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## Outline of psychoanalytic theory of emotion.

Bram M. Fridhandler  
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OUTLINE OF A PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY OF EMOTION

A Dissertation Presented

by

BRAM MICHAEL FRIDHANDLER

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 1986

Psychology

Bram Michael Fridhandler

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OUTLINE OF A PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY OF EMOTION

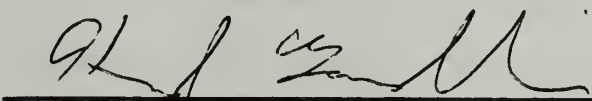
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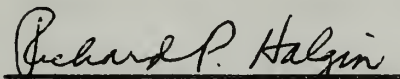
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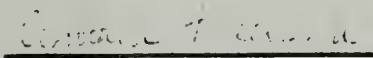
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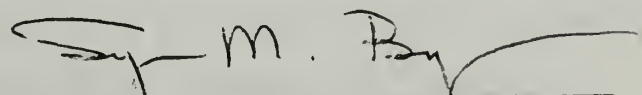
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## ABSTRACT

### OUTLINE OF A PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY OF EMOTION

February 1986

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Directed by: Professor James R. Averill

A psychoanalytic theory of emotion is presented and elaborated. The theory is psychoanalytic more in its applicability to psychoanalytic issues than in its being drawn primarily from psychoanalytic sources. The most important single source is Averill's (non-psychoanalytic) "social constructivist" perspective on emotion.

After a brief introductory chapter, the psychoanalytic literature on affect is reviewed. In Chapter II, Freud's several affect theories are traced in detail. Conclusions are drawn that differ in significant respects from those of previous reviews of Freud's affect theory. Separate theories are isolated in Freud's views of hysteria, obsessive-compulsive neurosis, anxiety neurosis, and in early, middle, and late periods of his writings. Freud's "clinical" writings are examined separately from his meta-psychological works, and several themes emerge in these clinical writings, particularly a view of affects as inherently justified.

Post-Freudian, particularly ego psychological, writings

on affect are reviewed in Chapter III. The review is organized according to six sets of issues: metapsychology, defense and unconscious affect, biological theories, anxiety, ego and cognition, and object relations and representations. Major papers in each area are critically discussed.

In Chapter IV the theory itself is presented. Emotions are described as schematic organizations (structured wholes, made up of heterogeneous components, and understandable in terms of the concept of schemas). These schemas are contained in and activated by the ego, and consist of physiological, psychological, and social responses. The importance of addressing emotions at the level of organizations of responses is stressed. Elaborations and implications of the theory are presented, focusing on causation, adaptiveness, irrationality, and repression. The relationship between the present theory and psychoanalytic theory in general is critically explored.

Chapter V consists of a discussion, from the perspective of the present theory, of the major issues in psychoanalytic affect theory that are reviewed in Chapter III. In addition, the issues of anxiety and psychotherapy are briefly discussed. Finally, in a concluding chapter, the theory is critically assessed, and views on the importance of the theory are presented.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

For nearly fifty years, psychoanalysts have lamented their lack of a satisfactory theory of affect. Time and again, analysts have returned to the topic in efforts to devise a theory that would be conceptually viable and would meet their theoretical and practical needs, but, by their own consensus, without real success. Freud did not leave a theory of affect, but a series of theories, unreconciled with one another. It was some years after Freud's death before sustained efforts were again made to construct an adequate general theory of affect; these efforts mostly took place among emigre analysts in the United States and their American successors. After a series of panels and many papers, it was still possible for a prominent analyst to write that "every analyst who has approached the subject has begun by emphasizing the meager and unsatisfactory state of our theoretical knowledge" (Brenner, 1974b, p. 532).

One can isolate two kinds of approaches in the efforts of analytic theorists to construct a psychoanalytic affect theory. These two approaches could be called the endogamous and the exogamous. Some theorists (e.g., Jacobson, 1971a; Rapaport, 1953) have sought to devise a theory through ever more elaborate extensions and coordinations of the existing terms of psychoanalytic theory, particularly those contained

in Freud's metapsychology. This is the endogamous approach. It is not clear how successful this approach ever was in gaining the allegiance of psychoanalytic theorists and practitioners. Although in some instances the efforts were widely cited, it is hard to detect a progressive dissemination of even these most prominent papers in contemporary writings. In any event, the endogamous approach has by now lost most of the influence it once had. Freud's metapsychology simply no longer carries the authority it did, and without this authority, theories based on it seem hollow. Even Charles Brenner, noted for his defense of the adequacy of Freudian views (e.g., Brenner, 1979), in his affect theory shows little interest in past metapsychological considerations.

A second factor in the decline of efforts to construct an account of affect out of the existing materials of psychoanalytic theory is simply the relative failure of such efforts after decades of attempts. Early post-Freudian theorists recognized that the prospects were poor for producing an adequate affect theory from the available concepts, and they blamed the predominant interest in instincts for this situation (Brierley, 1937; Glover, 1939). Their predictions have been borne out. The concepts of instinct or drive have not provided a foundation on which a theory of affect could successfully be built. They have led post-Freudian theorists, as they led Freud himself, into

exceedingly complex and often inconsistent formulations which fail to serve the purposes of theory.

For such reasons, current theorists have turned, by and large, to the exogamous approach to building an affect theory. Most theorists in the past ten or twenty years who have addressed themselves to analytic affect theory have based their theories on concepts from other fields and modes of thought than psychoanalysis, and have devised original conceptions far less constrained by the Freudian explanatory framework. The decline of metapsychology has opened the way for a greater infusion of new thought. There is reason to hope that these borrowings from other fields and the original approaches based on them will enliven psychoanalytic theory and lead to more successful solutions to the problem of affect.

Borrowing from other fields, though, is a consequential procedure and will not leave psychoanalysis as it was. Incorporating solutions of psychoanalytic problems which are based on the theories or assumptions of other disciplines must alter the character of psychoanalytic thought, particularly when an area as fundamental as affect is involved. These solutions, insofar as they are accepted, bring changes that can occur unobtrusively--silently, so to speak--and these changes can potentially affect even the most fundamental principles of psychoanalysis. Borrowings, then, should involve reflection on whether the new solutions



are in harmony with the essential features of psychoanalysis one wishes to preserve.

In this dissertation, a new theory of affect is proposed. The theory is intended for use in psychoanalysis. Whether it would find acceptance and by whom cannot be known, but the effort has been guided by an interest in addressing psychoanalytic questions. This theory, I hope, has features to recommend it even to those who are not adherents of any form of psychoanalytic theory and who are not concerned with psychoanalytic problems. It is not only the psychoanalytically oriented who are interested in a successful account of affect and emotion, and the present theory will be the more valuable if it captures the interest of a wider audience. Nevertheless, it has been devised with the primary intent of finding application to psychoanalytic problems.

This theory is of the exogamous variety. It does not have its origins in Freudian metapsychology, nor is it based on other traditional psychoanalytic metatheoretical entities. It employs only one such traditional entity--the ego--and not without first subjecting this concept to a critical examination. If it may be considered a psychoanalytic theory, then, this is not because it is built from readily recognizable psychoanalytic materials. Its borrowings are from two main sources. First, it draws heavily on Averill's "social constructivist" perspective on

emotion. The present theory has been guided at a great many points by Averill's framing of the issues in emotion and by the answers he has proposed. In some cases, Averill's views are directly adopted here; in other cases, the approach taken here parallels Averill's. The second main non-psychoanalytic source for the present theory is cognitive psychology, from which it borrows the concept of a schema. This concept, I will attempt to show, can be made to do valuable work in the effort to understand emotion, in ways psychoanalysis can use.

Before this theory is presented, the psychoanalytic literature on affect is reviewed. Of course, not all psychoanalytic writings on affect are included. Although the literature is not as extensive as one might imagine, still to review all papers and books which take affect as their primary focus would be highly demanding and beyond the scope of this project. Therefore, the review focuses first on Freud, whose changing conceptions are closely examined. Freud offered so many conceptions of affect that, as is often true in Freud, he raised a great many of the issues that recur in later psychoanalytic efforts, and therefore a close study of his views is well repaid. Following the critical review of Freud, a selection of the subsequent literature on affect is reviewed. Major papers are discussed as they fall into enduring themes, and the discussion aims to pick out from these papers some of the

recurring concerns and the difficulties these theorists have encountered and often foundered upon.

Following this presentation of the most prominent and pertinent analytic accounts of affect, I present my own. To make the task more manageable, I begin by restricting the domain of the theory. Mine is a theory of emotion only, which I define. Then, drawing on Averill, I claim that emotions need to be described as organizations of component responses, and I argue that they are well described as schematic organizations, borrowing the concept of a schema. I place these phenomena in the ego, where they are part of the ego's adaptive repertoire; I describe the factors in the activation of emotion, and particularly the kinds of problems on which the ego brings emotions to bear.

In the closing section of the chapter, I address the question of whether this theory is psychoanalytic. This is a question that has not often been addressed. In general, psychoanalytic affect theorists, even when borrowing their theories from elsewhere, have been satisfied simply to assert that their theories are analytic, and have relied on their own status as psychoanalysts and on the publication of their work, for the most part, in psychoanalytic journals to substantiate the claim. This procedure holds the danger I described above, that concepts brought in from other fields will change psychoanalysis in ways of which no one is clearly aware and which few would desire. Providing a forum

for a discussion of these issues would be an advance. Moreover, my own theory is in particular need of an account of its claim to be psychoanalytic, since it cannot rely on institutional or historical factors.

Whether the theory is genuinely psychoanalytic can be separated from the issue of whether it addresses, in productive ways, the issues analytic affect theories have struggled with. There is only a difference of degree, perhaps, between a psychoanalytic affect theory and one which addresses psychoanalytic issues well and which does so while preserving the essential features of psychoanalysis. Rigid distinctions need not be drawn, if terms for a discussion are available. Such terms will be more available here once all the issues have been presented, so we can return to this issue of whether the present theory is a psychoanalytic one in the concluding chapter.

The theory is offered as a viable and illuminating account of emotion. More specifically, though, it is offered as a new and more useful way of addressing issues in the psychoanalytic theory of affect. Accordingly, a chapter is devoted to trying the theory out, so to speak. Each of the major issues which emerge in the course of the literature review is addressed, at least briefly, and a few other areas which are closely related to affect theory are also considered. These discussions, of course, are not meant to be fully adequate considerations of these complex



issues in terms of the present theory; that is a task for the further research that the protocol of dissertations and other beginnings entitles one to call for. They are ways of demonstrating something of this theory's usefulness, and they may in turn help clarify the nature of the theory itself.

## CHAPTER II

### FREUD'S THEORIES OF AFFECT

#### Introduction

Freud did not have a single theory of affect. Whether one draws distinctions as Rapaport did (Green, 1977; Rapaport, 1953; Valenstein, 1962), or in some other way, such as the expansion of Rapaport's scheme employed here, it is clear that Freud's understanding of affect underwent fundamental changes as his theory developed, and that he often held more than one view at the same time. The present review is organized so as to isolate Freud's several theories of affect. These are examined as they appear in Freud's writings, and their connections with selected aspects of Freud's metapsychology and his theories of neurosis are highlighted.

When Freud discussed affect in general, he did so almost without exception in metapsychological terms. The literal meaning of "metapsychology" is correct here; the terms of these discussions were above, or outside of, the psychological. In the earlier years, this meant affect was discussed in terms of the ambiguous psychological or physiological, literal or metaphorical energy that Freud came to identify with sexuality and to call libido. Later,

and its mechanisms and goals. When Freud turned to particular affects, on the other hand, he tended to discuss them in psychological terms, free of references to energy, structures, and mechanisms. These discussions fall into what Klein (1973a) has called Freud's "clinical" theory. These two sorts of theory, the clinical and metapsychological yield theories of affect that bear only a distant, though distinct, relation to one another. Although it is the metapsychological theory that Freud identified as his theory of affect and that has been the exclusive focus of the major reviews of Freud's theory of affect, both the clinical and metapsychological theories are reviewed here.

### Early Theories

Freud's metapsychological theories of affect are among the most obscure and confusing aspects of Freud's theory, and they are formulated in some of the most highly technical terms. For this reason, the following review gives extensive consideration to the earliest forms taken by Freud's affect theory. These early forms, which preceded the distinctively Freudian theoretical framework, betray the roots of the later theories and reveal with particular clarity the assumptions that persist in the later theories but which are often obscured by the technical terms of Freud's metapsychology.

## Hysteria and affect theory

The concept of psychic drive energy is central to Freudian theory. In popular conceptions, on the other hand, the central feature of psychoanalysis is probably its emphasis on the pervasive influence of emotions. These two central features--energy and emotion--are united in the origins of Freud's thought, where affect and energy are equivalent, or rather, the roles that would later be filled by psychic energy are filled by affect.

Psychoanalysis originated in Freud's study, with Josef Breuer, of the etiology and treatment of hysteria. The distinctiveness of Freud's and Breuer's views on hysteria did not lie in the adoption of a psychological framework. Other physicians regarded hysteria as a psychological phenomenon--indeed, this was their reason for dismissing hysteria and hysterics from the proper realm of medicine (Freud, 1910/1957)--and moreover, Freud and Breuer adopted a mixed psychological and physical model (see Freud, 1894/1962, where Freud describes the model as "psycho-physical"). The distinctiveness of their approach was in the primary role they gave to affect. That is, the first step toward psychoanalysis was the explanation of hysteria on the basis of the vicissitudes of affect.

Freud (1910/1957) recounts the origins of psychoanalytic theory and therapy in the first of five lectures he delivered at Clark University in 1909. In this



lecture, Freud describes Breuer's treatment of Anna O., and in particular the great strides made in the treatment after Breuer and his patient discovered that her hysterical symptoms--paralyses, disturbances of posture and vision, nervous cough, inability to drink fluids, inability to speak or understand her native language, and more--disappeared when she recalled the occasion of the first appearance of a symptom, if (and only if) the recollection was accompanied by an energetic expression of emotion. Breuer and Freud concluded that the symptoms were the result of the lack of expression of aroused affect.

One was driven to assume that the illness occurred because the affects generated in the pathogenic situations had their normal outlet blocked, and that the essence of the illness lay in the fact that these "strangled" affects were then put to an abnormal use....a certain portion of our mental excitation is normally directed along the paths of somatic innervation and produces what we know as an "expression of the emotions". Hysterical conversion exaggerates this portion of the discharge of an emotionally cathected mental process; it represents a far more intense expression of the emotions, which has entered upon a new path. (Freud, 1910/1957, p. 18)

This passage highlights the close connection Freud initially drew between affect and hysterical symptoms, and demonstrates as well the physicalistic nature of this connection, notwithstanding statements in the same lecture that this was a "purely psychological" theory. Some features evident in this passage recur throughout the course of Freud's theory of affect.

Freud and Breuer (1893/1955, 1895/1955; Freud,

1894/1962) devised a model of the mind or brain based on their findings in hysteria, and this model is reflected in central features of Freud's later metapsychology. Affect, they held, is principally aroused by experiences, that is, by perceptions and ideas. Once aroused, the affect constitutes an increase in the normally prevailing optimal excitation in the nervous system, and the nervous system is so designed as to attempt to relieve this excess excitation in some fashion and to return to the optimal level. The customary and ideal method of returning to optimal excitation is through the movements, sounds, secretions (e.g., tears), and actions that are known as "expression of the emotions". So long as these processes can proceed freely, no lasting difficulty is encountered; the debilitating effects of emotion on thought and action are only temporary. However, should any factor interfere with this means of eliminating excess excitation, hysterical symptoms result.

Freud and Breuer maintained that two separate factors were responsible for interfering with this process. Of the two, only the one favored by Freud endured in later psychoanalytic thought--this, naturally, was the factor of inhibition or defense. Emotional expression could become the object of defense for a variety of reasons, including restrictions of social propriety or other situational constraints, but Freud considered the more common basis to

be the unacceptability of the underlying feelings to the person's own moral strictures. The second factor blamed by Freud and Breuer for blocking emotional expression was "hypnoid states". Hypnoid states, the explanation particularly favored by Breuer, consist of an altered state of consciousness, similar to that induced by hypnosis, in which normal processes of emotional expression do not take place. When either factor is present, the normal dissipation of excitation fails to take place, with the result that the excitation attaches itself to the relevant perception or idea, which then persists in the mind in an abnormal and pathogenic fashion.

Such charged ideas differ in two ways from ideas without an abnormal degree of energy attached to them. First, they are more potent and persistent than ideas in a normal state, and second, they are less accessible to the process of conscious association. As a consequence of their greater potency, these ideas exert a disproportionate influence over mental life; hysterical symptoms are the chief indication of this. As a result of their inaccessibility to ordinary association, separate networks of associations, dissociated from one another, are built up, so that when one of the networks is active, only those associations are available to consciousness. Blocked emotional expression and "splitting of consciousness" are therefore two aspects of the same phenomenon.

Hysterical symptoms represent an attempt to discharge the energy attached to charged ideas in the split-off association network. The attempt does not succeed, though, because each time the emotion-arousing idea or event is re-encountered, the split-off associations receive a fresh charge of energy. Freud and Breuer's cathartic therapy resolved this situation by relieving the pathogenic ideas of their charge of affect (through abreaction) and by bringing the split-off ideas back into the conscious network of associations.

According to this model of the mind, there are two paths open to emotion, once it is aroused. It can either be literally expressed (i.e., expelled), or it can attach itself to an idea. The latter event has two major consequences. First, the mind is split into conscious and unconscious portions, and second, the emotional energy presses constantly for release, and finds this release, albeit inadequately, in the form of neurotic symptoms. This model contains the essential features of the final Freudian model of mind, but with affect occupying the place later taken by drive. In later theory, it is the energy of drives that becomes attached to ideas ("cathexis") and that is expressed in neurotic symptoms, and it is the kind and quantity of drive energy attached to an idea that determines whether the idea is permitted into consciousness.



## Anxiety Neurosis and Affect Theory

Affect appears in another context, entirely independent of hysteria, during this pre-psychoanalytic phase of Freud's work, and some implications of this second context run virtually counter to those of the first. During the same period of time in which he was collaborating with Breuer in the development of their theory of hysteria, Freud's (1895/1962) attention was drawn by another clinical syndrome. Among patients suffering from "neurasthenia"--a commonly diagnosed syndrome at that time, primarily characterized by tiredness, intracranial pressure, dyspepsia, and various other symptoms of malaise (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973)--Freud distinguished a sub-group whose primary symptom was intense and chronic anxiety, including both physical and mental aspects. In other words, in contrast to hysteria, where the symptoms were considered by Freud and Breuer to be abnormal physical substitutes for emotional expression, the main symptom of "anxiety neurosis", as Freud proposed to call this new syndrome, was itself an emotion.

Freud's theory of anxiety neurosis merits discussion in some detail. This is not merely because it contains the most sustained discussion of affect of that period of Freud's work, although that alone would make it worthy of attention. The theory's importance goes beyond its historical role, for not only was it maintained in some form

as a theory of anxiety almost throughout Freud's life, but it profoundly influenced the body of Freud's work. This influence was at least equal to the influence of the early theory of hysteria, and yet it has been far less widely appreciated.

The argument Freud (1895/1962) advanced for distinguishing anxiety neurosis from neurasthenia was two-fold. First, Freud argued, they formed distinct clusters of symptoms, and thus there was a *prima facie* basis for a distinction. Second, the illnesses were caused by two distinct etiologies, a conclusion Freud based on experience with his patients. Freud adhered to the position, already prevalent in medicine, that neurasthenia was caused by masturbation, whereas for anxiety neurosis Freud held the cause to be failure to discharge sexual arousal in a normal and complete fashion.

Freud (1895/1962) reported he found anxiety neurosis in cases where sexual arousal was present but where, for various reasons, it repeatedly failed to end in "normal coition under the most favorable conditions" (p. 109). Some circumstances cited as fitting this description were coitus interruptus, prolonged courtship, voluntary abstinence, and, for a woman, marriage to a man suffering from premature ejaculation. That such circumstances have in common sexual frustration has led some writers (e.g., Rangell, 1968) to state that Freud held the sole decisive factor to be simple

absence of physical sexual discharge. Freud encouraged this view by describing the essential condition as an "accumulation of excitation" (p. 114).

However, a close inspection of Freud's (1895/1962) discussion reveals that it would be incorrect to describe the anxiety in anxiety neurosis as a simple conversion of sexual arousal, due to its excessive accumulation. An anxiety neurosis does not come into existence, according to Freud's account, solely due to the absence of physical discharge, but requires also a failure of mental mastery-- "the mechanism of anxiety neurosis is to be looked for in a deflection of somatic sexual excitation from the psychical sphere, and in a consequent abnormal employment of that excitation" (p. 108).

What is meant by this deflection of somatic excitation, and what are its causes? Freud had developed a model of sexual satisfaction (described cursorily in Freud, 1895/1962 and in detail in Freud, 1895/1966a) which required a full involvement of sexual ideas in coitus in order for an adequate discharge to be achieved. For this mental involvement to be accomplished, a well-developed set of sexual ideas had to be present in the mind and their activation by somatic energy had to be permitted, and had to be maintained during the sexual act. Any factor interrupting this process was likely, in the short or long term, to produce anxiety neurosis through the mechanism of

insufficient mastery or binding of somatic excitation by the mind, or more specifically, a failure of ideas to adequately absorb energy and then discharge it as required for full release of excitation.

Coitus interruptus, Freud held, produced anxiety neurosis in men not through lack of physical discharge--orgasm being readily possible--but through the mental distraction imposed by the task. In fact, any factor making intercourse less mentally exciting and satisfying, such as condoms, premature ejaculation, or coitus interruptus, was thought to act similarly to produce anxiety neurosis by blocking the full activation of sexual ideas (Freud, 1895/1962, 1894/1966).

Sexual abstinence would be the simplest case if Freud's theory involved simple accumulation of excitation, but the explanation of anxiety neurosis in cases of abstinence is actually more complicated than cases of physically adequate but mentally unsatisfying intercourse. Abstinence in adults leads to an accumulation of sexual energy, but this need not lead to anxiety neurosis; it may lead merely to intensification of "libido" (used here by Freud to mean conscious sexual interest). However, if the energy is "deflected into other paths, which hold out greater promise of discharge than does the path through the psyche" (Freud, 1895/1962, pp. 109-110), anxiety neurosis develops and sexual desire diminishes or disappears. Freud seems to hold



that constitution primarily determines whether sexual abstinence leads to anxiety neurosis or simply to intensifying sexual desire (see Freud, 1894/1966); in any event, anxiety neurosis was not regarded as an inevitable consequence of abstinence, even prolonged abstinence.

A final pertinent case in point is "virginal anxiety", in which newly aroused somatic excitation leads to anxiety because sexual ideas are not yet sufficiently developed to be capable of absorbing the energy. Here again, it is not deprivation per se which leads to anxiety neurosis, nor over-excitement, but "psychical inadequacy". Virginal anxiety should subside, presumably, with increased sexual knowledge, regardless of whether sexual activity takes place.

Anxiety in anxiety neurosis serves as a substitute discharge of the energy deposited in the nervous system by the genitals. Ordinarily, this energy is discharged in sexual intercourse with full psychological involvement, together with physical components such as "accelerated breathing, palpitation, sweating, congestion, and so on" (Freud, 1895, p. 111). In anxiety neurosis, certain of these physical components are preserved and serve as an avenue for partial, somatic discharge; in other words, the physical form of anxiety is determined by the natural discharge paths of sexual excitement.

## Comparisons

We can now turn to the differing conceptions of affect indicated by Freud's theories of hysteria and of anxiety neurosis.

One notable difference between the theories of hysteria and anxiety-neurosis is that energetic emotional expression--"abreaction"--is considered to hold very great curative powers in hysteria, but not in anxiety-neurosis, where the expression of anxiety, no matter how energetic, produces no change in the neurotic symptomatology. This difference might be taken to indicate a plain contradiction in Freud's views, but further consideration suggests that it demonstrates instead that Freud, again, held two distinct conceptions of affect, or perhaps subsumed two different entities under the heading of affect. In abreaction, affect is expressed with a full mental involvement; that is, the emotional expression is integrated with the memory of the event which originally provoked the affect. Thus, affect in abreaction differs from anxiety in anxiety-neurosis by virtue of having mental content. Years later, Freud would again vacillate over whether affect intrinsically had mental content.

Defense is a second area where the two different views of affect carry divergent implications. Freud was developing his concept of defense concurrently with these conceptions of affect (Freud, 1894/1962, 1896/1962). He

described defense as the removal from consciousness of unacceptable ideas; ideas were elemental entities in the mind, derived from images or perceptions. In hysteria, affects were considered to attach themselves, in a quite literal way, to ideas; therefore, in the theory of hysteria, affective energy could be defended against. In the theory of anxiety-neurosis, however, the process of defense could have no relevance to affect, as the anxiety was solely a somatic entity, and defense was against mental ones. This ambiguity, too, persists in Freud's later work, where he alternates in his views on whether affect can be the object of defense or be unconscious.

Although there are several areas of divergent implication, each with connections to more than one area of Freudian theory as it later unfolded, one difference predominates. Affect as presented in the theory of anxiety neurosis originates in somatic sources and remains a somatic entity, whereas the affect of the theory of hysteria originates in psychological sources and is both psychological and somatic in nature. Thus, Rapaport's (1953) "first phase" of Freud's affect theory is not unitary, as Rapaport views it, but instead contains two quite discrepant views.

Under the view connected with the theory of hysteria, affect is produced as a purely psychological reaction to external events, and requires no internal source. This is

the basis of Freud and Breuer's characterization of their theory as an "ideogenic" theory of hysteria (Freud & Breuer, 1895/1955), or simply a "psychological" one (Freud, 1910/1957). Once the psychological process of affect arousal is accomplished, the energy that has been created in the nervous system normally makes a rapid transition from psychic to somatic energy and is discharged in emotional expression. However, we have seen that it may instead remain in the mind, attached to ideas, and at the same time be "converted" to physical energy in the form of hysterical symptoms.

Affect in the theory of anxiety-neurosis does not make these transitions from the mental to the physical. On the contrary, in fact, a causal precondition of anxiety-neurosis is precisely the failure of somatic excitation to become mental. In other words, anxiety is a strictly somatic phenomenon here. In more contemporary terms, anxiety in this theory seems to be a purely physiological process; one may speculate that its mechanism would involve primarily the sympathetic nervous system. In any event, no ideas, beliefs, wishes, memories, or other psychological entities are involved, even as causal agents.

In short, Freud maintained both psychological and physiological theories of affect during this early period. One can find the descendants of these two views interacting in complex and sometimes confused ways throughout Freud's



theoretical writings, and both the interaction and the confusion continued after Freud's death. Broadly, one may say that the views of affect derived from the theory of hysteria formed the basis for Freud's theories of psychological conflict and defense and for other aspects of his "clinical" theory, whereas the main terms of the theory of anxiety neurosis soon became the foundation for the metapsychology.

We have seen that Freud's theories of hysteria and anxiety-neurosis differ sharply with regard to their conceptions of the nature of affect, their assumptions about the effects of abreaction, and the ways they construct the relation of affect and defense. Yet commentators have often overlooked these important differences. Rapaport (1953), for example, stated that Freud's theory during that period "equates affect with the quantity of psychic energy, which was later conceptualized as drive-cathexis" (p. 179). This formula applies only to affect within the theory of hysteria, where affective energy attaches itself to ideas, in precisely the same way drive energy was later described as attaching itself to ideas in the process of cathexis. In the theory of anxiety-neurosis, though, affect is not psychic energy at all.

Rapaport (1953) referred to the theory of anxiety-neurosis when he stated: "...the anxiety-affect was explained as affect or libido (these terms were at this

point still interchangeable) transformed by being repressed" (p. 179). Rapaport is incorrect here on two points. First, the terms affect and libido were clearly not interchangeable at this stage of Freud's theory. Affect, we have seen, was used in two senses, and neither corresponded with libido, which was used to mean conscious sexual arousal. The technical definition of libido as psychic energy only developed later, and when it developed, it did not duplicate either of Freud's early conceptions of affect. Rapaport's false equation of affect and libido led him to believe incorrectly that affect in the theories of hysteria and anxiety-neurosis is the same entity, only transformed. Second, repression had little place in Freud's theory of anxiety-neurosis. He considered unacceptability of sexual excitement only rarely to be the cause of the failure of ideas to absorb genital energy; either distraction or "inadequacy" of the ideas themselves relative to the quantity of energy were the main causes, in his view.

### The Discharge Theory of Affect

In 1900, Freud published *The Interpretation of Dreams*, where he brought forth many of the conceptions he had developed during the preceding years. In so doing, he laid the foundation for his overall theory, and the book is frequently cited as the beginning of psychoanalysis (Fine,

1979; Jones, 1953). In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud offered a new theory of affect, in rudimentary form, and this was the first theory of affect to be developed within the broader set of terms that we recognize as Freudian theory. The central feature of Freud's theory of affect as presented in *The Interpretation of Dreams* was the view that affect represents a discharge of psychic energy (Rapaport, 1953). This view was to remain in place for more than 25 years, and during that period provided the essence of the classical psychoanalytic theory of affect.

Two lines of thought jointly produced Freud's 1900 concept of affect. The first was the model of mind he had developed, of which some details had been published (Freud, 1895/1962, 1900/1953) and some had been shared in written form only with Freud's close friend, Wilhelm Fliess (Freud, 1895/1966b). The second line of thought was that concerning the unconscious. This latter topic, of course, was emphasized by Freud in a large proportion of his published writings, and received extended discussion on many occasions.

In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, affect in dreams is described and classified through the use of examples, and a limited theoretical account of some features of dream affect is provided. A more basic discussion of the theory of affect is provided in the final chapter of the book, where Freud gave his metapsychology its first published

expression; the concept of affect as discharge of psychic energy was also stated there for the first time. The two views of affects expressed in these two different places are not incompatible, but have relatively little connection with each other. This is an early instance of the divergence of the "clinical" and "metapsychological" theories (Klein, 1973a) the two views each stand independently, not conflicting with each other, but not supporting each other either. Before turning to the metapsychological discharge theory of affect let us consider the other views on affect in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, which appear mainly in the discussion of affects in dreams.

In Freud's discussion of dream affects, he advances four assumptions, of which the first has the broadest implications. This first assumption is that affects in dreams are always appropriate to some aspect of the "dream thoughts" (i.e., the thoughts that underlie the dream but are not permitted into it due to the influence of censorship). Sachs (1982) argues that Freud believed this to be true of all affects, that is, an affect is always appropriate to and proportional to its object or cause; Sachs calls this Freud's "doctrine of emotions". This theory of affect is essentially the common-sense one (i.e., that one feels emotions naturally in response to appropriate situations), with the crucial difference that in common sense, one must be aware of the objects of one's emotions.



This assumption of Freud's implies that an emotion is never unrelated to cognitive content; when there seems to be no ideational content, the emotion is based on an unconscious idea, and if one were aware of the idea there would be nothing anomalous about the emotion. (This assumption is discussed further below, in the section "Inherent justification of emotions".)

Freud advances three other assumptions in his discussion of affects in dreams. The first is that affects in dream thoughts often conflict with each other, with the result that the affect in the dream is relatively mild. The mechanism of this is not described. The second assumption provides an additional explanation for the relative mildness of affect in many dreams; Freud assumes that the state of sleep reduces the intensity of affect, because he believes that affect involves motility and motility is reduced during sleep. This second assumption bears a close relation to the concept of affect as discharge. The final one is an argument that affects can be turned into their opposites in the course of "dream work", which produces a dream out of the dream thoughts. Again, the mechanism is not described, and this proposition seems to conflict with the argument for the appropriateness of dream affects to some element of the dream thoughts.

The "discharge theory of affect", introduced in the final chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, probably best

deserves the title of "the Freudian theory of affect", since it is framed in the terms of Freud's formal theory, since Freud adhered to it through most of his career, and since its account of affect is based on characteristic and original Freudian hypotheses. Among Freud's statements of the theory, there is none which summarizes it completely or defines it in a way that can be understood independently of context. One is required to synthesize Freud's comments from various places and to place these within the relevant theoretical context. The discharge theory of affect states that affect is the release of psychic energy (derived from instinctual drives, which have somatic sources) through physical processes (mainly expressive or physiological ones) which do not constitute gratifications of the drive. From a functional point of view, the role of affect is to unburden the "mental apparatus" of excessive tension when preferable methods are unavailable, typically due to conflict.

