thought of it. His self-feeling is supported by his isolation; he prefers to reject and disdain and to be rejected and disdained in turn.

The unconventional person, on the other hand, continually strives to belong. What is unique about him is that he takes the most difficult course to his goal. That is, he tries to change the conventional mass to his views. He is under a continuous strain, then, for not having their approval, for appearing odd and unattractive in their eyes; he does not have the marvelous protection that the non-conformer has. But, on the other hand, neither is he as "lost" as the non-conformer. He retains the potential for gaining pleasure from social acceptance; he can still relate to people in a positive way and can afford to be hopeful, even optimistic, in his outlook. For the non-conformer there is no happy way out; his style of life is his guarantee against it.

It may prove interesting to speculate about the experiences--the self-other relations--which give rise to these two anti-social self-concepts. With the unconventional the development sometimes may be fairly simple. Thus, any experience with a powerful and significant person, himself unconventional, and making the usual demands on the young person to identify, will naturally lead to such a formation. This development is exactly analagous to the establishment of the conventional self-concept, with the exception that the significant other stands for unconventional qualities. But in most instances the development is probably a more complicated affair, one in which the self creates a notion

of a generalized other different from any particular other it has experienced. The concept of the ideal other is of this character. Depending upon the experiences the self has had, the concept of an ideal other may be built up more or less naturally out of satisfying relations with respected and loved others, going beyond each of the contributors but showing the same general scheme of values. Or it may be created in fantasy out of disappointing relations, as a romantic notion of a significant someone who gives the self the support and justification it so desperately needs.

Unfortunately, in the latter instance the idealized version of the other is designed not only to provide security for the self, but also to get back at the others who have brought pain to the self, and, consequently, it is usually unconventional in no uncertain terms and with uncompromising vigor. It is an ideal of striking qualities, one that is strong and highly romanticized, but in most cases is probably one that has no real humanity. This is the kind of ideal self-concept that harasses the recognized, and usually self-styled idealists (who are almost always unconventional in one way or another), and it is what forces them into, and gives them justification for, their lonely, unconventional styles of life.

The rabid non-conformer is probably in an even less enviable position than the unconventional idealist. His self-concept, accentuating just one thing--difference--is a

personal trap which effectively prohibits any real intercourse with others. Non-conformity in its essence is the ultimate in individuality, with everything else sacrificed in its favor, but, as attested by the zeal, it is an individuality with a curious and tragic twist. It is personal isolation, the impulsive rejection of what someone else stands for just because he stands for it. It is automatic rejection of the other, automatic scorn. It is a perpetual struggle against the other, and against society, to preserve the self-respect. At bottom it is little more than a chaotic, crazed turning-away from geniune human contact. It is a terrible position to be reduced to, and in my view the only thing that can bring the self to such straits is a completely relativistic and intensely anti-social self-concept.

And clearly such a self-concept, and such an anti-social disposition, could arise only from a background of extremely painful and disappointing self-other relationships. As the non-conforming dynamic is in its essence a dynamics of rejection, it would appear that the early experiences of such a person must have been so forbidding as to have made him turn to an active and indiscriminate rejection of others for his satisfaction. This would amount to an outright denial of his dependence upon anyone else, a refusal to accept the receptive pole in any relationship, and so would eliminate all others as models for identification. His self-

feeling would of course be very much involved in all this, but not in the ordinary way. For the other's acceptance and approval of him would make him uncomfortable, cause him humiliation and self-contempt: just the reverse of what is ordinary and normal. Out of such a painful experience he could create only one kind of self-concept--an amorphous thing, changing with the situation, but at all times directly and bitterly opposed to whatever is accepted, by whomever is present, as right and proper.

It is a senseless creation, the creation of a desperate nature. Without anyone to identify with, and yet still craving support and justification, which he cannot obtain from his social relations, the non-conformer finally creates a self-concept exactly on the order of that of the conforming person except that it is diametrically opposed to, rather than an image of, the qualities assumed by the person immediately present. In a sense, it is not a unified self-concept at all, but rather a disposition to create one, whenever personal values become an issue.

The intolerable position of the non-conformer is made clear with the consideration that by his nature he is denied companionship with, and the comfort of support from, even fellow non-conformers. Because, though he may be one with them in their mutual rejection of the conventional and the fashionable, this communality lasts only so long as their feud against society can be maintained. Whenever the feud

is dropped and the non-conformer is thrown back upon his relationships with his fellow non-conformers, the latter too must be rejected and those aspects of the self-concept brought into focus which emphasize the difference. The great hostility and the profound isolation expressed in this process can hardly be exaggerated.

Another facet of this performance deserves note--one which is as characteristic of the conforming person as it is of the non-conforming. This is the amazing blindness of the self to inconsistencies and turn-abouts. In this there is no reflection on the intellectual capacity of the person involved; there is only evidence of the great force of the internal pressures which prohibit him from bringing his various selves (self-concepts) into contact with one another. In a sense he is compartmentalized: at any given moment his thinking begins and ends in his self-concept, and it is enough that it be consistent with this. Further implications simply are not drawn. This, it should be noted, is true of his thinking on personal issues. On purely intellectual matters he may be consistent and profound, but as a person he is necessarily irrational and "shallow."

Spontaneity

It has been my thesis that despite the obvious differences in internal dynamics and in overt expression between the conventional and the unconventional, between the conforming and the non-conforming--that despite these differences

there is a basic similarity to them all. They are all mediated by the self-concept, and what differences there are in the respective guises that the self-concept takes are overshadowed by the fact that it does, in fact, play a part. According to my view, the real distinction to be drawn is that between these socially stereotyped expressions of self on the one hand, and spontaneity on the other.

Spontaneity is a much used and much abused term. In common parlance, the impression conveyed is one of a continuously bubbling enthusiasm, a free-wheeling exuberance, a charming disregard for self-controls: in short, an unlicensed and irrepressible indulgence in self-expression. But here I am using the term in what I believe must be its strictest meaning, simply to designate any mind process that gains expression directly without reflexive self-involvement. Spontaneity is unselfconsciousness; it is Mead's state of subjectivity, or "I-ness." It is the self when it is completely absorbed--or, as we say, "lost"--in its involvement in some life activity.

It is a profoundly different state of mind from the self-consciousness of the reflexive mind process, and perhaps it can best be described by contrast to the latter, and put into terms of what it is not. It is not the self controlling its own activities by reference to an objective internal standard; it is not an embarrassed self-awareness; it is not self-centeredness. On the other hand, what it is can

be stated only in the most general of terms. It is a free expression and exposure of the self, an open relationship with the world, and an involvement with the world that is so absorbing as to exclude all concern about how the self is supposed to behave or how it can make the best impression. The spontaneous self is a self without defenses, a self which freely accepts the world and as freely offers itself to the world. It is a naive self, in the sense that it lacks preteneions, and thus, a self with natural humility.

And no doubt, too, the spontaneous self is one of unusual charm and warmth. But the stereotyped notion of spontaneity, as I have described it above, certainly is a serious distortion of the real thing. For the self can be spontaneously thoughtful as well as carefree, spontaneously sad as well as gay, spontaneously determined and persistent as well as casual and indifferent. Spontaneity itself is not a particular feeling state or mood; it is a kind of mind process, and in its content it can run nearly the gamut of human experience.

It is limited only in that it is associated exclusively with what I have designated "pure" feelings. The spontaneous process can create only feelings of this kind, and the presence of self-feelings--pride, indignation, smugness, and the like--is certain evidence that spontaneity has been destroyed. Spontaneity is the absence of self-involve-

ment; therefore the two can never co-exist; it is either the one or the other.

In this connection, and perhaps to emphasize the point, it is conceivable that a person may incorporate the doctrine of spontaneity into his self-concept. In fact, I suspect that this is a fairly common occurrence these days, and perhaps accounts for the popular conception of the term. Of course such a state of affairs makes a travesty of genuine spontaneity. It is tantamount to reflexive, or self-conscious spontaneity, which is certainly a contradiction in terms. It is also, incidentally, a compulsive spontaneity, another property which stamps it as spurious. Spontaneity is the absence of compulsion. Compulsion stems from the self-concept.

Seen in this way, spontaneity is clearly divorced from the internal states which govern conventional and conforming behavior, and their opposites. The spontaneous person is neither conventional nor conforming, nor unconventional nor non-conforming. He is <u>free</u>, in the only meaningful sense of the term, to become a true individual, free to attain real maturity. The spontaneous person makes no fetish out of "individualism"--nor out of any other "ism," for that matter--because he is not burdened with a self-concept that demands recognition as such a person, and, thus, he is under no compulsion to act in the approved "individualistic" manner. Lacking the pressure to react in any one of the

socially stereotyped ways he is free to work his problems through in his own way.

This is the only way by which real maturity can be attained--or, in the terms that are so often used these days, this is the only road to self-actualization, or self-realization. Development in the spontaneous mode is the only development that deepens the person's understanding and enlarges his capacity to experience. The so-called "rich" or "deep" personality is created only in this way.

This is so despite the fact that the self-concept is an idealized conception of the self, and despite the fact that it creates pressures within the self to live up to its standards. Unfortunately, it is ironic but true that the self of the self-concept is never realized, and never can be. Of course, it can be approached in behavior, if a constant watch is kept over the self, but in the process the internal structure of the self never is one whit changed in the direction of the ideal. Though it may be accepted in this form as a personal value, it can never be achieved until the self-concept itself disappears. The self-concept promotes within the self nothing more substantial than the pretense of possessing a quality. And indeed, this is all that the ideal-of-self, as expressed in the self-concept, really aspires to. With the ideal of spontaneity, again, the person who has incorporated this value

into his self-concept does so not because he has tasted of the unique joys and satisfactions that the spontaneous mode brings, and not because he seeks more of these, but because he wants to be known as a spontaneous person; his self-feeling depends on it. Nor does the self-concept encourage the person to make an effort at honest self-appraisal, to face up to the source of his anxieties and fears; rather, it aggravates his self-contempt for being the kind of person he is, and, in effect, actually turns his eyes away from himself and his problem. In short, the ideal, as it is expressed in the self-concept, leads the self in a direction that precludes real growth. It serves its purpose in doing this, but it clearly stands in the way of geniune personal development.

CHAPTER IV

CURRENT VIEWS

The fourth chapter of my paper is devoted to the pertinent work of writers who are more "modern" in their psychological viewpoint (if not in fact) than the four source writers. Each has, in his way, written something that I feel is relevant to my topic. Naturally, I have not attempted to present the entire systematic view of any among them but have contented myself with selected aspects of the whole. Nor have I attempted to integrate all of the views presented into one unified and comprehensive system of my own. I have been profoundly impressed with the enormous scope and complexity of the psychological problems contained within the simple term--self-concept--and I do not pretend even to have begun to bring all of the loose ends together. I have tried, however, to point out disagreements and consistencies, where important, and at the end I have made some general and more or less systematic interpretations of my own. Finally, I have not included all of the modern writers who have published in this area. I have tried, rather, to choose representative writers from each of the more or less well-defined "schools of thought." This method

has seemed proper and adequate to me, inasmuch as my purpose is specifically to develop an idea, not to give an exhaustive account of its current standing.

I have organized the chapter in a rather arbitrary manner for purposes of convenience and continuity. I begin with Sherif because it was with Sherif that my own thinking on this topic had its beginnings. Otherwise, I have grouped together Gordon Allport, A. H. Maslow, and Carl Rogers as representing contemporary psychological views, and then Sigmund Freud, Anna Freud, Fromm, Sullivan, Horney, and Munroe as representing psychoanalytic views. I have included Munroe (a psychologist) in the latter group because her point of view is so closely allied with analytic theory.

The concluding section of the chapter is given over to the consideration of certain general problems, relevant to the notion of self-concept, which have grown out of the preceding accounts.

Sherif

As I have already noted in the preface to this paper, I am indebted to Dr. Sherif for the original inspiration to write on this topic. For in large part my interest in the self-concept grew out of a curiosity that had been whetted by the term, ego-involvement. This term was elaborately developed in The Psychology of Ego-Involvements (Sherif & Cantril, 1947) and was carried even further in the later book--An Outline of Social Psychology (Sherif & Sherif,

1956). The self-concept as I interpret it is ordinarily implicated in reactions that are ego-involved.

Sherif and Cantril (1947) refer to ego-involvement as the entering of ego-attitudes as a determining factor into the experience and behavior of the individual. Ego-attitudes, themselves, are a special brand of attitudes--those specifically which "are related to the delimited, differentiated, and accumulating "I," "me," "mine" experiences" (Sherif & Cantril, 1947, p. 4). This is a highly generalized statement that I find hard to grasp. A more concrete statement asserts that

> the most important attitudes formed in relation to one's body, to surrounding objects, person, institutions, and groups, are ego-involved. . . . /Thus, for example,/ inevitably one becomes somehow ego-involved when his intimate friends, his superior, his inferior, his school, his church, or his flag are in question. Gratifications and frustrations connected with such persons, groups, or institutions are felt as ego-gratifications and ego-frustrations (Sherif & Cantril, 1947, p. 156).

Or again, ego-involvement is described as "a general term that can have many specific and more precise meanings" (Sherif & Cantril, 1947, p. 153). Among these meanings are: ego-enhancement, ego-gratification, ego-frustration, ego-support. Ego-involvement always seems to imply a kind of moving force, or ego-striving, which is the effort the person expends to maintain or to enhance his ego. "In one way or another we try to feel good about ourselves" (Sherif & Cantril, 1947, p. 100), the authors write, and this affectional and motivational aspect, with the clear-cut self-reference,

may be taken as the essential and distinguishing aspect of ego-involved reactions, or ego-striving.

It seems proper to state, then--in brief--that ego-involved activity is oriented around the need to "enhance" the ego, or to "feel good about" the self. According to Sherif and Sherif (1956) this need pervades all of the person's feeling and motivational life. Thus they write that

> hunger, sex, and sleep do not function in insulated ways. They are the hunger, sex desires, or sleepiness of the organism of a person who has claims to be 'a man of good taste,' 'an honorable man,' one who is in dead earnest to maintain his standing in life, to raise the value of his own name in the eyes of his fellow man and in his own eyes (Sherif & Sherif, 1956, p. 584).

The discrepancy between such personal values, or ego-attitudes, and the biological drives catches the person in conflict and sets up within him what the authors refer to as ego-tensions.

Ego-tension is used as a generic term to cover such painful, unpleasant experiences as anxiety, insecurity, personal inadequacy, aloneness, shame. Specific painful, unpleasant experiences can be attributed to specific ego-tensions. For example,

> when ego-tension is caused by failure or potential failure threatening our sense of adequacy, our sense of self-esteem, or by blockage of our ego-involved goals, the appropriate designation may be anxiety. /And another/ When ego tension is aroused by a serious discrepancy between our actions and the level of our ego values, the resulting product may be referred to as shame. /And still another/ In the cases in which the deviation is related to our few most central fundamental ego values, the resulting

> ego-tension may be termed the experience of guilt (Sherif & Sherif, 1956, p. 602).

These are the basic ideas, as I see them, in the "psychology of ego-involvements." There can be no questioning the general validity and importance of these ideas, nor the fact that in a general way they account very nicely for "the established conformities" which regulate so much of our social living. The need to enhance the ego, or to feel good about the self, unquestionable plays a large role in both the private as well as the social life of the ordinary individual. But there is, I think, a serious limitation in this way of thinking, in that ego-involvement (and ego-attitudes, and ego-striving) is taken as the natural and inevitable accompaniment of self-development. Despite the emphasis that Sherif and his co-authors place on the genetic nature of the ego, their analysis is lacking in just this particular way. True, there is recognition of the fact that there are individual differences in the degree and intensity of ego-strivings. Moreover, these differences are attributed in part to differences among the particular constellation of social relationships experienced by different individuals. These, however, are isolated observations, and in the specific account offered of the genesis of ego-involvements there is only the most casual reference to the actual experiences which create them. And though the authors refer repeatedly to attitudes and, in fact, attribute enormous importance to them, their concept of attitude lacks the

unique and intensely personal flavor that accounts for the profound impact that they have on the person and on social relations. Attitude, as they use the term, refers to something so highly generalized as to be almost meaningless in the context of individual experience.

In short, the theory seems to hold that the ego (or self) is a structure of personal-social values (attitudes) to which the person is committed and which bring him either "ego-enhancement" or "ego-frustration" according as he meets or fails to meet the standards they represent. Any value, presumably, no matter what its origin, possesses this same dynamic significance; as far as I can make out there is no room in the theory for any other eventuality. But this is an indiscriminate and indefensible view, as it fails to take into account the nature of the actual experiences out of which "ego" arises.

My position on this point is clearly different. "Ego-involvement" becomes an issue only in connection with those values represented in the self-concept. And these are the values taken on by the self as an attempt in the imagination to escape the humiliation experienced as a result of contact with a concrete attitude directed toward it by a significant other. Such values become ego-involved, because self-feeling is attached to them. But only values that arise in this way become ego-involved, and it is a mistake to assume that the ego, or self, has no other constituents.

The spontaneous or subjective self is disregarded altogether in this formulation, and though this is understandable in a theory designed for and by social psychologists, interested primarily in "established conformities," it has serious limitations as a social theory of the self.

Allport, Maslow, Rogers

Gordon Allport. Allport's recent little book, Becoming (1955), is offered in protest against some of the simplifications of modern psychology which, in the author's view, may have succeeded only in caricaturing human nature. In its positive aspect it is an attempt to lay down a conceptual groundwork for a psychology that begins to do justice to the depth and complexity of human existence and to its active and spontaneous achievements.

The central concept in Allport's scheme of things is the proprium, by which he refers to that part of the personality which seems warm and important to us and as peculiarly ours, and which makes for inward unity. The proprium is a hierarchical structure of activities or awarenesses, with the bodily sense of being at the bottom and idealistic striving at the top. Allport is concerned in this book mainly that these uppermost aspects of the proprium get just recognition as representing the highest reaches of human growth, or becoming.

One of the aspects of the proprium is the self-image,

and it is in this that Allport seems to find the key to all of higher development. The self-image itself is divided into two parts; one is the awareness of the self as it is while the second is the image of the self as one aspires to be. Both are essential to maturity, but growth, self-realization, self-consistency, and conscience all depend in rather direct manner on the presence of the idealized self-image. In all of these higher level functions, Allport finds the person referring his impulses and thoughts to his idealized image of himself, and, presumably, without this latter agency of the mind no such high-level functioning would be possible.

I take it that Allport's self-image, in its "aspiring" form, is roughly equivalent to what I call the self-concept. One difference is that in Allport's view the self-image frees the individual from the compulsions of the infantile super-ego, based on fear. Whereas my notion of the self-concept describes it as arising directly out of a feeling of humiliation, or anxiety, or the like, and as giving the individual no "freedom" at all. I agree with Allport that there is a different kind of adult "conscience," or, as he writes, an "experience of value-related obligation" (Allport, 1955, p. 71); but I hold that this is a spontaneous activity of the mind, with no self-reference. So long as our morality, our self-consistency, our course of "self-realization," is mediated by this external (though internal-

ized) standard, it is not a natural, direct expression of our deepest feelings, nor does it bring us the satisfaction that we ultimately seek. Moreover, by providing us with a shortcut solution to our moral problems, it eliminates the need for an honest and painful attempt to understand our full dilemma. In effect, it subverts geniune moral struggle.

In sum, then, Allport holds to the notion that the mature mind is characteristically reflexive in make-up, and seems to equate spontaneous expression with the primitive and immature. In contrast to this, my point is that the most significant kind of self-development--the enrichening of feelings and the sensitizing of perceptions--takes place only within the spontaneous mode. Allport is undoubtedly right in stressing the dynamic and creative forces of the ego, or self, but he is wrong in describing the form that these forces take. The self can get along quite nicely without an ideal self-image, and, in fact, it escapes neurotic conflicts and guilts only so long as it does.

A. H. Maslow. Maslow's theoretical position can best be introduced, briefly, by way of two basic propositions: the doctrine of self-actualization and the theory of a hierarchy of motives.

In his doctrine of self-actualization, Maslow allies himself with Allport, Goldstein, Rogers, Fromm, Horney, and

other modern theorists who explicitly emphasize what might be called the "positive" side of human nature. Man is not by nature "bad," nor is he simply a structure of stimulus-response connections; he is basically "good" and probably above all else, he is self-determining. This means, simply, that man has a basic need to realize his human potential. What a man can be, he must be. Some men, at least, are moved by this need, and they represent, in Maslow's opinion, the highest reaches of human development.

Maslow says nothing about the personality structure of such persons, and therefore a direct comparison of his views with mine is not possible. However, it is interesting to note that one of the characteristics that he attributes to the self-actualizing person is spontaneity. This is spontaneity taken in the ordinary sense and not explicitly in the specific sense in which I use the term; yet there is great similarity. The spontaneous person has no "controls," in the sense of external standards; impulses and feelings are expressed freely and directly. What controls he does have arise from his noble and generous impulses, which are themselves spontaneous and natural. Thus Maslow sees man as complete and as reaching his fullest potential without recourse to reflexive mind-activities or reference to idealized standards.

But the need for self-actualization is not seen in all men, in fact, in very few. This is because in most

people the lower, more basic needs are not fully satisfied, so they remain fixated at a lower level of development. These needs, from lowest to highest, are: the physiological needs, the need for safety, the need to belong and for love, the need for esteem, and, finally, the need for self-actualization. It is at the level of the need for esteem (self-esteem) that the notion of the self-concept can be brought in for comparison. The esteem needs are said to be made up of two subsidiary needs. These are, first, the need for achievement, mastery, competence, independence, and the like; and second, the need for prestige, status, importance, etc. In my view, these two sub-needs do not belong together in the same class. Self-esteem as a motive is always a sign that the self-concept, in some form, is operating; the need for mastery is altogether spontaneous.

Moreover, I see mastery and achievement as a geniune form of self-actualization, but the need for self-esteem as a block in the road toward this goal. Maslow writes that as the need for self-esteem is satisfied, then, and only then, does the need for self-actualization arise. But the need for self-esteem is never satisfied, at least not by the response in others that it craves; it is insatiable. The so-called "secure" person (who is in position to go on to the level of self-actualization) is not the one in whom self-esteem needs have been satisfied; he is the one in whom they have never been aroused in the first place, or in whom

they have been worked through. Self-esteem becomes an issue to the extent that approval has been an issue in the person's life, in place of acceptance, and once established it disappears only when the meaning of acceptance has been learned.

Carl Rogers. So far as I know, Rogers is the only one among clinical psychologists who has committed himself in print to a systematic accounting of the self-concept, and I have no doubt but that both the current popularity of the term and the meaning generally attached to it derive pretty much from him.

I have taken the following account from his Counseling and Psychotherapy (Rogers, 1942). He writes:

> As a result of interaction with the environment, and particularly as a result of evaluational interaction with others, the structure of self is formed --an organized, fluid, but consistent conceptual pattern of perceptions of characteristics and relationships of the 'I' or 'me,' together with value attached to these concepts (Rogers, 1942, p. 498).

The genesis of this "conceptual pattern of perception" is then summarized.

> As the individual interacts with his environment he gradually builds up concepts about himself, about the environment, and about himself in relation to the environment. While these concepts are nonverbal, and may not be present in consciousness, this is no barrier to their functioning as guiding principles . . . Intimately associated with all these experiences is a direct organismic valuing which appears highly important for understanding later development. The very young infant has little uncertainty in valuing. At the same time there is the dawning awareness of 'I' experience, there is

> also the awareness that 'I like,' 'I dislike.' 'I am cold and I dislike it,' 'I am cuddled and I like it,' 'I can reach my toes and find this enjoyable'--these statements appear to be adequate descriptions of the infant's experiences, though he does not have the verbal symbols which we have used. He appears to value those experiences which he perceives as enhancing himself, and to place a negative value on those experiences which seem to threaten his self or which do not maintain or enhance himself.
>
> There soon enters into this picture the evaluation of self by others. 'You're a good child,' 'You're a naughty boy'--these and similar evaluations of himself and of his behavior by his parents and others come to form a large and significant part of the infant's perceptual field. Social experiences, social evaluations by others, become a part of his phenomenal field along with experiences not involving others--for example, that radiators are hot, stairs are dangerous, and candy tastes good.

As one particular instance of these social evaluations:

> One of the first and most important aspects of of the self-experience of the ordinary child is that he is loved by his parents. He perceives himself as lovable, worthy of love, and his relationship to his parents as one of affection. He experiences all this with satisfaction. This is a significant and core element of the structure of the self as it begins to form. At the same time he is experiencing positive sensory values, he is experiencing enhancement, in other ways. It is enjoyable to have a bowel movement at any time or place that the physiological tension is experienced. It is satisfying and enhancing to hit, or to try to do away with, baby brother. As these things are initially experienced they are not necessarily inconsistent with the concept of self as a lovable person (Rogers, 1942, pp. 498-499).

Rogers has a good deal more to say about these self-experiences, but it all follows along pretty much the same line as the above. For present purposes, then, we can settle upon the above excerpt as representing the general tenor

of his account, and it will serve, I hope, to point up a particular feature of my own.

According to Rogers, when a child's parents are "loving" he soon comes to "perceive himself as lovable, worthy of love." He develops what Rogers calls a "self-experience," which is that he is loved by his parents. This, then, is his self-concept: he is lovable. Presumably, if he were less fortunate in his choice of parents he would emerge with a less lovable self-concept; that he is inadequate, perhaps, or worthless, evil, or the like. In either case, however, whatever the treatment he receives he should emerge from it with an established self-concept: meaning a habit of conceptualizing himself more or less consistently in an evaluative way.

All of this seems straightforward and reasonable, and in accord with everyday clinical observations. However, the matter is not nearly so simple as Rogers' account makes it appear. We can assume, I think, that at birth the infant is sheer subjectivity. Granted this, we are left with the problem of how it is that the person (infant) comes to give up this mode of thinking in favor of self-objectification, which is so radically different. No doubt a certain development of this kind is inevitable, for after all the child can see and feel and hear himself, etc. But to perceive oneself and to hear oneself is not to think about oneself as lovable, worthwhile, or the like, and it is this particular form of

self-objectification with which we are here concerned. Rogers asserts that the child who is loved is naturally going to conceive of himself as "lovable," and I think that most clinicians of my acquaintance would agree. But what they mean, I think, is that the child will develop what is called a "feeling of security" and that he will not be inclined to conceive of himself as inadequate, worthless, bad, etc.