A critical change was under way in Freud's theory of anxiety during the preparation of **The Interpretation of Dreams**, accompanied by concomitant changes in the concept of psychic energy. In Freud's theory of anxiety neurosis, anxiety was seen as the result of a deflection of sexually-based somatic excitation from the mental sphere. By the time Freud wrote the final chapter of **The Interpretation of Dreams**, anxiety represented a transformation of mental sexual excitement. Mental sexual excitement was transformed

into anxiety due to the repression of sexual thoughts; in fact, Freud described the experience of anxiety in place of sexual excitement as "the essence of repression" (Freud, 1900, p. 604). Psychic energy now came to be identified with sexual wishes, and the concept of libido, or mobile energy derived from sexual drives, came into being. The old views of anxiety as a purely physical process were abandoned, and the theory of the production of anxiety due to deflection of excitement was adapted by Freud, and became the theory of anxiety due to repression.

The earlier logical framework was preserved, but the boundary between the physical and the mental became blurred. Libido, in particular, was ambiguous. A theory of affect as a discharge of mental energy could only exist within the context of an ambiguous notion of mental energy--in particular, such energy has to be assumed capable of fluid transformation between the mental and the physical spheres. This fluidity had a precedent in Freud and Breuer's theory of hysteria, where "affect" attached itself to ideas and was subsequently released in physical expression. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* these theoretical threads were brought together and produced the discharge theory of affect.

The statement of the discharge theory of affect in *The Interpretation of Dreams* contains some, but not all, of the elements of the theory. References to affect are scattered



in various places in the theoretical discussion; only at one point does Freud make a unifying statement.

[Affect] is viewed as a motor or secretory function, the key to whose innervation lies in the ideas in the Ucs. (Freud, 1900, p. 582)

Here Freud asserts that affect consists of physical processes, and specifies the types of physical processes. The statement constitutes a discharge theory by virtue of the fact that tension phenomena are excluded; in particular, the concept of affect as a charge of energy attached to ideas (as in the original theory of hysteria) is superseded. However, such important elements of the discharge theory are not mentioned here that the view of affect in *The Interpretation of Dreams* is reasonably viewed as a precursor to the discharge theory.

Another important element of the discharge theory made its appearance in Freud's paper on the two "principles of mental functioning", the pleasure and reality principles (Freud, 1911/1958). There Freud distinguished between affect and action as methods of discharge; of the two, only action could represent a real gratification of the underlying drive. Affect thus was seen as an essentially inferior form of tension-reduction, a substitute to be employed when action was impossible for some reason. The most typical reason was conflict over the drive, and this provides the relation of affect and conflict in the discharge theory.



The final formulation of the discharge theory appeared in the 1915 papers on metapsychology (Freud, 1915/1957a, 1915/1957c, 1915/1957d). The relation between affect and drive energy is made fully explicit, and the importance of affect as a "safety-valve" is specified. A fundamental distinction is drawn between ideas and affects in terms of their status in the mind; although both are "instinct-representatives", ideas, Freud wrote, persist as actual structures in the mind even when they are not in consciousness, whereas affects exist only while they are consciously felt, or in other words, while the actual process of discharge is under way. These formulations further consolidated the identification of affect with discharge.

Between the papers on hysteria and obsessional neurosis of the 1890's and the papers on metapsychology of 1915 Freud radically changed his views on the relation of affects to unconscious ideas. In the 1890's Freud held that a felt affect always indicated the presence in the unconscious of an idea for which that affect was appropriate. This was implied by the view that unconscious ideas carried the potential for specific affects, which was a prominent component of Freud and Breuer's theory of hysteria. A related assumption was that an affect, once stimulated by an unconscious idea, emerged into consciousness as that same affect (i.e., anger, shame, sadness, etc.), even if it was

detached from its original idea and attached to another one. Freud considered this particularly clear in cases of obsessional neurosis, where senseless combinations of affect and idea appeared in the patient's conscious experience.

In 1900 (Freud, 1900/1953) Freud continued to advance this notion in his discussion of dream affects. He made an exception, however, in the case of anxiety, and this exception gave an indication of further modifications to come. Anxiety in dreams, he maintained, did not indicate unconscious dream thoughts for which anxiety would be appropriate. Instead, it indicated unconscious sexual wishes which were under repression. Freud offered no theoretical account of how sexual wishes could give rise to anxiety, side-stepping the question by comparing the relation of the dreamer's conscious and unconscious mind to the relation between two people, each of whom could have different reactions to the same event (Freud, 1900/1953). The reasoning closely follows Freud's theory of anxiety neurosis, except that instead of somatic sexual tension it is unconscious sexual wishes that give rise to anxiety. The most important factor for the present discussion is the alteration in affect between the unconscious and conscious realms. Not only did Freud introduce the possibility of such a change, but he made it central to his theory.

The fulfillment of these wishes would no longer produce an affect of pleasure, but one of pain; and it is just this conversion of affect that constitutes the essence of what we call "repression". (Freud, 1900/1953, p.

604; emphasis in original)

By 1915 (Freud, 1915d) Freud had essentially reversed his 1890's view of the determination of affects by unconscious ideas.

It is possible for the development of affect to proceed directly from the system Ucs.; in that case the affect always has the character of anxiety, for which all "repressed" affects are exchanged. Often, however, the instinctual impulse has to wait until it has found a substitutive idea in the system Cs. The development of affect can then proceed from this conscious substitute, and the nature of that substitute determines the qualitative character of the affect. (Freud, 1915/1957d, p. 179)

Here, the only affect that can emerge from the "system Ucs." is anxiety, regardless of what affect would be appropriate to the unconscious idea. Such anxiety would be "free-floating" anxiety, appearing in consciousness unconnected to any idea. When affects appear in consciousness in connection with some "substitutive" idea, this idea determines which affect is experienced, no matter how different this idea is from the affect's source in the unconscious.

The implications of this shift were far-reaching. Affect was no longer at the center of psychic functioning, a component of all psychic entities and operations. Affect was also no longer thought to be determined through subjective experience of objects, as in the common-sense view. Instead, affect was placed at the periphery of psychic functioning, and was thought to be determined



quantitatively by the vicissitudes of drive energy and qualitatively by arbitrary linkages with conscious ideas. In short, affect had become an epiphenomenon.

Brierley (1937) and others have cited the crucial shift that took place in Freud's focus between his earliest theories and the later work, from affect to drive. It would be more accurate to state that Freud gradually transformed his earlier concept of affect into his later concept of drive energy, with the essence of the transformation being a loss of quality--i.e., Freud shifted from a concept of energy with qualities (affect) to a concept of energy without qualities (drive). In the earliest theory, the theory of hysteria, affects of a particular kind were attached to ideas in the unconscious. In the theory of anxiety neurosis, affect based on energy without any particular quality made its first appearance. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, ideas were no longer charged with affect, but instead with the energy of sexual wishes, or libido. Libido was protean, and could take on many forms; anxiety, in particular, was among them. Soon other affects, like anxiety, were derived from this energy that had no intrinsic quality. [1]

Freud (1915/1957d) specifies that affect cannot be unconscious. In part, this principle is a re-statement of the shift to quality-less energy. The "system Ucs." contains energy, but only when this energy is discharged can



it take on the qualities of felt affect. There were other reasons for Freud to deny that affect could be unconscious. During the period in which the metapsychological papers were written Freud thought of affect in terms of feelings, and it would have been a contradiction to conceive of unconscious (i.e., un-felt) feelings: "It is surely of the essence of an emotion that we should be aware of it." (Freud, 1915/1957d, p. 177) However, Freud had in earlier years been able to affirm a latent, unconscious state for affects. Only with the shift from affect to quality-less energy did the concept of unconscious affect become untenable.

These considerations--loss of quality and the theoretical exclusion of unconscious affects--amplify the nature of the discharge theory of affect. Affect was seen as one of the possible "vicissitudes" of drive energy, which appears in the presence of repression.

The **quantitative** factor of the instinctual representative has three possible vicissitudes, as we can see from a cursory survey of the observations made by psycho-analysis: either the instinct is altogether suppressed, so that no trace of it is found, or it appears as an affect which is in some way or other qualitatively coloured, or it is changed into anxiety. (Freud, 1915/1957d, p. 153)

Without repression, there would be no affect. In the presence of repression, sexual drive energy is compelled to seek some avenue other than sexual action and sexual pleasure, and affect provides one such substitute outlet. Relatively pleasurable affects offer an advantageous means

of disposing of energy, since it avoids the necessity of expending energy to suppress the instinct altogether and it also avoid the experience of unpleasant affects, particularly anxiety. In principle, any affect can serve the function of discharge; the workings of the psychic economy are not affected by the "qualitative" factor in affect, except insofar as a distinction between pleasure and "unpleasure" is concerned, since unpleasure sets defensive processes in motion.

#### **Affect Forms (Origins of Specific Affects)**

The discharge theory specifies the function and general nature of affect, but it does not explain the forms; that is, it does not account for the origins of specific affects. Freud provided different explanations at different times for the origin of specific affects, and he neither integrated these explanations nor explicitly abandoned earlier ones for later ones.

Freud's earliest view (Freud & Breuer, 1895/1955) that emotions were remnants of actions which had served a purpose earlier in the history of the species was adopted from Darwin (1872). Concurrently, in his theory of anxiety neurosis, Freud was claiming that the elements of severe anxiety--rapid breathing, sweating, palpitations, etc.--were borrowed from sexual intercourse. Thus, Freud held simultaneously that affects were determined by physiological

discharge paths and that they were vestiges of phylogenetically old actions.

Some time later, Freud broadened the Darwinian theory to include any experience (not just adaptive actions) as a possible basis for an affect, and suggested that experiences of the individual, as well as the species, could provide the prototype for affects; the experience of birth was the main example. In a Lamarckian premise, Freud (1916/1963) wrote that experiences repeated for many generations become part of genetic inheritance, and are passed on as affects. In this same vein, Freud (1916/1963) described affects as hysterical attacks which had become a part of each individual's inheritance. Conversely, Freud described hysterical attacks as "a freshly constructed individual affect" (Freud, 1916/1963, p. 396). This analogy between affects and hysterical symptoms had been anticipated in Freud's earliest account of hysteria.

Eventually, Freud (1926/1959) emphasized individual experience as the principal source of affects; specifically, he stressed birth as the prototype of anxiety. Inherited experiences and vestiges of adaptive actions tended to drop out of Freud's account, and physiological discharge patterns adopted from intercourse were no longer mentioned. Freud (1926/1959) agreed with Otto Rank that birth provided the first experience of anxiety, or rather that birth produces the pattern of responses that later, with some



modifications, becomes the affect of anxiety.

### The Signal Theory of Anxiety

In the papers published in 1915, Freud finalized the discharge theory of affect that had been implicit in many aspects of his thinking to that point. Many areas of Freud's thought were integrated in these "papers on metapsychology", and the theory of affect was one. This culmination of a long period of development of the theory of affect was followed neither by a period of refinement of the theory nor by a turning away from affect as a focus of investigation. Instead, it was followed by a period, lasting perhaps ten years, during which Freud overturned the theory which had taken 20 years to evolve. It was not only in the area of affect that Freud entered on new directions of thought; the papers on metapsychology were followed by profound modifications in Freud's thought (Green, 1977). It is only in the area of affect, however, that Freud can be said to have altered his basic beliefs entirely.

The new view appears in Freud's 1926 book *Inhibition, Symptom and Anxiety*. Some anticipations appear in *The Ego and the Id* (Freud, 1923/1961). There Freud states that "the ego is the actual seat of anxiety" (p. 57). This means far more than that affects are conscious. The ego was defined by Freud as the adaptive portion of the personality, so to



cite it as the "seat" of anxiety was to imply that anxiety was primarily an adaptive phenomenon. This trend, evident by implication only in 1923, is fully developed in *Inhibition, Symptom and Anxiety*.

A second change implied in *The Ego and the Id* is the re-attribution of quality and content to the energy of affect. In the second chapter of the work, Freud returns to the question of whether affects or feelings can be unconscious. He searches for a term for the energy of feelings in a state prior to becoming a feeling, and settles (in desperation, one supposes) on the term "something".

Clinical experience...shows us that this "something" behaves like a repressed impulse. It can exert driving force without the ego noticing the compulsion...We then come to speak, in a condensed and not entirely correct manner, of "unconscious feelings", keeping up an analogy with unconscious ideas which is not altogether justifiable. (Freud, 1923/1961, p. 22)

Whereas in 1915 (Freud, 1915/1957d) Freud had denied that unconscious feelings could exist, because energy only acquired content in the course of discharge, he changes that position here and states that the energy of potential conscious feelings--the "something"--has direction, like an impulse, and quality, like a feeling. He has, in effect, reversed himself. The formulation in *The Ego and the Id* contradicts the 1915 position that affect is represented in the "deeper layers of the psyche" only as a quantity of quality-less energy, and that all the qualities (which is to say, almost everything that we recognize as emotion) is

added on inconsequentially in consciousness. This reversal is only a step toward the basic changes of 1926.

The essence of the discharge theory of affect is that affect constitutes a discharge of psychic energy, and that the basic nature and function of affect lies in this fact. In *Inhibition, Symptom and Anxiety*, Freud specifies an entirely different nature and function for anxiety, and gives little attention to other affects, which are thereby left without a theoretical account. The new theory of anxiety is known as the "signal" theory. It is not an "economic" theory; that is, in the signal theory, psychic energy plays no role in the explanation of anxiety. It does not depict affect as an epiphenomenon, but instead as an important causal entity. Finally, it does not describe the production of anxiety as an "automatic" process, returning instead by and large to a psychological, common-sense understanding of what makes a person anxious.

According to the signal theory of anxiety, anxiety is produced by the ego in "danger situations". In other words, one becomes fearful in fearful circumstances. The "danger situation" includes objective, external dangers. The fear one feels when in genuine danger Freud calls "realistic anxiety". He investigates realistic anxiety no further, implying that this common-sense response is self-evident and in no need of explanation.

"Neurotic anxiety" is of more importance to the theory.

In neurotic anxiety, one is afraid of something that, if it were actually present, would warrant fear, so the fear itself, in Freud's analysis, does not require explanation. **Anxiety is neurotic when one is unaware of the object of one's fear.** The issue is not whether one's fear is exaggerated or inappropriate, given what prompts it, but rather that, being unaware of what one is afraid, one is not in a position to judge whether the feared situation actually exists. To take one example, in an adult man with oedipally based neurotic inhibitions, some strivings are unconsciously equated with forbidden oedipal wishes to supplant the father, and therefore arouse fear of castration. This anxiety is neurotic if, as is almost always the case, the man is unaware that he fears castration. If and when this fear becomes conscious, it ceases to be neurotic anxiety (and it ceases to exist altogether, since castration is not actually threatened).

There are characteristic objects of neurotic anxiety--characteristic danger situations--at different stages of childhood. The main ones Freud cites are threatened loss of love, threatened castration, and threatened "loss of the super-ego's love" (i.e., self-disapproval). These dangers loom unconsciously when forbidden drives are activated. In childhood, these objects of fear may be conscious, and may even be justified, at least within the limits of the child's understanding. In neurotic anxiety in later life, one



continues to have an unconscious conviction that these dangers are present.

There are deeper determinants of danger situations. Here, Freud is not satisfied with common sense, which would hold that fear in the face of loss of a loved one's love or loss of one's penis requires no explanation. A danger situation, Freud explains, is one which appears to portend a "traumatic situation", and this latter is a situation in which the organism is utterly unable to master or discharge excitation. Such excitation can be external, such as military battle or birth, but the source of excitation is generally internal--i.e., instinctual. A danger situation is one in which it appears one may be deprived of the means of disposing of excitation. (Freud acknowledges that this formulation applies less well to the threat of loss of the super-ego's love.)

The signal theory of anxiety is named for the function it specifies for anxiety. The signal is of danger, and the function of the signal is to initiate coping operations. When the anxiety is neurotic, the coping efforts are neurotic defenses or symptoms. The signal is necessary in order to motivate defense; Freud described the ego as weak in itself, but when it has the power to emit the signal of anxiety it can employ the omnipotent pleasure principle as an ally.

The "transformation" view of anxiety is largely



abandoned. Where Freud had previously held that anxiety was a transformation of libidinal energy that was under repression, he now said that energy had "little importance" in connection with anxiety. An increase in drive energy still precedes the experience of anxiety, in the signal theory, but the relation between the two events is completely altered. Whereas in the discharge theory the energy was "directly transformed", in the signal theory the ego "recognizes" a danger that the drive impulse seems to pose, and reacts to this with anxiety. [2] Anxiety is no longer the result of repression; instead, repression is the result of anxiety.

And yet, Freud at points retains the old theory side by side with the contrasting features of the new one. He maintains that anxiety can be produced "automatically" through an excess of stimulation, and that precisely this takes place in the "actual neuroses"--anxiety neurosis and neurasthenia (Freud, 1926/1959, p. 141). He equivocates on the question of whether the energy of repressed impulses finds expression in anxiety, stating that this is "very possible" (ibid) before dismissing the entire question. He adopts a common-sense view of the objects of fear, but only to a point, and claims that the ultimate fear and the source of all anxiety is the situation of being unable to discharge excitation. Freud's retention of both theories--"automatic", physiological anxiety and signal anxiety

"produced" by the ego--was to lead to continuing controversy (Blau, 1952; Brenner, 1953; Rangell, 1955; Zetzel, 1949).

Nevertheless, the change was profound. Although he equivocated on some changes (e.g., the transformation of libido to anxiety) and retained heterogeneous elements in the theory, the theory of affect presented in *Inhibition, Symptom and Anxiety* was sweepingly different than the one that had preceded it. The discharge theory had been overturned. [3]

### Freud's Clinical Theories of Affect

George Klein isolated two theories, or really types of theory, in Freud: the metapsychology, and a "clinical" theory (Klein, 1973a, 1973b). Other writers have recognized Klein's distinction or have drawn a similar one (Rubinstein, 1976; Schafer, 1976; Spence, 1982). In speaking of a clinical theory, Klein referred to a set of propositions cast in terms of personal meanings and aims, as against the metapsychological terms of instinct, energy, and structure. Klein's term "clinical" is misleading, since he is not referring only to propositions that apply in psychotherapeutic settings. Rather, he is referring to any propositions cast in the ordinary-language terms of meaning and intention, with the special extension of these terms to include "disavowed", unconscious meanings and intentions.

Alongside Freud's specifically theoretical (i.e., metapsychological) propositions about emotion, he advanced other propositions that he did not attempt to link up to the fundamental metapsychological entities, and which therefore are cast in terms of the clinical theory Klein described. Some authors (e.g., Rubinstein, 1973) would deny that these are truly theoretical statements, and Freud himself might have given them an ambiguous status, somewhere between explanation and description. Regardless of how one classifies such propositions, though, they offer new and often deeper ways of understanding emotions, highlighting new connections and providing new interpretations. Such propositions have been more influential within and outside of psychoanalysis than Freud's systematic theories of affect.

Since neither Freud nor any of his followers and interpreters have systematized the clinical propositions on affect, a comprehensive review would be exceedingly difficult. Instead, I trace an important theme, then examine some examples of Freud's treatments of specific affects.

### **Inherent Justification of Emotions**

There is an important theme in Freud's treatment of affect which finds some expression in formal theoretical statements but which is more clearly evident where Freud

does not attempt to formulate matters in metapsychological terms. Despite being relatively unsystematic and informal in comparison with others of Freud's propositions, it is a characteristically Freudian assertion, arguably one of his most central. Sachs (1982) calls it "Freud's doctrine of the emotions", and although Sachs overstates Freud's loyalty to it, it does constitute an important dimension of his conception of affect.

The assumption in question is that emotions which seem irrational, excessive, unrelated to the current situation, or in any other way anomalous are in fact related to and justified by unconscious thoughts or wishes. In other words, "irrational" emotions are only seemingly so; they are as rational, appropriate, and justified as any other emotion, only the state of affairs which justifies them is out of awareness.

This assumption appears in a rudimentary form in Freud and Breuer's understanding of hysteria. There, hysterical symptoms were understood as distorted affects that had been appropriate in the situation that first generated them. The assumption achieves its first full expression in Freud's theory of obsessive-compulsive neurosis (1894/1962, 1896/1962). This theory holds that the shame, guilt, and self-reproaches over trivialities that are the pathognomonic feature of this neurosis are not irrational or unjustified. Instead, they are prompted by wishes and fantasies which are



fully intelligible as sources of such feelings, but which are unconscious. (Ambivalence toward loved ones, sometimes including death wishes, was a frequent example.) This clinical understanding was the basis for Freud's concept of the splitting of affects from ideas, which in turn was central to the metapsychological concept of unbound, displaceable libido.

Sachs (1982) writes that Freud never stated this principle explicitly, but in fact Freud did so in his discussion of dream affects.

In the case of a psychical complex which has come under the influence of the censorship imposed by resistance, the affects are the constituent which is least influenced and which alone can give us a pointer as to how we should fill in the missing thoughts. This is seen even more clearly in the psychoneuroses than in dreams. Their affects are always appropriate, at least in their quality, though we must allow for their intensity being increased owing to displacement of neurotic attention. If a hysteric is surprised at having to be so frightened of something trivial or if a man suffering from obsessions is surprised at such distressing self-reproaches arising out of a mere nothing, they have both gone astray, because they regard the ideational content--the triviality or the mere nothing--as what is essential; and they put up an unsuccessful fight because they take this ideational content as the starting-point of their thought activity. Psycho-analysis can put them upon the right path by recognizing the affect as being, on the contrary, justified and by seeking out the idea which belongs to it but has been repressed and replaced by a substitute. (Freud, 1900/1953, p. 461; emphasis in original)

Thus, as with the affects in obsessive-compulsive neurosis, Freud held that affects in dreams were inherently justified by conscious or repressed ideas.

In Freud's discharge theory of affect, he contradicted this view. There, affect had no inherent basis in the unconscious, and acquired its character only through accidental connections with conscious ideas. It appears that in a clinical context, Freud believed affects provided a reliable guide to the contents of the unconscious, but that simultaneously, in the context of metapsychology, he attributed little meaning to affect. The metapsychological concept of quality-less energy dictated that affect had to be inconsequential, except as far as its intensity was concerned.

With the shift to a signal theory of anxiety, clinical and metapsychological affect theory came closer together. The central proposition of Freud's signal theory of anxiety was that anxiety reflected an "internal danger situation", and was thus justified by an unconscious state of affairs, if not a conscious one. This feature of the theory led Freudian analysts to greet it as an important new insight with far-reaching benefits (Rangell, 1968; Schur, 1953), while some non-Freudian analysts characterized it as merely a belated recognition of common sense (Kardiner, Karush & Ovesey, 1959). In fact, it was neither. Rather than a new insight or an adoption of simple common sense, it was an extension into metapsychology of the longstanding clinical view of affects as inherently justified.

## Clinical Views of Specific Affects

Further insight into Freud's understanding of affect can be gained by examining some of his discussions of specific affects. In general, one finds Freud, in the clinical writings on affect, either extending common sense with a piece of theory and thereby making some anomaly comprehensible, or conversely, importing the common sense understanding of affect into psychoanalysis in order to deal with a clinical problem. The chief example of the former is found in Freud's discussions of love, the essentials of which are well known. An example of the latter is Freud's use of the concept of guilt to help understand the "negative therapeutic reaction". These and other examples are discussed below.

Freud discussed love several times in connection with instincts, using the everyday meaning of the term ("the spirit of our language" [Freud, 1915/1957a]) to support the successive versions of his dual instinct theory (Freud, 1915/1957a, 1923/1961). When these writings are set aside and one turns to the clinical writings, Freud's essential addition to the understanding of love lies in his conviction that adult love expresses longings established in infancy and childhood, and that in some sense, love objects in adulthood are substitutes for the parents of early childhood. "The finding of an object is in fact a refinding of it" (Freud, 1905/1953, p. 222).



Freud elaborated this theme in his discussion of "transference love", the love of female patients for their analysts which Freud described as inevitable (Freud, 1915/1957b). Freud advised analysts not to turn away from this love, nor to attempt to pursue the analysis "in spite of it". Instead, he advocated a thorough analysis of it, in preparation for which one should point out to the patient that the love is not genuine, but is merely a transference onto the analyst of feelings toward infantile prototypes. However, he is compelled to admit that such statements to the patient are "the truth, but not the whole truth regardless of the consequences" (1915/1957b, p. 168). That is, there are no firm grounds for denying that such love is real, since all love reproduces infantile prototypes and depends on them.

In addition to the general consequence of the derivation of love from infantile attachments, namely the seeking after love objects who duplicate characteristics of the parents, Freud saw particular consequences of the origin of love in infancy (Freud, 1912/1957). The boy's original attachment to his mother, which is sexual, is repudiated and repressed at the dissolution of the oedipus complex, and is replaced by a sublimated, "tender" attachment. At puberty, there is another surge of sexual interest, which must find another object than the mother. Optimally, these two streams are united, so that sexual satisfaction with a woman



heightens tender feelings for her (the "normal over-estimation of the sexual object in men"). However, sexual fixation on incestuous infantile objects disrupts this bringing together of tenderness and sexuality, and requires that only "degraded" women can be objects of sexual interest, so as to avoid any conscious association with the mother. This state of affairs exists to some extent in all men, Freud writes. He has less to say about women in this connection, except that he believes them to be relatively unaffected by a need to degrade sexual objects.

Freud commented on a variety of emotions apart from love. A 1922 paper contains a representative example. In the paper, Freud discusses the mechanism of projection in jealousy, paranoia, and homosexuality. He divides jealousy into three types--normal, projected, and delusional. Of the normal type, he writes that "there is not much to be said from the analytic point of view" (Freud, 1922/1955, p. 223). He describes the components of jealous feelings (grief, pain, enmity, and self-criticism), but indeed, these remarks are not psychoanalytic; that is, they do not find hidden or forbidden meanings. Still, Freud finds a place for analytic hypotheses, as he argues that jealousy has roots in unconscious oedipal ties and in repressed bisexuality. These factors, he writes, establish that

although we may call it normal, this jealousy is by no means completely rational, that is, derived from the actual situation, proportionate to the real

circumstances and under the complete control of the conscious ego. (Freud, 1922/1955, p. 223)

Rationality, then, establishes the boundary of relevance for psychoanalytic study of this emotion. Insofar as jealousy is "derived from the actual situation", there is not much for analysis to say about it. This position is in sharp contrast to the metapsychological writings, where Freud had a great deal to say about all affects. It is evident that Freud pursued different explanatory projects in the metapsychological and the clinical writings on affect. In the former, he attempted to explain the nature, mechanisms, and functions of affect in general. In the clinical writings, he accepted common-sense views of emotion (e.g., that emotions which are proportionate to the circumstances require no explanation), and takes up only where common sense leaves off.

One other instance of Freud's clinical affect theory has already been described, but it may be mentioned again here. This is the explanation of shame, guilt, and self-reproach in obsessional neurosis. Here again, Freud takes up where common sense leaves off. In common sense, one feels ashamed when one has done something shameful. Freud asserted that shame and related feelings in obsessional neurosis were not essentially different, but that the neurotic harbors shameful unconscious wishes, which in the unconscious are not distinguished from actual deeds.

Freud not only brought his theory to bear on the common-sense understanding of affect, but he sometimes employed the common-sense view of an affect to deal with a theoretical problem. This was the case with the "unconscious sense of guilt", which he used to help explain the "negative therapeutic reaction" (1923/1961). Freud was faced with the puzzling fact that a number of patients responded with intensified symptoms and suffering whenever their analytic treatment went particularly well. He solved this riddle by noting that these patients were behaving as if they were feeling guilty; like a guilty person, they denied themselves pleasure or gain, and saw to it that they suffered. Freud was satisfied with this account of the problem, but he could not entirely reconcile himself to violating the common-sense view of emotion by speaking of an unconscious guilt (Freud, 1933/1964).

### Summary

In the preceding review, we have seen the succession of Freud's views of affect and the varied conceptions he held even at single points in time. We have seen affect fade from its position at the center of Freud's concerns, as instincts in particular and metapsychology in general came to dominate. We have seen the clinical and metapsychological theories diverge, and have seen affect

retain an honored place in the clinical writings while being depicted as an epiphenomenon in metapsychology. Finally, we saw Freud return to some of his earlier views, in the final theory of anxiety.



# C H A P T E R    I I I

## POST-FREUDIAN AFFECT THEORY

### Introduction

Psychoanalytic theory has sometimes been thought of as constituting, in its entirety, a theory of affect, so that to review the psychoanalytic theory of affect would require a review of the whole body of theory (Mandler, 1984). Indeed, affect is pertinent to virtually all the concerns of psychoanalytic theory and practice, and a great many psychoanalytic writings, from every school, have implications for the understanding of affect. Nevertheless, it is possible to isolate a set of writings on the theory of affect per se. Although every psychoanalytic author encounters affect or implicates it in the course of his or her work, only some--only a relatively small number, in fact--set out to devise an understanding of affect itself. For the most part, psychoanalytic theorists incorporate affect into their theories without inquiring into its nature, and therefore adopt either the common-sense views of affect (Lewin, 1965) or some other understanding that was "in the air" at the time.

Most of the theorists to attempt an explicit and original formulation of affect were either directly involved with the early Freudians or members of the predominantly

American "ego psychological" movement. The present review is confined to these figures. Even within this relatively homogeneous group, the range of interests and assumptions is great enough that the various works sometimes seem to occupy different domains. The review has been divided into four sections, both to recognize the diversity of the interests and make the review more manageable. In the first section, the major post-Freudian metapsychological statements on affect are reviewed. In the second section, a number of prominent theoretical statements involving the relation of affect and defense are discussed. Thirdly, several theories are reviewed which, although devised by psychoanalysts for use in psychoanalytic theory, are essentially biological theories. Finally, the views of a number of authors who include affect in the ego are reviewed, together with related discussions of the place of cognition in affect.

At no point since Freud has there been a theory that could be called the psychoanalytic theory of affect. This is more than an issue of the failure of any theory to be convincing and satisfying to the majority of analysts, although indeed no theory has been able to accomplish this (Brierley, 1937; Brenner, 1974b; Green, 1977; Rapaport, 1953). Beyond this, there is the question of what defines a theory of affect as psychoanalytic. All of the theoretical positions reviewed here were seen by their authors as psychoanalytic, but their grounds for viewing their state-

ments in this light varied greatly. In some cases, it was because they constructed the theories out of the terms of Freud's metapsychology (Jacobson, 1971a; Rapaport, 1953), whether or not the theories coincided with any of Freud's views of affect. In other cases the justification lay in a supposed consistency with the spirit of Freud's views on affect, though concepts foreign to these views were employed (Brenner, 1974b; Schur, 1969). In still other cases the relation of a theoretical statement to psychoanalytic theory in general was still more varied and complex. In the end, only historical and institutional continuity and the intention to advance psychoanalytic theory define all these views as psychoanalytic.

In the present chapter, the most pertinent papers are reviewed. (A number of other important or interesting papers are reviewed in the Appendix.) The four sets of issues which provide the framework for the present review will again appear in Chapter V, where each is considered in light of the present theory of affect.

### **Metapsychology**

No other theorist pursued the metapsychology of affect with Freud's intensity. This is especially the case if metapsychology is defined as it is defined here, namely, as explanations in which psychoanalytic metapsychological

concepts are the final explanatory concepts. It may be that most Freudian authors did not feel they had sufficient authority to enter into this discussion, while non-Freudian analysts (i.e., "British school" object relations theorists and post-Freudians in the United States) rejected metapsychological concepts as explanations. In any case, there were only a handful of original metapsychological hypotheses of affect proposed by authors other than Freud.