The feeling of security, so-called, is not self-objectification at all; indeed, there is no self-reference of any kind in it, nor any self-feeling. And so it is not at all accurate to say of the loved child that he comes to conceive of himself as "lovable." For the experience of being loved--a subjective state--is one of sheer pleasure and completely satisfying in itself. And so there is no call for the mind to have recourse to any other mode of activity, and self-objectification would strike it as a thin and hollow substitute. In fact, I take it that the more the child conceptualizes himself as "lovable" the more is he unsure of his place in his parents' affections.

Perhaps I can make my point clearer by starting from another of Rogers' ideas: that about self-enhancement. The infant, he states, "appears to value those experiences which he perceives as enhancing himself and to place a negative value on those experiences which seem to threaten himself (Rogers, 1942, p. 498). It strikes me that a statement such

as this takes an enormous lot for granted about the infant's mental apparatus. The infant seeks to enhance himself and is sensitive to threats to himself? This is surely a serious misapplication of terms. Why should an infant seek self-enhancement? To say of anyone that he seeks self-enhancement is to say of him that he is suffering from feelings of self-debasement. But self-feeling of this latter kind surely is not in the infant's make-up; you cannot appeal to his pride and he is insensitive to your scorn or reproach. These become effective only at a much later time, and as I have tried to show, only as a result of a particular kind of experience. To assume, as Rogers apparently does, that these unique feelings are part of the equipment that the infant brings into the world with him is terribly presumptuous and tends to distort by simplification a learning and maturational process that is complex in its unfolding and profound in its implications. Certainly it is true, as Rogers states, that the infant <u>values</u> certain sensory experiences in his own primitive way, and this certainly is a function of the mechanism he is born with, but self-enhancement and threat are far removed from pure sensory experience of pleasure and displeasure, and the distinction must always be kept in mind.

Psychoanalytic Views: Sigmund Freud, Anna Freud

Sigmund Freud. The notion of self-concept as I have put it forth makes contact with Freudian theory at just one more or less clearly defined point. Self-concept bears some resemblance to what Freud designates as ego-ideal.

As I understand Freudian theory, super-ego evolves out of, or splits off from, the ego, which is a more elementary agency of the mind. Before the splitting occurs the ego of the child lives in a kind of narcissistic splendor. Freud writes about this existence in terms of libido--the basic mental energy--and observes that the infant is primarily self-centered: his libido attaches to his own ego, so to speak. This is primary narcissism. As the child becomes involved with the outside world, and especially with his parents, he transfers some of his libido from his own ego to certain outside objects. There is, then,

> an original libidinal cathexis of the ego, part of which cathexis is later yielded up to objects, but which fundamentally persists . . . /There is maintained/ a certain reciprocity between ego-libido and object-libido. The more that is absorbed by the one, the more impoverished does the other become. The highest form of development of which object-libido is capable is seen in the state of being in love, when the subject seems to yield up his whole personality in favor of object-cathexis (S. Freud, 1953, p. 33).

The development from primary ego-cathexis to object-cathexis takes place, of course, as a result of the infant's traffic with the outside world, and especially with his

parents. He establishes emotional ties with them of one kind or another. According to Freud, the earliest and original form of emotional tie is what he labels identification. In its simplest guise, identification is represented by the small boy's outspoken desire to be like his father. He takes his father as his model, imitates his behavior; in short, sets him up as his ideal.

In this form, identification is an innocent enough kind of relationship. There is nothing in it to portend later strain and conflict. However, identification apparently takes on new significance when the relationship between child and parents becomes imbued with the spirit of moral training, and the mechanism whereby it is achieved becomes significantly more complex and difficult to grasp. Identification in this latter sense is said to be the means whereby the super-ego is created, and to have the purpose of repressing the Oedipus Complex.

As far as I can make out, Freud posits two rather distinct forms of identification. In one sense it is said to be a regressive reaction to the loss of a love object. That is, every time the child, say, is forced to disavor his libidinal attachment to another person, he compensates for his loss by introjecting certain features of the object into his own ego, and, so to speak, falling in love with himself instead. This results in a modification of the child's ego-structure and is a step forward in the shaping

of his character.

Now, a unique situation is created when the objects of the child's love are his parents, and especially when it is the parent of the opposite sex. At a certain stage in his development this love brings him into the Oedipal relationship, at which time he is forced to relinquish his object-cathexis for the parent in question. He resolves his problem by identification, but not, it seems by identification with the lost object. Rather, it is a more general identification with what Freud calls the parental function. "When the Oedipus Complex passes away the child must give up the intense object cathexes which it has formed toward its parents, and to compensate for this loss of object, its identification with parents, which have probably long been present, become greatly intensified (S. Freud, 1953, p. 91).

But in another context (S. Freud, 1933), Freud offers a rather different account of what takes place when the boy--as an example--enters the Oedipal situation. Typically he is forced, out of fear of his father, to give up his object-cathexis towards his mother; his sexual desire for her must be repressed out of fear of "castration." Whether the boy, as he succeeds at his task, identifies with his mother according to the above formula Freud does not say. For here his emphasis is on the boy's relationship with his father. Out of his fear of castration he must repress his sexual feelings for his mother. This is a catastrophic situation

for him, and to resolve it, Freud asserts, he identifies with his father's authority and thereby gains the necessary strength for self-control. He identifies with his father out of fear of him.

In brief, then, the combination of the child's disposition to identify with his parents, and their deep concern with his moral upbringing, leads to the establishing within the child's self-structure a new agency: the super-ego. It is the creation of this agency that gives the mind its capacity to objectify its own ego. Indeed, this agency is set up exactly according to that principle and for that purpose. Where formerly parents had kept a close and critical watch over his behavior, now the child gains the capacity to do this on his own. It is only natural that he should apply the same standards to himself as did his parents previously.

Super-ego functioning has two more or less separate aspects. One of these is represented by what ordinarily is referred to as <u>conscience</u>; the other by the <u>ego-ideal</u>. Super-ego as conscience is of course the term in its conventional and widely understood meaning. However, the basic facet of the agency appears to be the ego-ideal, the concept of a perfect self which the ego holds itself up to. It is from this ideal version of self that the functions ordinarily attributed to the super-ego may be seen to flow. It is the perceived discrepancy between ego and ego-ideal which arouses

guilt, and it is also this which institutes repression.

The notion of ego-ideal again brings us to the concept of narcissism, though now it is a modified, "secondary" form. The conditions for secondary narcissism are established with the creation of the ego-ideal.

> To this ideal ego is now directed the self-love which the real ego enjoyed in childhood. The narcissism seems to be now displaced onto this new ideal ego, which like the infantile ego, deems itself the possessor of all perfections. As always where the libido is concerned, here again man has shown himself incapable of giving up a gratification he has once enjoyed. He is not willing to forego his narcissistic perfection in his childhood; and if, as he develops, he is disturbed by the admonitions of others and his own critical judgment is awakened, he seeks to recover the early perfection, thus wrested from him, in the new form of an ego ideal. That which he projects ahead of him as his ideal is merely his substitute for the lost narcissism of his childhood--the time when he was his own ideal (S. Freud, 1933, p. 51).

With libido thus fastened to it, the ego now assumes an attitude of self-regard, or, in everyday terms, becomes imbued with self-respect. And it is the self-respect of the ego, Freud asserts, which specifically is responsible for repression. Our concern here, however, is not with repression but with the nature of the self-regarding attitude as an expression of secondary narcissism.

> First of all, the feeling of self-regard appears to us a measure of the ego; what various components go to make up that measure is irrelevant. Everything we possess or achieve, every remnant of the primitive feeling of omnipotence that experience has corroborated, helps to exalt the self-regard (S. Freud, 1933, p. 55).

Self-regard is thus taken as an instance of ego-libido: that is, mental energy that is fastened not upon some outside object but upon the internal representation of the self. This is true self-love.

> The self-regard has a very intimate connection with the narcissistic libido. Here we are supported by two fundamental facts: that in paraphrenics[7] the self-regard is exalted, while in transference neuroses it is abased, and that where the erotic life is concerned, not being loved lowers the self-regarding feelings, while being loved raises them (S. Freud, 1933, p. 55).

As has already been pointed out, the discrepancy between ego and ego-ideal is experienced as tension, specifically as guilt. One might suppose that such tension would naturally cause the ego to restructure itself more in keeping with its ideal of itself, and that success in this venture would provide the sought after relief. However, if I read Freud correctly, the tension of itself is not enough to effect such a change. As he puts it, the sublimation of instinct--the directing of instinct away from sexual aims and onto another and "higher-level" aim--is not achieved by "worship of" a high ego-ideal.

> A man who has exchanged his narcissism for the worship of a high ego-ideal has not necessarily on that account succeeded in sublimating his libidinal impulses. It is true that the ego-ideal requires such sublimation, but it cannot enforce it; sublimation requires a special process which may be prompted by the ideal but the execution of which is entirely independent of any such incitement.

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[7] Schizophrenics, in modern parlance.

> It is just in neurotics that we find the highest degree of tension between the development of this ego-ideal and the measure of their sublimation of primitive libidinal instincts (S. Freud, 1933, p. 51).

I think that it is not unreasonable to compare my notion of the self-concept with the Freudian ego-ideal. The facts of self-observation (reflexiveness), idealization of the self, tension between real and imagined self, and fluctuation of self-regard (self-feeling)--all are as pertinent to the functioning of the self-concept as to that of the ego-ideal.

It may prove of interest, then, to compare self-concept with ego-ideal on certain issues of general importance. To begin with, let us take the concept of identification. I have already presented the Freudian view, in brief. In my view, identification is carried in the self-concept. We can say that a son identifies with his father to the extent that his self-concept is identical to that of his father. Thus, for example, the father may be contemptuous of his son's fearfulness and timidity. The perception of this contempt is intolerable to the child; it humiliates him and arouses him to defensive self-activity. This activity may take many forms, but generally outright aggression against the offender is impossible, for father is too threatening. Therefore, he may readily resort to the creation, in his imagination, of a version of the self that is strong and brave: the self-concept of the moment. With

this, his humiliation gives way to pride; his ego has been debased but now it is exalted.

With the creation of the self-concept, then, the boy is able to find some satisfaction in what is otherwise an unbearable relationship with his father. But in the process he has taken into himself precisely the same attitude he sees in his father, and herein lies the identification. Father extolls strength and courage; so too does son; to this extent they are identical in their respective self-concepts.

It will be seen from this account that identification, in this sense, is essentially a defensive maneuver of the self--one which is undertaken in the imagination as a means of escape from an attack on its self-respect. It is a way of joining the enemy by molding the self in his image. By taking over the values implied in the attacking party, the self is thereby assured that the attack will stop. And of course, when the relationship is internalized the attacking party is perpetuated within, making it necessary to maintain the same self-concept more or less indefinitely.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that social cohesiveness--the easygoing companionability, the spirit of camaraderie, the air of congeniality, the intimate feeling of belongingness, that mark harmonious groupings--demands essential congruence in the self-concepts of the individual members (or else, in the rare instance, a

substantial freedom from self-concept all the way around). Ordinarily, in order for social intercourse to proceed smoothly and intimately, it is necessary for each party to feel secure that he will find his own self-feeling reflected and supported by that of the other members of his group. One can feel secure in a social setting only when one knows one can express one's prejudices and lurking animosities to the approval of all those present. No social affair can be more deadly than one in which basically conflicting self-conflicts try to establish free, informal contact. No one can be comfortable; the best that can be hoped for is a dreadfully strained politeness that fools no one. This, I take it, is in line with Freud's assertion that the cohesiveness of a group is to be found in the fact that the members "have introduced the same person into their super-ego, and on the basis of this common factor have identified with one another in their ego" (S. Freud, 1953, p. 96). This holds, Freud states, only for groups with a leader, yet it no doubt can be made to apply equally well to more amorphous groups with the simple consideration that the identification be extended from just one person to a group of persons who represent more or less the same social values and attitudes.

A second point of general interest is found in the notion of "splitting" the ego with the creation of the ego-ideal and in the self-objectification that this makes

possible. It seems to me that this development is one of the most important in the history of the individual, transforming, as it does, his original spontaneity and giving rise to a whole new class of emotional experiences: those called self-feelings. Freud refers to these experiences as the feeling, or attitude, of self-regard, and considers them to be the concomitant, in the feeling-life of secondary narcissism. Secondary narcissism itself is in a sense a return to the state of self-love and belief in the self's perfection as found originally in infancy.