One such theory is contained in a 1937 paper by Marjorie Brierley. The paper touches on many important topics, and it is discussed below, in the section "Object Relations and Representations", as well as here. Brierley's metapsychological proposition is that affect is a tension phenomenon. This view, she notes, is in direct contradiction to Freud's discharge view of affects (and, she also notes, to the James-Lange theory). Brierley's assertion of a tension view of affect has been the occasion for many, perhaps most, of later references to this paper, and she herself emphasizes the importance of the assertion by stating it early in the paper, as preliminary to her later argument and as part of its basis.

Brierley states that affect represents instinctual tension that has risen beyond a certain threshold; below this threshold, she implies, tension does not emerge into consciousness as affect. As instinctual tensions rises still further, affect becomes intolerable and discharge



becomes imperative. In this way, Brierley reconciles her premise with the concept of instinctual energy, but raises further problems, which she must then address.

Freud initially equated tension with pain (precisely, "unpleasure") and discharge with pleasure. This view fit neatly with his fundamental conception of the mind as an apparatus designed for the discharge of tension. However, he was compelled to acknowledge the difficulty caused for this theory by the pleasurable nature of erotic tension. He never fully resolved this contradiction. Brierley resolves it within her own framework by adopting a premise from the psychology of emotion, one that was at variance with the Freudian psychoanalytic tradition. Citing McDougall (1918), she adopts the view that there exist multiple instincts, and that each instinct is associated with its own affect. Tension derived from some instincts is pleasurable, and that derived from others is painful.

Brierley is unable to maintain her positions on the relation of affect and instinct. Early in her paper, she had stated that affect corresponds to instinctual tension raised beyond a certain threshold, and that different affects result from different instinctual impulses. In her account of affect in development, however, she reverts to the more firmly established psychoanalytic view: "The affect manifested is...the index to the fate of the impulse....A good external object is one which satisfies

instinct and so produces a state of contented feeling." (Brierley, 1937, p. 262). In other words, the nature of an affect is determined by whether instinct is discharged ("satisfied"); good affect ("a state of contented feeling") results from either the process of discharge or the consequent state of low tension. Brierley's theory, then, is inconsistent. She did not resolve the conflicting trends in psychoanalytic thought, the one toward affect as primary tension, the other toward affect as secondary discharge.

To address affect within the context of tension and discharge, as Brierley does, is to address it in terms of the most fundamental concepts of psychoanalytic theory. Freud's original theory of the mechanics of mental life (Freud, 1895/1966b) was based tension and its discharge. But the issue is not a "purely theoretical" one, a mere exercise in manipulating terms. As we saw in Freud's discharge theory of affect, it is--or can be--a translation of basic positions on emotion into the language of metapsychology. The relevant position here can be stated in this way: If affect is discharge, it is an epiphenomenon, a secondary consequence of the fundamental factors (instinctual energy, and ideas), whereas if affect is tension, it is of causal importance in its own right, and can be a basic explanatory concept. Thus, Brierley's assertion of the tension view of affect is an attempt to re-establish the importance of affect in psychoanalytic theory.

The first major metapsychological studies of affect after Freud's later papers appeared in a symposium on affect theory held at the 1952 meetings of the American Psychoanalytic Association. Two of the three papers delivered there, one by Edith Jacobson and the other by David Rapaport, were subsequently published, and they both became major works in the metapsychology of affect. However, they were not followed by a significant renewal of interest in the Freudian metapsychology of affect. In fact, they are perhaps the last papers to deal with affect in a purely metapsychological framework.

Edith Jacobson produced a study of psychoanalytic affect theory as part of her extended study of affective disorders (i.e., depression and manic-depression or, currently, "bipolar disorder"). In 1953 her symposium paper appeared as a book chapter, "The Affects and Their Pleasure-Unpleasure Qualities, in Relation to the Psychic Discharge Process". In 1971 a revised and expanded version appeared under the title "On the Psychoanalytic Theory of Affects", as the first chapter of a book in which Jacobson collected her views on depression. The earlier title gives the more accurate indication of Jacobson's concerns. Her discussion centers on basic metapsychological issues; in fact, she makes a consideration of affect the occasion for an argument for altering basic psychoanalytic assumptions.

Jacobson's concerns are particularly with Freud's

pleasure principle and its connections with discharge and with affect. In Freud's metapsychology, the pleasure principle held that the ultimate determinant of all mental events was the tendency toward pleasure. Pleasure, however, was defined by Freud in an abstract way, as the discharge of energy or tension. In Freud's writings it is often unclear whether such pleasure is necessarily consciously experienced. By the same token, he did not draw an equation between this pleasure and affect. Pleasure and affect tend to be considered separately in Freud's work, and in fact they are theoretically opposed to one another in the discharge theory of affect; there, affect arises when direct gratification--pleasure--is blocked. Jacobson, on the other hand, takes pleasure as the prototypical affect. She asserts that the "pleasure" in the pleasure principle must refer to a conscious feeling, asserting also that Freud agreed on this point (see Jacobson, 1971b, p. 25; see also Rapaport, 1953, p. 193, where he emphatically disputes Jacobson's interpretation of Freud).

Jacobson's attention to pleasure as a prototype for affect leads her to focus her theoretical interest on the relation of affect and discharge. One might have anticipated that Jacobson would advance a discharge view of affect, given the traditional Freudian equation of pleasure and discharge and Jacobson's equation of affect and pleasure. In fact, she takes a different direction. She



disputes the equation of pleasure and discharge, aware that she is seeking to overturn Freud's most fundamental metapsychological assumption. She cites the doubts that Freud himself expressed on this issue in his paper on masochism (Freud, 1924/1961). She also points to the pleasure associated with increasing tension (e.g., sexual arousal), which Freud had also cited as throwing doubt on the theory.

Jacobson seeks to substitute a "constancy principle" for the pleasure principle as the basic determinant of psychic functioning. Jacobson's "constancy principle" states that the psychic apparatus seeks to maintain a generally constant level of tension, not to reduce tension to a minimum. Her wish to make this change in metapsychology appears to have been a reaction against Freud's Nirvana principle, which was the logical--and extreme--extension of the pleasure principle, and which stated that the ultimate tendency of the mind was toward death. In any event, Jacobson seeks to unseat pleasure as the primary motivation.

In addition to altering the place of pleasure in psychoanalytic theory, Jacobson seeks a more refined metapsychological understanding of pleasure itself, and it is this aspect of her writings on pleasure that bears directly on affect theory. Jacobson denies that pleasure can be equated with discharge. However, she does not

depart from the "economic" view of pleasure, that is, the view that pleasure is based on psychic energy. Instead, she proposes that pleasure (and unpleasure) can be the result of either increases or decreases in psychic tension. Instead of increase or decrease in tension as the determining factor of the quality of feeling (pleasurable or unpleasurable), she suggests the rate of increase or decrease as a more relevant factor. She proposes that tension simultaneously rises on one part of the "psychic apparatus" and is discharged elsewhere, and pleasure corresponds to optimal fluctuations in tension.

Although Jacobson points to the importance of affects other than pleasure and unpleasure, her theory of affect focuses almost exclusively on these. Thus, her theory of affect is essentially a complex re-alignment of the psychoanalytic concepts of tension, discharge, pleasure, and unpleasure.

Rapaport's paper at the 1952 symposium (Rapaport, 1953) has been cited most often for its review of Freud's affect theories. Rapaport himself seems to be more interested, in this paper, in making an original statement on metapsychological affect theory, within the "structural" version of metapsychology he favored. Thus, he proceeds from his review of Freud, in the first part of the paper, to a review of such theorists as Brierley (1937), Jacobson (1953), Fenichel (1941/1954), and Landauer (1938), praising or

faulting each according to whether their formulations are compatible with his own. Finally, he attempts to "sketch the outlines of a theory as it seems to emerge from this review" (p. 194).

The main terms of Rapaport's theory are: 1) inborn affect channels, 2) inborn affect thresholds, 3) similar channels and thresholds for drives, and 4) progressive taming of drive-based motivations during development. Rapaport maintains that affect exists in early life in the form of inborn channels for drive energy. These channels direct the energy that cannot be directly discharged through satisfaction of drives into either the interior of the body (i.e., Freud's "secretory and motor innervation") or perhaps to the exterior of the body in the form of instinctive adaptive responses (e.g., the infant's smiling or startle responses). As new obstacles are placed in the way of drive gratification, greater and greater use is made of these affect channels to carry off energy.

In the course of development, there is a progressive "taming" of affects, as the inborn affects are supplemented by subtler, more complex, and less "peremptory" ones. This process is the result of three factors. First, the drive energy which affects dispose of becomes tamed itself, and the tamer quality of this energy is passed on to the affects. Second, new affect-channels are developed. Rapaport provides no examples of such acquired affect-

channels, so one can only surmise what they might be. Third, there are changes in the affect-thresholds (that is, the amount of energy that must be diverted into affect-channels before discharge occurs). In the mature adult, one therefore finds "mobile" affect energy, evident in the form of "affect storms", and more restrained, controlled, and subtle affects.

Rapaport is reluctant to accept affects as motives or as objects of defense. He acknowledges that in some cases affects appear to play a role similar to drives, and admits that it may not always be possible to attribute these features to the underlying drive. He states that one may have to adopt some aspects of Freud's first (tension) theory of affect to accommodate these instances of affects playing the part of drives.

Rapaport emphasizes that in his view, affects have an actual existence even when they are not in the process of discharge. He criticizes Freud's discharge theory for not accommodating this fact, and argues that his own concept of affect-thresholds does so. He also favors Freud's concept of signal affects which are freed from dependency on energy and can be "actively produced" by the ego.

Like Jacobson, Rapaport in this paper vigorously pursues a metapsychological account of affect. He does so with an even greater disregard of clinical utility or intelligibility. His constructs have no clear everyday



referents, and deliberately so. They are intended to relate only to one another, so as to build a system of inter-dependent postulates and hypotheses. In evaluating his theory, then, it is important to distinguish between its success in terms of Rapaport's goals and success in elucidating affect in more generally accepted terms. For the former, one may accept Rapaport's own estimation that the theory was only "one possible interpretation" of where psychoanalytic theory stood at that time, to which one may add that Rapaport was one of the foremost systematizers of the abstract principles of psychoanalytic reasoning. For the latter goal of elucidating affect per se, however, it is difficult to identify any real contribution in Rapaport's original formulations.

### **Defense and Affect**

Psychoanalytic theory has been ambivalent about the relation of affect and defense. On the one hand, many theorists have routinely referred to defenses against affect and to affects employed as defenses (Novy, 1959). Freud himself did so, when he was writing in a "clinical" vein, unconstrained by metapsychological formalities (e.g., Freud, 1922/1955). On the other hand, Freud and others have denied that affect could either be defended against or serve as a defense. Only instincts or drives could be the legitimate

objects of defense, according to this reasoning, and as for affect serving as defenses, this fit neither with the discharge theory of affects as epiphenomenal residues of other processes nor with the signal theory, which described anxiety as a signal for defense but not as itself defending against the dangerous internal situation.

The four writers discussed below raise various aspects of the issues in the relation of affect and defense. The early paper by Earnest Jones is widely cited on this theme. The Zilboorg paper is almost never cited, and yet it develops important specific possibilities. Fenichel's paper has been an important statement on the relations of the ego and affects. Finally, Schafer's writings on affects as "disclaimed actions" are included here.

In 1929, Earnest Jones published "Fear, Guilt and Hate," one of the very few papers by early members of the Freudian movement directly to address emotions. The paper is most often cited by later analytic writers in connection with its discussion of the "layering" of affects (e.g., Brierley, 1937; Novey, 1959). Jones begins the paper with a formula: Each of the "emotional attitudes" of the title exists in three "layers", the surface one of the apparent (and conscious) emotion, a deeper one consisting of one of the remaining two, and a still deeper one consisting of the initial emotion in an ego-dystonic, primitive, and threatening form. This layering reflects a developmental

progression as well as a continuing dynamic interaction (though these two are not clearly distinguished by Jones).

Matters soon become less orderly as Jones develops his argument, specifying the interactions among pairs of the three, then analyzing each emotion separately. It emerges that only fear and hate conform to the three-layered pattern described in the paper's opening paragraphs, and that moreover the nature of the layering involved--developmental progression, dynamic conflict, or some combination of the two--varies from one emotion to the other, in ways that Jones makes no attempt to systematize.

Jones examines first hate, then guilt, and finally fear. Hate is described as a three-layer construction, in which only the first layer--anger--is conscious. This anger covers guilt or anxiety (or fear), which in turn is produced by an infantile "primary hate", composed of frustration-generated rage and sexual sadism. Developmentally, Jones describes the eventual overtaking by guilt and anxiety of early satisfaction in hate. In order to overcome this state of "impotence", the guilt is projected outwards--some person is viewed as guilty of wrong-doing--then this person is "identified with" the originally thwarting person, the object of the primary hate. This primary hate thus finds a modified expression in conscious anger or righteous indignation, with the added benefit of relief from guilt, owing to the projection of the forbidden impulses (i.e.,

"I'm not bad, s/he is").

Jones postulates two functions of conscious anger, to defend against guilt and anxiety and to express primitive hate. Each postulated function carries important implications. To claim that affect per se serves as a defense was a departure from the prevailing view of defenses as occurring in the domain of meanings, thoughts, symbols, and other specifically mental or cognitive contents, with secondary effect on affect. This continued to be, and remains, a minority view, and contrasts both with Freud's discharge view of affect as a release of instinctual energy and with his later view of signal anxiety. In Jones' formulation of anger, anxiety and guilt are defended against (rather than being signals for defense), and the defense is itself an emotion, though an emotion based in part on mental operations (viewing some person as guilty and in terms of an earlier, thwarting object--i.e., projection and displacement).

Following hate/anger, Jones takes up guilt. The account of guilt differs from that of hate in that Jones does not describe a layering of the same sort. Instead, he describes two developmental stages of guilt. The first, a preliminary, "pre-nefarious" form, consists only of the renunciation of libidinal strivings when these are frustrated and therefore produce unbearable anxiety. (Here Jones employs a version of Freud's view of anxiety in his



theory of anxiety neurosis.) Jones' terms the second stage of guilt "true guilt", and states that it is constituted by the turning against the self of the rage and sadism evoked by frustration, this turning against the self being motivated by dread of punishment and by love for the person who is simultaneously hated.

Jones cites his clinical experience that guilt is, for most people, virtually intolerable, and poses a question: How can guilt be both more and less intolerable than the emotions--fear and hate--that it defends against? His answer is that "guilt" refers to both the "pre-nefarious" stage and to guilt in the full sense. However, his account grows confused at this point, in part due to a failure to maintain the distinction between developmental and dynamic issues--he implies that guilt becomes intolerable when, in the course of development, it becomes true guilt, whereas at another point he describes the defensive layering in question as a dynamic, ongoing one, and therefore not one in which one form of guilt is supplanted by a more mature one.

For present purposes, two points are particularly noteworthy. First, guilt, unlike fear and hate, is not depicted in a primitive, basic, unacceptable form. This is consistent with other psychoanalytic views, in which guilt is described as an amalgam of more basic forces, constructed to solve a conflict. Second, in Jones' account of guilt we find indications of aspects of the process by which one

emotion can defensively replace another. Guilt emerges when the hated and feared object is internalized, that is, when there is a re-arrangement of self- and object-images and the relations between them.

Finally, Jones discusses fear. He begins by inquiring whether hate and guilt are necessary conditions for fear, since in clinical situations fear is accompanied always by hate and usually by guilt. He concludes that it must be possible in earliest infancy for fear to occur alone, and his evidence is that such seems to be the case in animals. In making this phylogenetic connection, he is compelled to note that he is using the term

'fear' in this paper in the clinical sense of anxiety and apprehension, not necessarily in the biological sense of alertness with its appropriate responses (Jones, 1929, p. 389n).

Jones proceeds with his discussion of fear with a reference to Freud's 1926 discussion of anxiety, in particular the distinction between primal, pre-ideational anxiety caused by traumatic libidinal over-excitation and signal anxiety deployed by the ego in response to the danger of an approaching traumatic over-excitation. Jones rejects Freud's claim that primal anxiety is purely a product of undischarged libido, and argues instead that, although it has no ideational content, it does constitute a defense. Here Jones introduces an original concept: aphanisis. Aphanisis "means total annihilation of the capacity for

sexual gratification, direct or indirect" (Jones, 1929, p. 391). By sexual gratification Jones means any satisfaction or pleasure resulting from any activity in life. Jones seeks with this concept to unite castration anxiety, fear of loss of love, and the quasi-physiological concept of libido. For both Jones and Freud, the fundamental danger posed by castration or loss of love--that is, the reasons these constitute catastrophes for the "personality" (Jones) or the "psychic apparatus" (Freud)--is that they make discharge of libido impossible. According to Jones, the infant undergoes an exhaustion of libido after prolonged build-up (similar to the cessation of hunger after prolonged fasting), and this provides the infant with an experience of aphanisis against which all subsequent defenses are ultimately directed, including the defense of primal anxiety. This anxiety offers a defense against dangerously mounting excitation through mental and physical inhibition and over-excitation. Inhibition "isolates the ego" from the excitation, and is akin to repression; over-excitation provides some measure of discharge.

In Jones' conclusion, he notes that there exist two stages in the development of each of the three affects under discussion; in all three cases the external world of object relations plays a greater role in the second stage. Next, Jones calls attention to the lack of inhibition in hate, which distinguishes it from fear and guilt and which Jones

relates to the deleterious social and psychological consequences of hate. Finally, he formulates the paths of inhibition and defense as the two alternatives available when libidinal excitation accumulates beyond the infant's capacity to tolerate it, and describes as the aim of psychoanalytic therapy to induce tolerance of guilt, hate, and fear, which requires increased confidence on the analysand's part that wishes can be held in abeyance without being inhibited (i.e., renounced) forever.

In this bold formulation, we find the familiar mingling of psychological and physiological reasoning, in the context of which an affect can exist without an object and yet serve a defensive function. we find a new process through which emotion provides a defense; it is a relatively automatic process, relatively mechanical and non-purposive. Inhibition and avoidance play a role, as does partial discharge. Finally, it is worth noting, given the controversy in psychoanalytic affect theory over whether affect signifies tension or discharge, that Jones' description of primal anxiety includes excitation itself as a form of discharge, and includes also inhibition (which may be seen as a third possibility, neither tension nor discharge) as a basic component of anxiety.

In 1933 Gregory Zilboorg, a New York analyst, published "Anxiety Without Affect", which he had delivered as a paper to the New York Psychoanalytic Society the previous year.



Zilboorg gives little preface to his remarks, and gives no indication of whether any current controversies prompted them. He states that the formulations he offers grew out of thoughts on a particular case, which he reports on in detail.

Zilboorg has to justify his surprising title, since anxiety was considered an affect; indeed, this was perhaps the only aspect of anxiety that was not in question. Zilboorg was compelled to bring even this into question by one analytic case, in which the patient described every aspect of his life--homosexual and heterosexual experiences, his difficulty devoting himself to a career, details of his medical studies, his father's progressive illness--in the same flat, unemotional tone. As the analysis proceeded, the patient described dreams and thoughts representing castration in symbolic forms, which Zilboorg regarded as inevitably anxiety-provoking. The patient's aplomb, however, was undisturbed. During the same phase of the analysis the patient experienced several episodes of physiological responses corresponding to acute anxiety; his pulse raced, his face paled, his breathing quickened, and so on. He was aware of these changes, but denied any feelings, describing the episodes as "purely physiological".

Zilboorg described this man's thoughts and responses as "anxiety without affect". He considered the dreams and thoughts with implied connections to castration as the

"ideational component" of an anxiety response, and the physical reactions he considered the physiological component. Despite these factors, the patient had no subjective sense that he was anxious; this subjective sense, or "feeling tone", Zilboorg considered the affective component of the anxiety reaction.

Thus, in Zilboorg's formulation, anxiety is something to be defended against. He implies a specific mechanism for accomplishing this, namely, splitting up the normally unitary anxiety reaction and suppressing the "subjective experience", which Zilboorg believed was possible even if the physiological reactions take place. Freud had emphasized the possibility of splitting affect from cognition, but Zilboorg was the first to suggest that affective phenomena could themselves be split in the process of defense.

Otto Fenichel, best known for his comprehensive textbook *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis*, was also a prolific author of articles in clinical and metapsychological theory. Among the latter is "The Ego and the Affects", written in English after Fenichel had emigrated from Berlin to Los Angeles, and published in 1941. In this paper, Fenichel depicts affects as closely similar to instincts, and in particular as having similar relations with the ego, such as pressing for expression and being held back by defensive efforts of the ego.

Like Brierley's 1937 article, Fenichel's elevates affects to a central importance, but unlike Brierley, he does not set out to do so; instead, the centrality of affect emerges in the course of Fenichel's coordination of observations on emotional behavior with basic features of psychoanalytic theory of ego and neurosis. He readily concludes that, in practice, there is a virtual isomorphism between instinct and affect. He states that defense against instinct is always defense against affect, that a "weak" ego is overwhelmed by primitive affects, just as it is with instincts, whereas a strong ego treats affects as it does instincts, modulating them, sublimating them, and employing them toward its own ends. Unexpressed affects, like unexpressed instincts, accumulate and press for discharge, requiring energy to contain them and betraying themselves in derivatives, in lability or rigidity, or in general fatigue. In short, the parallels between instinct and affect are so complete that one is left wondering what necessity is served by instinct theory.

Fenichel was a knowledgeable and careful exponent of Freudian metapsychology, with the result that the contradictions and ambiguities of classical psychoanalytic affect theory are highlighted in the article. For example, Fenichel must reconcile his description of affect as virtually equivalent to instinct with the firm distinction drawn by Freud between affect and instinct. In Freud's

view, instincts and their associated energy are the source of psychic tension, and affect is one form of the discharge of such tension. Affects, per se, cannot be repressed, since they are active processes of discharge; only a "disposition" toward affect can be repressed. Fenichel, in his equation of affect and instinct, is hard pressed to maintain these views of Freud's. He affirms them (Fenichel, 1941/1954, p. 221), but virtually all the implications of his position stand in contradiction to them. He is closer to Freud's earliest views of affect in the theory of hysteria (cf. Fenichel, 1941/1954, p. 220).

An even more fundamental ambiguity of the classical view emerges with clarity in Fenichel's paper. Irrationality is regarded with considerable ambivalence in psychoanalysis. The instincts are the enemy of psychological health, and reducing their influence is the goal of psychoanalytic treatment--"where id was, there shall ego be"--yet Freud also advocated the view that all the activities of human life were expressions of the instincts, and insofar as they are gratifying, are so for this reason. In Fenichel's paper, affects largely take the place of instincts, and a similar ambiguity emerges. He begins by describing fully discharged affects as always representing a loss of the ego's usual control over the body, and therefore a regression from healthy adult functioning. Affects are described as embattling the ego, forcing their way through



despite the ego's efforts, and consuming energy that is then unavailable for adaptive pursuits. However, Fenichel also depicts affects as beneficial, within a strong ego. A strong ego is capable of "synthesizing" the affects, that is, integrating them within its overall functioning, to its considerable benefit. This situation makes itself manifest in the "autonomous, active, free play of the victorious ego with its multiplicity of affects" (Fenichel, 1941/1954, p. 226). Defenses against affect should be secure but not rigid.

Roy Schafer has produced a large body of theoretical and metatheoretical psychoanalytic writing, in which affect, although not a consistent theme, has received considerable attention. His most sustained treatment of affect is in his 1976 book, *A New Language for Psychoanalysis*, in which he advocates abandoning the traditional psychoanalytic metapsychology in favor of what he calls "action language". One aspect of this action language is to regard emotions as "disclaimed actions", that is, actions for which the person does not wish to take responsibility. This process of disclaiming action is the model, for Schafer, of all defense, and emotions, therefore, are all involved in defensive operations.

The consideration of emotion in the context of action language was preceded by an earlier paper. Here, I review that paper, then discuss emotion in action language.

In his first major discussion of affect, "The Clinical Analysis of Affects" (1964), Schafer comments on a broad variety of issues; the comments are unified mainly by the proposition that the theory of affect had suffered from far too much abstract, metapsychological formulation and a neglect of the actual thoughts and actions of clinicians in the analytic situation. The paper benefits from Schafer's exceptional appreciation for subtlety, nuance, and ambiguity, and the view of affect that emerges is extraordinarily rich and multifaceted. Few summarizing remarks or central tenets are attempted. Schafer's intent in the paper is not to advance a theory but to "re-examine the means by which we learn about affects in the clinical situation" (p. 275). He explores eight categories which, he believes, analysts "have in mind" when they do analytic work with affects. These include affect existence, affect formation, affect strength, affect communication, and others. The explorations provide a context for many remarks on the nature and importance of affects, their development, and the central role of the analysis of affects in psychoanalytic treatment.

Schafer is able to make his points without taking a position on any of the controversies that had gone on for years or decades in the psychoanalytic literature on affect. For example, he does not discuss whether affect represent tension or discharge, and he describes patients avoidance

and defense against their affects without pursuing the meta-psychology of unconscious affect. This neglect of theoretical disputes is not through lack of familiarity or a disinclination to theoretical discourse, as Schafer's later work (1968, 1976, 1983) makes clear. It seems instead to be a demonstration of his point that clinicians function every day in intimate interaction with affects, without requiring answers to the controversies that had been pursued with such vigor in metatheoretical discussions; and therefore the everyday conceptions, far from depending on metatheory, could be the basis for it.

Schafer does take an implied position on one basic issue. Nowhere in his discussion are affects depicted as physiological entities, nor as automatic or innate. Even when he discusses affect "location" in terms of areas of the body, there is no implication that affects actually occur in distinct parts of the body, or that if parts of the body become specially involved in an affective experience, that this is a necessary part of experiencing that affect. It is clear that for Schafer, psychology is the basis for all aspects of affective experience, and that he believes physiology to be extraneous to clinical work with affects, and probably also to a satisfactory psychoanalytic theory of affect.

Turning now to the action language book (Schafer, 1976), we find that in this instance Schafer's work is

guided by a specific purpose apart from expanding the understanding of emotions. A polemical interest guides the presentation, as Schafer was arguing that a technical language in which all psychological entities are described as groups of actions and modes of action could and should replace psychoanalytic metapsychology. Emotions posed a critical test for this system, and Schafer endeavors to show not only that they can be rendered in his action language but that this rendering clarifies our understanding of them.

Schafer objects strenuously to the reification and substantialization of emotions. He describes all references to emotions doing things--"having effects" on people's thoughts and actions--as crude metaphors at best, and more commonly as concretistic, infantile ways of thinking and talking incorporated into psychological theory. He has the same criticisms of the entities of psychoanalytic metapsychology, such as id, ego, and superego. He argues that it is critically important for psychoanalysts to stop using such metaphors as if they corresponded to real entities, and proposes that they employ instead a comprehensive set of terms in which all references to entities other than the person are specifically excluded.

For emotions, this means eliminating references to a mythical entity which is "expressed", "controlled", "experienced", "built up", and which "overwhelms" us, "poisons our hearts", "lifts our spirits", "energizes" us,



etc. Instead, he offers examples of translations into actions and modes of action. For example,

using action language, we replace the idea of happiness by the idea of doing actions happily. As a first approximation, to do actions happily is to be likely, while doing them, to smile, laugh, sing, and dance; to embrace oneself and others; to speak favorably of oneself and one's situation and of other persons as well; perhaps to undergo some physiological sexual arousal; and to believe that one has what one wants and has it securely and to be potentially able to say so. (Schafer, 1976, p. 277)

The action language was a proposal for a truly radical change in psychoanalytic theorizing, and it called for an equally fundamental change in the ordinary-language ways of conceptualizing emotion. In the above passage, the influence of Ryle (1949) is evident, both in Schafer's objections to the concept of an entity "behind" or "within" observable actions, and in his use of dispositions to actions ("to be likely...to smile, laugh, sing, and dance", etc.) as a means of eliminating concepts of entities. He denies that there is an experience of emotion that is private in principle and inaccessible to others, and discusses the personal experience of emotion as one possible interpretive description of a set of actions.

The notion of "disclaimed action" is Schafer's way of translating the psychoanalytic concepts of the impulses and mechanisms that make up the "psychic apparatus". Impulses or drives are "conditional actions" (i.e., actions a person would do under different circumstances), and many such

conditional actions are disclaimed by thinking and speaking of them as concrete entities. Similarly, "mechanisms", such as defenses and symptoms, are also often disclaimed by referring to them as things that happen rather than chosen means of coping and/or experiencing satisfaction. There are many reasons people disclaim so many of their actions. These include protecting relationships, protecting one's image or self-image, and reducing the "excitement and violence" of life. The reasons, in fact, include all the motives for defense.

Emotions are, for Schafer, the epitome of disclaimed action, because they are invariably spoken of as things which are passively experienced or "undergone", and never as modes of action that are chosen for various reasons. Schafer insists that emotions are best thought of as "enacted", rather than undergone. For all of the many reasons that other actions are disclaimed, people often prefer to avoid identifying with and taking responsibility for the actions and modes of action that make up emotion.

### **Unconscious Affect**

The issue of unconscious affect is conceptually related to that of defense and affect, and its history in psychoanalysis has been similar as well. On the one hand, Freud stated flatly, in the context of the discharge theory of affect, that affect could by definition not be

unconscious.

It is surely of the essence of an emotion that we should be aware of it, i.e., that it should become known to consciousness. Thus the possibility of the attribute of unconsciousness would be completely excluded as far as emotions, feelings, and affects are concerned. (Freud, 1915/1957d, p. 177)

Some authors have followed Freud on this point, at least when they have attempted to be conceptually rigorous (e.g., Blau, 1955; Fenichel, 1941/1954; Moore & Fine, 1968), and analysts continue to be uncomfortable with the concept of unconscious affect. However, uncomfortable they may be, though, they employ the concept readily, just as Freud did.

There is, as we think, no doubt about the origin of this unconscious need for punishment....If only the words went together better, we should be justified for all practical purposes in calling it an "unconscious sense of guilt". (Freud, 1933/1964, p. 109)

Jealousy is one of those affective states, like grief, that may be described as normal. If anyone appears to be without it, the inference is justified that it has undergone severe repression and consequently plays all the greater part in his unconscious mental life. (Freud, 1922/1955, p. 223)

In discussing affect and defense, we have already encountered references to unconscious or repressed affect. Jones' (1929) concept of layered affects implied unconscious affect in some instances, and Fenichel (1941/1954) addressed the issue specifically. In the present section, though, unconscious affect is the specific focus. That is, the concern of the present section is affect that has an "actual existence" without being conscious (as opposed to a "potential to develop", as Freud [1915/1957d] described it), that is actively kept out of



awareness, and which in addition is thought to have important consequences while unconscious. A few representative discussions are reviewed.

To return first to Jones' (1929) paper, we find that he depicts hate, guilt, and anxiety as possibly or even typically unconscious. The theoretical necessity of unconscious emotion in Jones' argument is less clear than it might be due to the lack of a consistent distinction between development and intra-psychic dynamics. If the hate-guilt-anger relation is one of individual development, it is not necessary to view the earlier emotions as unconscious; they could simply be supplanted over time. However, Jones is clear in stating that he does view hate and guilt as unconscious, not supplanted, which, together with the metaphor of "layering", leaves no doubt that Jones is departing from Freud on this point.

Brierley's (1937) discussion of affect includes a consideration of unconscious affect and its role in neurosis and its treatment. Her advocacy of a concept of unconscious affect is consistent with her metapsychological position on affect as a tension phenomenon, tension being something that can have an actual existence without being active. Brierley considered the making conscious of unconscious affects a central part of psychoanalytic treatment. She regarded repressed affects as dissociated fragments of the ego (or "self", as it might be called today in this context), and



making these affects conscious, she felt, constituted a crucial bit of integrative analytic work. Her description of this process startlingly anticipates Schafer (1983) and other present day writers of the psychoanalytic construction of the personal "narrative" (e.g., Spence, 1982).