In this connection, my point is that in describing secondary narcissism as a return to an earlier narcissistic state, a very important differentiating feature is obscured. This is that before the creation of the self-concept (ego-ideal) the self experiences only in the subjective mode; there is no reflexiveness except insofar as the infant sees and feels its own body; there is surely no self-love (or self-respect) as we understand the term in its adult meaning. The creation of the objectified version of the self, then, does <u>not</u> lead to a regression to an earlier state of self-love; the creation alone makes self-love possible. Subjective self cannot love itself; by definition it is lost to itself; cannot take itself as object. It can, of course, take its own physical body as object, as I have noted, and can "love" it, in a sense, but this love relationship has no overtones of self-respect as does the later

love for self. For the infant, the body has not yet come to represent, through certain affective experiences, social grace or moral virtue, or their opposites, and so the "love" is purely sensuous. Love of self takes on its typically adult character--pride, vanity, conceit, etc.--only after the ideal version of self has been established, when the imagined qualities attributed to the self give one the luxurious feeling of being approved.

A third point has to do with psychic growth, a subject which apparently still is very poorly understood. As far as I know, Freud never wrote about this subject directly, but it is my understanding that in his system of thought the concept of sublimation conveys the meaning of the maturation of the primitive libido into affection for others, interest in ideas and activities, and the like. The nature of the conditions that are favorable to this development is of course an important issue in its own right. But in the present context I am concerned only to point out that tension between ego and ego-ideal is <u>not</u> among these. I have already noted Freud's position on this point. He states that the man who worships a high ego-ideal has not necessarily on that account succeeded in sublimating his libidinal instincts.

My view is somewhat different. I hold that the functioning of the self-concept (ego-ideal) makes geniune growth (sublimation) difficult if not impossible, not merely that

ego-ideal and sublimation are independent of each other. It is clear that self-concept does imply tension, and this I take to be the same tension that Freud describes as existing between ego and ego-ideal. However, the self-concept being what it is, the tension which it generates is relieved specifically only when the self acts in a way that is consistent with it, or makes an appearance that impresses the significant others that their code is being adhered to. The tension does not represent real dissatisfaction with self or the longing for greater satisfactions; it has, in fact, nothing to do with this kind of awareness and, what is more, effectively keeps the self from it. The tension generated by the self-concept is in the form of shame, guilt, etc., and these only make the pain of self-awareness so acute as to induce the self to shy away from it. The self-concept, then, causes the self to seek anxiously to "improve" itself, yet drives it away from the kind of self-awareness necessary for real change. The Freudian picture of the idealistic neurotic who suffers from very primitive libidinal impulses is, it seems to me, characteristic.

In passing, and as a final point, let me note again that I do not argue that the holding of an ideal automatically impedes true personal development. It is only the particular form of the ideal that we are here considering that works in this unfortunate fashion. Actually, I feel that real growth proceeds according to the primitive identifica-

tions that the infant makes, with the same patterning of the ego according to the chosen model. The infant, however, has no ego-ideal to conform to; he is merely trying to understand his world and to get along in the best way possible, and he no doubt uses his imitations of adults in a very discriminating way, as they best serve his interests. Real growth demands humility as a starting point. The infant has it (and sometimes, too, so does the adult); unfortunately, the ego-ideal or self-concept is a conspiracy against humility, and this is wherein the trouble lies.

Anna Freud. It is generally said that in recent years psychoanalytic theory has shown increasing interest in the workings of the ego as one of the agencies of the mind. According to Munroe (1955), this interest has been channelled in two directions. One of these is in the clarification of the process whereby the reality-adapted aspects of the ego mature. Munroe includes among the leaders in this direction Hartmann, Kris, Loewenstein, and Rappaport. The other has to do with the elaboration of the concept of the mechanisms of defense, and the leader in this direction is said to be Anna Freud. I have arbitrarily dismissed the first group of writers from consideration on the grounds that their contribution has no relevance to the self-concept. The concept of defense mechanisms does.

In Anna Freud's accounting of the defensive operations of the ego three stages, or structures, are to be

found. The first of these, and the most primitive, is defense motivated by dread of the power of the instincts. This defense is said to grow out of a fundamental and innate opposition existing between the primary processes of the id and the secondary processes of the ego.

> The ego is friendly to the insticts only so long as it is itself but little differentiated from the id. When it has evolved from the primary to the secondary process, from the pleasure-principle to the reality principle, it has become . . . alien territory to the instincts. Its mistrust of their demands is always present (A. Freud, 1946, p. 63).

To id and ego, then, are attributed conflicting aims, which are held to be inherent in the structure of the human mind. This finds expression in the ego in the fear that it will be "overthrown" or "extinguished" by the instincts, and its defenses are intended to prevent this from happening.

In the earliest stage of defense operation there apparently is little or no splitting of self into subject and object, for the differentiation of ego from id, at this stage, is accomplished by internal forces entirely, without the urging of an outside agency. But in the second stage the ego's defenses are motivated by objective anxiety: that is, by the ego's awareness that danger lurks without, generally in the guise of parental disapproval and punishment. "The infantile ego fears the instincts because it fears the outside world. Its defense against them is motivated by dread of the outside world, i.e., by objective anxiety" (A. Freud, 1946, p. 61). This stage thus marks a structural

change over the first. Ego contends with id with its eye on the outside world, and its strongest feelings hinge upon how the outside world receives it. There is as yet no objectification of the self, but in this relationship the seeds of objectification are sown.

In the third stage the motivation for ego defense is anxiety stemming from super-ego. The super-ego itself represents the internalization of certain features of the outer world, to which the ego "identifies"; these features are constituted mainly by the example set by the parents and their educational methods. With internalization effected, a new agency is created within the mind to supplement the original id and the derivative ego. This agency (the super-ego) in turn alters the defense process, owing to the ideal standard which it represents and which is set over against the ego as moral and social demands.

> Some instinctual wish seeks to enter consciousness and with the help of the ego to attain gratification. The latter would not be averse to admitting it but the superego protests. The ego submits to the higher institution and obediently enters into a struggle against the instinctual impulse (A. Freud, 1946, p. 58).

In this sequence the ego itself is said not to find anything dangerous in the instincts; it fears them only because it fears the super-ego.

This, briefly, is Anna Freud's interpretation of the defensive activities of the ego. It will be of interest now to consider what she has expressed or implied about self-

structure in the light of my earlier remarks on the self-concept and of the fundamental distinction between the subjective and the objectified modes. To do this we go back to her account of the differentiation of ego from id and of super-ego from ego.

As I understand this account, ego evolves out of id as a matter of innate internal dynamics, independently of social experience. This is because the infantile mind operates simultaneously according to two irreconcilable principles: the pleasure and the reality. The chaotic primary process co-exists with the reasoned and measured secondary process, and the distinction between them is that between id and ego. This differentiation, it should be noted, is accomplished without at the same time splitting off ego from id, and without altering the original non-reflexive nature of the process in which impulse is transformed into idea, intent, and action. Ego no longer is "merged" with id, but its relationship to id is one of co-operation.

With a simple structure such as this--with the mind process proceeding in a straight line, so to speak, from its inception in impulse to its termination in thought or deed, no true defense mechanism is possible. This, at least, is my belief. Anna Freud, however, speaks of defense at this stage, as I have noted above, and posits ego's innate dread of the strength of instincts as the motivating force. There may indeed be some inchoate response mechanism of this kind

in the infantile ego. My conviction is, however, that at this stage, ego can abandon or "lose" itself with rather complete freedom, and that fear of overthrow by the instincts is not, and cannot be, an issue until the first signs appear of the internalized standards (attitudes) of others. In this connection, it is probably wise to distinguish between ego-control and ego-defense. The ego that is aware of impulse and aware of reality is able to respond appropriately, even to the point of suppressing action. But this is not ego-defense, as the term defense is ordinarily used. The latter arises only when the impulse (or feeling or thought) itself becomes unacceptable, and this occurs only as an internal agency is present to pass judgment on it. The structure of id-ego simply is lacking the dynamic "leverage" to effect defense mechanisms.

All of this is changed with the differentiation of super-ego from ego. The creation of super-ego--or rather, of ego-ideal--is an art of self-objectification, and in this creation the heretofore direct, spontaneous id-ego process is given a reflexive turn. It is self turning back on self, so to speak, in a way alien to and impossible for the simpler id-ego process. Actually, the self that is objectified in this creation is not the original id-ego structure--not the self itself--but an idealized version of the self, and it is not a perception of the self but a conceptual creation (as a drama or a novel).

The establishing of super-ego does not merely add another agency, and another function, to the original self constituted by id and ego. It changes the relationship between these two agencies in a very significant way.[8] The earlier differentiation becomes--in part, at least--a split: conflict between the two is aroused, out of which come the mechanisms of defense. Super-ego is able to cause such profound effects between ego and id because of the unique nature of the feeling that it wields. This feeling is what I have called self-feeling. Guilt is perhaps the most widely acknowledged feeling of this kind, but the forms are legion: shame, humiliation, self-contempt, elation, smugness, pride, are some of the more common. These are the only feelings that precipitate defense reactions--which is why defense is strictly the business of the reflexive self.

Anna Freud appears to hold to somewhat the same view with regard to certain of the defense mechanisms, but makes exceptions to the rule. Thus, in suggesting a chronological classification of defense mechanisms she quotes Freud to the effect that, "It may well be that before its sharp cleavage into an ego and an id, and before the formation of a super-ego, the mental apparatus makes use of different

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[8]This is a basic tenet of Gestalt psychology. Super-ego is not simply "added on" to an already existing structure. With its creation the entire structure is modified in all its parts. It strikes me that in the analysis of mind-functions this point is often overlooked.

methods of defense from those which it employs after it has attained these levels of organization" (A. Freud, 1946, p. 55). And she adds, by way of example, that it is meaningless to speak of repression where the ego is still merged with the id. On the other hand she suggests that the defenses of projection and introjection may indeed precede the internal development noted above. For my own part, I cannot see the justification in classifying these processes as defenses to begin with. Both have a place in Baldwin's accounting of the dialectic growth of the normal self and both are taken as innate workings of the mind. Especially is this true of projection: we interpret or "read into" others what is in ourselves. What is labelled as projection in the pathological sense is simply the same process in effect when the private feelings are hostile or otherwise perverse. This often makes for a dramatic example when it is so blatently a misrepresentation of the other, but the process itself is no different from those instances in which the reading of the other is perfect.

At the other end of the suggested chronological classification Anna Freud puts sublimation, which is a "normal" rather than a "neurotic" defense mechanism. "Sublimation, i.e., the displacement of the instinctual aims in conformity with higher social values, presupposes the acceptance or at least the knowledge of such values, that is to say, presupposes the existence of the super-ego" (A.

Freud, 1946, p. 56). According to this view, personal growth to the so-called higher levels requires defense against instinctual impulses, and, thus, the reflexive type of psychic structure, which makes such defense possible. Social and moral values are contained in the ego-ideal (super-ego) and they can be realized only by first prohibiting the free expression of the impulse-life.

This, it strikes me, is the same theme to be found in many of the modern writers who show an interest in the higher reaches of personality. Allport (1955), for one, explicitly takes this position; however, Horney (1945, 1950) makes a very vigorous attack on it. But it is clear that such a view takes no account of the observation made by Freud (see p. 131) to the effect that worshipping a high ego ideal does not necessarily go hand in hand with sublimation, that it is especially in neurotics that the greatest discrepancy is found between the two: lofty ego-ideal along with "primitive libidinal instinct." I have already presented the view that there is <u>always</u> this discrepancy whenever ego-ideal exists. Let me add here for emphasis the point that the larger the role played by ego-ideal in the person's psychic life, the greater is this discrepancy.

Sublimation, in the sense described here, is simply another defense measure, and it follows the typical pattern of such measures. Instinctual impulses are denied direct expression and ego contrives to find some indirect channel

of expression that meets the approval of the ego ideal. This no doubt does result in conformity to higher social values, as Anna Freud notes, but it is a conformity enforced by the person's fear of the punitive power of the super-ego and one which leaves the basic id-ego structure unchanged, or at least without modification in the way desired.[9] Sublimation thus has serious shortcomings as a conveyor of social and moral values; it "encapsulates" these values apart from the person's basic psychic structure; it prevents their real integration. It provides only the well-known "thin veneer" of civilization that by reputation collapses so quickly in crisis.

"Neo-Freudian" Views: Fromm, Horney, Sullivan

Fromm. In the books Escape from Freedom (1941) and Man for Himself (1947), Fromm's main objective, as I make it out, is to offer a social interpretation of character development in place of Freud's essentially biological interpretation, and to give emphasis to certain positive features of personality said to be overlooked in the Freudian view.

Thus, for example, he rejects the Freudian explanation of the "oral" character as being the result of certain rather well-defined early-year experiences centering around

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[9]Actually there is a modification and a very important one, but it is never in the direction of higher personal and social values. It is always a malevolent transformation.

the mouth. Instead he turns the explanation around, so to speak, and views the dependent character's interest in the mouth and its functions as being expressive of (or symbolic of) a generalized way of relating to people, one which has been learned in the course of a host of social experiences. As another example, he posits a kind of conscience (which he calls "humanistic"), different in its make-up from the Freudian super-ego--one which is said to develop independently of the internalization of authority-figures. And as still another, he writes extensively about the nature of self-love and about its place in the mature and <u>productive</u> mind.

There are just three of Fromm's ideas that I shall discuss here. These are, first, the notion of conscience; second, that of self-love; and third, that of spontaneity.

According to Fromm, there are two kinds of conscience: authoritarian and humanistic. The first of these is equivalent to the Freudian super-ego: "the voice of an internalized external authority" (Fromm, 1947, p. 144). But there is another form of conscience, in Fromm's view: one which has its origin not in external authority but in the fullest expression of the self.

> Humanistic conscience is the reaction of our total personality to its proper functioning or dysfunctioning; . . . It judges our functions as human beings. . . . Actions, thoughts, and feelings which are conducive to the proper functioning and unfolding of our total personality produce a feeling of inner approval, or 'rightness,' characteristics of

> the humanistic 'good conscience.' On the other hand, acts, thoughts, and feelings injurious to our total personality produce a feeling of uneasiness and discomfort, characteristic of the 'guilty conscience.' Conscience is thus a re-action of ourselves to ourselves. It is the voice of our true selves which summon us back to ourselves, to live productively, to develop fully and harmoniously--that is, to become what we potentially are (Fromm, 1947, p. 158).

Fromm contrasts his notion of self-love with Freud's secondary narcissism, in which the ego is said to attach its libido back onto itself--or rather, back onto its idealized version of itself (ego-ideal). According to Freud, love of self, in this sense, is antithetical to love for others, and he describes the latter state as an "impoverishment" of ego-libido. Fromm rejects this antithesis and insists that love of self is a necessary pre-condition for love of another.

He makes much of the concept of spontaneity. Spontaneity, he notes, is given to all of us as children, but ordinarily it is soon covered over by controls and pretense, accrued during the process of socialization.

> Spontaneous activity is not compulsive activity, to which the individual is driven by his isolation and powerlessness; it is not the activity of the automaton, which is the uncritical adoption of patterns suggested from the outside. Spontaneous activity is free activity of the self and implies, psychologically, what the Latin root of the word, sponte, means literally: of one's free will. . . . One premise for this spontaneity is the acceptance of the total personality and the elimination of the split between 'reason' and 'nature'; for only if man does not repress essential parts of his self, only if he has become transparent to himself, only if the different spheres of life have reached fundamental integration, is spontaneous activity possible (Fromm, 1941, p. 258).

As I see the issue, the distinction that Fromm makes between the humanistic and the authoritarian conscience is conveyed in a more general sense in the distinction I have made between the subjective mode of experience and being, and self-objectification. The authoritarian conscience is internalized external authority. This is as far as Fromm goes. What I should add to this is that the process of internalizing the outside authority is accomplished by the setting up within the self of a concept-of-self which satisfies in all significant respects the demands of the authority. The original process of internalizing--typically of parental authority--disrupts the subjective mode, corrupts the child's naive spontaneity. There is no "internalized external authority" possible in the subjective mode; authority manages to find its way into the being of the child only by inducing him--out of fear--to surrender his spontaneity and create an objectified conceptual version of himself. Such a conscience--it is better perhaps, to call it super-ego--is the product of the splitting of the ego into subject and object, as Freud has described it. Without this splitting the super-ego function cannot be established.

What Fromm refers to as humanistic conscience I take to be established within the subjective mode. It is conscience which arises directly out of the feelings of the person insofar as they express his relatedness to others.

It is conscience in the sense of concepts and feelings which have been fully integrated into the subjective self and which thus become part of the individual's spontaneous feeling and impulse life.

On the matter of self-love, the distinction that Fromm notes between his view and that of Freud is, I think, a spurious one. He is simply writing about a different phenomenon. Freud uses the term self-love (secondary narcissism) in its egotistical sense, as a development within the self when the individual is rebuffed by others. It is, of course, a caricature of real love, as, no doubt, Freud realized. But it seems to me that his use of the term is more defensible than is Fromm's for the simple reason that it is better grounded empirically. Self-love in the egotistical sense is well known to all.

But Fromm clearly has a different meaning in mind when he uses the term. Self-love is of the same order as love-of-other and, if anything, is more basic to the productive personality; for without self-love there can be no love-of-other. Exactly what Fromm means by the term using it in this way is not at all clear. As far as I can make out, his self-love has no experiential referent; it is an abstraction, a presumed quality of a certain kind of personality which he posits for what I suspect are purely logical reasons.

But love of self cannot be of the same order as

love-of-other. This is so because love-of-other requires that the ego gives of itself spontaneously; love must be experienced in the subjective mode; it cannot be self-conscious, or mediated by one's "ideal" of love. But clearly one cannot maintain one's subjectivity and love one's own self; self-love is by its nature a form of reflexiveness. Therefore it makes no sense to take Fromm's notion of self-love at face value. As concrete experience, or mind process, the only form of self-love that I know of is that described by Freud as secondary narcissism.

About spontaneity I have already made passing reference. Fromm writes of spontaneous activity as the "free activity of the self," and he notes that this involves the lack of repression, transparency of self (to self), and integration of the "different spheres of life." But he makes no attempt to describe the structure of the self wherein these conditions are met. In my view, spontaneity must be tied down to a form of self-structure if it is to mean anything; and this structure, as I see it, is "subjective," or non-reflexive. It is thought and feeling coming up through the self to expression, so to speak, without being detoured through and being transformed by the ideal concept of self. In spontaneity there is no possibility for what is called neurotic conflict because there is no splitting of the self into opposing camps. Conversely, spontaneity is possible only when the self is able to maintain its sub-

jective unity.

In short, on each of the three ideas I have taken from Fromm for comment--conscience, self-love, and spontaneity--I feel not so much disagreement in any significant way with his position as dissatisfaction with the way that he states it. His analysis stops, it seems to me, just at the point where sound empirically-based analysis of the personality should begin. In this he does not come up to the very high standards set by Freud, who came to terms with his subject matter in a straightforward and strictly "scientific" manner. Compared to Freud, Fromm appears more the philosopher than psychologist.

Sullivan. In a sense, with Sullivan we once again return to the intellectual tradition developed by my four source writers. Sullivan himself explicitly recognizes his indebtedness to Cooley and, especially, to Mead for their social theory of the self; and the resemblance between his writings and those of the source writers, taken as a group, is fairly obvious. Of course he goes far beyond these others in working up a theory of self-development that emphasizes individual experience and so-called personality dynamics, but in certain essential features his ideas can be seen as an extension of their self-theory.

Here I do not intend to deal with the full scope of Sullivan's theory; rather, my interest centers around certain

rather circumscribed aspects of it which are relevant to my notion of the self-concept. The central idea for my purpose --and perhaps the central idea in Sullivan's system as a whole--is that of the self-system, or self-dynamism, or, simply, the self: three terms which seemingly he uses interchangeably.

To understand the concept of the self-system it is necessary first to take account of the social context within which it arises, or what Sullivan designates as interpersonal relations. The individual cannot be understood apart from these relations; indeed, the idea of a self isolated from, or independent of, these relations is, according to Sullivan, sheer "illusion." This is to say again, using somewhat different terms, what Colley and Mead have repeatedly emphasized: i.e., that self implies other.

The self-system grows up as a dynamism within the personality as a result of the person's relations with others. Sullivan describes in great detail the course that these relations more or less typically follow, beginning (by inference) with the infant's earliest relations with his mother and on through the period of childhood, the juvenile era, the preadolescent age, and adolescence--each of which offers the growing child an opportunity for certain characteristic and unique kinds of interpersonal relations.

The beginnings of the self-system are to be found in the person's growing personifications of himself. These

Sullivan designates as the "good-me," the "bad-me," and the "not-me." Naturally, these too have their roots in interpersonal relations. The good-me is the personification of those features of the personality which have elicited a "tender" or approving response from the significant others. The bad-me personifies those features which arouse the disfavor of the significant others and which, consequently, evoke anxiety. And the not-me personifies those features which have aroused such intense disfavor and, consequently, such intense anxiety (or "uncanny emotion") that they are "dissociated" from the conscious life.

Good-me and bad-me constitute the basis of the lifelong ingredients of consciousness. Bad-me, it seems, consists in those defects of character which the person is fully aware of; it is the unfortunate side of the personality which still can be appraised in a rational manner. "There is no person who is not, in the privacy of his own covert operations, perfectly clear on the fact that he has a number of unsatisfactory and undesirable attributes which he is busily engaged in concealing, or excusing" (Sullivan, 1953b, p. 316). On the other hand, the features of the not-me remain out of the person's awareness, except under unusual circumstances. Both the bad-me and the not-me, it should be noted, consist of features which have brought, and which continue to bring, anxiety to the person. I presume that whether a particular feature is accepted as part of the bad-

me, or "dissociated" as part of the not-me, depends on the intensity of the anxiety it arouses, or, perhaps, on some qualitative features of the anxious experience.

The self-system grows out of these personifications. It is, according to Sullivan, a more or less clearly defined function of the personality. It is not an agency or object or mechanism; it is a dynamism. A dynamism is "the relatively enduring patterns of energy transformation which recurrently characterize the interpersonal relations. . . which make up the distinctly human sort of being" (Sullivan, 1953b, p. 103). Among the dynamisms, the self-system is unique in that it is aroused by and serves as a protection against anxiety. "It comes into being because of, and can be said to have as its goal, the securing of necessary satisfaction without incurring much anxiety" (Sullivan, 1953b, p. 169).

Now, anxiety, in Sullivan's scheme of things, has a rather unique meaning and a very specific origin. To consider the latter first, anxiety originates in the infant through an "emphatic linkage" with the significant older person--especially, of course, the mothering one. When the older person is anxious, the tension is by some means transmitted to the infant. According to Sullivan, the mysterious capacity to "empathize" is pretty much lost to the individual beyond infancy. But at about the same time the interpersonal relationship comes to be characterized by important novel

features: what in effect is the approving and disapproving attitudes of the significant others. Disapproval, of course, arouses anxiety; approval (tenderness) leaves one feeling "secure" and comfortable. It is a point worth noting that punishment itself is said not to have any part in the formation of the self-dynamism. Punishment of itself leads to fear, not anxiety. But most parents, Sullivan observes, subject their children to pain-with-anxiety because of the attitudes they display while meting out punishment.

Anxiety, then, (as opposed to fear) originates in the interpersonal relationship either through "empathy," originally, or, later, in response to the perceived disapproving attitudes of the significant other. But the experiences that cause anxiety also serve to shape and establish the personifications of self: good-me, bad-me, and not-me. And these personifications give anxiety its unique flavor by creating a new issue: the issue of self-respect, or personal worth, or what can be called generically, self-esteem. Anxiety in this sense is aroused by an experience that threatens the self-esteem, and when this happens the self-system is called into operation to protect the person from the danger. The self-system, aroused by a touch of anxiety, moves toward the feeling of personal worth, or "security."

One of the important ways--perhaps the important way --in which the dynamism operates is to dismiss the trouble-

some experience from mind. Sullivan's term for this is dissociation, and the elements of experience that are thus dismissed from consciousness form the not-me. In effect, this kind of self-activity permits the person to disregard certain unpleasant aspects of experience; at the same time it narrows down the range of experience and makes the person more or less resistant to change--either in the direction of growth or retrogression. According to the theorem of escape, "the self-system from its nature . . . tends to escape influence by experience which is incongruous with its current organization and functional activity" (Sullivan, 1953b, p. 190).

It is not quite clear to me what Sullivan intends when he refers to experience which is "incongruous" with the "current organization and functional activity" of the self-system. But it is most consistent with his over-all theory, I believe, to take it as experience that is incongruous with the good-me. For it is experience of this kind which arouses anxiety and sets the self-system going in its defensive operations. And it is this interpretation which fits in best with Sullivan's emphasis on self-esteem and on the security operations of the self-system. It is hard to see how an experience incongruous with the bad-me could have such an effect; yet it is possible that Sullivan had this in mind too.

Now, one of the serious difficulties that the person

may get into derives from the fact that the personifications of self often are inadequate and inappropriate. Whether this applies to both the good-me and and bad-me, Sullivan nowhere states. The only specific reference I can find seems to apply in particular to the good-me. "People have come to hold views of themselves which are so far from valid formulations that these views are eternally catching them in situations in which the incongruity and inappropriateness are about to become evident, whereupon the person suffers the interference of anxiety" (Sullivan, 1953b, p. 300). This pretty well describes the workings of what I have labelled self-concept. In Sullivan's system it is the "autistic, fantastic" side of the good-me, which in addition has a side that is reality-bound and objective too.

But I do not think that it is justified to refer in this way to two separate aspects of good-me to cover such strikingly different processes, for the difference between the two is important enough to warrant greater distinction in names. Indeed, I do not think that the "realistic" good-me exists in the same way that the "fantastic, autistic" form does, nor that it has the same repercussions on the workings of the mind. I cannot find any empirical referent for the former at all, and I question the use of the term, while the latter is a familiar occurrence to all. And the former seems to have no association whatever with anxiety, whereas the latter is thoroughly drenched with it.

Sullivan further blurs the issue, I feel, by treating bad-me as exactly correlative with good-me both in origin and function; they are different only in that the one encompasses bad qualities, the other good. Otherwise, in their status as concepts they are similar. Both are said to arise from interpersonal contacts, from "reflected appraisals": good-me from such appraisals which are favorable, bad-me from such as are unfavorable, much as if the self-personification is a direct impression from these experiences.