What happens when a repressed fragment of ego-experience comes into consciousness? The patient feels the emotion he was formerly unable to endure. If we can reconstruct for him by transference interpretation the conditions which originally provoked this feeling, especially if we can recover the infantile reality-bases of the phantasies, the experience will fall into perspective as a part of his personal history. In structural terms, the dissociated ego-fragment can become integrated with the reality-ego. Abreaction does not do away with the liability to feel, though it reduces the pathological intensity of the infantile emotion. Its major function is to open the hitherto barred path from id to personal ego. Working-through is, in part, a drainage of residual affect pockets, but, in essence, it is a stabilizing process of ego-assimilation and re-integration. (Brierley, 1937, pp. 265-266)

There have been a small number of papers devoted specifically to the question of unconscious affect (Knapp, 1957; Pulver, 1971; Reid, 1956). Of these, Pulver's has been the most frequently cited. Pulver argues that unconscious affects exist. He explains Freud's theoretical objections to this concept as a result of the discharge theory of affect, and suggests that Freud retained these objections despite discarding the discharge theory because of the influence of linguistic conventions linking affect, "feelings", and conscious awareness. Pulver believes such conventions are misleading.

Pulver does not base his case on conceptual analysis, but instead provides empirical evidence for the existence of unconscious affects. However, he requires a definition of affect that does not rely on subjective experience. He argues that we are justified in inferring an affect when an "individual shows physiological, ideational and motor behavior usually associated with a central feeling state" (Pulver, 1971, p. 350). The feeling state at such times can be conscious, preconscious, or unconscious; that is, the individual may be aware of it, may be capable of becoming aware of it with "an ordinary effort of attention", or may be incapable of becoming aware of it through ordinary efforts of attention.

Among Pulver's examples of preconscious affect are the constant feeling states he asserts we are in, usually without being aware of it, as well as stronger feeling states aroused by particular events (e.g., an argument) which eventually come to our awareness by intruding on some other focus of attention or which are evident to others if not to ourselves. Among his examples of unconscious affect are analytic patients who behaved angrily or elatedly, in situations that would warrant these feelings, but denied having these emotions.

Pulver successfully demonstrates that there are affective phenomena that correspond to the descriptions of conscious, preconscious, and unconscious ideas in psycho-

analytic theory. However, he does little to resolve the conceptual anomaly of unconscious affect. As noted, he operationally defines affects as a set of physiological, ideational, and motor phenomena "usually associated with a central feeling state". He argues that we are justified in inferring the central feeling state, whether or not the individual feels it. We are left with a definition of affect as a central feeling state that one may or may not feel. If Pulver provided a conception of affect that did not rely on the unexplicated concept of "feeling state" he might have provided a solution to the theoretical problem, but on the contrary, he is careful to state that his definition of affect refers solely to the "pure feeling", not to associated "affective phenomena", in the ideational, physiological, or motor spheres.

### **Biological Theories**

Biological theories of affect occupy a special place in psychoanalytic theory. In a broad sense they are meta-psychological, in that they offer explanations of psychological phenomena which are not themselves in psychological terms. However, Freud's metapsychology was not a biological theory. Rather, it was a para-biological theory, one might say. Its structure and logic were biological, but its terms were sui generis--they occupied a

special category between the realms of biology and psychology, and between the realms of the literal and the metaphorical. In contrast to Freud's theories of affect, some of which were partly biological and some of which were purely in terms of his own metapsychological, there have been several analytic theories of affect which have been biological in a simple sense; that is, these theories have employed explanatory concepts current in biology and have not used metapsychological concepts as explanations.

Like Freud, other analysts have freely referred to biology in their discussions of affect, and have sometimes taken considerable liberties with biological fact. For example, Jones' (1929) paper exemplifies certain aspects of the connections frequently drawn in psychoanalytic theory between psychological and biological reasoning and evidence. A continuity and basic identity is assumed between non-human responses and psychological ("clinical") ones, and the non-human responses are assumed to indicate the nature of the earliest, perhaps pre-psychological human phenomena. These earliest phenomena are further thought to remain at the deepest regions of the psyche throughout life, either as mental phenomena or at the boundary of the physical and the mental (as in Freud's definition of instincts).

Similarly, Franz Alexander, in a paper that is discussed in more detail in the Appendix (Alexander, 1935), effectively equates emotions and psychosomatic conditions,



continuing a theme that had begun with the *Studies on Hysteria* concerning the ambiguously psychological and somatic character of emotions. Where Freud and Breuer held that psychological energy--affect--could be dissipated through physical emotional expression or physical conversion symptoms, Alexander maintained that an unconscious logic could cross the mind-body boundary and disturb somatic functions. Questions about how such a transition could be possible, and concomitant questions about the nature of emotion, did not arise or were ignored.

There have been frequent occasions in the analytic literature in which a distinction has been drawn, in effect, between biological and psychological affects; in some instances, this contrast has been considered identical with the contrast of id and ego. For example, Rapaport (1953) refers to Freud's discharge theory as an "id-theory", because of its emphasis on physiology. Similarly, Novey (1959) contrasts primitive, primary affects with later affects that are based on psychological object images, and Zetzel (1949) proposes a similar distinction. Rangell (1955) argues that anxiety must be biological, since it is "suffered" rather than voluntarily initiated, and Blau (1955), in a paper discussed below, effectively divides unpleasant emotions into biological and psychological categories. In each of these instances, no new psycho-analytic theory has been proposed. Instead, relatively

unquestioned assumptions are made about physiological processes or innate behavioral sequences, and these are applied to existing psychoanalytic formulations.

In the Appendix, a controversy over the theory of anxiety which revolved around issues of the relation of biology and psychoanalysis is reviewed. In the remainder of the present section, several other instances of biology in the psychoanalytic theory of affect are reviewed.

Landauer's (1938) paper exemplifies the casual use of biological speculation that characterized some of the work of early analysts. Blau's (1955) paper, as noted above, shows a combination of biology and psychology. Emde (1980) provides a more recent example of biological theory brought to bear on the psychoanalytic theory of affect. Finally, Bowlby (1969) provides an original synthesis of biology and Freudian metapsychological, including a specific account of emotion.

In 1936, Karl Landauer delivered "Affects, Passions and Temperament" at a meeting of the Vienna Psycho-Analytical Institute on the occasion of Freud's 80th birthday; it was published soon after (Landauer, 1938). Glover (1939) cites it as an important paper, and Jacobson (1953) includes it among her selective review of psychoanalytic papers on affect. Among recent authors, Emde (1980) in particular cites the paper with approval.

Even among works of psychoanalytic metapsychology, the

Landauer paper is unusually obscure. Few passages can be interpreted with confidence, and the principal points of the presentation remain elusive even on careful reading.

Rapaport (1953) understates the case when he refers to the paper as "not easy to follow". One suspects the paper acquired its importance through historical context, that is, that Landauer's varied speculations and suggestive but undeveloped themes achieved some lasting impact owing to their having been delivered in Vienna, possibly in Freud's presence, at a time when Vienna remained the center of psychoanalytic thought. One presumes that the meaning of the remarks was clearer to those present than to later readers less familiar with the issues most urgent at that time. As for Emde's (1980) praise, he appears to have seen in the paper indications of a view similar to his own "organizational" view of affect.

Among Landauer's concerns in the paper, the theme of affects as compromises in a conflict is prominent. Landauer ascribes the view to Freud that all affects are the product of conflict, on the basis of Freud's description of affects as "inherited hysterical attacks". In fact, Landauer's view seems quite distant from Freud's. Whereas Freud thought of affect either as a means of disposing of tension when other forms of discharge are inhibited by conflict or as a signal that a conflict has become active, Landauer described the affective expression as itself incorporating the enactment



of two opposing instinctive impulses, such as, in shame, the impulse to conceal and the unconscious impulse to display. Thus, Landauer breaks down Freud's distinction between emotion and action. Affect becomes, for Landauer a form of action, and fails to achieve the aim of the unconscious impulse only because the impulse and its opposite are confounded in the same set of actions.

Landauer's classification scheme--affects, passions, and temperaments--is one of the earliest in the psycho-analytic literature of affect. It is of little use, unfortunately, since Landauer's definitions elude understanding. Passions, for example, are defined as those affects which are libidinal, meaning their activation involves sexual zones of the body; included are "sympathy, longing, jealousy, modesty and similar emotions" (p. 405). Temperaments are described as combinations of affects which are more enduring than simple affects. All three categories derive from biological, inherited tendencies.

Landauer concludes with a discussion of affective zones, aims, and objects. He draws a very close parallel between these aspects of affect and instinctual zones, aims, and objects as defined by Freud (1905/1953).

Abram Blau presented his views on affect in two papers (Blau, 1952, 1955). The earlier of the two presents a purely physiological view of anxiety; this paper is reviewed in the Appendix. In 1955, Blau attempted to give an account



of all unpleasant affects. The account takes a very different direction from his earlier effort, and suggests that Blau was unable or unwilling to sustain his physiological view of emotion.

In his hypothesis of emotion, Blau emphasizes the need to make distinctions between various aspects of emotion. He argues that "inner and outer manifestations" of emotion should be distinguished, and that among inner manifestations, physiological and psychological components should be differentiated. He further divides the inner manifestation into "enteroceptive, proprioceptive, and verbal" components; he does not specifically classify these three components into physiological and psychological, but does imply that the first two are physiological and the last, psychological.

Blau's hypothesis is essentially an expansion of his 1952 view of anxiety as a distinct, inherited physiological entity. However, while the 1952 paper was an advocacy for increased attention to physiology in psychoanalytic theory and practice, physiology is depicted in 1955 only as emotion's primitive basis. Only a part of any emotion is physiological, and this part takes on less and less importance in the more highly developed emotions.

Regarding the three components of emotion, it is only the "enteroceptive" one that is clearly physiological. Blau defines this component as "an awareness of visceral reactions, such as accelerations of the heart rate, muscular

tension, or a feeling of faintness" (p. 81). At some points, Blau seems to regard this as the most basic component of all emotions, as when he states "affect consists of inner kinetic perceptions of a pleasant or unpleasant quality" (p. 80). The source of these physiological processes is in the autonomic nervous system; the sympathetic system is responsible for unpleasant affect, and the parasympathetic system gives rise to pleasant ones.

Blau defines the proprioceptive component as "an awareness of an action or an impulse for some motor action" (p. 82). He states no position on whether these actions are innate; the use of terms like "avoidance" and "flight" suggest that Blau had inherited action patterns in mind when he wrote his discussion of the concept, but nothing about the concept rules out voluntary action or acquired impulses. In his discussion, Blau acknowledges the similarity of his formulation to the James-Lange theory (as he might equally well have done in discussing the enteroceptive component):

The verbal component is depicted by Blau as a label which is attached to the first two components "relatively late" in development. He emphasizes the relative poverty of words as compared with the variety of affects. Clearly Blau does not believe the verbal component alters anything essential in an affect.

The outward signs of emotion are given less attention than the inner, and Blau seems to feel that they lie outside

the domain of his hypothesis of emotion. He emphasizes, though, that few of them are innate, most learned. The learned aspects of emotional expression include facial expression; citing Landis (1934), Blau states that cross-cultural uniformities in facial expression of emotion do not exist. (Given Blau's predilection for biological explanations in the 1952 paper, one might have anticipated he would be an advocate of nativist theories of emotional expression.)

Blau distinguishes between primary, secondary, and tertiary emotions. The primary emotion of displeasure is anxiety, and it is innate. Secondary and tertiary emotions of displeasure are acquired modifications of anxiety; secondary and tertiary emotions differ in terms of the greater maturation and autonomy implicit in the latter. The secondary emotions of unpleasure (or rather, the categories of these) are rage, fear, and depression. Blau identifies three groups of tertiary emotions of unpleasure--guilt, shame, and disgust--but states that there may be more. Most significant for present purposes is that all secondary and tertiary emotions are, implicitly, psychological entities, in that they incorporate thoughts, images, memories, social norms, and other distinctly psychological components.

Robert Emde (1980) has provided a more recent effort to create a biological theory of affect for application in psychoanalysis. He draws on biologically oriented theories

in the psychology of emotion (e.g., Ekman, Friesen & Ellsworth, 1972; Izard, 1977) to devise what he calls an "organizational" view of emotion. From this perspective

affects are composite states including motoric perceptions and direct feelings of pleasure and displeasure; they are rooted in biology; they include cognition and are evaluative; they function unconsciously as well as consciously; and they organize mental functioning and behavior. (Emde, 1980, pp. 68-69)

Emde isolates a wide variety of views in psychoanalytic writings which he considers to be evidence for the pervasiveness of an organizational model of affect. These views include attributing positive functions to affect, viewing affects as indicators of intrapsychic functioning, and considering affects to be continuously present. These various views seem united primarily in opposing a view of affect as a unitary and disruptive agitation.

In the course of Emde's exposition it becomes clear that he regards affects as biologically given patterns of thought, behavior, and feeling which have generally adaptive consequences. Once they are triggered, these patterns, as he describes them, have an autonomous life, and influence all aspects of functioning. They are inherited, presumably in the form of templates which, singly and in combination, organize responses in functional ways. This view of emotion is as fully biological as the physiological theories brought into psychoanalysis by Blau (1952) and Brunswick (1954) more than two decades earlier, but it reflects the changes in



biology in the interim, particularly the influence of ethology.

Bowlby's (1969) studies of attachment are also an outgrowth of modern ethology. Bowlby set out to study infant attachment and separation within a broadly psychoanalytic perspective, and soon had recourse to the developing field of ethology (Hinde, 1966; Lorenz, 1963; Tinbergen, 1951). By bringing together British psychoanalytic views and ethological thought, he created a new view of instincts, which he hoped could substitute for Freud's dated theory of the instincts. Bowlby offered a radically new theory of emotion on the basis of his instinct theory.

Bowlby's view of instincts was inspired by the information processing metaphors which were exercising a widespread influence. He termed this the "control systems" viewpoint. He proposed replacing the concept of instincts as "hard-wired" sequences of stereotyped movements with a concept of "goal-corrected behavioral systems". Such systems are organized around a goal with clear adaptive significance for a species (e.g., mating, nesting, raising young) and subsume a number of behavior patterns which may, depending on the circumstances, contribute to achieving the goal. Rather than calling such behavior systems "innate", he proposes adopting Hinde's (1959) distinction between "environmentally stable" and "environmentally labile"

behavior systems; the former are relatively uninfluenced by different environments.

Bowlby's view of emotion is derived from his concept of behavioral systems and of the role of "appraisal" in initiating and guiding these systems. The concept of goal-corrected systems holds that behavior is initiated when it is likely to lead to a goal, and is corrected constantly to make success most likely. This process requires constant monitoring and appraising of both the situation and the progress of the behavior sequence. Bowlby's conclusion is that

affects, feelings, and emotions are phases of an individual's intuitive appraisals either of his own organismic states and urges to act or of the succession of environmental situations in which he finds himself. (Bowlby, 1969, p. 104)

At some points during the unfolding of a behavior system, the appraisals of internal tendencies and urges (which are part of the system) and of the external situation rise to consciousness, and are felt. This feeling of ongoing processes, Bowlby argues, should not be construed as having a causal influence on the process; at least, there are no grounds for assuming that it does. To assume this, Bowlby writes, is to make the category mistake of assuming efficient causality when there is only dispositional causality (Ryle, 1949; see also Fridhandler & Averill, 1982). That is, feelings are a reflection of the process that gives rise to behaviors, not a cause of the process or

the behaviors. Bowlby cites Ryle (1949) on the correct dispositional interpretation of emotions.

The statement "Tom bit his little sister because he was jealous" is logically equivalent to the statement "the glass broke because it was brittle"; and, as such, it also gives no cause. "Jealous", Ryle points out, is a dispositional adjective: it carries the meaning that if certain circumstances obtain, for example if mother attends to little sister and not to Tom, Tom would be likely to attack his little sister in some way or other and would probably not play contentedly or caress her. The statement tells us, in fact, nothing whatever about the particular events that led up to this particular bite: what it says is that in certain conditions such an action is likely. (Bowlby, 1969, p. 119)

In other words, Tom does not hit his sister because he is jealous, but his hitting his sister is part of being jealous, as is his particular appraisal of his mother's tending to her (as opposed to an appraisal linked to indifference, or to helping mother).

Bowlby's characterization of emotion, then, is as a reflection of a complex process involving physiological and psychological components organized toward some end. The concept of the emotion causing or being caused by aspects of this process, such as appraisals of a situation or introspective appraisals, becomes meaningless in this conception. The emotion is a reflection of all these processes, and serves to summarize them for the individual or for others.

## Ego and Cognition

The history of the theoretical views on affects and the ego is not easy to trace, owing to the many meanings that have been attached to the concept of ego. When Freud or other theorists have drawn connections between affects and the ego it has not always been clear on what basis, and when authors have not specifically related affect to the ego it has been difficult to say whether such a connection is implied. The connections to the ego have been in three broad areas--consciousness, adaptation, and cognition. In some cases, it has been enough that affects are generally or always conscious for authors to place them in the ego. Freud, though, had more in mind when, in the later periods of his work, he placed affect in the ego (Freud, 1923/1961). In his earlier work, his views of affect would have placed them in the id, had the latter concept been formulated, although the conscious nature of affect would have led to complications. In the same work in which he formulated the concepts of the ego and the id (Freud, 1923/1961), Freud delivered his well-known formula "The ego is the actual seat of anxiety." That, in Freud's view, anxiety was always conscious, was one reason he included it within the province of the ego. A more important reason was that he was beginning to develop the signal theory, in which anxiety formed an integral part of the ego's intra-psychic adaptive



efforts. A third factor was Freud's conclusion that anxiety was a psychological product, based on cognitive processes. Formerly, he had retained his special view of anxiety as an automatic transformation of libido, without psychological participation. These themes were expanded by the authors reviewed in the present section.

Charles Brenner has offered an ego-based theory of affect (Brenner, 1974a, 1974b, 1975). The cornerstone of the theory is the proposition that affects include ideas and can only be identified through a consideration of these conscious or unconscious ideas. Brenner regards his theory as a substantial departure from Freud's major proposals and from highly influential metapsychological statements by Rapaport (1953) and Jacobson (1971a). The departure is in Brenner's emphasis on ideas. Rapaport, Jacobson, and at times Freud offer accounts of affect that depend primarily or entirely on the concept of psychic energy and its expression in physiological processes. Certainly these theorists emphasized an opposition between affects and ideas; for them, this distinction was fundamental. Brenner, like Lewin (1965), denies that affects exist without ideas, and gives ideas pre-eminent importance in determining the nature of affect.

It is a measure of the distance between psychoanalysis and academic psychology that Brenner's paper omits any reference to the work of Stanley Schachter (1964), as

Brenner's main thesis duplicates Schachter's proposals, which had preceded Brenner's by ten years. Schachter, too, argued that emotion had to include physiological and cognitive components--and Schachter, like Brenner, failed to go beyond this statement to a consideration of affect as a whole, as opposed to its component parts. Brenner's theoretical definition of affect closely echoes Schachter's:

I believe that affects...are complex mental phenomena which include (a) sensations of pleasure, displeasure, or a mixture of the two, and (b) thoughts, memories, wishes, fears--in a word, ideas....Ideas and sensation together, both conscious and unconscious, constitute and affect. (Brenner, 1974b, pp. 534-535)

Brenner offers an indication of what sorts of ideas are associated with affect, by referring to theoretical and clinical psychoanalysis. Although he states that the ideas may be conscious or unconscious, all his examples concern unconscious ideas deriving from childhood. For instance, he cites Arlow's paper on smugness (Arlow, 1957) to suggest that the thought in smugness is "I have it better than you. I have my mother all for myself." In triumph, he suggests, there is an unconscious idea that one has defeated a rival or rivals. Borrowing from Fenichel (1934) and Greenson (1953), Brenner suggests that boredom depends on an unconscious attempt to convince oneself that one does not want to gratify one or another forbidden wish. These examples leave it an open question whether Brenner believes an affect's idea can be wholly conscious.

Brenner does not provide a theoretical account of the relation between affects and ideas, except to assert that they go together. His examples confuse matters, since they include instances in which an idea characterizes an affective state and could be considered a constitutive part of the affect, and instances in which the ideas play only a causal role. The first two examples above--smugness and triumph--are of the first type, and Brenner's theory requires that all his examples conform to this description. But his example of boredom already confounds the issue--one is not bored about the forbidden wish, one is bored because one desires to avoid the wish--and further examples confuse matters still more, as when he implies that euphoria contains similar ideas as depression, when in fact he seems to be referring to a causal relationship (i.e., euphoria as an avoidance of depression). His more detailed clinical examples only add to the ambiguities.

Despite its shortcomings, Brenner's views represented an important advance. For virtually the first time, a prominent psychoanalyst had, in an explicit theoretical statement, emphasized ideas and meaning as essential parts of affect, departing radically from the ambiguous, physicalistic, "economic" explanations. By doing so, Brenner dissolved a significant barrier that had obstructed psychoanalytic understanding of affect, namely, the artificial distinction between affect and ideas. His



examples, although confused, demonstrate one benefit of this achievement--he is able to bring the familiar methods of psychoanalytic reasoning about ideas, symbols, interpretations, and so on, to bear on the analysis of affect. Even more broadly, he placed affect in the context of the ego, and thereby implied a new set of fundamental assumptions about affect. These assumptions concern not only the cognitive involvement in affect, but include issues of adaptiveness, relation to purposes, relation to unacceptable wishes, and the role of affect in internal psychological "regulation" and coping. These assumptions are reflected in the present theory of affect, and are discussed further in Chapter IV.

Max Schur's views on the relation of affects and the ego are distinctive and were influential (Schur, 1953, 1969). In the earlier of his two papers dealing with this topic he was concerned to systematize and clarify Freud's views on anxiety, and in addition Schur took issue with some of Freud's positions and suggested improvements. Schur's basic proposition is that anxiety is a "response of the ego" to danger or potential danger, but contrary to Freud, it is not "produced" by the ego. What Freud called the production of anxiety by the ego (as a "signal"), Schur argues is better described as the ego producing danger (through direction of attention or through fantasy) to which it then responds with anxiety. Different "parts" of the ego are



held responsible for the production of danger, the experience of anxiety, and the use of the signal.

It is not immediately clear why Schur insists that the anxiety is in the ego, since he depicts anxiety as a natural, pre-programmed response to the perception of danger, much as Blau (1952) had. Schur's reason seems to have been his concern to eliminate Freud's concept of "automatic" anxiety, which held out the possibility of the production of anxiety through purely physiological transformations. Schur regards psychological recognition of danger as essential to anxiety, and this is evidently enough for him to call anxiety an ego-response, as it was not for Blau.

Schur distinguishes different types and degrees of ego regression in anxiety. The first type is regression in terms of the misperception of danger and the second is regression in the form of the anxiety response. Neurotic anxiety involves regression in the first sense or in both senses. The most adaptive, least pathological form of anxiety is one which Schur regards as "genetically related to anxiety" but better called "awareness of danger" (with little or no physiological discharge).

In a later paper, Schur turns specifically to the issue of affect and cognition. His thesis is that all affects intrinsically involve cognition, by which he means "mental processes" such as "scanning, evaluation, judgement,

repression, etc." He argues that this view was implicit in Freud's signal view of anxiety, and that it may be readily extended to all affects. Regarding the particular relation of the cognitive aspect of affects and the "feeling" aspect, Schur is less clear. On the one hand, he states that the cognitive process occurs first and the feeling consists of a response to the cognitive element--a similar concept to that of "appraisal" in the psychology of emotion (Lazarus, Averill & Opton, 1970)--but then emphasizes that

the cognitive process and the response to it occur simultaneously and are therefore inseparable components of the affect. (Schur, 1969, p. 651)

In addition to these two writers, several authors incorporate the ego, in one or another aspect, into their account of affects. Brierley (1937) emphasized that affects are "ego-experiences". Initially, her statement seems to refer only to the fact that affects are typically conscious, but as she develops her various themes (which are reviewed above, in the sections on metapsychology and unconscious affect, and in the Appendix) it becomes evident that she has in mind a richer thesis, namely that affects encapsulate aspects of one's identity or self, and that to experience an affect is to acknowledge that part of oneself. Since for Brierley, the ego or self develops out of relationships, affects are by the same token internalized relationships.

Novey (1961) advances many similar points to Brierley's; he, too, regards affects as reflecting aspects

of the self and of internalized relationships. Like Brenner and Schur, he stresses that no rigid distinction should be drawn between affect and cognition, since every affect involves processes that are ordinarily considered cognitive. Lewin (1965), too, argues forcefully that no affect can exist without cognition, and extends this argument to cases, such as meditative ecstasy, where cognitive content seems to be absent.

Rapaport's (1953) metapsychological propositions include a type of affect he calls "completely structuralized". By this he means an affect that involves no consideration of psychic energy but which is entirely under the "command" of the ego. In this formulation, he implies an identification of physiology with the id. Schafer (1964) emphasizes the adaptive potential in affect, particularly when adaptation is construed in broad terms, as referring to effectiveness, fulfillment, and meaningfulness. Rapaport (1953) also stressed the adaptive importance of affect in reality testing, arguing that without affect, one cannot have reliable knowledge about the external world. (Unfortunately, he does not elaborate this claim.) Emde (1980) places very great emphasis on the adaptive importance of affect, although approaching the issue from a very different perspective than Rapaport or Schafer. Emde's perspective on affect, as noted above (in the section on biological theories) is essentially biological, and this

excludes his concept of affect from most psychoanalytic conceptions of the ego, though certainly not all. Finally, Bowlby (1969) also connects emotion with adaptive processes, again in a biological vein.



# CHAPTER IV

## A PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY OF EMOTION

### Introduction

In the present chapter, I offer a theory of emotion. The theory's main purpose is to throw new light on old questions, mostly psychoanalytic ones. It employs some psychoanalytic concepts, but defines these in broader terms, because using psychoanalytic terms without defining them makes a theory psychoanalytic in the narrowest and most sterile sense--meaningful only to the true believer. This theory is meant to be psychoanalytic in a broader sense, and so addresses issues that are meaningful to a wider audience, in terms which this audience uses or could use.

The theory concerns only some of the phenomena that have been studied under the term "affect" in the psychoanalytic literature. This theory does not purport to explain all affective phenomena; some of these it merely classifies in new ways, and it ignores some altogether. Psychoanalysis has sought in vain for a unitary theory of affect, without recognizing that it had set itself an impossible task. Like Rapaport (1953), theorists of affect have often noted the heterogeneous phenomena that psychoanalysis calls "affective", then pressed ahead with an attempt to unify them under one theory. One can only devise

a unitary theory for unitary phenomena.

Therefore, the present theory's domain is restricted to emotions. Moreover, I am using the term in a specific sense. Like "affect", "emotion" has been used in a great variety of senses (Rorty, 1980). It is used here to refer to a complex and relatively well formed entity, with certain special components; emotion is further defined in the discussion below. The theory will have its clearest application to emotions in this sense; these will be its paradigm cases. However, it will have something to say about related phenomena, in particular about how they approach and differ from full-fledged emotions.

The most important single influence on the present theory is Averill's social constructivist view of emotion (Averill, 1976, 1979, 1980a, 1980b, 1980c, 1982, 1983, 1984). Many of its propositions are drawn from Averill's work, and most, I believe, are in harmony with it. No single psychoanalytic theory of affect has exerted a predominant influence on the present theory. It resembles Brenner's (1974b) in the emphasis on the ego in emotion, and Bowlby's (1969) in its approach to components of emotion. In most respects, though, the present theory is a departure from previous psychoanalytic approaches to affect. At the end of the chapter I discuss the reasons I believe the present view constitutes a psychoanalytic theory despite having few conspicuously psychoanalytic features.

First, the theory is stated and an overview is given of the basic propositions. Then "emotion" is defined, and the concept of the ego is defined as used here. Then the concept of emotions as organizations is explored in detail, and elaborations and implications of these views are described. Finally, the place of the present view in psychoanalysis is discussed.

### **Statement of Theory**

The core of the present theory is the view that an emotion is a schematic organization contained in the ego and activated by the ego, of psychological, physiological, and social responses, according to individually adapted, socially based rules. The basic propositions are that emotions include different kinds of responses, and that is a mistake to argue that one type is "the emotion" and that the others are appended to this. Although some previous theories have recognized this, very few have then addressed emotions at the level of a whole made up of parts. Instead, most have merely addressed the parts. In the present theory, emotions are addressed as organized wholes. The concept of a schema is employed as an aid in conceptualizing emotions as organized wholes.

The correspondence between emotions viewed in this way and psychoanalytic theory is developed from two directions.

The concept of the ego is used in an explanatory context. Other concepts in psychoanalytic metapsychology are used informally to structure aspects of the discussion, but are not accepted as explanations. Instead, I argue that the present view of emotion entails certain fundamental psychoanalytic assumptions and is at least compatible with all the fundamental assumptions of psychoanalysis.

### Emotion Defined

In the present section the term "emotion" is defined, as it is used here. For the theorist, the definition is a specialized one. That is, it is restricted to a small subset of the phenomena that have been studied under theories of affect or emotion. For the layperson, though, it is not really a specialized definition, or at least is not intended to be, because it is guided by common sense and ordinary language. Ordinary language is the authoritative reference for the present definition, and the definitions of emotion and related concepts are accurate insofar as they reflect the distinctions and usages of everyday life. Of course, ordinary language is not always internally consistent, and it lacks answers for some of the questions a theorist must ask, so there are points where it must be supplemented or refined.

Occasionally, ordinary language has been explicitly



taken as the standard for the psychoanalytic definition of emotion (e.g., Alexander, 1935). More commonly, theorists have relied on the common-sense definition without recognizing or acknowledging it. Freud, as Lewin (1965) argues, let the common-sense definition stand by default. This is clearest in the clinical writings, but is true even in the metapsychological works, where the notion, for example, of "discharge" is never clearly defined and rests in part on an "appeal to common sense" (Lewin, 1965, p. 28). Often, psychoanalytic theorists have begun with a common-sense definition, then gradually altered it over the course of a theoretical exposition, ending with an entity that corresponds to theoretical imperatives but not necessarily to a phenomenon that exists outside of that theory. Jones (1929) concept of aphanisis is a good example; some phases of Freud's work, such as the discharge theory, also fit this description.

Once this route has been traversed, one no longer has a theory of emotion, but instead a theory in which emotion (or some hybrid entity which carries the name) serves a supporting function for other propositions. The greatest advantage of maintaining a common-sense definition, and doing so explicitly, is that one's theory then concerns an entity that most people, whether as laypersons or as theorists, would recognize as emotion.

No theory can cover all the many phenomena that are

called "emotional". Only a body of theory could do that. The present theory takes for its focus a class of entities that a layperson would identify clearly as emotions. It is a fairly homogeneous class, so it is relatively manageable. Also, it is representative of the phenomena that have been studied as emotions by psychoanalysts, psychologists, and philosophers.

Consider the following: anger, fear, sadness, disappointment, pride, shame, guilt, grief, envy, jealousy, remorse, regret, indignation, annoyance, gratitude, hope, pity, resentment, contempt, dread, shame, and embarrassment. What are their defining characteristics?

## States

First, they are all states. Despite the prevalence of state concepts in psychology, the conceptual category has not been clearly defined. Webster's Dictionary defines "state" as

a set of circumstances or attributes characterizing a person or thing at a given time; way or form of being; condition.

This definition points to the temporal dimension of states-- a state is present at a given time, which is to say, for some definite and limited period of time. A state also "characterizes" a person or thing. Beyond this, though, the dictionary definition is not especially informative.

It may be most helpful to consider states in contrast

with a related category, traits. One difference between them is duration. States characterize a person only at a given time, traits for much longer or permanently. Beyond duration, though, one can identify two other important differences. (For further details, see Fridhandler, in press.)

First, there is a difference in the frequency of manifestations. A trait may not demonstrate its existence over a very long period of time without raising doubt about whether the trait is still present, so long as circumstances do not warrant a manifestation. A genuinely cheerful person may not look, feel, or act cheerfully for many months after the death of a loved one, say, without calling the trait into question. A state, on the other hand, must show itself frequently or we are apt to assume it has ended. It is hard to conceive of someone being in a happy state yet not looking, feeling, or acting happy for hours at a stretch. In fact, it is most typical for one or another aspect of a state to be manifest for the entire duration of the state.