My view is rather different. To begin with, the self-concept is strictly a "positive" personification of self. I do not think that there is a negative self-concept; therefore I do not propose a term equivalent to Sullivan's bad-me. My feeling is that the "bad" side of the self-other relationship makes its impression not in the form of a self-personification (or self-concept) at all, but rather in the primitive feeling of humiliation, or negative self-feeling. It may be argued that such "bad" feeling pre-supposes a "bad" personification of self, but this is presumptuous. There may be no personification at all, and this I take to be the case. As I have remarked above the humiliated person does not conceptualize himself as inadequate, worthless, or the like. What is in his mind is the awareness that the significant other persons conceive of him (and judge him) in this light. This arouses the negative self-feeling which in turn

evokes the self-concept as a defense, or reaction-formation.

The closest approach to this statement of the sequence of events that I can find in Sullivan's writings is a remark he makes about the relative silence with which the person with a low self-appraisal (his term) endures his fate. One achieves this in part, Sullivan writes, "by preoccupation with implicit revery processes that dramatize the opposite of one's defects, or protest one's rights, or otherwise manifest indirectly one's feeling of unworthiness and inferiority" (Sullivan, 1953a, p. 11). This process is what I call the process of self-conceptualizing.

It is interesting to note that Sullivan himself, when he gets down to the business of writing about the self-dynamism as composed of "reflected appraisals," writes only of the negative instance (Sullivan, 1953a, p. 10). And, incidentally, it is in this context that he makes the statement, cited just above, about the dramatic revery processes, providing, in this rather loose way, the same formulation that I have proposed. That is, derogatory self-appraisal leads to imaginative dramatization of the self as "ideal." So far as I know, Sullivan does not give the same treatment to the opposite instance, in which the "reflected appraisals" are laudatory.

Perhaps I can sum up this section with one additional point. The act of self-conceptualizing as I have described it no doubt would be classified in Sullivan's terms as one

of the operations of the self-system. I believe that it plays a central and perhaps uniquely important role in these operations. On the one hand, the act itself is an attempt to allay anxiety. But on the other hand, the existence of the self-concept, or the established habit of self-conceptualizing, makes the person vulnerable to attacks of anxiety in the first place. The sequence thus is cyclical, and self-perpetuating.

Horney. In Horney's writings probably no one theme is more dominant than that of the ideal image. This theme is first propounded in Our Inner Conflicts (1945) as one of the various ways employed by the person to resolve conflict. Later, however, in Neurosis and Human Growth (1950), it becomes of much greater significance. Horney writes: "in subsequent years the concept of the idealized image became the central issue from which new insights evolved. It actually was the gateway to the whole area of intrapsychic processes presented in this book," (Horney, 1950, p. 367).

According to the Horney theory, the ideal image is a neurotic production, resorted to by the individual as an attempt to achieve harmony among incompatible attitudes: compliant, aggressive, and detached; as a device for protecting himself from his lack of real self-confidence; and as a way of overcoming what she calls his "alienation from self." There is only one way he can resolve the predicament he finds himself in, and that is by way of his imagination.

"Gradually and unconsciously, the imagination sets to work and creates in his mind an idealized image of himself. In this process he endows himself with unlimited powers and with exalted faculties; he becomes a hero, a genius, a supreme lover, a saint, a god" (Horney, 1945, p. 22). It takes away his feeling of insignificance, gives him a sense of meaningfulness and power; it raises his self-esteem.

Thus the ideal image possesses a very definite attraction for the person full of anxiety and doubts about himself. It offers him certain rather spectacular rewards. However, these rewards are not unmixed blessings. "Instead of solid self-confidence . . . /the person/ gets a glittering gift of most questionable value: neurotic pride" (Horney, 1950, p. 87). As a device for securing internal harmony, then, the ideal image has serious drawbacks. For one thing, the person thus afflicted is thereby made "vulnerable." "Any questioning or criticism from outside, any awareness of his own failure to measure up to the image, any real insight into the forces operating within him can make it explode or crumble" (Horney, 1945, p. 110). He thus becomes hypersensitive to criticism and rejection, and totally dependent upon "endless affirmation from others in the form of approval, admiration, flattery--none of which, however, can give him any more than temporary assurance" (Horney, 1945, p. 110). His self-evaluation (self-esteem) "rises or falls with the attitudes of others toward him"

(Horney, 1945, p. 135).

In the second place, the ideal image creates a "dangerous rift" in the personality. The person builds up his ideal image because he cannot tolerate himself as he actually is. This is the original calamity, against which the ideal image is set in defense. But "having placed himself on a pedestal . . . the person . . . can tolerate his real self still less and starts to rage against it, to despise himself and to chafe under the yoke of his own unattainable demands upon himself. He wavers then between self-adoration and self-contempt" (Horney, 1945, p. 112).

And lastly, his "alienation from self" is therein intensified. "Alienation" is a very difficult concept to grasp, but it is of paramount importance in Horney's system. By alienation, as I understand it, she refers to a state of affairs in which the person's "real self"--his would-be natural, spontaneous, undisguised thoughts and feelings--is denied expression by the compulsive drive to live according to the dictates of the ideal image. As Horney puts it, the person grows "remote" from his own feelings, wishes, beliefs, and energies; he suffers from a kind of depersonalization. Spontaneity gives way to compulsion.

Looked at in another way, the ideal image of self involves the person in what Horney refers to as the <u>pride system</u> and makes him subject to what she calls the <u>tyranny of the should</u>. On the issue of pride, Horney notes that

there are really two different states that we ordinarily designate by the term--one healthy, the other neurotic. Neurotic pride is the emotional reflection of the fantastic and unfounded ideal image of self at such times as the person has convinced himself that he <u>is</u> his image. Healthy pride, on the other hand, is simply well-founded self-esteem. Neurotic pride indicates a <u>need</u> to feel proud and raises the spectre of shame and humiliation should the need not be met; it is, then, a shaky, insubstantial form of self-esteem and it quickly and easily can give way to self-hatred.

It is, in fact, always associated with self-hatred, for the simple reason that pride is attached to the ideal image--not the self. This image is such that the real self must appear shabby and despicable in comparison. Thus, the greater the involvement with the ideal image, the greater the underlying feeling of self-hatred.

The extent to which the pride system pervades the personality may reach impressive proportions. Horney remarks that "there is simply nothing that cannot be invested with pride" (Horney, 1950, p. 93). The ideal image can take any conceivable form; any quality, and in particular any felt weakness or vice, can easily be transformed into a strength or virtue. Egocentricity thus may appear as strength, vindictiveness as justice, and so on. Or again, "compliance becomes goodness, love, saintliness; aggressiveness becomes strength, leadership, heroism, omnipotence;

aloofness becomes wisdom, self-sufficiency, independence. What appears as shortcomings or flaws are always dimmed out or retouched" (Horney, 1950, p. 22).

The tyranny of the should is closely tied up with the pride system. Like the latter it, too, is an expression of the ideal image. For the person who reflects on his ideal image is telling himself, in effect: "Forget about the disgraceful creature you actually are; this is how you should be; and to be this idealized self is all that matters" (Horney, 1950, p. 64). Thus every ideal has a should --a compulsion--attached to it, a tension created by the discrepancy between real and ideal self.

This tension is experienced variously as egotistical pride, if the idealized image is accepted as the real self; self-derogation, if the focus is on the real self in comparison with the ideal; and guilt, if the focus is on the discrepancy itself. Whatever the particular form taken, the tension creates a drive toward the actualization of the idealized self, a drive which in Horney's lexicon must be sharply differentiated from geniune self-realization. Actualization of idealized self is nothing more than the compulsive attempt to prove one's perfection, according to the standards one has set up in the ideal. It is thinking, feeling, willing according to the way the ideal dictates that one should think, feel, and will. In the process it forces the person to forego his "real self" and to set him-

self up as a superhuman being, with capacities that are utterly unattainable, yet which he feels under a compulsion to attain. As I understand Horney, it is her contention that this development is not in the direction of the maturation of thought, feeling, or impulse, but only in their rigid control by the tyrannical should.

It is interesting to note that there is no place in Horney's system for a "negative" equivalent of the ideal image. I have made the same point with reference to the self-concept; it has no "negative" side. There is, of course, a negative aspect to the personality. One may feel inadequate, worthless, sinful, and the like; and there is a temptation to take such feelings as evidence of a negative self-concept. But there is none. The self-concept serves a very specific function within the total functioning of the personality, and this function--the raising or maintaining of self-esteem--can be realized only by a concept that reflects favorably on the self.

Horney notes that there is "simply nothing" that cannot be invested with pride. This is true; for example, certain unfortunate individuals may take pride even in being fools and ne'er-do-wells, labels that would annoy or humiliate the ordinary person. This is indeed an instance of "negative" self-concepts, but they are negative only from the social, or objective, point of view. To the person concerned the values claimed are positive; they enhance his

self-esteem. And the status of such a "perverted" self-concept within the personality is exactly the same as that of the typically glorified one.

Horney locates the crux of neurosis in the ideal self; by contrast, she finds mental health in what she calls the "real self." The concept of real self is a difficult one to grasp, to say the least. Horney defines it as an "original force toward individual growth and fulfillment. . . . [It is also] what we refer to when we say that we want to find ourselves" (Horney, 1950, p. 158). Such statements are hardly descriptive, and to the extent that they give the impression of an existing "real" component of the personality waiting to be discovered (or uncovered), they are misleading. I do not subscribe to the concept of a real self in the exact sense that Horney proposes. And yet the term does have some justification, in that, taken in company with "ideal self" it at least announces the existence of profound differences in possible self-structures. However, I prefer the concepts of spontaneous and reflexive self-structures as being more descriptive, and as presenting the distinction between structures in more concrete and understandable terms.

Apropos the distinction between real and idealized self, I find it interesting that Horney is impelled to distinguish between two kinds of pride, or self-esteem. There is pride and there is neurotic pride--the latter a "glitter-

ing gift of most questionable value" (Horney, 1950, p. 87). Neurotic pride is mediated by the self-concept and it is of questionable value because of the inevitable anxiety that suffuses it. It is pride-with-anxiety and it is extraordinarily sensitive to the attitudes of others, whereas pride in the sense of the feeling of a satisfied well-being is anxiety-free and "secure."

Neurotic pride is antithetical to humility, "real" pride is not. To my knowledge, the concept of humility is not incorporated into Horney's system, yet it is clear that she could easily find a place for it in her scheme of self-realization and growth. A point that she makes over and over again is that the ideal image obstructs self-realization; that the compulsive actualization of the self-ideal achieves nothing more than a kind of behavioral perfection. This is the same point that I have raised with regard to the functioning of the self-concept, and it creates a very nice issue for further analysis: i.e., the nature of "real" ideals and of personal growth. In this connection, my only remark is on the negative side. Growth is not realized through the self-concept or through the ideal image. For growth demands humility, and of course pride, in the neurotic sense, is the polar opposite of humility.

Horney makes much the same point, though she does not explicitly recognize the role of humility. She points out, however, that humility follows from genuine ideals,

whereas the ideal image evokes its opposite: arrogance. "Precisely to the extent that the image is unrealistic, it tends to make the person arrogant, in the original meaning of the word; for arrogance . . . means to arrogate to oneself qualities that one does not have" (Horney, 1945, p. 97). And of course, as one's pride becomes attached to the possession of these arrogated qualities, the issue degenerates into one, simply, of defending one's image. "The idealized image is a decided hindrance to growth because it either denies shortcomings or merely condemns them" (Horney, 1945, p. 98).

Munroe. With Munroe we can come directly to the point. "To my mind," she writes, "there is a major omission from Freud's statement of the important dynamic groupings (structures, institutions) that come to function more or less independently in the mature personality. That is the self-image" (Munroe, 1955, p. 273). People, she states, build up a rather clear cut picture of themselves--a picture which goes beyond conscience and which has definite social contours. "This image is surely strongly influenced by the superego, but it is also a reflection of what other people think of us--as interpreted by ourselves; of what we consider our assets and limitations according to the social values we accept; of the role we think we play in our own world" (Munroe, 1955, p. 274).

The self-image is a developmental construct, and the exact form that it takes depends upon the kind of experience out of which it arises. With a child-parent relationship which is strong and either markedly syntonic or dystonic with the general culture pattern, the emerging self-image may be almost identical with the Freudian superego. Where the child-parent relationship is diffuse and the culture pattern strong and unified, the self-image may be more closely related to the accepted social role and only slightly related to superego.

Just how the self-image functions as an agency of the mind to regulate or influence self-activities, Munroe does not make clear. However, she classifies it, dynamically, as a substructure primarily of the ego, and, like all ego structures, she notes, it must "borrow" much of its energy from an outside source. This source is said probably to be the superego. Self-esteem apparently is in some way associated with the self-image, but the nature of this association is not specified, nor is the dynamic significance of self-esteem or other self-feelings, hinted at.

But the self-image ordinarily is not a single entity, Munroe states. "Typically there are important sub-images, which may have a high degree of autonomy. Most of us have several pictures of ourselves, not always logically compatible with one another, which serve as a dynamic focus under varying circumstances" (Munroe, 1955, p. 611).