Second, states are more concrete than traits. States imply some tangible, palpable referent; a quality of immediacy is implied. Traits are thought of as more complex and inferential entities.

### Intentional Objects

In all these respects, emotions are like sensations,

which can also be states. The resemblance is so strong that emotions are often called "feelings" and are thought of as if they simply were sensations. Theorists make this mistake with dismaying frequency, and laypersons make it as well. However, there is a clear distinction between emotions and sensations in everyday linguistic usage.

Emotions differ from sensations in that they require intentional objects (Pitcher, 1965). [4] An emotion is about something, and logically has to be, in order to be an emotion. A sensation may or may not refer to something in this sense--may or may not have an object--and yet still count as a sensation. Being about something is part of what makes a state an emotion, and part of what makes it whatever particular emotion it is. In order for a state to count as anger, for example, one must be angry at someone about something, but one could have a headache without it referring to anything beyond the sheer sensation. In order for a state to count fully as anger, it must have an object.

An emotional object is a complex of particulars. The object of anger is not only a person, but some act that violates some principle of right and wrong and for which the person can reasonably be held responsible (i.e., it was done knowingly or with culpable carelessness). Averill (1982) divides the object of anger into the target (e.g., person), instigation (e.g., wrongful act), and aim (e.g. redressing a grievance).



Emotional objects are called "intentional" objects because the objects of emotions are mental, not physical. (The term was promulgated by the philosopher Franz Brentano, who took it from the medieval scholastics.) The fact that an emotional object is mental is clearest when it does not correspond to objective reality. I can be angry at John for stealing my car even if he was not the one who stole it, or if it was not stolen at all but towed away. In order for me to be angry, it is only necessary that I believe John stole the car. John stealing the car is the intentional object of my anger, but it never happened. Even when an emotional object corresponds to objective reality, it is the intentional object that helps constitute the emotion, not the physical things and events that the intentional object refers to. Psychoanalytic theory knows the concept of an intentional object under the term "mental representation" (cf., Beres & Joseph, 1970; Novey, 1958; Sandler & Rosenblatt, 1962). Freud may have been influenced in his use of the concept by his studies with Brentano while a medical student (Jones, 1953).

### **Emotions are Understood to be Involuntary**

Emotions are interpreted by the emotional person and by others as involuntary. Without this feature, they cannot count as emotions (Averill, 1980a, 1982). This does not mean that emotions are in fact voluntary, and that

portraying them as involuntary is a deception (contrary to de Rivera, 1984). Emotions are an organization and interpretation of a number of elements, some of which are readily interpreted as voluntary, some as involuntary, and some not clearly as one or the other. The organization and interpretation themselves, which constitute the emotion, are ambiguous regarding volition, and this is the reason to apply the concept of the ego to them.

The interpretation of emotions as involuntary is a distinct issue from the "facts" of the matter. In this interpretation, the involuntariness is highlighted. The question of volition actually arises only rarely for psychological processes. When one "uses one's intelligence" to solve a problem, one does so neither voluntarily nor involuntarily. It just happens, usually, without conscious intent to be intelligent, but on the other hand, one would never say, "I couldn't help it." Emotions wear their involuntariness on their sleeves, so to speak.

### **Other Affective Phenomena**

The significance of the preceding attributes of emotions should become more apparent when we turn our attention to the affective phenomena that are excluded.

The list of emotions presented above omitted several items that have been widely and routinely discussed as emotions or affects in the psychoanalytic literature. Of

these omissions, probably the most glaring is anxiety. Anxiety differs from the items on the list because it lacks a clear object. According to the present definition, then, anxiety is not an emotion.

Anxiety has been the focus of more psychoanalytic theoretical study than any other affective state, but the present theory does not apply directly to it. It does apply indirectly, though. In the next chapter, I argue that anxiety has been so intractable in part because it is like an emotion (in the present definition) but is not exactly like one, and I argue further that a better understanding of anxiety can emerge from a consideration of its differences from emotions.

Defining emotions so that anxiety is excluded may depart from lay usage. If asked, most people would probably say that anxiety is an emotion. Yet most people would probably acknowledge a difference between anxiety and most other emotions, even if they were unable to articulate that difference. We know that we cannot say what we are anxious about as clearly and specifically as we can say what we are angry about or proud of. Sometimes when we try to say what we are anxious about, we point to what is making us anxious rather than what we are anxious about; that is, we point to a cause rather than an object. (The distinction between objects and causes is discussed later in the present chapter.) When anxiety acquires a clear object, when one

"figures out" what one is anxious about, the anxiety becomes an emotion--fear.

Two other omissions from the list of emotions may be conspicuous--love and hate. These are omitted because the terms refer to both emotions and sentiments--more commonly to the latter. Sentiments can be distinguished from states, in the sense defined above. Sentiments do not come and go like states, and do not have their palpable immediacy. One can love or hate someone without feeling it at each and every moment. More formally, sentiments are made up of a complex of acts, feelings, and commitments, extended over time (Brierley, 1937; Novey, 1961; Shand, 1914).

Finally, moods are excluded from the present definition of emotions, because they, like anxiety, lack clear objects. Moods are dispositions to see, feel, and act in certain ways toward everything and everyone. The distinction between emotions and moods has often been observed in psychoanalytic theory (Brierley, 1937; Jacobson, 1971a).

### Ego

The only term of the theory that is specifically psychoanalytic is "ego". For psychoanalytically oriented readers, the term will provide a context for addressing the major psychoanalytic controversies about affect. For non-psychoanalytic readers--that is, those who do not make



psychoanalytic theory their world view--the term requires definition in order for it to add to the statement of the theory.

The concept of ego, although it has differentiated and broadened vastly since the beginnings of psychoanalysis, remains true to its origin as the repressing side of the personality in conflict. When it was an id-psychology, psychoanalysis investigated principally forbidden impulses; the ego comprised the acceptable parts of oneself, and also was the agency of repression. Consciousness was centrally involved in the distinction, also. The impulses were unconscious, and the ego (by default, as it were) was conscious. The distinction between logical, rational, "secondary process" thought and illogical "primary process" was also added relatively early to the central dualism (Freud, 1911).

In its beginnings, psychoanalytic theory and treatment paid relatively little attention to whatever was responsible for repressing impulses, for the therapeutic technique was simply to expose these impulses to the patient. In principle, the "split" was thereby undone, that is, the impulses had become part of the conscious system and had lost their pathogenic force. As long as therapeutic success was thought to be so straightforward, the parts of the personality apart from the impulses seemed not to require investigation.

When psychoanalysis began to study the rest of the personality, the ego was defined as the "agency" responsible for negotiating rational "secondary process" solutions to the problems presented by impulses, on the one hand, and by people and things in the environment, on the other (Freud, 1923). In other words, the ego was defined as the agency of adaptation.

To speak of emotion as being "in the ego", then, is to make a claim that emotions are adaptive. It does not specify what emotions help one adapt to, who or what benefits from emotions and at what cost, or whether emotions are the best possible way of adapting. It says, mainly, that emotions have predominantly positive results for the individual.

Emotions serve a variety of adaptive functions. Socially, they aid in societal integration, and specific emotions serve specific societal functions (Averill, 1982). Emotions may also be helpful in an individual's social relations. Interpersonally, they may benefit the individual (for example, through a clearer communication of needs), the other in a dyad, or a family or small group. The focus of the present theory where functions are concerned, though, is on functions for the individual. These functions can be divided, heuristically at least, into promoting good outcomes and minimizing disruptive effects of other psychological entities. Emotions gain these benefits by

integrating disparate elements. (These functions and the means of achieving them are discussed later in the present chapter and in the following one.)

There is a second connotation to the statement that emotions are in the ego. In addition to being the adaptive part of the personality, the ego has also been, from the beginning of psychoanalytic theory, that part of the personality which develops in response to the environment. The theoretical precursor of the ego was the "system Cs-Pcpt", standing for Conscious-Perception (Freud, 1895e, 1900). Freud "located" this system at the periphery of the psychic apparatus, where it supposedly developed as a "cap", due to its "contact" with the environment. He retained this notion when, much later, he introduced the concept of ego (Freud, 1923).

In the later work Freud specified that the ego's development is based on a series of identifications with significant others. [5] This concept, which formed the basis for the object relations school, emphasizes the ego's social nature, its dependence on interactions with others for its content. In addition to the British object relations theorists, Erikson (1959) and to some extent Kernberg (1976) have developed this theme.

In the present theory of emotion, the social nature of the ego occupies a central place. The theory holds that emotions are based on social rules, as adapted by the



individual. Since the ego is primarily social, the statement that emotions are in the ego is consistent with, and already argues, the claim that they are socially-based.

My statement is not only that emotions are in the ego but also that they are activated by the ego. This clause is in particular need of elaboration. To say that emotions are in the ego gives them a metaphorical location (in the manner of Freud's "topographical point of view"), which in turn asserts that they have certain characteristics. It describes them. The latter statement, that they are activated by the ego, speaks to the issue of what causes an episode of emotion, and is in an active voice. The ego, then, is doing something when we have an emotion. What does it mean to state that the ego does something?

Some authors have rejected such theoretical statements. Schafer (1976) has criticized the notion of the ego doing anything, arguing that such statements are nonsensical, since only persons can do things. Hartmann (1964), too, has objected to the anthropomorphic nature of this concept, and has sought a more consistently mechanistic scheme.

Waelder, however, (1967) takes an equally incisive but more sophisticated view. He, too, notes that the concept of ego is of an entirely different order than that of the drives; he draws the contrast in terms of "teleology" versus "mechanism", that is, explanations based on goals and purposes versus ones based exclusively on efficient



causality. He states that Freud became progressively more acceptant of teleological concepts, but nonetheless never relinquished his preference for mechanistic concepts. In this, Waelder writes, Freud was consistent with the dominant trend in Western scientific thought.

Waelder sees in modern analysts' acceptance of the concept of ego an acceptance on an equal footing of both mechanistic and teleological models of explanation. Although in Waelder's view it remains an open question whether this situation is ultimately satisfying from a scientific point of view, he states, he believes this duality necessary for psychoanalytic theory at present and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. He argues that psychoanalytic theory is not the only scientific area to accept teleological models, pointing to Darwinian evolutionary theory and American behaviorism.

Like many other issues in psychoanalytic theory, the problem at hand calls for a teleological model of explanation. In the present theory, an episode of emotion is, in part, a means of achieving certain goals (to be described later). The general character of an emotion is based on a pre-existing pattern or schema, but having an emotion on a particular occasion and the details of the episode (who is the emotion's target, the intensity of the emotion, how long it lasts and what is required to terminate it, etc.) coincide, to a considerable extent, with

current goals and with many aspects of the current situation which relate to these goals. A coherent account of these relationships requires a teleological mode of explanation, and in psychoanalysis, teleology is the province of the ego.

The classification of emotion or affect as an ego function has a long but irregular history in psychoanalytic theory. Freud at one point (Freud, 1923) stated dogmatically that anxiety, and by extension all affects, are situated in the ego. His reasons for stating this seem to have been, first, that affects are conscious, and consciousness is restricted to the ego. Second, and more important, Freud was in the process of developing the signal theory of anxiety, in which anxiety is functional and is under the ego's control. Other analytic theorists, notably Brierley (1937), Schur (1969), and Brenner (1974a, 1974b, 1975) have classified affects in the ego, for similar reasons and due to the involvement of "cognition" in affect.

In other cases, affect has clearly not been included in the ego. This was true for Freud, prior to the signal theory. Other early theorists, such as Landauer (1938) and Jones (1929), saw affects as more or less automatic reactions, closely tied to the drives. Fenichel (1941/1954) understood affects in terms very similar to the classical psychoanalytic view of drives, and opposed them to the ego. Some recent theorists take a view that cannot be easily classified, but in any case do not view affects as ego

functions in the sense of the ego which is being employed here. Emde (1980) is an example. He regards affects as organizing entities, and thus they are "on the side" of the ego, so to speak. But he, like Basch (1976), regards affects as essentially automatic, biological entities, and such entities, if they are ego functions, are so in only an extended sense. Finally, there are mixed models, such as Blau's (1955). Blau holds anxiety to be simply a biological function, but describes other negative affects as secondary and tertiary elaborations, on the basis of cognitive ego functions.

In the present theory, the classification of emotion as an ego function refers to the cognitive, synthesizing activity involved in emotion, to the elaboration beyond physiological givens, to the adaptive significance of emotion, and to the importance of a teleological model of explanation.

### Emotions as Organizations

In psychoanalytic and psychological theory, emotion has been identified with biological, psychological, and occasionally social entities. Even within a relatively homogeneous field such as psychoanalysis the dispute over whether emotion is essentially physiological or cognitive has continued to repeat itself, without signs of resolution or even progress. In the field of psychology, viewpoints

are if anything even more polarized, and the opposing camps predominate successively, in the continuing swing of a pendulum (Averill, 1983).

The study of emotion in both fields has been the victim of a category mistake. The search for a single nature of emotion is misguided, and when we engage in the search we are "barking our way up the wrong gum tree" (Austin, 1950/1979). Ryle (1949) explicated the concept of a category mistake. He defines a category mistake as representing something of one logical type or category as if belonged to another (Ryle, 1949, p. 16). He gives as an example a foreign visitor to Oxford who, after being shown the various colleges that make up Oxford, said, "This has been very nice, and now I would like to see the University itself." The visitor made the mistake of thinking that the University was another entity like the colleges, when in fact it is the collection of colleges, an entity of a different logical category.

Emotions are physiological entities, and they are cognitive entities also. They contain elements of both these types, but they cannot be reduced to any single element. To some extent, the story of the blind men and the elephant provides an analogy. (Several blind men confronted by an elephant set out to discover what an elephant is like. One says it is cold, smooth, and tapers to a point; another says it is like a wall made of leather; another says it is



round like a tree trunk and must be glued to the ground as it cannot be lifted, and so on.) Emotions contain many of the elements that have been attributed to them, but no one element is the emotion to which other elements are accidental accompaniments. Emotions are superordinate organizations of their elements.

There have been a few theories which regarded emotions as superordinate organizations, but only a few. In the field of psychology, Leventhal (1979), de Rivera (1977), Schachter (1964) have been among the few to define emotions as organizations, prior to Averill (1980a). In psychoanalytic theory, Freud (1916) originally described affect as being made up of distinct components.

[An affect] is in any case something highly composite. An affect includes in the first place particular motor innervations or discharges and secondly certain feelings; the latter are of two kinds--perceptions of the motor actions that have occurred and the direct feelings of pleasure and unpleasure which, as we say, give the affect its keynote. (Freud, 1916, p. 395)

This view was in keeping with Freud's view of instincts as made up of constituent parts (Freud, 1905). However, Freud did not hold to a concept of affect as a composite entity.

A few psychoanalytic theorists since Freud have endorsed a view of emotions as composites, and some others have favored some related (and usually ambiguous) view. Zilboorg (1933) broke emotions down into components as an aid in understanding his patient's "anxiety without affect". Blau (1955) proposes a view of affect as made up of three

major classes of components, although he offers no account of how these components are united. Bowlby (1969) implicitly advances a similar view when he argues that emotions are unfolding behavior systems that are felt, since these behavior systems are composed of multiple elements. Brenner (1974b) advocates a view of emotions as composites of id and ego components (in this case meaning, biological and cognitive). He argues that the two classes of components are both essential. Other theorists have been less clear. Pine (1980) in effect uses a composite concept of emotion, but nonetheless attempts to separate a pure "psychobiological" emotion from ideas and verbal labels, and Pulver (1971) perceptively enumerates important components of emotion, only to exclude most from the "pure feeling".

Although some psychoanalytic theorists of affect have suggested that affect is composed of distinct components, only Emde (1980) seems to have realized that this requires addressing affects or emotions as superordinate organizations of their components. Of these theorists, most, like Blau (1955) and Brenner (1974b), have enumerated affective components but have given no account of how these are unified. In fact, they have thus failed to given any theory at all of affect or emotion; at best, they have given a theory of affect's components, or a catalog of items to be accounted for by a theory. Blau's begging of the question is characteristic.

We are all familiar with the difficulty of communicating the phenomena of affect. Because affect is a personal and often elusive experience, it is difficult to describe. Its components however are well understood. (Blau, 1955, p. 80)

The neglect of the emotion itself in favor of its components is a symptom of the category mistake which has vitiated the study of emotion. Blau's impotent perplexity in the face of "elusive" affect reveals his assumption that affect or emotion is of the same logical category as its components, and that one experiences affect in the same sense as one experiences the "visceral reactions" that he considers among affect's components. The affect, he assumes, is simply a more subtle, ephemeral experience--a more ghostly one, as Ryle (1949) might have said. This is a theoretical dead end. One cannot build a theory of an entity that has no possible logical existence; one can only invent a myth or elaborate a reification.

The present theory of emotion explicitly adopts a view of emotions as organizations of component responses. This view is taken from Averill, who calls the organization of components a "syndrome". Within such a view, it is possible to accommodate the various biological, psychological, and social responses that have been identified by psychoanalytic theories of affect, and to then address the virtually ignored issue of how these elements are unified into some entity which we can refer to as an emotion.

In the following section, some specific components of



emotions are discussed, and in the subsequent section the logic and implications of emotions as organizations are further examined.

### **Component Responses**

There are many components in emotions. They can be roughly broken down into biological, psychological, and social ones, at least for purposes of exposition. (Often, the difference between these categories is only a matter of the point of view one adopts. See Averill, 1982, on "levels of analysis".)

The biological, nativist theories of emotion have produced many hypotheses about the nature of emotion. The physiological theories (e.g., Wenger, 1950) have favored autonomic nervous system functions and the associated end organ changes. The James-Lange theory included such autonomic functions, but implicitly also included instinctive motor action. More recently among psychologists and a few analysts, innately patterned facial expressions have been cited as a basis of emotion (Basch, 1976; Ekman, Friesen & Ellsworth, 1972; Izard, 1977; Tomkins, 1962, 1963).

There is no reason that any such biological responses cannot be components of emotion, assuming they conform to the general features of emotion. None of them constitutes the emotion, but they may surely be included among the



elements. Biological responses that are automatic and noticeable are especially well suited to become elements of emotions. Automatic responses provide an experience of palpable, literal passivity, which helps to establish and confirm the theme of involuntariness in emotion. Responses that are noticeable to the emotional person or to others (e.g., gastric activity, blushing) aid the communicative functions of emotions and make the evidence of involuntariness more compelling. (See Averill, 1984 for an example, drawn from Bateson, 1976, of the use of reflexes in the socialization of trances in a Balinese society.)

The role biological responses play will vary in different emotions, persons, and occasions. For a particular emotion, a particular response (e.g., sympathetic activation or a facial expression) may be essential, optional, or even proscribed. It may be emphasized by a particular person and not by another. A person may include it on one occasion and not on another, and the meanings of the response may vary from one person, dyad, family, or group to another.

In short, one can affirm the reality of biology and provide an important place for biological responses in a theory of emotion while still denying that emotions are biological.

There are as many different psychological elements involved in emotions as there are biological ones, perhaps

many more. No a priori classification of these elements can be given, since they include representatives from all categories of psychological contents, such as thoughts, beliefs, desires, intentions, images, needs, and memories, as well as psychological reflections of physiological processes, such as sensations and perceptions, in the narrow sense. Psychoanalytic theory has developed conceptual categories for these psychological contents; the principal such categories are id, ego, superego, and self and object representations. (The concept of mnemic trace was important in Freud's metapsychology, but has mostly been abandoned in favor of self and object representations).

Unlike biological elements, which are rarely if ever essential to an emotion, certain psychological components are necessary constituents of emotions. First, emotions must have intentional objects. Emotions as a class are partly defined by having intentional objects, and particular emotions are partly defined by having particular intentional objects. These objects are made up of various thoughts, beliefs, and intentions. Second, emotions are experienced with a special sort of involuntariness, and this is another necessary psychological component.

Because of the regularity in intentional object, generalizations can be made about some psychological elements of particular emotions. As a first example, let us consider guilt. Guilt depends on internalized prohibitions

and other principles (Pine, 1980), and the experience of guilt involves a number of psychological elements related to such principles. Among these are belief that one has violated such principles, anticipation of disapproval from some legitimate authority should he or she learn of the violation (a disapproving internal object, in psychoanalytic terms), perhaps memories of such disapproval in the past, and an intention to atone and regain the anticipated approval of the internalized object.

To take another example, consider disappointment. This involves memory of a desire, a belief that this desire will not be fulfilled, and a further belief that one's efforts could not lead to the fulfillment of the desire.

Anger will serve as the final example. Like guilt, anger involves internalized principles. In anger, there is a belief that someone else has violated these principles, an image of the other person as being disapproved of by legitimate authority (which psychoanalytic theory considers often a projection of one's own guilty self representation; see Bychowski, 1966), and an intention to "set things right" either by forcing a change or by counter-aggression.

Apart from these universal elements, the types and particular psychological contents vary, just as biological ones do.

The social components of emotions include what psychoanalytic theory refers to as relations with the "external



world". These would include ones that have been emphasized by some theories, such as facial expressions, and also include elements that are not specifically emotional but can be contained in emotions just like "non-emotional" psychological components. These latter social elements include such things as verbal formulas and conventions, enactments of hierarchical relations, conventionalized management of interactional episodes, and so on. These social components are to be distinguished from the socially based rules that guide the integration of all the elements of an emotion.

### **Schematic Organizations**

Once one speaks of components of emotion, the emotion per se is at the level of a superordinate organization and must be addressed at that level. Organizations, though, are extremely difficult entities to conceptualize. For whatever reasons, we are accustomed to thinking of far more concrete entities. When we refer to an "it", as we do with an emotion, we expect to be able to point to it, in some sense. Emotions are not elusive experiences--it is difficult to think of more compelling ones--but they elude being pointed to. One is little helped by the concept of a superordinate organization. It does not offer familiar possibilities for comprehension and elaboration. If one is to advance beyond the previous efforts to comprehend emotions, one requires



conceptual tools for addressing them as organizations.

The concept of a schema offers such a tool. This concept, introduced into psychology by Bartlett (1932), has in recent years received growing attention as part of the interdisciplinary field of "cognitive science". Of the several computer-influenced metaphors that have been so widely applied in the past two decades, such as control systems (see Bowlby, 1969), plans (Miller, Galanter, and Pribram, 1960), and scripts (Schank & Abelson, 1977), schemas are perhaps the most general and therefore the least tied to engineering and computer programming. Bartlett (1932) used the concept to combat the concretistic understanding of memories as "traces" of previous experience stored somehow in the brain (Paul, 1967). In its more recent applications, the concept of a schema has been applied to knowledge in general (Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977) and, most broadly, to all mental phenomena (Mandler, 1984). Here, it offers a means of conceptualizing emotions as subtle, dynamic organizations.

Despite its wide use, the concept of schema has rarely been defined. The meaning has usually been allowed to coalesce out of a series of applications (in fact, in just the way schemas themselves are said to develop). It is used to mean several different kinds of frameworks or skeletal organizations which bring order and relationship among elements. When applied to memory, it suggests that memories

are stored as abstract forms or outlines. Most uses of the concept imply that schemas may be viewed in both static and active aspects. They are spoken of as being "stored", but also as doing things ("performing cognitive operations") once they are "activated".

The concept's usefulness in the present context derives from the fact that it is a conceptualization of a super-ordinate organization, which has been applied and elaborated in a variety of settings. It offers some precedents in comprehending and using a notion of a psychological organization of elements--some footsteps to follow, so to speak. Rumelhart (1980) has offered an introduction to the current uses of the concept of schema in cognitive science in which he attempts to convey the major features of the concept and to define some of the major associated terms. He provides no single definition of schema, but instead gives a series of analogies.

Rumelhart first likens schemas to plays. The chief analogy here is that both schemas and plays have component parts that have stable general definitions but which, on given occasions, can be filled by different specific items. In a play, these are the roles and the actors. In a schema, these are commonly termed the "variables" and their "values". Rumelhart gives the example of the schema for a purchase, that is, the concept of purchasing or buying. We know that a purchase involves a buyer, a seller, some medium

of exchange, and merchandise. These are the variables. On any given occasion, they can be filled by any of a large set of items. The schema gives the relation among the items, which imparts the meaning to the series of events, or, to put it another way, the schema gives the set of instructions for accomplishing an act of buying.

Although each of the "variables" in a schema can be filled by any one of a number of items, there are limits on what can fill the variable. These limits, according to Rumelhart, are usually called "variable constraints". In buying, the buyer and the seller are typically persons and the medium of exchange is typically money. These "values" for the "variables" are prototypical, and they suggest that there is a prototype for each schema. As more and more divergent items fill the variables or roles of a schema, the schema fits less and less well, and at a certain point, ceases to be an instance ("instantiation") of that schema. For example, in buying, generally, the merchandise and the medium of exchange covary in value; that is, the more one buys, the more one must pay. This is typical of buying, but not absolutely essential. Nominal payments fall just within the schema of buying. If a non-profit institution buys a building from a philanthropic corporation for one dollar, this may qualify as a purchase for some purposes (corporate taxes, perhaps), but it is far from the prototype for buying. Examples like these suggest that variants of the



ideal instance of a prototype can still be recognized.

Rumelhart's second analogy for a schema is a theory. Schemas provide a model of a situation that may aid in comprehending that situation, depending on how well the model fits. As with a theory, Rumelhart proposes, one tests the fit of one's schemas with the current situation, through making observations. When some critical number of observations fit, the schema is accepted, and from that point guides assumptions about the situation.

Once accepted, a schema not only provides assumptions about what further observations would reveal, but also provide a course of action, and this feature leads to Rumelhart's third comparison, to the procedures in computer programs. Like such procedures, schemas are sets of instructions that, once activated, provide a sequence of actions oriented to some goal. The goal Rumelhart specifies is evaluating the "fit to the available data", but in other uses, schemas have been described as having a variety of goals. (Rumelhart need not have turned to computer programs for the feature of prescribing a course of action, since a play also does so.)

Of the features of schemas highlighted by Rumelhart, the four of most interest here are: they are organizations of elements; they are frameworks that fit situations more or less well; they are organized by an ideal instance or prototype; and once they are accepted, they organize



perception and guide action. Each of these features is useful in conceptualizing emotion. Rumelhart and others who employ a concept of schema (e.g., Mandler, 1984) speak of the "activation" of schemas and by implication of two possible states for schemas, active and inactive. This feature is also useful for the present discussion. Of these five features of schemas, the importance of the concept in conceptualizing emotions as organizations has already been described. Let us review the remaining four features as they apply to emotions.

Emotions fit situations more or less well. This is clearest with regard to the object of emotion. When one levels an accusation in anger, the accusation is well or poorly justified, the target of anger is or is not the guilty person, and the redress one seeks is either suitable or not. The relevant situation includes many other factors than these, however. It includes also the internal situation, what Freudian theory calls the state of the psychic apparatus. This situation can be broken down into current needs and goals (in Freud, drives in a state of cathexis) and the degree of current conflict between impulses and prohibitions. In ways that are detailed below, all these factors are part of the situation that an emotion fits more or less well.

Rumelhart and others consider schemas to be organized around a prototypical case; for each schema, there is in

principle a "classic" example, although this classic example may never have actually existed and may never exist. De Sousa (1980a) suggests a similar and very useful notion for emotions--the "paradigm scenario". Such a scenario specifies characteristic objects and responses in emotion, and one learns these scenarios as children through personal experiences (as one is led by adults to understand them) and through cultural products, such as stories and fairy tales. Paradigm scenarios lend themselves to a very similar line of reasoning to the one being advanced here in connection with schemas.

Learning to "gestalt" situations in terms of such scenarios is learning to attend differentially to certain features of an actual situation, to inquire into the presence of further features of the scenario, and to make inferences that the scenario suggests. (De Sousa, 1980a, p. 143)

Emotions, once activated, organize perception and guide action. Rumelhart's comparison of schemas with theories is germane.

Once we have accepted a configuration of schemata, the schemata themselves provide a richness that goes far beyond our observations. On deciding that we have seen an automobile, we assume that it has an engine, headlights, and all of the standard characteristics of an automobile. We do this without the slightest hesitation. We have complete confidence in our little theory. (Rumelhart, 1980, p. 38)

It is a commonplace that emotions influence the way one sees things. For the most part, the everyday assumption is that emotions tend to distort perception of events, that is, to introduce irrationality. Equally often, emotions highlight

valid perceptions and lead to a deepened, more complete view. In either case, emotions lead beyond the "observable" and the already known.

Many emotions do more than influence perception of the external situation; they lead to action. These actions have an intricate structure. In anger, for example, it is possible to isolate patterns of aggressive and nonaggressive action organized toward solving problems (Averill, 1982). An emotion plays a role, potentially, in everything one does and says while in its "grip", and one's actions and words at such times are not disorganized. They cohere around the theme of the emotion, around its structure. The schema-concept helps to conceptualize this organization.

Finally, we need a way of referring, in the language of schemas, to the state of having an emotion. The concept of the activation of a schema establishes this link. If we employ the concept of schema for emotions, we can speak of being in a emotional state as having an active schema, and the analogy inclines us toward conceptualizing an organization that has pervasive influence during distinct periods of time. The "operations" and directions in a schema correspond to the set of dispositions that make up an emotional state (Fridhandler & Averill, 1982), which can also be described as a set of rules (Averill, 1982, 1984; Cornelius, 1984).

**A note on origins of emotions.** The issue of the

origins of emotions is largely outside the scope of the present effort. This theory takes up primarily at the point where emotional schemas are available for the ego's use, having been acquired over the course of development. It is assumed, though, that emotions are cultural products, as proposed by Averill. In his "social constructivist" perspective, as just noted, emotions are thought to be based on socially developed rules. These rules include rules of interpretation (constitutive rules) and rules of procedure and action (regulative rules), which parallel the meanings and procedures included here as part of emotional schemas.

The schema-concept used here and the concepts of rule and role in Averill are parallel terms for roughly the same entities. The concept of schema is chosen here to emphasize: the presence of prototypes for each emotion; the possibility of variations on, and distortions of, this prototype; the evaluation of the internal and external situation vis-a-vis the activation of emotion; the imposing of the intentional object on external reality; and the organizing functions of emotion. The assumption that emotions are sociocultural products is more strongly connoted by the role-rule terminology, but it is accepted here as well.



## Some Elaborations and Implications

### Objects, Causes, and Activation

An important aspect of this view of emotions as schematic organizations is that the object of an emotion is part of the emotion, rather than simply its cause. Among psychoanalytic theorists, only Bowlby (1969) has explicitly espoused such a view. In his discussion of emotion, he argued, on the basis of Ryle (1949), that the intentional object of an emotion should not be considered its cause, but should instead be considered one part of the emotional state, alongside all the others. In Bowlby's account, the emotional state is part of an activated behavioral system. In the present account, the emotion is itself a schematic organization.

With this view of intentional objects as a constitutive part of an emotion, rather than its cause, some traditionally difficult problems become far less meaningful. For instance, it has long been a difficult problem for theories of emotion to account for the fact that one's emotional state seems to effect the way one perceives the situation that underlies the intentional object. For example, in the usual view, one becomes angry when someone has done something wrong. However, often one's anger makes an act seem to be a wrongful one, so that the anger causes one to misperceive the act. In fact, in all episodes of anger, the

wrongful act comes to seem more clearly and thoroughly wrongful. Therefore, if the wrongful act, or even the perception of the wrongful act is considered to be the cause of the anger, we have the difficult situation of something (the anger) causing its own cause. However, if the intentional object (the wrongful act as perceived, in its perceived context) is part of the schematic organization, this problem is much less meaningful.

This feature of the present theory--that the intentional object is part of the emotion--provides a new understanding of an old and central theme in psychoanalytic theory of affect. Freud often considered affects to be inherently justified, as discussed above in Chapter II. In order to account for this, he had to assume an unconscious object, which could be "replaced" by another in consciousness. Freud had difficulty providing a grounding for this assumption about emotion. At one point (1915d) he abandoned it, and when he moved to restore it (1923), he could give it only an awkward and provisional account, referring to a "something" in the unconscious. (See above, Chapter II, "The Signal Theory of Anxiety".) In the present view, affects or emotions are inherently justified because an intentional object is part of the emotion; they are inseparable. Thus, the present theory incorporates one of Freud's central views of affect, and provides a new account of it.

If the object does not cause the emotion--if the wrongful act does not cause the anger--we are left with the question of what causes an emotion. Since the term "cause" is so ambiguous, referring to many factors besides the immediate efficient cause, it may avoid confusion to substitute the term "activate". This latter term also fits well with the concept of a schema. The question, then, is what activates an emotional schema on a given occasion?

It is the ego. The ego activates an emotion when it "judges" the situation to be right for that emotion. The "situation", in this case, includes the internal, psychological situation, as well as the external, interpersonal and social situation. Many factors go into this "judgment". The internal factors can be roughly grouped into, first, needs and goals, and relevant aspects of the external situation, and second, internal dangers and potential disruptions. The external factors are the ones more commonly thought to cause an emotion, and include everything referred to in the intentional object, and much else. When, in the ego's "judgment" (which is fallible), enough factors indicate that an emotion would be adaptive, it is activated.

Certainly, the concept of the ego judging factors and activating a schema is a theoretical convenience. It is a metaphor, drawn from psychoanalytic metatheory, for complex processes of monitoring and self-monitoring. We have no "literal" way of describing these processes, yet we have no

choice but to assume that some such processes take place; in other words, we have no choice but to assume that something analogous to conscious monitoring underlies all the accomplishments of human intelligence, from reading a word to following a map to having an emotion. It becomes a question of choosing the best metaphor for the purposes. In the present case, the judgment of the ego becomes the metaphor of choice because it resolves some difficulties and because it is a familiar part of psychoanalytic theory.

The needs and goals monitored by the ego are numerous. A comprehensive accounting of them would require a theory of needs and goals, and such a theory would be cumbersome and inessential here. Several theories of needs have been developed in psychology, some of them with psychoanalytic inspiration (e.g., Murray, 1938). Within psychoanalytic theory, many needs and goals have been recognized, none unanimously. Some have derived from concepts of instinct, but only Freudians have insisted that all needs and goals be traced to instincts. In ego psychology, the concept of conflict-free parts of the ego opens the way to needs and goals with no relation to repressed instincts, and various special needs and goals have been formulated, such as Sandler's goal of safety (Sandler, 1981) or Kohut's need for admiration (Kohut, 1971). For the present purposes, the best approach is an pluralistic one; that is, there is no need to restrict the list of needs and goals which are



relevant to emotions. Instead, we can clarify the role of needs and goals in the present view of emotion by surveying examples.

Regarding the internal dangers and potential disruptions that emotions help to contain, the traditional division of the ego's adversaries provides a useful guide. That is, we may usefully divide the dangers and disruptions into id and superego factors. Id factors are chiefly unacceptable impulses, whereas superego factors involve primarily self-criticism and "attacks" on oneself. The concept of the ego using emotions to help it deal with dangers and disruptions includes the concept of emotions acting as defenses.

A good example of this process can be drawn from Freud's paper on jealousy and other topics (Freud, 1922). Freud describes three forms ("layers") of jealousy: normal, projected, and delusional. In projected jealousy, one projects one's own unacceptable impulses toward unfaithfulness. In this way, one disowns the impulses and escapes from damaging self-reproaches. In "delusional" jealousy, unacceptable homosexual impulses are expressed. "As an attempt at defence against an unduly strong homosexual impulse it may, in a man, be described in the formula: 'Indeed I do not love him, she loves him!'" Freud regards this as a defense, but in fact it is better characterized as a defended expression of the impulse, since it provides a

license to dwell on thoughts of the other man, including sexual thoughts.

To take another example, it is customary to think of the aggressive impulses of anger as caused by the anger. From a psychoanalytic perspective, though, one is more inclined to think of aggressive, destructive impulses as existing prior to the anger and using the anger as a rationalization. This assumes a displaceability of impulses, and assumes psychoanalytic concepts of transference as well. In other words, it is possible for distorted destructive impulses to have an active existence while remaining unconscious, and to be activated in complex ways. When such is the case, the ego can make use of anger to provide a structured and more acceptable vehicle for the destructive impulses, which can then be expressed with less disruption and less self-criticism.

In the detailed example below, a further instance of the ego's use of an emotion in adapting to internal dangers is presented. Here, we turn to an exploration of the special adaptive value of emotion, and to the related issues of irrationality and maladaptiveness.

### **Adaptiveness and Irrationality**

Psychoanalysis has not been particularly successful in treating the question of the adaptiveness of emotions. On the one hand, most of the major psychoanalytic theories of

affect have considered affect to be adaptive to internal circumstances. In Freud's discharge theory, affect provides a "safety valve" when more direct drive gratification is impossible. In his signal theory, anxiety serves the crucial purpose of signalling a need for defensive efforts, and Brenner (1975) has carried this analysis over to other affects. Rapaport (1953) retains the discharge understanding of the function of affect, and Jacobson (1971b) adds an account of affects mediating interactions between the ego, id, and superego that parallels the one presented here. Some other theories have not attended to the question of functions, while at least one has attributed practically every imaginable functional benefit to them (Emde, 1980).

On the other hand, although no theorist has explicitly argued that emotions are entirely maladaptive, psychoanalytic theory has not been particularly comfortable with the notion of emotions holding a unique value. Intellectualism and high regard for rationality pervade the logical structure of psychoanalysis, through the basic dualities of conscious and unconscious or ego and id. Within this structure, it has been difficult to give a theoretical value to affect. Thus, Schur (1953) finds himself compelled to reserve his theoretical endorsement for the most thought-like affects, and neither Fenichel (1941/1954) nor Rapaport (1953) can formulate good theoretical reasons for their

conviction that there is an optimal degree of affectivity and that affect has crucial roles to play.

In the present theory, the ego activates an emotion when it considers that this particular emotion will further its own adaptive efforts. The adaptive efforts to which emotions may contribute involve a wide range of internal and external ends. Perhaps the most inclusive of these is increased understanding and organization, which is primarily an internal end. A need for increased meaningfulness and organization arises when situations, particularly interpersonal situations, are evidently important yet ambiguous. Such situations present one with such questions as: What is the meaning of this occasion? What will be its impact on me and on others? Of the different aspects of this situation, which are the more and less important? What are the best things to do and say? How do I know whether others are participating in the same event I am, and if they are not, how can I best communicate a wish that they do so? Emotion-schemas offer answers to such questions. They provide a coherent set of interpretations and instructions, connecting the present situation with other situations and social institutions, so that one's own understanding is increased and so that one may make oneself understood to others. To take one example, a wedding is an ambiguous situation. The emotion of happiness can provide a unifying theme, allowing coherent shared understandings and a shared



construction of an event with implications.

An increase in the comprehensibility and organization of ambiguous situations, then, is one of the goals toward which the ego employs emotions. In the previous section, the major factors in the ego's decision to activate an emotion were described, and each of these corresponds to further adaptive goals. Needs and goals in the common-sense definitions are included. When the ego is relatively free of constraining demands, in relation with its capacities (concepts to be elaborated on at various places below), it may employ emotions toward any of one's ordinary needs or goals. In the example provided later in the present chapter, these are chiefly prestige, autonomy, self-respect, and interesting work.

Reduction in disruption from id-impulses and superego criticisms constitutes the final major class of functions to which the ego applies emotion. Id-impulses press toward consciousness until some form of gratification for them is found; the ego sometimes uses emotions to provide the required masked gratification, as described in the previous section. Superego criticisms can lead to depression, "pursuit of unhappiness" (Schafer, 1984), exceedingly painful attitudes of self-hatred, and so on. Emotions can be of use in avoiding these outcomes by providing other targets for the criticism, as in anger or contempt, by sheltering the self-image from criticism through affiliative

emotions such as happiness, by providing a structured means of repairing the damage the superego accuses one of causing or the inadequacies it accuses one of having, as in disappointment, gratitude, and some instances of guilt, and so on. In some instances, these id and superego pressures continue over time and the ego continues to employ the same emotions against them, leading to chronic emotions. [6]

Emotions may or may not lead to success in the efforts in which they are employed, and even when they lead to success in one context, this may mean adaptive failure in another setting. For example, the ego may activate guilt as a means of finding suitable penance so that the superego (as the parents' representative) offers forgiveness, but the superego may prove obstinately harsh and the ego's efforts to avoid the criticisms may fail. Or the emotion may succeed in its primary, intrapsychic aim but disrupt functioning in the external world, as when guilt leads to excessive passivity in the face of aggression.

Beyond these functions, and partly on the basis of them, there are the benefits of emotion that common sense would point to. Emotion imparts meaning and sense, brings vitality to endeavors, consolidates commitment to activities and to people, and is the substance, guide, and goal of relationships and of much else that essential to a fulfilled life. Emotion provides conviction and energy where intellect might yield only passionless and dreary

obligation. Emotion sweeps aside constriction and restraint and allows the boldness of creativity. Intellect provides means; emotion holds promise of ends.

In the present theory, a more complete theoretical account can be given to these values of emotion than has previously been possible in the psychoanalytic literature of affect. The account is based, first, on the fact that emotional schemas derive from the past, generally in childhood; second, from the fact that emotions are schematic organizations; and third, from the constitution of emotions by social rules, particularly the socially sanctioned interpretation of involuntariness.

Emotion carries forward some of the characteristics of childhood, through the schema and the interpretation of involuntariness. Among these characteristics are the sense of urgency and un-self-conscious investment in relationships and activities. Emotions can also impart childhood's readiness to change and grow--that is, to review and alter some part of one's identity, if perhaps only a small part--and the concomitant readiness to risk personal failure. All these characteristics lead to an unhesitancy, a reduction of doubt. They lead, too, to a sense of meaningfulness and importance of the moment, in itself, with little reference to its outcome.

Emotions carry these features of childhood, in part, in the same way memories do. In fact, they are memories of



childhood, although they are condensed memories, not unlike Freud's concept of screen memories (Freud, 1899/1962).

There is nothing new, obviously, in suggesting that a schema can constitute a memory, since the concept of schema was introduced into psychology to understand memory (Bartlett, 1932). When an emotional schema is activated, these characteristics of childhood are, by the same token, re-awakened and available.

These characteristics of emotions are also produced in part by the fact that they are schematic organizations, regardless of whether the schemas date from childhood. Schemas impart clarity and certainty, and these can constitute a sense of meaningfulness. In de Sousa's (1980a) terms, emotions are "determinate patterns of salience" which can lead to choices where logic is inadequate. Where logic is indeterminate, choice is difficult and conviction is impossible. Emotion can bring both choice and conviction, yielding meaning.

The possibilities offered by these characteristics of emotion are realized, in part, through the socially sanctioned interpretation of involuntariness. Choice and conviction can be obstructed by obsessive demands for "rationality", demands imposed by oneself or others. Norms of "responsibility", too, can re-introduce doubt and obstruct forthright action. The interpretation of involuntariness, when successfully made and "played"



(Averill, 1982), offers a means of protecting conviction from doubt and protecting coherence from analytic dissection. If the many aspects of an emotion--its interpretations, expressions, and actions--are understood to be involuntary, then voluntary choices are not being made. If voluntary choices are not being made, then doubt and the more restrictive norms of responsibility cannot take hold.

Emotions can miscarry, however. Many of the same features that lead to the adaptiveness of emotions can lead astray. One can embark with clarity and conviction in what is at least in some respects the wrong direction. Though the ego activates an emotion for reasons, it is fallible in its judgment; that is, it is misleading to conceptualize the ego as infallible and omniscient. In principle, emotions can be activated when they serve the goals of internal adaptation only poorly. Since it is impossible to observe these internal interactions--or rather, since these internal interactions are purely conceptual constructions--there is no independent way of judging when an emotion serves internal adaptation well or poorly.

Matters are different regarding the external situation, where it is possible to form a judgment about how well an emotion fits. Most conspicuously, an instigation of an emotion can fail to fit the facts of the matter. One can be angry at an imagined wrong, jealous over trivial flirtation, hopeful without reason, and so on. De Sousa (1980a)

provides a useful framework for comprehending the fit and failure of fit between the intentional object of an emotion and the real external situation. When the fit is good, we call the emotion "appropriate", and de Sousa terms this the form of rationality in emotion. When the fit is poor, the emotion is inappropriate, and we have irrationality in emotion. And if emotions guide action as well as organize perception, a poor fit can lead to action that is misguided, misplaced, or destructive, and which is impervious to the lessons of experience.

As Mandler (1984) notes, the concept of schema leads to a Freudian notion of transference. If understanding is based on schemas, then we tend to understand current situations as reproductions of past ones. Under the present view of emotion, emotions are one kind of schema that carries forward the perceptions and reactions of the past. The interpretation of involuntariness reinforces emotional transference reactions by undermining appeals to norms of rationality. Such preservation of the past, and therefore the possibility of irrationality, is inherent in the make-up of emotions, and the liability to irrationality in emotion is strengthened by the internal, psychological factors in their activation.

## **Repression**

Under the present view, emotion can have two relations

to the repressed unconscious. First, it can be used by the ego as part of its repressive operations, and second, it can itself be repressed. The first of these has already been implied by the proposition that the ego incorporates id-impulses into emotions when these impulses threaten to disrupt functioning. These impulses press for some kind of expression, and the ego can adapt to this by incorporating them in emotions, where the specifics that make the impulses unacceptable can be disguised. Examples were given above of sexual and aggressive impulses incorporated, respectively, in jealousy and anger. The liability to transference just discussed also can serve the repressive role of emotion, by transferring impulses directed at forbidden objects to contemporary ones.

For Freud, a central instance of emotion's involvement in repression was provided by the emotions in obsessive-compulsive neurosis, particularly the self-reproach over trivial matters (e.g., the "Rat Man's" self-reproach over leaving a rock in a path, since his fiancée's carriage might hit it). In Freud's account, the emotions "belong to" unconscious impulses--in the Rat Man's case, to sexual and aggressive impulses toward his fiancée and his father. In the present terms, this would be a case of the ego misrepresenting in consciousness the object of the emotion, with the result that the emotion is malformed, that is, it departs substantially from the paradigm scenario or ideal

case of the schema, although it is still structured by that schema.

In Freud's account, the emotion is generated by the unconscious impulses, and is then split off from its ideational content as part of the repressive operations directed at that ideational content. (These aspect of the account were instrumental in the development of the concept of libido as a displaceable energy.) In the present account, too, the impulse plays a role in the generation of the emotion, but in a mediated way. Certain configurations of impulse and prohibition place severe restrictions on the ego and virtually require it to activate a certain emotion. When the Rat Man had his particular impulses in the presence of strong prohibitions against them, an emotion of shame or self-reproach was virtually required in order to accommodate them. By the same token, under such conditions, the ego is unable to include the impulse itself in the instantiation of the schema, since this would imply conscious acknowledgment of the impulse. Therefore it selects a substitute object and produces a distorted instantiation, that is, one that is quite different from the prototype of the schema.

In this way, emotions can be caused by conflict. Instead of the more mechanistic account of Freud's discharge theory and similar theories (e.g., Jacobson, 1971a; Rapaport, 1953), the present account centers on an ego whose choices are drastically narrowed by internal conflicts. In



principle, emotions caused by conflict are produced in the same way as other emotions, as adaptive organizations. They preserve the element of teleology in this account. However, the more the ego's choices are narrowed by conflicts, the more it is possible to speak of an emotion caused by conflict.

The topic of unconscious emotion in the present theory is considered in the next chapter. In brief, emotions in the present view are conscious or preconscious. However, these emotions may be substitutes for others which would be more consistent with circumstances and needs but are being defended against.

### An Example

An example may illustrate the range of possibilities in the composition of an emotion and the type of organization provided by the schema. The example is designed to be detailed enough to approximate the complexity of an everyday emotion. Like everyday emotions, it involves other emotions, within the broader episode of a single emotion--in this case, disappointment.

Alex has been hoping for a promotion. He works in a business consulting firm, where he handles statistical analysis. He got the job after graduating from college, with a major in economics; he had a general familiarity with

the kinds of statistics he handles, but he learned most of what he needs to know for his job in this office. He handles the mechanical aspects of the projects of his immediate superior, and he has been in the same position since joining the firm three years ago.

Alex's superior, Harry, announced a few weeks ago that he would be taking a partnership in another firm. There had been rumors for some weeks that he had been offered this position, which represents a substantial advance in his career. A week before he made the public announcement, Harry told Alex that he would be leaving, and said that he hoped Alex would be selected to replace him; further, he told Alex he would be recommending this to the firm's managing director. Alex was surprised and enormously excited. Harry had an MBA and had gotten his position after two years with another company. Alex had imagined from time to time taking Harry's position, but had never thought of it as a realistic possibility.

In the days following Harry's announcement, the director conferred with him about a replacement. Harry had cultivated a set of accounts that he was highly familiar with, and these companies had remarked to the director on how valuable Harry's familiarity with their operations was. Harry pointed out that Alex was also familiar with these companies' needs, and that anyone from outside the firm would require many months before he or she had comparable

knowledge. The director agreed, but noted that the position had always been filled by an MBA.

Some days before Harry was scheduled to leave, the director spoke with Alex. He said he assumed Alex was aware that Harry was leaving, and that he had suggested Alex as his replacement. He had given careful consideration to this possibility, the director continued, and he was genuinely impressed with how quickly Alex had learned and how well he did his work. But he had decided that it would not be feasible to have Alex in Harry's position. He felt that the position required broader familiarity with business practices than Alex could have without more experience, and ideally an MBA. Rather than bring in someone from outside to replace Harry, the director said he intended to restructure the position's responsibilities, distributing Harry's accounts among other account managers but farming out greater responsibility for report writing and client relations to subordinates, particularly to Alex. This would involve a pay raise for Alex and a chance to learn new aspects of the business.

Alex felt deeply disappointed, more so that he expected he might feel. His wife had told him to try not to get his hopes up too high, and he had thought he had been realistic, but now he felt so crestfallen and discouraged that he realized he'd almost become confident he would get the promotion. In his meeting with the director he had said

almost nothing, mainly nodding and at the end saying he understood the director's reasons. He'd wanted to argue, to point out how much he knew about Harry's accounts, but he had stifled the impulse. When he left the director's office, he went back to his desk, but his cubicle was open to view, so he went across the street to a restaurant where he could be more or less alone.

Sitting in a booth, he started to cry. Not copiously; only a few tears fell. Continuing in his job seemed futile and dreary. He realized he was not proud of his job, and that he had been picturing telling his wife and his parents exuberantly about his promotion. He saw himself as a failure--incapable, undeserving, and inconsequential. He felt disgusted with himself, or with his job; he wasn't sure which. He breathed in deeply, and for a moment thought he might begin to sob.

Alex cried for a time. Then he smiled, a bit. Smiling, for a while, he cried more, but as he smiled and cried a tightness in his chest relaxed, and he felt better. He dried his eyes and his cheeks, took a few more deep breaths, and started back to the office, a little embarrassed about not ordering anything and turning to see whether anyone might have watched him drying his tears.

Later, he spoke briefly to the director, to let him know he hadn't meant to seem angry and that he appreciated the new responsibilities and the raise. The director said



he hoped Alex wasn't disappointed; Alex laughed and said, "I'll get over it."

In the afternoon, Alex took a long break and went to a college nearby where one of his friends had gotten an MBA. He checked into course requirements and loans. He began working out in his head how long he would have to go to night classes until he could afford to quit work and finish up during the day. He had never been sure he wanted an MBA, and he still wasn't, but he felt practically buoyant when he went back to work.

Let us first examine the intentional object in this emotional episode, then turn to the other elements and their organization.

The example is an episode of disappointment. Its intentional object--what Alex is disappointed about--is that he will not be promoted to Harry's position. It is an intentional object (i.e., mental, representational) in that Alex is not disappointed about "objective" external events, which consist only of the managing director deciding not to give him a job. Rather, his disappointment depends on an interrelated set of personal meanings, some of which were longstanding (e.g., Harry's job was "better" than his own), some of which were recent (he might be able to get Harry's job), and some of which were partly created in the course of the emotion itself (his own job was dreary and possibly humiliating). A better approximation of the intentional

object would be "not getting Harry's job which it seemed he could conceivably have gotten and having to stay in his current job which now seems much less desirable".

The objective event--the director's decision--is the occasion for Alex's disappointment, but it is not the cause. The schema for disappointment is activated on the basis of the ego's assessment of current needs and goals (vis-a-vis the external situation), the status of internal conflicts, and the range of intentional objects the current external situation could support. In the case of Alex's disappointment, the needs were for mastering new skills and knowledge, for praise and pride from his wife, his parents, and Harry, and for "prestige", which is perhaps the admiration of a generalized other. In keeping with these needs, Alex's current goals include professional advancement. (For present purposes we are not required to settle the complex question of whether these needs and goals are based on infantile needs of the past or on "deeper" current needs.) The most prominent inner danger seems to be an intensification of punitive criticism from the superego.

Among the elements in the emotion apart from its intentional object, one cluster involves another emotion, namely hope. Hope itself is not an element in Alex's disappointment (although emotions can be elements in one another); it is a causal precondition. Alex would not have been disappointed by not getting the promotion if he had not

been hoping for it. This hope itself can be broken down into elements in a specific configuration. These elements include Alex's beliefs regarding work and accomplishment, his desire to advance and to get praise and appreciation from his wife and parents, the value he places on money and position, his assessment of his own and Harry's job and of his chances of promotion, and so on. Alex's hope had placed these elements in a state of flux and uncertainty; they had been static and now they were active. These same elements formed part of the disappointment.

Self and object representations, in the psychoanalytic sense, form another, overlapping set of elements. The self representations include an ideal one (having obtained Harry's job, successful, capable, deserving) and a now-devalued actual one (incapable, undeserving, inconsequential). Object representations might include a rejecting, attacking director and a more realistically seen accepting director.

Numerous memories are involved in the episode of disappointment. Among the more recent ones would be memories of hopes, of his wife telling him not to be too hopeful and of his own thoughts at that time, of Harry's encouragement, and so on. More distant memories of earlier disappointments, including childhood ones, would also be involved. These more distant memories would include images of depriving and cruel persons, comforting persons, shameful

self images, and memories of how he had "gotten over" the disappointments, that is, how the sense of an irreplaceable loss had faded, together with the accompanying sense of worthlessness or deprivation.

Among the desires involved in the disappointment are the desire for the promotion, the desire ("impulse") to argue with the director, and the desire to be alone after speaking to the director.

Several physiological events form elements of the disappointment. These are created, in a form in which they can be incorporated into the disappointment, by complex processes of initiation of reaction patterns, self-interpretation, and social self-consciousness. Some of them, such as the deep breaths and smiles, are often interpreted as voluntary, although Alex must not. Others, such as the tightness in his chest, are readily seen as self-interpretations. Some, such as his tears, are generally seen as involuntary, as Alex must see them in accord with the schema, but from a theoretical viewpoint one must assume that they are generated by the operation of the schema, through complex processes.

These many elements must be organized into a whole, if they are to be other than an assortment of unrelated items in the context of many other unrelated items (such as what Alex had for breakfast, what color his director's eyes are, whether Alex sat at a booth or at the counter in the



restaurant, whether he had any asthma attacks that day, etc., etc.). This is provided by the schema, which is employed by the ego to this end.

The schema provides a set of legitimate causal assumptions, such as that the tears were caused by the director's decision. It provides justification for recovering memories of old, surmounted disappointments and using these to replace images of worthlessness and dreariness. It provides a template of the course of such emotions--one "gets over" them, i.e., the elements form a new and less painful alignment. It provides a particular meaning to the memories of hopeful anticipations, namely that one is suffering a painful process that cannot be evaded. Finally, it offers a conviction of lasting internal change, as the elements of hopeful anticipation, altered personal values, more conscious values and beliefs, and the knowledge of the director's decision combine to lead to a new set of possibilities (an MBA, a new job), which Alex begins to pursue with an increased sense of autonomy. In these various respects, the schema helps provide coherent organization.

Beyond the general need for coherence, the ego in this example is confronted with a set of problems, to which it applies the emotion of disappointment. There are two chief problems. First, Alex, in the context of his hope, has acquired a new set of active needs and goals, and this has

created a situation in which he cannot return to his former adjustment around his job. His needs for mastery, praise, and prestige now have a new job as their object, and the previous adjustment in which these needs were deployed elsewhere or defensively avoided has been disrupted. The problem is how to continue in his current situation when his needs are focused on what he does not and will not have. The second problem, suggested by psychoanalytic assumptions, is that superego criticisms have become more intense. This may have been due to the possibility of new gratifications, if these possibilities activated self-punitiveness and the "unconscious sense of guilt" that Freud referred to. The intensified superego criticism emerges most directly in the conscious self-image as incapable, undeserving, and inconsequential.

The disappointment helps resolve these adaptational problems. It provides a template for "getting over it", that is, re-orienting needs and goals to renew the possibility of their satisfaction. In Alex's case, the new, tentative focus is an MBA and other jobs. This new focus helps restore a livable degree of favorable self-regard. But such a resolution could be readily undermined by the strengthened superego criticisms. These are workably resolved through the shifting of criticisms from the self to the job, which then seems disgusting. The disappointment-schema offers the possibility of this shift, and makes it

more successful through the interpretation of involuntariness, which neutralizes the criticism that Alex might otherwise direct at himself, to the effect that he is making excuses and that the problem is not with his job but with himself.

The schema provides the outline or set of possibilities. The individual, through a set of ego processes (self-reflection, action and interpretation according to the internalized rules), puts these possibilities into effect, toward the primary goal of forming a meaningful, organized integration of elements and the secondary one of achieving some greater satisfaction of strivings toward an ideal self, personal integration, or desired relationships with external or internal objects.

### **How is the Theory Psychoanalytic?**

Of the terms of the theory, only ego is drawn from psychoanalytic theory. Certain of the conceptions in the theory can be found in previous psychoanalytic affect theories, but not exclusively there. On what grounds, then, can the theory be called psychoanalytic? First it is necessary to consider what it means for a theory to be psychoanalytic, and for a theory of affect to be psychoanalytic.

Psychoanalytic theory has undergone several radical

transformations during its history, and it has spawned other schools of thought and therapy. At times, there has been bitter controversy over whether new approaches were genuinely psychoanalytic (Fairbairn, 1962; Freud, 1914; Guntrip, 1961; Kohut, 1977). It becomes clear in the course of such controversies that there is no universally accepted definition of psychoanalysis, and that one is not likely to be devised.

Even within orthodox circles, firm definitions are elusive. The issue of psychoanalysis versus psychotherapy is instructive. In the early 1950's, American analysts became particularly concerned to distinguish psychoanalysis proper from psychoanalytically informed psychotherapy (Gill, 1954; Rangell, 1954; Stone, 1954). The concern derived, at least in part, from the increasing number of psychotherapists who were not trained in psychoanalytic institutes, and in many cases were not physicians. Analysts sought to clarify their professional identity, both to orient themselves as to the particular value of their arduously acquired method, and to reinforce their pre-eminence.

In the course of this discussion, Merton Gill (1954) formulated a distinction between psychoanalysis and psychotherapy which has become the most definitive (Kernberg, 1984). Gill's definition of psychoanalysis rested on the analyst's neutrality, on the techniques designed to induce a



"regressive transference neurosis", and the "resolution of the neurosis by techniques of interpretation alone" (p. 775). This definition remains the most widely agreed upon (Kernberg, 1984). Gill himself, however, now dissents. In fact, he has completely reformulated the distinction, as a consequence of his new positions on psychoanalytic technique (Gill, 1984). He has come to view each of the main elements of his earlier distinction differently, and no longer regards all of them as essential or even desirable.

The uncertainty of definition that attaches to psychoanalytic treatment is much surpassed by the difficulty in defining psychoanalytic theory. In the early decades of the movement, this task was carried out by Freud, who maintained rigid control over the definition of the truly psychoanalytic, and employed this authority in excluding those whose ideas challenged his own conceptions (Freud, 1914/1957, 1925/1959) even when he eventually incorporated these heterodox propositions (e.g., Freud, 1933/1964, p. 87). In effect, Freud's authority substituted for principles of definition.

Initially, the most important authors whose work was expelled from psychoanalysis by Freud, such as Jung and Adler, did not dispute the issue, but instead developed their thought and technique outside of orthodox psychoanalysis. Later, as Freud's predominance over the movement waned and after his death, advocates of various

schools of thought made claims on the title of psychoanalytic theory (Fairbairn, 1952; Kardiner, Karush & Ovesey, 1959; M. Klein, 1975; Kohut, 1977; Horney, 1937; Sullivan, 1953). In some cases (e.g., M. Klein, 1975) the originators of these schools felt themselves to be directly extending Freud's work--although these claims were often rejected by others (Kernberg, 1980)--whereas in other cases, schools of thought emerged in spirited opposition to Freud (Fairbairn, 1952; Kardiner, Karush & Ovesey, 1959).

The profusion of different schools, differing over fundamental issues and yet all considering themselves psychoanalytic, raised in a new and deeper way the question of what could be identified as the essence of psychoanalytic theory.

In the context of such differences, one can attempt to identify guiding principles and assumptions underlying most or all of the schools which identify themselves as psychoanalytic. This approach avoids sectarianism, authoritarianism, and the arbitrary reliance on peripheral features of theory. On the other hand, it is a highly subjective approach, and one that is more likely to generate disputes than to resolve them. Still, there are no alternatives if one wishes to arrive at a meaningful definition which is not determined by sectarian commitments or by loyalty to inessential ideas. (Schafer [1976] makes a similar argument.)

In my own view, psychoanalytic theory can be defined by the proposition that adult thoughts, actions, and feelings are ordinarily based in large part on potentially distorting interpretations and coping strategies of which one is unaware. Seemingly senseless thoughts, actions, and feelings become comprehensible when the underlying interpretations and coping strategies are known. These interpretations and coping strategies derive from childhood, which included both distorted and accurate interpretations of significant others. The lack of awareness of irrational interpretations and coping strategies is not accidental, but is explained by the personal unacceptability of alternatives. Certain kinds of irrationality are striven for, for reasons which are themselves out of awareness. Symbolism and interpretation are crucial in all these processes. Finally, the of irrationality can be reduced, in ways which involve becoming aware of these processes in some coherent set of terms.

I think this definition captures essential elements in the various schools of psychoanalysis--Freudian, ego psychological, object relations, interpersonal, culturalist--without depending on features not shared by all genuinely psychoanalytic perspectives. For example, concepts of instinct and of the fundamental importance of sexuality are not shared by most schools. However, all schools share a concept of unacceptable parts of the self



which have a crucial and problematic impact. For Freudian schools, this unacceptability is due to the involvement of infantile, perverse, or incestuous sexuality. Other schools attribute unacceptability to other factors, but the logic is parallel, and is essential to a psychoanalytic theory.

If a body of theory is defined as psychoanalytic by these features, it remains a separate question what defines an affect theory as psychoanalytic. Three possibilities can be isolated:

1) An affect theory is psychoanalytic if it is drawn from established psychoanalytic theory and metatheory.

2) An affect theory is psychoanalytic if it is consistent with the essential features of psychoanalytic theory and can be readily applied to psychoanalytic issues.

3) An affect theory is psychoanalytic if it specifically entails the essential features of psychoanalytic theory, so that adopting that theory of affect entails adopting the essential features of psychoanalytic.

The first possibility has perhaps the greatest simplicity and the most immediate appeal, but it can be readily eliminated by two considerations. The first has just been discussed, namely, that most specific theoretical terms, and all metapsychological terms, are tied to specific versions of psychoanalytic theory. Secondly, the history of psychoanalytic affect theory strongly suggests that psychoanalytic theory does not provide an affect theory but, on



the contrary, needs an affect theory. Most of Freud's affect theories, for instance, were either borrowed from elsewhere (or from assumptions originating elsewhere). Despite repeated efforts over several decades, attempts to devise an affect theory based on metapsychology produced almost universally dissatisfaction (Brenner, 1974b; Green, 1977). It would be unwisely restrictive to confine the title of psychoanalytic affect theory to theories based on established terms.