Presumably, then, the particular form that the self-image takes at any given moment depends in part, at least, on the features of the social situation as the individual perceives it, and in part on his specific needs at that instant. Momentary self-images need not be brought together into a single consistent structure.

There are two features of Munroe's self-image that warrant comment in relation to my notion of the self-concept. The first of these is her choice of a term: self-image as compared with self-concept. The former indicates the visual mode, the latter the verbal. To point this out may only be to quibble over a trivial verbal distinction; yet on the other hand it may well hint at a geniune and basic issue. My choice of "concept" was deliberate and stems from my belief that the idealized, objectified version of the self is carried in conversation. It is an outgrowth of the internalized conversation of gestures, and though in its developed form it may have visual components as well as verbal, my feeling is that the verbal components give it its essential structure and carry its deepest meaning. Verbal praise and verbal censure, both from within and without, are the stuff out of which the self-concept originally arises, and these remain the stimuli to which the self-concept is most sensitive.

The second feature is that the self-image (Munroe) seems to be an agency of both rational and dispassionate

self-appraisal as well as of distorted idealization. This is essentially the same view expressed by Allport (self-image) and Sullivan (good-me), but it departs from both Freud's notion of the ego-ideal and my own version of the self-concept, in both of which the idealization of self in imagination is the distinguishing characteristic. I do not see how it can be otherwise. For the conditions which arouse the self to self-conceptualizing activities are those of acute stress, and the resulting conceptual version is shaped according to the need of the anguished self for relief. Munroe seems to associate the self-image with self-esteem, but apparently overlooks the fact that the latter can be attached only to an image of self that possesses social or moral virtue.

No doubt the self does engage in so-called objective self-appraisals, in the service of its adaptations to reality. Yet I do not believe that these appraisals have the emotional backing ever to attain the status of a more or less continuous function, or "agency." And clearly their role in the total dynamics of the self is far different from that of those fanciful and idealized appraisals that constitute the ego ideal or self-concept. Thus, the self-concept as I construe it is narrower in scope than Munroe's self-image, but it is composed of a more homogeneous set of functions and can more properly be designated as a single agency.

Self-Concept Reconsidered

I conclude this chapter with some additional remarks about the self-concept and its functioning within the self, remarks which have been prompted by the several observations and interpretations just presented.

To begin with: it is possible and convenient to think of the self as a "structure," two more or less sharply differentiated kinds of structures can be observed. The first of these, chronologically, is what can be called the spontaneous structure: it is characterized by mind processes which proceed in a straight line, so to speak, from their inception in primitive impulse and feeling to their expression in deed, or their suppression. This is a structure that I believe could be described, in analytic terms, as an Id-Ego structure. It is the simplest possible self-structure,[10] one that would be described as naive (Cooley) or subjective (Mead), or as being selfless (Lewis, Fingarette). It is non-reflexive.

The second type of structure is reflexive in nature, and includes the self-concept (or ego ideal, or ideal image). This structure is characterized by mind processes which turn around upon the self, which are referred to the idealized

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[10]Simple self-structure should not be confused with simple self. Within this simple structure enormous complexity of development is possible. In fact, it is probably true that the most complex and mature personalities are basically of this type.

version of self on their journey to expression, and which are significantly modified in the process. In analytic terms, again, this is a self-structure constituted by Id-Ego-Superego. The self so formed would be described as sophisticated or affected (Cooley), or as self-conscious (Lewis, and general usage).

These are the two basic forms that self-structure may assume: that is, either with or without a self-concept. The structures themselves are more or less enduring. Of course they are not structural entities at all, but only structurings of processes, and the self is not exclusively composed of either the one or the other but may swing back and forth between them with relative ease. Individuals may be characterized as predominantly spontaneous or predominantly reflexive in make-up, but these are only general descriptive terms. At any one time the person is either the one or the other, and probably there is no one who does not have both in his repertoire.

As I have repeatedly stated, the transformation from the spontaneous to the reflexive structure is accomplished as a result of a particular kind of self-other relationship. It comes about when the person--taking him as in the spontaneous mode to begin with--comes into contact with an attitude directed toward him by a significant other person, and especially when that attitude is one of disapproval (as contempt, scorn, etc.). The reaction to the perception of an

attitude is self-feeling, an affective state which internalizes the approving or disapproving attitude coming from the outside. It is the unique power of self-feeling to turn the mind to the self-conceptualizing activity. This is especially true of negative self-feeling, which is intolerable; the self cannot accept it, or "live with it," as we say, and as an escape or defensive measure resorts to the imagination to create an ideal version of self which in the mind's eye draws the favor of the significant others. This is the act of self-objectification, which introduces into the self a new element (the self-concept) and transforms the original spontaneous structure into a reflexive one.

Having arisen in response to self-feeling, the self-concept serves in turn to perpetuate it. That is, the person with a self-concept is made "vulnerable," in the sense that he is sensitized to the perpetual threat of disapproval, either from without or within. The self-concept thus becomes, in effect, an approval-disapproval dynamism, to use Sullivan's term. It is the vehicle for anxiety, in the deepest and most significant form that anxiety can take.

It also profoundly alters the feeling and impulse-life, and raises important new problems of self-control. For negative self-feeling, especially, is intolerable, and makes demands for satisfaction on the self that pure or spontaneous feelings do not.[11] The need for self-esteem

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[11]These demands may have something to do with the

(the internal reflection of the need for approval from other) cannot be appeased or "sublimated"; it is felt as a positive threat in a way that an ordinary need, even the sexual, cannot approach no matter how intense it may grow. Moreover, self-esteem as a need is insatiable and leads to compulsive behavior. This derives ultimately from the fact that approval implies and is invariably associated with disapproval, and therefore that real security can never be attained from this source; no matter how much approving support is given the man with shaky self-esteem, he remains on shaky grounds. Furthermore, because he is dominated by his need for approval, he cannot understand the meaning of acceptance[12] and can gain no emotional satisfaction from the kind of relationship that, objectively speaking, should offer it to him. He becomes engaged in a continuing struggle to prove himself, according to the qualities he has arrogated to himself, and is unable to comprehend anything other than success (pride, elation) or failure (humiliation, shame) in his quest.

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problem of ego-strength. A "strong" ego may be nothing more than an ego that is subject to few demands of this kind--that is, one which is part of a spontaneous self-structure. In this view it is a mistake to refer to a strong or weak ego in the first place, as the strength and weakness are to be found in the total self-structure, not in just one aspect of it.

[12]Horney refers to a compulsive need for acceptance. This is a misconception, for the need for acceptance cannot be transformed into a compulsion. The compulsive need, which no doubt Horney has in mind, is the need for approval, which is something else again.

Finally, the transformation invariably leaves a residue of hostility, or as Sullivan would have it, malevolence. The hostility may be disguised, but it is an inextricable aspect of all self-conceptualizing. It is explained simply enough. The person resorts to self-conceptualizing in the attempt to rid himself of intolerable self-feeling. Disapproval of one kind or another has been shown him. But one cannot accept a judgment of this kind without reacting with hostility; this I take to be an invariable sequence. Probably the self-concept itself is shaped in a way that provides, in the imagination, a drain for the hostile impulses that result; but of course expression in this form can never relieve the source of the hostility, and it remains as an important moving force within the self and a constant threat to self-control. Thus, much of positive self-feeling is tinged with arrogant contempt for the other, just as the objective of much of self-conceptualizing is the domination or the humiliation of an other.

There is very little reference in the psychological literature to the workings of the spontaneous self. This no doubt is due in part to the inherent difficulty in describing the subjective state or the processes that characterize it and in part to an implied value judgment that dismisses the simple self-structure as primitive and that locates human value and growth in the reflexive process and the ego-ideal. Fingarette (1958) makes this same point

about the ineffability of "self-less" experience, but at the same time makes a very good case for self-lessness as a prerequisite for insight and maturity, as contrasted with the state of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness, as Fingarette uses the term, is to be distinguished sharply from self-awareness, and is one expression of "defensive character armor."

But however this may be, most of current psychological interest is fastened upon the reflexive self-structure. For one thing, this structure is easier to talk about; moreover, it is more intimately involved in the "neurotic," "defensive" activities of the self, which have traditionally been one of the main concerns of psychological analysis. It is my contention that all of conflict (in the neurotic sense) and all of the ego defenses (in the same sense) take place within the reflexive structure; that the self-concept is an integral part of these activities and that, strictly speaking, they cannot arise within the spontaneous self-structure.

There are, of course, conflicts of various sorts, and in a sense every problem that the person faces throws him into one. However, the conflicts which have greatest effect on the workings of the mind are those which implicate self-feelings. And these imply the existence of a self-concept. Thus, certain impulses may be denied expression (suppressed) out of an awareness of consequences: as

physical danger or financial loss. There is conflict between the impulses and the forces of denial, but ordinarily it is conflict which is easily resolved. On the other hand, impulses which conflict with the ideal of self cause a much greater reaction within the self. The aroused self-feeling is intolerable to the self, and activities designed to defend the self from this feeling are initiated. These are activities which no awareness of physical danger, however acute, or no expectation of financial loss, however heavy, can arouse. Defensiveness in this sense is strictly the property of the reflexive self.

The concept of defense is a confused one in the psychological lexicon. The term can, in fact, be used with a certain justification to refer to any activity of the self that wards off potentially painful experience of any kind. But its most widely accepted use is rather specifically limited to the kind of defense typified by repression, in which an impulse not only is denied expression but somehow is prevented from entering into awareness as a conscious desire. There can be no defensiveness of this kind in the spontaneous self-structure; the spontaneous self cannot frown upon or disown its own functioning because it is unselfconscious. It is only with the advent of the self-concept (ego ideal, ideal-image, good-me) that self-activity of this kind can be evoked. The self-concept provides the "leverage," so to speak, for the defensive maneuvers of the

self, by making one part of the self unacceptable to the other part. This is the internal state created by the reflexive act, and the nature of the tension aroused within the self by the functioning of the self-concept. The existence of self-concept necessarily implies such tension.

CHAPTER V

SELF CONCEPT AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

The reader should keep in mind that in writing about therapy I am presenting a partial and fragmentary account. I do not claim that the self-concept is the central issue in the therapeutic process (nor do I have any idea what is). I do feel, however, that there is something to be gained by looking at it from this particular point of view and I do not think that it requires much of a shift in focus to assume it, taking ordinary clinical parlance as the conceptual starting point.

Stated briefly, my position is that in the course of successful therapy the self-conceptualizing activities of the individual are progressively reduced, and in the hypothetically perfect case are eventually eliminated. Ideally, then, the self should have no conception of itself but should act in a free and un-selfconscious way, and the purpose of therapy should be to help it achieve this freedom.

Therapeutic effort, however, cannot be directed at the self-concept, as such. For the self-concept itself,

and all of the activities that go under the label of self-objectification, are themselves only expressions and symptoms of an underlying unrest. This, again, is the apprehension stemming from the internalization of attitudes held toward the self by significant others. These attitudes, then, are the source of the trouble with which the therapist must deal, and he must direct his efforts toward unseating them from their dominant position in the mind of his client. This, I believe, is always the problem in those people who are labelled "neurotic." They have internalized a host of attitudes, and as protection against these they have surrendered their natural spontaneity and "subjectivity" in favor of self-objectification. Neurosis is always the destruction of spontaneity, and spontaneity itself is always the mark of mental health.

It follows from this, then, that the task of the therapist is to help his client find his way back to spontaneity. This is simply put, but the task itself is difficult because, for the person afflicted with the disposition always to think about himself, it is literally a terrifying experience to give it up and enter into un-selfconscious interaction with others. If therapy is to be successful he must, and yet it is like giving up one's only secure hold on life and venturing blindfolded out into a dangerous and uncertain world. Of course the danger and uncertainty stem from the attitudes that he himself has internalized and not

from external sources, but this changes the matter not one bit. One loses one's natural spontaneity usually in childhood, when one finds that the things one does and the things that spontaneity seem to stand for endanger one's position with (arouse an attitude in) the others who are important. One is literally forced, then, to keep a careful watch over one's self as a precaution against catastrophe, and if the others are easily disturbed this develops into a constant vigil and eventually into an established mode of thought, with the self as object. And when this is accomplished, exit spontaneity.

For such a person, then, the subjective mode of thought (spontaneity) is much too dangerous to be indulged in. Occasionally he may break over into this mode, especially when he is involved in a neutral or trivial matter, or one that really absorbs his interest, but he cannot hold to it for long and, on his return to the objectified mode, is more frightened than ever, even though in retrospect he may concede that the experience was delightful while it lasted. But to have let one's self go! To have so carelessly exposed one's self! It is enough to make one cringe.

It is exactly this kind of reaction that the therapist must work against. To gain anything from therapy the client must take a chance, must let himself go, must expose himself, however terrifying it may be to do so. And the therapist, if he is to be successful, must be able to

encourage his client to do so. But this takes some doing and not everyone is equipped to do it. For of course it's not enough just to encourage the client verbally; no doubt he already has had enough of that from friends and neighbors and would only be exasperated to run into the same kind of treatment from the therapist. No, the "ability to encourage" carries a different meaning; it means that the therapist must be a person who can serve as a new kind of other to his client.