The second of the three possibilities specified above for determining whether a theory of affect is psychoanalytic is more meaningful and holds more promise for a satisfying affect theory. In this definition, an affect theory is psychoanalytic if it is consistent with the essential features of psychoanalytic theory and can be readily applied to psychoanalytic issues. In favor of this definition, one may note: first, in order for a theory of affect to be adequate to the needs of psychoanalytic theory it need only be compatible with the basic tenets of psychoanalysis; second, if it can be readily applied to psychoanalytic questions, it can be recognized as an especially useful theory; and third, if it is not drawn from metatheory, it does not depend on inessential components of one or another school, and does not suffer from the vitiating effects Freudian metapsychology has had on affect theories.

The shortcoming of this definition of a psychoanalytic

affect theory is that it includes too much; it makes no distinction between psychoanalytic affect theory and a non-psychoanalytic affect theory that can be applied in psychoanalysis. This is a worthwhile distinction to be able to draw, even though it has often been ignored (cf. Basch, 1976; Emde, 1980). If we seek a way to make this distinction in meaningful ways, without resorting to arbitrary and restrictive metatheoretical connections, we arrive at the third possibility described above.

In this third possibility, an affect theory is psychoanalytic if it specifically entails the essential features of psychoanalytic theory. In other words, there would be a close logical correspondence between such a theory and the basic assumptions of psychoanalysis. This would include compatibility, but would go beyond it, so that the affect theory would be most coherent and most compatible within psychoanalysis, and would tend to be incompatible with other viewpoints. In the strongest version of this way of defining psychoanalytic affect theory, an affect theory would only be psychoanalytic if it logically entailed all the essential features of psychoanalytic theory, so that adopting that theory of affect would require adopting some version of psychoanalysis.

The present affect theory, I now argue, qualifies as psychoanalytic under this third definition. It does not meet the strongest requirements of this definition, but it

is not clear that any affect theory could; that is, it may not be that any affect theory would logically require all the essential features of psychoanalytic and be incompatible with any viewpoint that did not include all of these.

However, the present affect theory does, as I attempt to show, imply some crucial aspects of the essential psychoanalytic assumptions, and is compatible with all of them.

Some of this discussion is undertaken in the next chapter, in conjunction with the discussion of specific issues in psychoanalytic theory, particularly the discussions of unconscious emotion and emotion in therapy. For the moment, let us return to the issues discussed above in "Some Elaborations and Implications". The first subsection there dealt with the ego's role in the causation, or activation, of emotion, and also addressed the implications of inclusion of the intentional object as a constitutive part of an emotion (rather than as its cause). On the basis of these views, one is led to the psychoanalytic proposition that interpretations of external reality are based on many factors which are not a part of that current reality, and that therefore interpretations of external reality are readily distorted. The objects of emotions are imposed on external reality when, in the ego's judgment, that emotion is needed, and often the emotion is needed for reasons that have little to do with the real current situation. Like psychoanalytic theory in general,

the present view of emotions sees the possibility for many degrees of validity in interpretations and of adaptiveness in coping strategies. When internal conflict is relatively low and superego prohibitions are less stringent, these factors impose fewer constraints on the ego in activating emotions, and the ego is then free to form emotions in close accord with current reality and with current needs and goals, in the highest degree of adaptiveness.

The factors in the ego's decision to activate an emotion include repressed impulses, and this means that emotions are partly in the service of such impulses. Irrationality, then, in the form of divergence of emotion from external reality and from other needs and goals, is a systematic part of emotion, in the present account. Part of the character of repressed impulses is to demand loyalty, so to speak. That is, one acts as if no satisfaction could substitute for the satisfaction of these impulses, clinging to them and retaining them in repression. Freud called this the "conservative character of the instincts" or the "repetition compulsion" and it was one of the factors that lead to the formulation of the death instinct. Emotions serve this process of conservation of repressed impulses by providing them with some limited expression and with a continuing disguise.

Emotions, in the present theory, contribute to the preservation of more than impulses. As discussed above,



they help preserve, in active forms, some features of childhood, such as the sense of urgency of the moment and the un-self-conscious investment in relationships and activities. They help preserve, too, images of self and others formed in childhood. As noted above, this aspect of emotions can be derived from conceptualizing them as based on schemas which are formed, for the most part, during childhood. The lasting influence of childhood, of course, is a key notion of psychoanalysis.

The concept of repression, or purposive unawareness, is not specifically entailed by the present view of emotion, but we have seen how emotion as understood here can play a role in repression, and in the next chapter a more detailed account of repressed emotion is given in terms of the present theory.

In short, some of the essential features of psychoanalysis are entailed by the present theory, and some, though not specifically entailed, can be accommodated. The former include the vulnerability of distortions in interpretations of current reality and in coping strategies, the preservation of repressed impulses, and the pervasive influence of childhood. Among the latter are concepts of repression.

### Summary

A theory of emotion has been proposed, which takes emotions to be schematic organizations, in the ego and activated by the ego, of physiological, psychological, and social responses, according to individually adapted, socially based rules. Emotions were defined as states to which intentional objects are essential and in which an interpretation of involuntariness is highlighted. The psychoanalytic concept of the ego was discussed and its central role in the present theory was described. The conceptualization of emotions as schematic organizations was explicated. A number of elaborations and implications were presented, including an account of the factors involved in the activation of emotion and the functions of emotion vis-a-vis these factors, a discussion of adaptiveness and irrationality, and an initial discussion of repression. A detailed example was given. Finally, the relation of the theory to psychoanalytic theory in general was explored.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION OF ISSUES IN PSYCHOANALYTIC AFFECT THEORY

#### Introduction

In the second and third chapters, I reviewed many of the major statements on affect within psychoanalytic theory. Freud's work took pride of place, as is traditional. Later authors, reviewed in Chapter III, addressed a variety of issues, some of which Freud had been concerned with and many of which he had not. In the present chapter, we return to this history of affect theory in psychoanalysis. We turn to each of the themes that emerged in the review and bring to bear on each the original conceptions of emotion just outlined, in an effort to determine what degree of clarification and further insight these conceptions can offer. The chapter closes with a consideration of two topics, anxiety and psychotherapy, which although they were not selected as major themes in my review of theories, are of sufficient importance to warrant inclusion here.

#### Freud

In the review of Freud's theories, his views in the context of the theories of hysteria and "anxiety neurosis" were considered first. Then the "discharge theory" and the

"signal theory" of anxiety were reviewed, and finally Freud's clinical theories were sampled. Here, this succession of topics will provide the organization as we attempt to see how Freud's theories appear in the light of the present conceptions.

## Hysteria

"Strangled affect" was the cornerstone of Freud and Breuer's theory of hysterical neurosis. In Chapter II I surveyed the many implications for affect theory in their conception of hysterical symptoms. To re-state these in summary form, the theory of hysteria depicts affect as energy with quality. The theory holds that this energy is created when a person meets affect-provoking situations, and that normally it moves through the psyche and is expressed. However, on occasion the energy is not released in this immediate, optimal way, but is retained in the psyche, most often because a person finds expression unacceptable and defends against it. This situation produces disturbances of functioning, typically including physical functioning, until such time as the energy is released in the optimal way, that is, until it is "abreacted".

A clear divergence of the present views from Freud's emerges immediately in connection with the concept of energy. Energy, in Freud's sense, has no place in the current understanding of emotion. Freud explained an



enormous range of phenomena with his successive variations on the energy concept, but for many theorists it has come to be a hollow concept, certainly unable to bear the weight Freud and his direct successors placed on it (Holt, 1976; Klein, 1973b; Schafer, 1976; Swanson, 1977). David Hume said of explanation that it is a place where the mind comes to rest; it is a rare mind today that finds rest at the concept of energy. Few would be inclined to offer a simple reference to energy as the explanation for the manifold patterns of thought, memory, perception, sensation, action, and interaction that we class as emotional; it would seem, to most, an unenlightening tautology. Even though the related concept of id-impulses pressing for gratification is retained in the present theory, the core of Freud's energy concept--hypothetical energy as explanation--is not employed.

What, then, becomes of the concept of abreaction in the context of the present views? Freud and Breuer's conception of the central role of abreaction in treatment collapses without their specific concept of psychic energy. Freud himself would not have regretted the loss of the concept of abreaction, since he abandoned it as a therapeutic technique and developed other explanations for the therapeutic successes it had seemed to provide. However, not all of his followers shared his attitude (Reich, 1933/1949) and some current non-psychoanalytic figures continue to argue the

therapeutic and theoretical value of abreaction (Jackins, 1965; Scheff, 1979). Are aspects of the concept tenable, and can these be rendered in terms of the present conceptions?

Reduced to its basic elements, the concept of abreaction supposes that certain situations and events--"emotional" ones--produce some kind of disequilibrium, and that this state lasts until the emotion is energetically expressed. Until the abreaction is accomplished the accumulated emotion has untoward effects of some kind; conversely, energetic emotional expression has direct benefits. According to the view of emotion I have proposed, emotions offer answers to questions or solutions to problems. I have asserted that emotions, in most cases, leave things better than they were, or simply, that emotions are efforts toward adaptation. My view, then, offers a parallel to viewpoints advocating abreaction. In both, the emotion-inducing situation presents a problem, and an emotion contributes to its resolution.

Certainly, though, the differences outweigh the parallels. First and foremost, in the present view, nothing is expelled in the expression of emotion. Abreaction theories have not always been specific as to what is expelled during emotion, but the implication is that something detrimental is cleared from one's system. Under the present theory, emotions are organizations, not

substances or energies that could be excreted or discharged.

Second, in the present view, it is not the expression of the emotion that is beneficial, but the entire emotion, of which expression is a part. The possible benefits of emotion are too varied to be attributed to emotional communications alone. Advocates of abreaction, moreover, are referring to something apart from the values of emotional communication. Expression, for them, has some direct benefit, not mediated by the responses of others. The closest parallel within the present view is the benefit in approximating the prototypical instance of an emotion. Schemas for emotions include prototypes. Many of these prototypes include energetic expression, at least within most cultures and subcultures. When one has an episode of an emotion that is close to the prototype for that emotion, one is well understood by others, one knows what to do and how each element is related to the other elements, and one does not feel chaotic, nor does one suspect that other people are likely to see one as "crazy" or "falling apart". In episodes of emotion that are far from the prototype, one is on uncharted territory, with the concomitant unpredictability and need for improvisation. For such reasons, approximating the prototype for an emotion carries direct benefits, and emotional expression, where it completes an emotion in the sense of bringing the episode closer to the prototype, is directly beneficial, as the



concept of abreaction implies.

Freud's theory of hysteria incorporates the view that affect is generated, automatically in a sense, when one encounters an affect-provoking situation. Though this assumption may appear tautologous, there are many views of affect that have not shared it, among them most of Freud's, with the exception of those in the theory of hysteria and in his later "clinical" writings. The present theory shares the seemingly tautologous view only to a limited degree. That is, the theory retains the common-sense view that emotions are typically occasioned by certain corresponding situations, but interposes an intermediary set of factors (i.e., the ego and the bases for its decision to activate an emotion-schema), allowing for inappropriate or irrational emotions.

Two remaining central propositions in Freud's theory of hysteria--the possibility of suppressing affect and the pathological effects of suppressed affect--are discussed later in the present chapter, in the discussions of defense and therapy.

### **Anxiety Neurosis**

Freud's theory of anxiety neurosis assumed a very different route for the production of affect than was posited in his account of hysteria. In the theory of anxiety neurosis, anxiety is produced by the blocking of



"somatic excitation" at the "soma-psyche" barrier. The excitation then proceeds along paths that do not involve connections with ideas, and a normally somatopsychic process becomes an abnormal, somatic one. In this view, affect can result from a purely physical process and does not necessarily bear the marks of ideas or of the external situation.

In my view, physiological processes may predispose, perhaps strongly, toward emotion, but emotion is never the direct product of such processes. Emotion, in the restricted definition applied here, always involves complex interpretations, to which physiological processes often lend themselves. The construction of an intentional object, the setting up of various dispositions to action and expression, the adoption of conditions for ending the episode, the self-reflective construction of relations between these aspects of the emotion and one's physiological state--in short, all the things I have attributed to the operation of the emotion-schema--require an elaboration beyond physiological givens. Some emotions, such as the sadness and despair in apparently biological depressions, suggest that physiological processes can strongly predispose to emotion, but even in these instances elaboration is required.

### **The Discharge Theory**

In the discharge theory of affect, as it emerged

between 1900 and 1915, affect was described as a discharge of psychic energy, a "safety valve" employed when more complete discharge was impossible. The discharge theory is thus a conflict-based theory; under it, affect is only produced under conditions of conflict between impulse and prohibitions. It is also a theory in which affect is based on energy without quality, so that the qualities of affect--everything that differentiates one affect from another--are determined by chance associations with conscious ideas. In other words, the quality of affect, and thus affect itself, was regarded as relatively inconsequential. By the same token, since the energy underlying affect was considered to have no quality, affect could no longer be repressed or be contained in the repressed unconscious. When a person is not in an emotional state, only the potential for affect exists, and defense against affect can only mean prevention of the development of affect, not repression in the Freudian sense of confining existing entities in an unconscious domain.

Certain of the tenets of the discharge theory are rejected in the present conceptions. The concept of energy, as noted already, does not appear here. Second, emotions are viewed here as far more consequential than in Freud's discharge theory. In the present theory, a wide variety of interpretations and dispositions are attributed to activated emotions. In Freud's discharge theory, emotion has only

indirect influences on interpretation and action, and the experience of emotion is determined by chance connections with ideas. Third, the present theory differs from Freud's discharge theory in its treatment of defense and affect, and of unconscious affect (both to be discussed later.)

However, some important assumptions from Freud's discharge theory appear, in altered forms, in the present theory. These assumptions concern the relation of affect and conflict. Although in the present theory, emotion does not depend on conflict to the same extent--conflict is not a necessary condition of emotion, here--I have described emotions as frequently consisting of attempted resolutions of internal, psychological conflicts involving either id-impulses or superego-criticisms. Emotions can contribute to such resolutions by providing more acceptable routes for the limited satisfaction of id-impulses. For example, anger forms a convenient vehicle for the expression of destructive impulses, and jealousy can provide some satisfaction of homosexual interests. The more an episode of emotion is in the service of such impulses, though, the less appropriate it becomes to the evoking situation (in de Sousa's [1980a] phrase) and the less it is possible for the emotion to serve less conflictual needs and goals.

Thus, the present theory incorporates from the discharge theory the view that the concept of emotion may indirectly satisfy id-impulses, although it provides a



different account of the process than Freud did. For Freud, the satisfaction took the form of releasing energy, which occurred along somatic discharge "channels". In the present view, no energy is invoked (although a parallel concept of impulses pressing for satisfaction is perhaps implied.) Instead, the account turns on the notion of the ego incorporating impulses in emotions, and activating emotions partly to satisfy impulses (making some episodes of emotion "compromise formations"). Whereas for Freud, conflict was a necessary condition for all affect, it is here only one of the possible factors that leads the ego to activate an emotion. Moreover, conflict can be involved to many different degrees in a particular episode of emotion. In some episodes, the ego's need to provide satisfaction for an impulse or to contend with superego criticism may be so dominant that the emotion is grossly inappropriate to the external situation, impervious to influence, and contrary to other personal needs and goals. In other instances these influences may play only a small role, or no role at all, in the choice of emotion.

### The Signal Theory of Anxiety

According to the view introduced by Freud in his 1926 book *Inhibition, Symptom and Anxiety*, anxiety is a signal given by the ego when it recognizes a danger situation. This signal provides an indication that defense is needed



against an external or internal danger, and the anxiety, or the unpleasure associated with it, provides the motive for defense.

The present theory is, in a sense, founded on the signal theory of anxiety, or rather on a specific aspect of it. One of the central tenets of the present theory is that emotions are activated by the ego in the service of its many adaptive goals. The signal theory of anxiety introduced such a notion into psychoanalysis. The notion was a break with Freud's previous thinking and with the assumptions of psychoanalysts in general. Without it, the present theory would have far less precedent in psychoanalytic theory. In short, the present theory is an expansion of Freud's signal theory. First, of course, Freud's theory is expanded to apply to all emotions, not just anxiety. (Actually, anxiety is a special case for the present theory, and will be discussed below.) Second, I have claimed that emotions can serve many functions, where Freud only postulated one. In fact, the signal function is not among the functions I have described.

### **Freud's "Clinical" Theory**

Two of the themes covered under the heading of clinical affect theory figured prominently in the theoretical presentation in the last chapter, and therefore require no further exploration here. Freud's view that affect is

inherently justified was discussed in the course of presenting the schema-concept and its relation to psychoanalytic principles. The relation between the present theory and the issue of transference in emotion was also treated briefly there, and was further discussed as an aspect of irrationality in emotion.

A further theme of interest here arises in some of Freud's clinical discussions of affect. We encountered it in his comments on normal and pathological jealousy. Though he never formalized the distinction, in such places Freud distinguished between normal or rational episodes of affect and abnormal ones. Only abnormal, irrational affects, he stated, required psychoanalysis to understand them. Freud follows common sense in identifying normal affects as ones which are "derived from the actual situation" and proportionate to it. He adds that these affects are "under the complete control of the conscious ego" (Freud, 1922/1955, p. 223). In these comments, Freud exhibits some of the early and most characteristic assumptions of psychoanalysis as an "id-psychology". He assumes, that is, that irrationality is the province for psychoanalysis, and that what common sense calls rational is under the control of the conscious ego, meaning not that everything rational is based on conscious reasoning but simply that it is not part of the special province of psychoanalysis, the repressed unconscious.

The present theory is intended to apply equally well to rational and irrational emotions, and to provide a framework for discussing this distinction and the underlying determinants. In this theory, rationality in emotion is understood to include appropriateness to the external situation, just as Freud and others have understood it (de Sousa, 1980a), but it also includes instrumental rationality; that is, emotions can serve the needs and goals of the individual and can serve adaptive interpersonal functions, and the rationality of emotions can be assessed also in terms of how well they serve these. In any case, the present view is that both rational and irrational emotions can be subjected to explanatory efforts. In this respect the present theory is closer to the spirit of American ego psychology than to the early Freud, with respect to the former's interest in developing a "general psychology" on the basis of, or at least in accord with, psychoanalytic theory. The present theory, too, seeks to frame explanatory principles for all the phenomena within its domain, not only the irrational ones, and like ego psychology, the present theory is based in part on previous psychoanalytic theory but is drawn from other sources as well.

## Post-Freudian Affect Theory

As in the previous section, the structure of the literature review will provide the organization here. Thus, the themes of the discussion are metapsychology, defense and affect, unconscious affect, biological theories, and ego and cognition.

### Metapsychology

The major post-Freudian metapsychological treatments of affect have turned on two related issues, psychic energy and tension versus discharge conceptions of affect. The rejection of psychic energy in the present theory has already been discussed. The discussions of energy and affect in the major metapsychological papers are difficult to translate into other terms, and indeed are generally quite insular, that is, they have meaning only in connection with this assumption. Jacobson's (1953, 1971a, 1971b) papers are the principal examples. The second issue to arise consistently in the metapsychological discussions, the question of whether affect represents "tension" or "discharge", can be given more meaning. Of course, the question is framed in terms that are drawn from the economic language, that is, from the concept of psychic energy. However, discussions of this issue seem to have been animated by more than a desire to coordinate assumptions



about hypothetical energy. This significance has already been touched on at several points. It is the difference between affects as epiphenomena, implied by the discharge view, and affects as consequential entities, corresponding to the tension view.

The correspondence of the present theory to the tension view in this regard has already been noted. However, the relation between this theory and the tension view of affect can be elaborated somewhat beyond this, along lines that are relevant to the next topic to be considered, defense and affect. The essence of the tension view is an assumption that an affective state is an indication that there is some sort of pressure for something (further) to take place. A felt affect, according to this assumption, reflects a process that is building up to something, rather than playing itself out and running down, as the discharge view holds. (The same would be true for un-felt affect, although this raises difficult complications for both the tension and discharge views.) In the present theory of emotion, an activated emotion represents, in part, a set of dispositions, that is readinesses to respond in certain ways. For example, anger represents a readiness to speak loudly, to make accusations, and so on. Disappointment, at least for Alex in the last chapter's example, includes a readiness to withdraw and to weep, but also to re-organize goals and make new plans. An emotion has a temporal course

(Fridhandler & Averill, 1982), and in the present theory the episode begins with the activation of a schema; at that point, much remains to unfold, including even the construction of the emotion's object. This beginning point of an episode of emotion is a theoretical construction, though, so it may be less obscure to refer to that point in the episode when there has been enough organization of the emotion's object and of its dispositions to other responses that the emotion can become an object of reflective self-awareness--that is, when the emotion can be felt. At this point, too, much remains to unfold.

### **Defense and Affect (and Unconscious Affect)**

Three topics come under the heading of defense and affect. First, affect can be used defensively. Of the post-Freudian works reviewed, Jones' (1929) paper and Schafer's (1976) book dealt with this function of affect. The place of this function in the present theory has already been discussed in several places, although in terms of the ego's internal adaptive efforts vis-a-vis the id and the superego, rather than as "defense". Second, affect can be defended against. Zilboorg's (1933) and Fenichel's (1941/1954) papers addressed this topic. Third, unpleasant affect can be a motive for defense (against conscious acknowledgment of id-impulses and superego criticisms, against activation of self- and object-representations,

etc.). Jones (1929) describes this, and there are references to it throughout the psychoanalytic literature. The latter two topics are the subjects of the present discussion. In particular, consideration is given here to the questions of how defense against emotions is best described within the present theory and why emotions are defended against if they are part of the ego's adaptive efforts. These topics lead to an account of unconscious emotion.

One may ask whether in fact emotions are defended against at all, or whether this topic may be dispensed with. I think the answer is that emotions are indeed defended against. One often encounters defense against emotion in psychotherapy, which is to say that conceptualizing a situation in terms of emotion and defense against it is often extremely natural and useful for both patient and therapist. Among psychoanalytic writers, Fenichel (1941/1954) is unusual in affirming the phenomenon in formal theoretical terms. In clinical writings, however, references to defense against affect are ubiquitous.

Emotion has been described here in highly favorable terms, and yet evidently there are things in emotion that we often wish to avoid. There have been many psychoanalytic hypotheses regarding the motive for defense. Most often, these have been based on the perfectly intelligible notion that defense is implemented in order to avoid unpleasant

affect. This notion is well-founded for defense against emotions themselves. We avoid emotions that are painful, most of all. We also avoid emotions that are embarrassing, and, with less awareness, ones that would be shameful. In each case, the motive for defending against an emotion is to avoid another, unpleasant emotion. This logic, though, leaves us with the question of what makes an emotion unpleasant, and sometimes intolerable. This difficult question cannot be given an adequate treatment here. Any explanation of the unpleasantness of some emotions would have to accommodate the fact that we often seek out unpleasant emotions in esthetic or entertainment contexts. It may be that the emotions which provide the motive for intra-psychic defense are unpleasant for special reasons; possibly these are emotions that re-create, internally and perhaps externally, the painful situations of childhood, situations which most often have to do with separation and loss, with rejection, or with blows to self-esteem. [7]

In some people, defense extends to virtually all emotions. All emotions are treated as a threat. This is particularly likely to be the case among what have been called "compulsive characters" (Reich, 1933/1949). For such people, it seems to be something in emotions in general that calls for defense, rather than unpleasantness of particular emotions. Shapiro (1965) points to the spontaneity in emotion as the motive for defense. He describes the



rigidity and tense deliberateness characteristic of obsessive-compulsive style, and notes that these fundamentally conflict with emotion.

It must be admitted that this account of the motives for defense against emotion leaves something to be desired in terms of simplicity, since it assumes two steps: certain emotions at times occasion unpleasant emotions, and these unpleasant emotions in turn provide a motive for defending against the original ones. (The account is simpler for the unpleasant emotions themselves, which are defended against due to their own painfulness.) Moreover, a more substantive objection could be raised on the basis of these steps in the reasoning. If emotions depend on the ego's decision to activate them, what is the need for defending against unpleasant emotions, and against other emotions that would lead to unpleasant ones, when the ego could simply not activate these emotions? The ego, though, does not have absolute freedom of choice in its decision to activate emotions. At times, it is virtually compelled to activate one or another emotion. This may be due to the character of id-impulses or superego-criticisms present, or perhaps to the nature of current needs and goals vis-a-vis the external situation. On occasion, the external situation may conform so closely to an emotion's object that activating the emotion is virtually required if the coherence of the social rules constituting emotion is to be preserved. Moreover,

the repertoire of possible emotions from which to choose is finite. We rely on "received culture" for this repertoire, and cannot devise the structures and rules out of whole cloth. Emotions are learned so early and through so many avenues, and they are integrated into so many other social institutions and psychological entities that vigilance is required if specific emotions or emotions in general are to be avoided. In short, the ego's choices are restricted, and emotions carry a certain force that sometimes requires resistance.

When the ego is in the position of resisting the activation of an emotion, it may arrive at a compromise. It may activate the emotion, but in a version different enough from the prototype that painful emotions are avoided. Probably the ego most often alters the object of the emotion in connection with these defensive efforts. For example, anger that is occasioned by an act of one person or by unconscious impulses toward one kind of person can take as its object another act or another person. Resentment can be directed toward someone besides the "original" target, or an offense can be fabricated to cover the shameful inadequacy of the original. Guilt and self-reproach can be given a trivial object rather than an all-too-weighty one (Freud, 1894/1962, 1896/1962); that is, a trivial object reduces the degree to which guilt re-creates a painful situation of childhood.

In such cases, there is a tension, so to speak, between the object of the emotion and what the object would be without the ego's defensive distortions. It would not be severely misleading to refer to this would-have-been object as the real object of the emotion in the unconscious. The factors in the activation of the emotion, together with the schema, press for this "real" object, and demanding efforts are required to devise and maintain the substitute. All these considerations apply equally when the distortion is in terms of other aspects of the emotion instead of, or in addition to, the object. [8]

Thus, unconscious emotion in the present theory is an emotion toward which many factors compel the ego but for which the ego substitutes a distortion, one which resembles the avoided emotion but occasions less pain.

### **Biological theories**

The present theory is hardly likely to be thought of as a biological theory. It does not use physiology as an explanation of emotion, as Blau (1952, 1955) did explicitly and as many psychoanalytic theorists have done implicitly. Nor does it make any reference to evolutionary biology, as Landauer (1938) did so freely and as is also quite common among other psychoanalytic theorists. In view of the degree to which the present theory turns away from biology, the close correspondence to two of the biological theories

reviewed in Chapter III is perhaps unexpected. Yet, in different respects, the present theory closely resembles Emde's (1980) and Bowlby's (1969).

Emde (1980) calls his theory an "organizational" view of emotion. The essential difference between Emde's view and most previous psychoanalytic theories lies in Emde's conviction that emotions organize behavior and thought, rather than the opposite. This view, of course, is central to the present theory. The major difference between Emde's assumptions and those of the present theory is in Emde's belief that emotions derive from biological evolution and genetic inheritance, in contrast with my assumption that the schemas for emotions are acquired during development and derive from cultural and subcultural sources. This difference in assumptions has such a pervasive effect on the tone of our respective theories that it might be possible to overlook the underlying similarity.

Regarding Bowlby's (1969) account of emotion, the similarity lies in our both viewing an emotion as relating closely to a structured pattern of perception and action. Terminology makes the similarity somewhat obscure. Bowlby considers emotion to be the felt awareness of an unfolding "behavior system"; in the present theory, the concept of emotion is more inclusive, since the emotion is the activated schema. In both views, though, emotion is based on the activation of a pre-existing pattern, so the



structure of the respective theories and the handling of causation is similar.

As with Emde's theory, a major difference between the present theory and Bowlby's lies in the assumptions regarding the origin of emotion. However, whereas Emde is clear in his implication that emotions derive from evolution and heredity, Bowlby allows for other possibilities. He adopts Hinde's (1959) continuum between "environmentally stable" and "environmentally labile" behavior systems, instead of the more traditional distinction between innate and acquired. Highly environmentally labile patterns correspond to acquired behaviors. Since behavior patterns may be highly dependent on the environment in which an organism is reared and lives, socially based behavior patterns, as posited in the present theory, can in principle be accommodated by Bowlby's system.

### Ego and Cognition

The role of the ego in the present theory has been discussed in some detail, and the present section is accordingly brief. In previous psychoanalytic considerations, the ego in affect has arisen most often in connection with cognition. Both Brenner (1974b) and Schur (1969) focused on this issue. Although both these authors were emphatic in their belief that cognition was essential to affect, neither made a clear statement on the exact

nature of the relation. Brenner's examples carry a mixture of implications, and Schur is limited to general references to processes such as comprehension and evaluation. The present theory shares the view that cognition, broadly defined, is essentially involved in emotion. The account here is more specific than those provided previously.

First, the ego processes considered here to underlie the activation of emotion--i.e., the evaluation of the relevant internal and external factors and the generation of a possible adaptive integration of these in the form of an episode of emotion--are cognitive in the same sense as other forms of decision-making are cognitive. Second, the intentional object of emotion has been emphasized here, and this is a cognitive entity.

Another theme has run through psychoanalytic commentaries on the relation of affects and the ego. Numerous authors have stated or implied that affects can come under the increasing domination of the ego. Freud implied this in speaking of "normal" jealousy (Freud, 1922/1955) and in many other connections. Fenichel (1941/1954) was explicit about this possibility, although providing no theoretical account of it. Rapaport (1953), too, was explicit about the possibility of affect being "completely structuralized", which meant that it no longer resulted from movements of psychic energy and was thus under the ego's exclusive command. In the present theory, emotion

is regarded as the exclusive province of the ego. Nonetheless, the theory recognizes different degrees of ego autonomy in emotion. In the previous section, the various factors that may limit the ego's autonomy in activating emotions were described. Under the conditions described there, the ego is constrained to act as the agent of factors over which it exercises little control. The ego in the present theory is as Freud (1923/1961) described it--faced with an array of adversaries which are often its master, but capable of expanding its autonomy through development.

### Anxiety

Many specific topics could be taken up beyond the ones discussed to this point. Two which have been of particular importance are selected: anxiety, discussed in the present section, and psychotherapy, discussed below.

Anxiety has been discussed in the psychoanalytic affect literature more than any other single topic. Freud repeatedly returned to it (Freud, 1895/1962, 1915/1957d, 1923/1961, 1926/1959, 1933/1964), and his final theory of affect was in fact a theory of anxiety. Virtually all later writers have given at least some consideration to anxiety, and for several years in the early nineteen-fifties anxiety became almost the only issue addressed in the literature (see Appendix). This disproportionate attention can be

accounted for, in part, by the particular importance of anxiety in neurosis, as a symptom itself and as a factor in the maintenance of other symptoms (Glover, 1939). Another factor has been Freud's extensive attention to it and his changing views, which stimulated further debate. An additional factor, though, is the special nature of anxiety. In certain respects, anxiety is an anomaly among the affective phenomena to which psychoanalysts have addressed themselves. It has no evident object, the role of expression is unclear, it is hard to distinguish decisively from purely physiological phenomena, and it often seems arbitrary or meaningless when compared with other affects. In their discussions of the topic, analytic theorists have wrestled repeatedly with these features of anxiety.

In keeping with its special nature, anxiety is not considered an emotion within the present theory. Anxiety does not conform, in a crucial respect, to the definition of emotion employed here--it has no object, or its object is incomplete and poorly defined. Anxiety is related to a true emotion, namely fear. As the object of anxiety becomes progressively better defined the state grows to resemble fear, and eventually merges with this emotion. In other words, to be anxious is to be afraid without knowing of what one is afraid or with what justification.

It might be argued that one often knows what one's anxiety is related to. In one instance it might be an



examination, in another it might be a stage performance, or one could be anxious about a project or about an awaited response to some project. I suggest that such situations, insofar as they are more than simply part of the causal conditions for the anxiety, can be viewed as rudimentary object-precursors. To be nervous before a performance implies little or nothing about what one might fear; one is simply anxious about the performance, not afraid that one will forget one's lines, miss cues, be received badly, etc. As these objects are specified, the state is transformed into fear.