There are two aspects to this encouragement. The first is that the therapist must be the kind of other who will "call out" the client's fullest self. And the second is that he must respond to the client's productions in a way that the client may find out that his apprehension, in the therapeutic context at least, is unfounded.

Of these, the first is the more basic. Therapy cannot proceed at all until the client produces something of himself, and of course the more he produces, the more varied and free his productions, the greater is the chance that it will proceed. It is no guarantee, of course, but it is the necessary first condition. Now, psychotherapy is always a self-other relationship, and as in every other self-other relationship the kind of self that is called out in the client--his thoughts and feelings--depend to a certain extent upon the character of his other--in this instance, the therapist. This point cannot be stressed too much. Cooley

remarks that what we would be embarrassed to tell to some of our acquaintances we may boast about to others. This certainly is a common enough experience, and though it is a rather superficial illustration it carries a very clear point.

The same sort of thing holds at a much deeper level. The very thoughts and feelings that come to us depend in a significant way upon how we see our "other." There are some people with whom you may never feel inclined to speak out about anything of personal importance. They don't invite closeness, and when you are with them personal thoughts and tender feelings seem strangely foreign and inappropriate. But their imprint goes deeper than this, for when you are with them and let them get a hold on you <u>such thoughts and feelings simply don't appear at all</u>. On the other hand, there are those with whom you may find yourself indulging freely in ideas and feelings of all kinds, who "call out" in you a wider and deeper and richer self, one which gives expression to its full potentiality. It should be apparent that a therapist who calls out only a segment of his client's self is a poor therapist for that reason. If the client in his so-called free association is constrained from thinking about a certain kind of experience or from experiencing a certain kind of feeling because of the presence of the therapist, the therapeutic process is thereby cut off even before it begins. It seems, then, that the most important

single attribute a therapist can possess is his own "fullness" as a person; he must be the kind of person who calls out in his client the full range of his experience.

The second aspect of the therapist's task of "encouragement" follows from the first. Having called out his client's fullest self he must accept it. This is easily written but not so easily done, for inevitably in the course of therapy the client will get to the seamy side of his life and will talk about experiences and express feelings that we would call disgusting, shameful, and the like (and that disgust and shame him). It cannot be otherwise if therapy is to progress at all, for these experiences and feelings (self-feelings) are at the very heart of the trouble he brings into therapy.

Now, if one thing is clear about therapy it is this: the therapist himself cannot show the same attitudes toward his client as the client had previously suffered, or perhaps is still suffering, at the hands of his significant others. After all, it is the internalizing of these attitudes that brings him into therapy in the first place, and in the therapist he must find someone who feels in a different way about him or else he will get no relief. The therapist must be able to face up to what we call "disgusting" without being disgusted by it, or to what we call "contemptible" without being contemptuous of it, or to what we call weak and foolish without being derisive of it, and so on.

In short, he must be the kind of person whose own self-feeling is not easily aroused, for only if he remains at peace with himself and spontaneous in his response to his client can he give him the kind of other that quiets apprehension and encourages a free outpouring of the full self.

More than anything else, the client seeks an other who can really accept him, but because he has been sensitized by many blows in the past he is ever on guard for signs of disapproval, and his capacity to detect it is tuned to an incredible fineness so that little escapes him, however disguised, subtle, or circumstantial it may be. Sooner or later attitudes will out; there is no way to cover them up and especially not in a relationship such as therapy which demands a free (uncontrolled) response from the therapist. He must be spontaneous if he is to call up spontaneity in his client, for spontaneity-in-relationship is the only true mark of acceptance.

There is, then, no way out for the therapist. Either he has worked through his self-feeling and the attitudes it engenders or he is less effective as a therapist. And the therapist who harbors these things and deliberately tries to cover them over rather than rid himself of them only causes his client additional woe. For this is sheer pretense, and dishonesty in the strictest personal sense; and the only thing it accomplishes is to present to the client an other who pretends to accept and yet who really

does not. For the breeding of insecurity and apprehensiveness a better device could hardly be fashioned.

Now there are two further points that should be made about this issue of acceptance. The first is that the feeling nature of acceptance must not be lost sight of. I have already called attention to this point on the negative side (rejection) in the discussion of the destructive force of attitudes in therapy. On the positive side, feelings--of the therapist for the client--are essential to therapeutic progress. This is because in the deepest sense of the term acceptance is feeling and is carried to the client as feeling, and nothing that the therapist could do would be more absurd and self-contradictory than to verbalize his acceptance of his client and yet relate to him in a cold, indifferent way. Lack of feeling is always rejection, for it clearly implies a warding off of the other, a refusal to get involved with or close to him. It would be hard to imagine more eloquent and forceful testimony that he is not wanted.

The second point is that it must be the client's self that is accepted and not a false version of it. When we seek acceptance it is for what we are, and in order to feel really secure in our relationship to any other we must feel that he understands us fully, not right down to the tiniest detail of our thought and feeling, of course, but to the point of an awareness of our weakness as well as of our strong points.

Nothing is quite so insecure as the so-called "acceptance" accorded to us by an other who can see only good in us and who persists in turning away from any thought of us as less than perfect. For it is not our real self that he accepts at all, but only his private, glorified, but truncated version of it, and, by implication which is too clear for even the most naive to escape, he will have nothing to do with the rest of us. What a frustrating experience to try to convey to such a person that we are not really so perfect as he thinks! But even more than this, what an insecure feeling we carry around with us when he is with us or in our mind. And how much better we feel when we are with an other who can see us fully--or at least who does not block out portions of our self that do not suit him--and who, with this, can speak freely about our foibles. Such an other, we know, is responding to our full self and seems not at all dismayed by some of the un-pretty things he finds there; why, then, should we be concerned about exposing ourselves if, when we show a bad spot, it makes so little difference? This is acceptance and this is security in the deepest sense of these terms.

Of course the therapist must work from this second point of view. In order to encourage his client to give up self-conscious control for spontaneous self-expression he must first demonstrate that his acceptance of the client takes into account some awareness of the client's full self,

including its weak, shady, obscene, and foolish sides. Otherwise his therapeutic power as an accepting other is drastically reduced. For an accepting response is accepting of only that portion of the self that it is in response to, and as it is the deeper and more hidden portions of the client's self that give him the most trouble, and thus are most in need of acceptance, a superficial understanding simply will not do. This is why the accomplished therapist, offering greater understanding, can effect changes in portions of the client's self that even a very close friend, without such understanding, cannot touch.

And this is why psychotherapy must be structured as it is: with the client talking more or less freely about his experiences, thoughts, and feelings, past and present. No matter how good a friend you are, you cannot help a man come to terms with an experience that he suffered years ago and which since then he has kept hidden within himself. And of course neither can the therapist, no matter how wonderful a person he may be. If he is to help his client overcome the deep self-feelings that attach to a particular happening of yesteryear he must actually enter that happening as an other. This is why in therapy the client must re-create those experiences, for only in this way can they be brought into the context of an accepting other. The client must relive them; he cannot just talk about them, for unless he is involved in them he is only objectifying himself again, and

his self now is not the self that it was at the time of the significant experience. If one cannot enter subjectively into one's re-creation the only thing one can gain from the therapist's response to it is the knowledge that this old experience was indeed the beginning of one's trouble and that one really shouldn't feel about it the way one does. But the self-feeling persists in its original intensity.

Perhaps it is apropos here to remark in passing that because acceptance is such a crucial issue one can hardly accomplish alone by probing into one's self what one can accomplish when this is done in the presence of another. A self-other relationship must be significantly altered, and acceptance-by-other internalized. And, how can one achieve this by one's self? It is possible, perhaps--yet certainly the change is made a great deal easier and procured a great deal faster when an other is introduced who, by virtue of his training and his qualities as a person, serves as a concrete representation of understanding and acceptance. One can create such an ideal other out of one's imagination, perhaps, but it is hard to see how such an imagined other could escape the defects that earlier inhered in the concrete others of one's experience, and in any event it would lack the vividness and power of a real other.

To summarize: I have argued that for therapy to be successful the therapist must in some way encourage his client to give up the security of self-objectification in favor

of subjectivity. And for this to take place I have stated that the therapist must first of all "call up" his client's fullest self, and, second, having done this, he must understand and accept it.

All of this takes place within the therapeutic sessions. However, the therapist cannot very well change history, and he cannot--nor would he want to--persuade his client that the others who earlier had heaped derision and scorn and contumely upon his head really did love and accept him. Nor can he very well change reality, and his client must continue to live more or less closely with a host of others who are not always accepting of him, not only during the course of therapy but, and especially, for years after he leaves it. What then does it benefit him to have found acceptance in one man?

There are many sides to the answer. In the first place, in coming to experience the acceptance of the therapist he at the same time is growing capable of experiencing the acceptance of all those others about him who do have feelings for him. Even without any changes in the nature of his relations with these others, there is real benefit accruing to him from his new and inherently more satisfying orientation toward others.

But the matter does not stop here. For, from having experienced the acceptance of the therapist he is a changed man. To appreciate this point you must keep in mind that

this feeling (of being accepted) comes to the client only from having re-lived a host of significant experiences in the company of the therapist. The acceptance, then, relates directly to more or less specific experiences, or, more precisely, to the self-feeling that had been attached to them. To say, then, that the client now can experience the therapist's acceptance of him means that he no longer is humiliated or made guilty by the memory of the experiences in question, or, in general terms, that his threatening others no longer have their earlier hold on his mind. In short, it is to say that he can now accept himself (at least on the specific issue involved) or, as we say, that he is at peace with himself.

Because of this he is better able to relate to others in a spontaneous way. This is a more satisfying kind of relationship in its own right, but even more than this it presents to them an "other" to which they can in turn respond in a more open and geniunely sociable way. Spontaneity begets spontaneity: this is the way that it is in therapy and this is the way that it is in social life. Hence, for having changed his own self the client finds that the others whom he meets and "calls up" are thereby changed for the better. These people are the same people that he knew before, but, in response to the changed "other" that he presents to them, their selves may be changed, too. It is a long and involved cyclical process that presumably has

no ending.

And finally, he benefits from the possession of a new set of values for appraising others. In actuality, this is a very complex matter, but what the statement means, briefly, is that he sees others in a different light than he did before and that he no longer is so receptive to--or as dependent upon--these others who formerly made such a great and disturbing impression upon him. Successful therapy always has this liberating effect on the person. For, in the process of re-living earlier humiliating experiences within the context of the therapist's acceptance he thereby changes his relationship with the others who had been part of the original experiences, and, by generalization, with all others whom they represent in his mind. Those others said, by implication if not explicitly, that he was very bad, in one way or another; his therapist now says, by implication if not explicitly, that he wasn't so bad, after all. His progress in therapy is measured by the success that the therapist has in gaining his respect, and in usurping the place that these threatening others have previously held in his mind as an active and significant force. But in becoming a significant other the therapist does more than just usurp an established power; he also and at the same time establishes new criteria for significance. By this I mean that to the extent that the person is influenced by his therapist--that is, accepts him as an ascendant other--to

that extent is he accepting of the personal values that the therapist stands for, and rejecting of those that the therapist stands opposed to. As I have stated, for therapy to proceed at all, the person must show humility, and take what Baldwin would call a "receptive" position in relation to the therapist. There is nothing "weak" about this and nothing surreptitious; it is only an honest awareness of one's own limitations in relation to one's other, and in order to put oneself in this position one naturally must first of all see to one's satisfaction that the qualities of the other are in fact admirable.

But however this may be, when the therapeutic relationship is ended, the person emerges with changed values. He does not feel the same way about things any more, and his relationship with people is different. Here the important thing is that certain others, or certain qualities in others, that heretofore had called up his receptive self and aroused humiliation, or other negative self-feelings, no longer carry this power. They do not carry it because he does not find them so impressive any more. They no longer get his respect or deference, and even though they may continue to abuse, belittle, manipulate, or otherwise reject him, they have lost some of their effectiveness with him because they have lost some of their significance to him.

In writing about the therapeutic relationship I have made no direct reference, to this point, of the self-

concept. I have contended that in successful therapy the self-concept is progressively weakened, and that the ideal (hypothetical) self has none at all. But though ridding the self of its self-concept is essential to success, this work cannot be accomplished by direct attack. Clearly, it would be a foolish waste of time to try to dissuade a person from such activity, for it is not subject to his will and so long as the underlying feelings persist so long will he feel compelled to indulge in it. And it would be even worse than foolish to take a "rational" approach and try to demonstrate to him that his particular self-concept is the product of ill-founded or misguided beliefs, because--his needs remaining unchanged--if you have any influence over him at all he will respond only by taking on another self-concept in its place--one more in keeping with the values implied in your argument. There is, in fact, considerable danger in this sort of thing, in that he may eventually re-orient his overall concept of self according to the values he reads into his therapist, and in so doing effectively protect himself against any real therapeutic change. I suspect that the number of people who have gained this and nothing else from therapy is not inconsiderable. These are the people who can talk <u>about</u> themselves and their problems with great facility and ease (and who do a good job of it!), but who nonetheless give the impression that their problems remain unchanged or that they have even been compounded by this intellectual counterfeit of true therapy.

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