An emotion-schema, once activated, exerts an organizing influence, tending to construct perceptions and responses in line with its own structure. In anxiety, this process does not take place. The schema for fear is activated but prevented from completing itself. Anxiety is thus another of the affective phenomena which, like unconscious emotions, are the result of disruptions in the process of constructing an episode of emotion. One way this particular distortion can be introduced into fear is through defensive processes. This is the "neurotic anxiety" Freud (1926/1959) described. Because of how intolerably threatening certain fears would be, one stops short of the full construction of fear, which would include the natural and well-defined object toward which one's perceptions, impulses, goals, and needs lead. In addition to defense, there is another basis for the

distortion of fear into anxiety or the failure of anxiety to develop into fear. The cognitive capacities necessary to develop a complete and coherent emotion such as fear are subject to disruption by any number of factors, principal among which are psychotic disorganization and organic brain deficits (dementia, head trauma, toxic delerium, etc.). Anxiety is common when either of these conditions is present, and this may be due to their interference with the complex process of organizing an intentional object.

### **Psychotherapy**

One hardly needs to argue the importance of emotion in psychotherapy. Affect and emotion are integral to almost every phase and aspect of psychotherapy. Affect is virtually always involved in the reasons people seek treatment, and patients and therapists both chart therapeutic progress, or lack of it, by looking to the feelings that brought the patient to therapy and new areas of feeling that neither specifically anticipated. In addition to being one of the goals of psychotherapy, affect is among its tools. Although abreaction has long since lost the place it held in Freud's original technique, affect and emotion are critical in the practice of psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

Despite the evident importance of the issue, the

psychoanalytic affect literature has had relatively little to say about affect in therapy. Periodically, theorists have remarked on this omission (Brierley, 1937; Schafer, 1964), but affect theory has yet to attempt a thorough account of affect in treatment. In recognition of this state of affairs, a convention of the International Psycho-Analytic Association was organized around the theme of "affect in the psychoanalytic situation" (Green, 1977), but so far the meeting has not stimulated sustained efforts in this area.

To give a full consideration to emotion in psychotherapy would require a lengthy treatment. One would want to provide a theoretical understanding of the accepted role of emotion in therapy, but since no consensus exists on exactly what this role should be, a full discussion of emotion in therapy would itself have to take a position on a wide range of issues in therapeutic technique and in the theory of therapy. The effort would carry important practical implications, perhaps so many that it would amount to an advocacy of a new variant of psychoanalytic treatment. In comparison with such a comprehensive treatment, the present discussion must be relatively short. It aims only to give an indication of the direction a full consideration would take.

Several topics within the broad area of emotion in therapy suggest themselves for attention. On the one hand,

there are issues relating especially to technique. Such issues include the use by the therapist of the patient's and his or her own affective changes to select and time interventions, follow the course of the therapeutic interaction, and so on. A related issue is the use of affect, as it occurs both within and outside the therapeutic sessions, as a guide toward insight. Other issues pertain more to the outcome of therapy. Affective changes are among the most important results of a successful therapy. These include changes in the set of affects a person tends to have--who does not want to feel better as a result of therapy?--and perhaps, more subtly, the acquisition of new emotions.

Turning first to the technical issues, we may ask how affect guides the form and content of therapy. From the present point of view, the central proposition is that emotions represent the outcome of a complex integrative process. If one assumes that this process has products throughout its course, then there exist a wide range of emotion-precursors, or emotion-fragments. Such entities are, so to speak, on their way to becoming emotions, but have not yet reached that level of coherence or completion. Anxiety is one such entity. A whole variety of feelings, intuitions, fleeting affective convictions, moods, affective memories, vague impulses, and so on, may be considered in the same light. To be sure, a full account would require a



classification of these disparate phenomena as they relate to emotion proper. For the present purposes the important point is that there are many way-stations on the way to fully formed emotion, consisting of some of the components of emotion in partial integrations.

These partial integrations constitute developing solutions to conflicts, or reflect steps in this process. They may or may not be fully successful solutions, and they may eventually be superseded, but they are in any event the patient's current solutions. By following these feelings, then, a therapist can gain an indication of what solutions a patient is testing and how successful an integration he or she has found. The therapist, of course, wishes to do more than observe this process of developing solutions; he or she attempts to contribute to it. One form these contributions take is interpretation. Many interpretations involve pointing to evidence of transference, which can be defined as perceiving and responding to oneself and current figures in one's life (including, of course, one's therapist) as though they were reproductions of figures in unconscious fantasies deriving from childhood. Emotions and emotion-fragments are the best indicators of active transference derivatives, since they integrate memories, self- and object-images, actions, and dispositions to actions. Thus, they provide crucial guidance to the therapist's efforts to interpret the unconscious and to understand the patient's

response to these efforts.

One important factor in formulating and delivering interpretations is the therapist's empathy, which has been defined as temporarily feeling the same feelings as the patient currently feels, usually to a lesser degree, with the motive of achieving a greater understanding (Greenson, 1960). Feelings provide such an important route to interpretive understanding because they encapsulate so much. The empathizing therapist can reconstruct the factors entering into a feeling by following the patterns of salience and attention (de Sousa, 1980a) in the feeling, as well as the patterns of disposition to action and expression. The reconstruction by the therapist amounts to an understanding of the inner world of the patient at that moment, which provides the basis for a transference interpretation. When such interpretations are couched in terms of feelings, patients are often readier to accept them and find them more useful. This may be because referring to a feeling implies an acknowledgment that the patient's current solutions are, or at any rate were at one time, the best he or she was capable of. Couched in this way, interpretations can promote, in addition to insight, the therapeutically useful self-acceptance which Schafer (1964) aptly termed empathy with oneself.

The above considerations have reflected the principal that feelings which emerge during therapy are not so much

discovered as newly created. Discoveries are certainly involved in therapy, and the "archaeological" assumption that therapy uncovers a hidden but present reality (Spence, 1982) has a basis, but feelings in therapy can be best understood as reflecting progressive integrations. In light of this principal, it is natural that a patient's affective life changes in the course of therapy. It is not that the components of emotion are discarded during therapy, but their integration is changed in ways that provide greater freedom and effectiveness, or greater adaptiveness, in a broad sense (Schafer, 1964). In recent years there has been a dispute over whether therapeutic change results from awareness of the contents of the (infantile) unconscious or from the creation of a coherent personal narrative, integrating personal history and disowned impulses and desires (Schafer, 1983; Spence, 1982). From the present perspective, changes in affective life may reflect both these processes simultaneously. In particular, new emotions may appear that integrate, in consciousness, formerly split-off desires and beliefs. Such emotions reflect greater ego autonomy, not only in the awareness of formerly denied material but also in the ability to incorporate infantile desires and images into current activities, without being controlled by them.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

A theory has now been presented and some of its implications spelled out. In this closing chapter, reflections on the theory and its context are offered. The theory is in an unfinished form; thus the "outline" in the title. Further development will involve both refinements and new applications, and some preview of these can be given here. It is possible, too, to comment on the place this theory occupies in psychoanalytic theory and practice.

Turning first to areas where refinements could be made, one such area is definition of concepts. The principal terms I have in mind are schema, prototype, and variant instantiations of schemas. In the abstract, the distinctions among these concepts are reasonably clear. A schema is the template for all specific episodes of an emotion; the prototype of a schema is the classic, ideal episode of that emotion; and variant instantiations are episodes of that emotion that depart significantly from the prototype but not by so much that they are no longer recognizable as that emotion. In practice, though, making these distinctions is difficult, and never more so than when one attempts to separate one emotion from another or emotions from related entities. Anxiety presents these problems. I have argued that anxiety is not an emotion in



view of its lack of an object. Yet I have defined intermediate cases, where anxiety becomes progressively like fear, and finally may be transformed into fear. This account raises the question of where the line between anxiety and fear is to be drawn. The same issue is present in separating any emotion from closely related entities, as well as in distinguishing two related emotions.

The schema-concept forces one to deal with these problems. One of the features of the schema-concept that makes it useful for understanding emotion is that it includes the concepts of prototypes and variants. Emotions differ from one occasion, person, and setting to another, yet are meaningfully and importantly classed according to which emotion a given episode is an episode of. For example, jealousy may differ in any number of ways from one instance to another and still be jealousy (and still not be envy, anger, or resentment). These distinctions of one emotion from another are not post hoc discriminations; the episode is a product of some central set of specifications. If one is to accommodate these features of emotion, a concept that describes variant instances of a central pattern is required. But as soon as one adopts such a concept, practical problems arise in defining the boundaries of the category. In order to satisfactorily deal with these problems, the present theory will need to return to the literature of the schema-concept, where efforts have been

made in this direction (e.g., Rosch & Mervis, 1975; Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977).

A related problem is how emotion-schemas develop in the useful forms I have described for them, and in particular how it is that they alone, among affective entities, have the property of actively organizing and assimilating elements into a pattern. In the present account, emotion-schemas actively construct emotional episodes, and this property has been restricted to emotions proper (for example, when it was argued that effort and vigilance are required to defend against painful emotion, but not against emotion-fragments). Since I argue that emotions have greater adaptive potential than related entities, this property of actively constructing episodes coincides with the requirements for adaptive usefulness. An account of this fact would usefully refine the present theory. The problem is at bottom the same one encountered by functional sociologists and evolutionary biologists, namely, how do practices, institutions, bodily organs, physical features, etc., evolve in forms that meet the requirements of the relevant situation?

Another avenue for extending the theory would be through a more detailed account of the logical relation and dynamic interaction between the ego and emotion-schemas. Regarding the logical relation, it seems that emotion-schemas must be described as structures available to the

ego. They are part of the ego, in that they are at its disposal and allied (for the most part) with its adaptive purposes, but a distinction is required between the schema, per se, and the part of the ego which activates it. It may be that a distinction between an executive ego and its store of adaptive tools would be suitable. In elaborating any such a psychic anatomy, though, one would want to avoid reification by keeping one eye, as it were, on the origins of these concepts.

Regarding the dynamic interaction of ego (or executive ego) and schemas, one might begin by noting that activity in the construction of an emotional episode has been ascribed to both the ego and the schema. The schema, it has been said, guides the development of a suitable object for the emotion, sets up dispositions to action and expression, and guides interpretation of component responses as elements of the whole. The ego has been described as instituting specific details in emotional episodes, whether in the process of defense, in employing emotions toward needs and goals, or in incorporating the characteristics of the external situation. Roughly speaking, the schema provides the pattern and the ego fills it in. However, the interaction has another dimension, as there is a tension between emotions and the ego that is not entirely accounted for by id and superego factors. At times, there is conflict between the activities of the ego and of emotion-schemas,

and the details of these conflicts could be profitably explored.

A particularly central area that remains to be given sufficient attention is consciousness and emotion. The exposition of the theory has led far afield from the aspect of emotions that, for many, give them their claim on our interest, namely, that they are feelings. The word "feelings" defies definition (Schafer, 1976), but it is used here only to point to the fact that emotions often occupy consciousness or it least make their presence felt there, and that this is basic to their common-sense definition. Though this issue has received only passing attention to this point, the foundation has been laid for a coherent account of consciousness and emotion. First, active emotions as defined here are always accessible to consciousness; in psychoanalytic terms, they are conscious or preconscious. Whether they remain only potentially conscious or become conscious depends on whether there is occasion for self-awareness during the course of the episode or afterward. Emotions have sometimes been defined as conscious phenomena (Freud, 1915d), but that is not the route taken here. Instead, they are depicted here as processes that may or may not receive the kind of reflective attention that common sense calls feeling.

Although an emotion remains an emotion whether or not it is conscious, consciousness is not an epiphenomenon with



regard to emotion. On the contrary, there is every reason to suppose that emotion and consciousness interact in consequential ways, and most pertinently, that emotion is changed when it becomes conscious. The details of these changes, and the process through which they are effected, would have much to tell us with regard to the action of psychotherapy, the interpersonal negotiation of emotional episodes, and many other issues.

It has been assumed here that emotion-schemas are acquired in the course of development and derive from sociocultural sources. Both these areas offer immensely fertile ground for further study. Studies of childhood development of emotion have lacked a theory of emotion that could properly accommodate their results (e.g., Pine, 1980), since few previous theories, and no psychoanalytic ones, have described emotions as true developmental products. A constructive interplay could occur between the present theory and such studies. An equally useful adjunct would be considerations of the roles and genesis of emotions in cultures and societies. If emotions derive from sociocultural sources, they could not exist if they did not serve social and cultural imperatives. The study of these imperatives would do much to illuminate emotion, not only by giving an account of their sources but by deepening our understanding of their ultimate consequences. Moreover, such investigations could contribute to the psychoanalytic

recognition of social factors in the development and functioning of personality (e.g., Kovel, 1982).

These are some of the refinements that could be introduced into the present theory and a few of the directions that further study could take. But what is the significance of this theory for psychoanalysis? What role might it play in psychoanalytic theory and practice?

Psychoanalysis continues to search for a satisfactory theory of affect, and much turns on the result. First, good theory can illuminate clinical material and orient the therapist. It does not do so directly, for the most part. A therapist does not rehearse the theoretical principles of psychoanalysis as he or she listens to a patient, as a means of developing clinically useful understandings. Theory comes into play outside the therapeutic hour, in the therapist's training and continuing reflection. Coherent theory can gradually form the framework for one's listening, and from that point it exercises a powerful influence over the connections one draws and the significance one imposes on material. Just as good theory can promote the treatment process, bad theory can disrupt it. Incoherence in theory contributes to incoherence in practice, and theoretical reifications can distort the practice and goals of psychotherapy over the course of decades.

The present theory, I believe, avoids many of the shortcomings of previous psychoanalytic affect theories.

The reifications attendant on the concept of psychic energy are, I believe, excluded. There is little danger, on the basis of the present theory, of coming to regard emotion as the outward manifestation of the vicissitudes of an elusive quantity. As a result of the present emphasis on understanding emotions at the level of organizations, there is less danger of seizing on some particular fragment of an emotion and assuming it to be the essence, thereby losing sight of many connections. In a clinical hour, one aspect of an emotion may come forward at one point, and another at a different point. A theory should support the clinician's assumption that a complex but coherent whole is present, and it should guide the elucidation of that whole and its connection to other aspects of the patient's past and present. In fact, it is up to a theory of affect to highlight the many roles emotion may play in psychotherapy. Few clinicians doubt that affect occupies a central role in the process and outcome of psychotherapy (Arlow, 1977; Valenstein, 1962), but at present psychoanalysis as a social institution lacks a theoretical buttress for this intuition. The present theory, with its emphasis on emotions as attempted adaptive solutions distilling unconscious contents, needs and goals, and current coping strategies, offers such a framework.

Modell (1973) has aptly referred to affects as the pre-eminent route to psychoanalytic knowledge, and Rangell

(1966) has characterized them as "the human core". There is a glaring gap between these views of affect and the current affect theories. Current theories are either rudimentary (Brenner, 1974b) or see in affect a biological product (Basch, 1976; Bowlby, 1969; Emde, 1980). These theories are not commensurate with the task they face, which is to accommodate the special psychoanalytic view of the person. However important a role biological considerations may play, this view is not guided by the logic of biological mechanism.

Psychoanalysts have never been content to confine their efforts to treatment, but continue to attempt to expand knowledge about motivation, development, and "the workings of the mind". Affect has been left by the wayside in these efforts, because psychoanalysis has never had a way of conceptualizing them which firmly connected them to the issues of enduring interest. This is all the more true since the demise of drive concepts, which despite their problems could be essentially connected to affect theory. The present theory is offered as a contribution toward integrating emotion into the central considerations of psychoanalysis.



## FOOTNOTES

1. James Strachey, editor of the Standard Edition of Freud's work, assumed that Freud adhered to the discharge view of affect throughout his writings until 1926 (Freud, 1926/1959), and that the energy in the unconscious was considered from the start to be quality-less (see Editor's appendix to Freud, 1894/1962, pp. 66-68). Strachey's reading is a minority one on this point, and it is not clear what grounds he had for denying a change in Freud's thought. However, it is true that even from very early, Freud (1895/1966b) employed a concept of quality-less mental energy (called "Q" for quantity). Thus, the shift in Freud's views that was completed by 1915 was in the nature of an integration of previously un-synthesized concepts.
2. Schafer (1976) and others have posed the question, to whom or what is the ego signalling if it already recognizes the danger? Schur (1953) proposed an elaborate model of this, involving successive stages of recognition and signalling. Freud, though, clearly had no such model in mind. Rather, he seems to have divided the ego, in this formulation, into two parts, one capable of signalling with anxiety and the other capable of initiating defense. He wrote that the ego makes use of the anxiety signal to mobilize the pleasure principle on behalf of defense. In later terms, this meant that anxiety was seen as the motive

for defense.

3. The death instinct has not arisen in the course of this review of Freud's metapsychological writings on affect. It played little part in these writings. After Freud introduced the death instinct his metapsychological interests in affect were confined to anxiety. Insofar as instinct and energy remained relevant to anxiety during that final period of Freud's work, it continued to be libido that Freud cited.

As far as other affects are concerned, Freud assumed a close correspondence between the death instinct and hate (Freud, 1923/1961). In contrast to love, which Freud explored on several occasions, he subjected hate to little study, regarding it essentially as destructive impulses directed toward a particular person. The death instinct also entered indirectly into Freud's account of guilt, especially unconscious guilt. Freud held that the superego is based in part on the death instinct, directed toward the parents and then re-introjected (Freud, 1923/1961). The "tension" between the ego and superego, on which guilt was based, was derived from the energy of the death instinct.

4. There is a large philosophical literature on emotional objects. Some representative works are Gordon (1974), Gosling (1965), Kenny (1963), and Wilson (1972). The present discussion is drawn from Averill (1982) and Solomon (1976).

5. The superego, too, is considered to be based on identifications. In Freud's account, the identifications that help resolve the Oedipal complex form the superego.
6. The concept of the internal, psychological adaptiveness of emotions is similar to de Sousa's (1980a) concept of the "minimal rationality" of emotions. De Sousa argues that if the context of consideration is sufficiently restricted, emotions are always rational, which is to say that there is always a context in which a felt emotion is reasonable and optimal. De Sousa notes the parallels between his conceptions and psychoanalytic principles (de Sousa, 1980a, 1980b).
7. One could attempt to press the account further by trying to explain the "pain" in the childhood situations. But all explanations have to stop somewhere. Freud's lead--pain reflects a certain accumulation of psychic energy--is not appealing.
8. Not all inappropriate emotions are explained in this way. Many, perhaps most, are more simply the products of ignorance, confusion, or some other limitation.

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## APPENDIX

## APPENDIX

Many analytic considerations of affect had to be omitted from the reviews in Chapter III. Following are reviews of papers of particular interest or importance that were judged not to relate directly enough to the concerns of the dissertation to be included in the third chapter. Four papers from the thirties and forties and one from the early sixties are discussed first, in order of their publication, after which is a summary of a debate over the theory of anxiety, which turned on issues of psychology versus physiology.

### Franz Alexander

Franz Alexander's "The Logic of Emotions and its Dynamic Background" (Alexander, 1935) appeared while Alexander was engaged (with Thomas French) in investigations of specific psychodynamic etiologies for psychosomatic illnesses or "organ neuroses", in Alexander's term. In the paper, Alexander describes emotions as adhering to a system of logic, like rational thought. He argues that this logic is intuitively obvious owing to repeated experiences of the "causal relationships" between particular events and particular emotions. Alexander calls the logic underlying an emotional reaction an "emotional syllogism".



We understand anger and aggressive behaviour as a reaction to an attack; fear and guilt as results of aggressiveness; envy as an outgrowth of the feeling of weakness and inadequacy. Such self-evident emotional connections as "I hate him, because he attacks me", I shall call emotional syllogisms. (Alexander, 1935, p. 399)

Alexander is inconsistent with regard to whether the form of emotional logic is the same in conscious and unconscious processes. At first he states "the fundamental emotional connections which I call 'the logic of emotions' are about the same in consciousness and in the unconscious" (p. 401), but shortly he describes unconscious emotional logic as "strange", "primitive", and "archaic".

Alexander's concept of the logic of emotions is essentially a re-statement of the common-sense view that one feels an emotion in response to appropriate circumstances or events. He contends that psychoanalysis makes "seemingly irrational psychic process, such as neurotic symptoms, accessible for psychological explanation" through the reconstruction of unconscious emotional syllogisms (p. 400). This is similar to Freud's inherent justification of emotion view, which holds that an apparently anomalous emotion is appropriate to some unconscious object. Alexander's argument is that this view represents part of the the essence of psychoanalysis.

From the "logic of emotions", Alexander turns to a "vector-analysis of psychic processes" which has little bearing on emotions per se. Alexander proposes three basic

"directions" in psychic processes--incorporation, elimination, and retention--and relates unconscious reasoning and reactions regarding such "tendencies" to psychosomatic conditions. Although Alexander applies his term "emotional syllogism" to these processes, no emotions are discussed.

### Marjorie Brierley

Marjorie Brierley's "Affects in Theory and Practice" was mentioned in the review in the discussions of metapsychology and the ego. The paper appeared in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* in 1937, having been read before an International Congress the previous year. Brierley was a British analyst, and as such was most heavily influenced by Jones, Klein, Glover, and Joan Riviere. In her paper, Brierley bids to restore "affects to a place in theory more consonant with their importance in practice" (Brierley, 1937, p. 257). Though Brierley's explicit statements retain the primacy of instinct and of ego development over affect, the thrust of her argument is toward a view in which instinct is of little real concern and in which ego development is based on affects, rather than the other way around. In these and other respects, her paper anticipates the theories of W.R.D. Fairbairn, and of Otto Kernberg. The paper is widely cited (Emde, 1980;

Glover, 1939; Green, 1977; Jacobson, 1953, 1971; Kernberg, 1976; Novey, 1959, 1961; Rapaport, 1953) and yet its impact has been limited. It proposed a revolution, but the task of carrying it out was left to others.

Brierley introduces her topic with the observation that in the early days of psychoanalysis--the time of the cathartic method--affect played the leading role in theory as well as practice. However, by the time of her writing affect had been almost completely eclipsed in the realm of formal theory by the concept of instinct, while losing little of its clinical importance. "Whatever differences of opinion exist as to principles of technique, no analyst fails to pay attention to his patient's feelings" (Brierley, 1937, p. 257). Affect, she writes, is primary in diagnosis, prognosis, and in the process and criteria of cure. The theoretical predominance of instinct is not consonant with psychoanalytic practice.

Not only was the theoretical neglect of affect discordant with its practical importance, but this neglect had left the understanding of affect in a highly rudimentary state. Analysts would agree, Brierley observes, that affects are in the domain of the ego yet have "peculiarly intimate" connections with instincts. Beyond this, agreement or clearer knowledge was lacking.

Brierley then turns to the core of the new psychoanalytic interests--the early development of the ego in

relation to objects. She gives an account of the role of affect in early psychological development that closely anticipates the account developed by Kernberg more than three decades later. Brierley posits that ego-nuclei--fragments of self--are formed in the infant when experiences lay down memory traces. These experiences are affective in nature, and the affect at this stage is a primitive form, in which sheer sensation is prominent. Objects are involved in two ways. The nature of the sensation-affect is determined by the caretakers' responses to the infant, and the nature of the psychic object formed in the experiences is determined by the quality (good vs. bad) of the sensation-affect.

Brierley states that whereas Freud conceived of this early stage of development as that of the "body-ego", it is better to conceive of the early ego as a series of "part-body part-object nuclei". Thus, Brierley's hypothesis is of a sequence of sensation-affect-object experiences that lay down memories and subsequently begin to unify into fragments of self, or as Kernberg would later describe them, self-object-affect units. Of particular note in Brierley's account is the postulated unity of sensation, affect, self, and object, in which affect is the primary organizing given. Affect is thus described as the foundation for all development.

Brierley's suggestion that there are many instincts,



each with its own affect, was noted in the discussion on metapsychology in Chapter III. Such a suggestion could only have been made at a time of profound change in psychoanalytic theory. The Freudian focus on instincts and their vicissitudes was giving way, in theory and practice alike, to different interests. For this reason, and also because of the decline in Freud's dominance of the movement, the definition of the essence of psychoanalysis was more open to question than at any time before. Brierley and her colleagues were in the process of founding the object-relations approach, in which a focus on the early development of the ego through interactions with real and fantasied objects replaced instincts as the defining focus of psychoanalysis. This new approach, with its new defining focus, provided the basis for Brierley's assumption of multiple instincts. Only if psychoanalytic theory was defined by something apart from dual instinct theory could such a move be made.

In the remainder of her paper, Brierley touches on a variety of issues raised by the theory she had advanced. First, she notes that affects not only underlie ego development but are influenced in turn by development. In particular, as ego development proceeds through Klein's phase of the "depressive position" with the development of whole, coherent self and objects, enduring attitudes of love and hate are formed. Brierley recognizes (as many analytic

theorists have not) that she is describing qualitatively different phenomena under the general heading of affect, and she proposes a classification scheme and terminology. She suggests that the earliest sensation-affects, lacking objects "in the adult sense", be distinguished by the term "feelings". She suggests "emotions" as the term for affects tied to objects. Finally, she correctly notes that love and hate "are not in themselves emotions, but...are dispositions to experience certain emotions about certain objects" (Brierley, 1937, p. 264), and suggests adopting the term "sentiments" from Shand (1914).

### Edward Glover

In 1939, another British analyst, Edward Glover, published a theoretical paper on affect, "The Psycho-Analysis of Affects". Glover begins by describing psychoanalysis as being in a "fallow period" in its development, due to a relative neglect of affect. Accordingly, he seeks to re-stimulate psychoanalytic progress with a fundamental study of affect. Only if such a study is added to the Kleinian investigations of "early stages of ego organization [and] early ideational content" (Glover, 1939, p. 299), he implies, will psychoanalytic theory continue to move forward.

Glover ascribes the neglect of affect to a variety of

sources. These include the greater difficulty in comprehending affects, as compared with ideas, and the greater "subjective resistances" aroused by the study of affect. He also cites the focus on anxiety, at the expense of other affects. Finally, like Brierley (1937) before him and Fenichel (1941/1954) after him, he notes that the study of instinct--in particular, the "ideational derivatives" of instincts--had supplanted interest in affects, despite the fact that "[i]t is to the actual derivatives of instinct-stress [and not to the abstract concept of instinct] that we must look for an explanation of mental behavior" (Glover, 1939, p. 300, emphasis in original).

A clearer understanding of Glover's objectives in this paper can be gathered from an annotation he wrote for it later (Glover, 1956). There, he describes his objections to the practice, at the time the paper was written, of attributing adult phenomena to infants. He suggests that the attribution of adult affects to infants was a product of the absence of mental contents, through which psychoanalytic theorists were accustomed to tracing developmental stages; that is, without the guideposts of ideas, analysts fell back on an assumption that what was present in adults was present from the beginning of life. Glover argues that this assumption cannot be sustained for affects any more than it can be for ideas, and states that the purpose of the 1939 paper was to provide an example of a method for deducing the

nature of an infantile affect. He describes the method as one of drawing deductions from metapsychology and "psychobiological possibility", and then refining and extending these through an examination of clinical evidence.

Glover's turn to the "primary affects" of infancy carries the implication that it is through an understanding of the earliest, and thus the most basic, affects that knowledge can be gained of their nature and significance. Since earliest experience cannot be directly studied, Glover reasons, the nature of primary affects must be deduced through one or several classification schemes derived from metapsychology. He notes, with varying degrees of approval, several such possible bases of classification. "Pleasure vs. pain" he rejects as too simple to have much value. Somewhat more promising is classification with respect to instinct or component instinct. (In this connection, Glover draws a striking equivalence between physiological processes and instinctual energy, linking affective experience and the "distribution" of libido and aggressive energy among body organs, and tracing both to sensory stimulation and the action of the sympathetic nervous system.) Glover cites with still more approval the classification of affects according to whether they are "simple" or "compound", and argues for the importance of differentiating mixture, fusion, and simultaneous experience of different affects. Finally, however, Glover rejects these candidates for basic



classification in favor of a distinction between tension affects and discharge affects.

In the remainder of the paper, Glover develops a hypothesis of an early, basic tension affect. He refers to a broad variety of clinical phenomena, derived from conditions including hysteria, depression, and psychogenic impotence. In reviewing these phenomena, he equates sensations of tension, the metapsychological concept of tension, and unconscious fantasies of fullness and bursting. He concludes that the original essence of this affect is a "psychic feeling of disruption", which progressively assumes different forms during the course of development.

Glover concludes with a comparison of his tension affect with Jones' concept of aphanesis, which it closely resembles. Glover states that his tension affect is a developmentally earlier, more basic entity. It is doubtful that Jones would have accepted this claim, as he believed aphanesis to be the earliest and most fundamental affect.

### Gregory Zilboorg

One of Gregory Zilboorg's papers was reviewed in the discussion of defense and affect in Chapter III. Another of his papers, "Affects, Personal and Social", was read before the New York Psychoanalytic Society in 1944, and it was published the following year. The tone of the paper is

remarkable. Unlike the great majority of theoretical psychoanalytic papers, it is written in a vigorously polemical key. Zilboorg's motive in writing the paper seems to have been an urgent impulse toward social commentary, together with a desire to comment on--decry, in fact--the dominant trends in psychoanalytically informed social thought. The theory of affect was apparently a secondary concern, a vehicle for treating other issues, and Zilboorg gives less attention to affect than to his other concerns. When he does turn to affect, it is not clear that the phenomena he discusses are actually affects rather than related entities.

In this paper, Zilboorg seems to be responding primarily to the psychologizing of society, which he maintains is rampant in psychoanalytic social thought and in psychoanalytically informed sociology. He criticizes models of society which are based on the individual, objecting that these models fatuously assume that the workings of social structure are based on identical principles as the psychological or biological functioning of an individual person. He argues that society operates on entirely different principles, particularly cultural and economic ones, and that therefore the comprehension and amelioration of social ills such as "inequality, hatred, crises, and slavery of man at the hands of man" (p. 45) cannot proceed along psychological lines.

Zilboorg has much criticism to offer of previous social psychology, accusing Freud of "flagrant mistakes" in the area and describing pre-Freudian social psychology as subjective and psychologically naive. When he points to Marx as a much undervalued and inadequately understood source of social analysis, and one begins to suspect that Zilboorg was becoming more disturbed by the injustices and philosophical shortcomings of liberal humanism, of which psychoanalytic theory was a part, as he witnessed the vanquishing of fascism in Europe. That is, as the end of the enormous social evil of Naziism came into view, socialists--and Zilboorg's citations of Marx and adoption of some central Marxian tenets makes one suspect he was sympathetic to socialism at that time--may have looked with renewed alarm at the injustices and distortions in democratic societies, which had subdued fascism and which would prevail afterward, at least in the West.

Zilboorg, it becomes clear, had deep misgivings about the dominant trends in his own and other societies, and about the forces that control the functioning of societies. When he describes social affects (which are really sentiments, or complexes of attitudes and tendencies to experience affects), he points to such phenomena as persecution of outgroups, idealization of unrealistic goals and of leaders, and abstract love of fellow members of the group or class combined with rigid intolerance of deviance.

He argues that these phenomena establish that societies do not function on the basis of libido, at least not in its mature (genital) form, contrary to Freud's position (Freud, 1921). Personal affects, on the other hand, Zilboorg considers to be based on libido, a position he justifies only scantily.

Regarding the question of what social affects are based on, if not on libido, Zilboorg proceeds in two directions. On the one hand, he states that social affects, and therefore the functioning of society, derive from aggression and from "partial" or "pregenital" instincts. This, he maintains, accounts for the primitiveness and destructiveness of society, and for its hostility to loving, concrete mutuality. On the other hand, he states that social affects spring not from instinctual sources at all but from "the cultural, economic determinants which capture the psychobiological apparatus of man" (pp. 42-3).

Zilboorg's purview in this paper is sweeping, and is in exhilarating contrast to the typical psychoanalytic theoretical discussion. But despite his title, the paper's strengths are not in the theory of affect. In particular, Zilboorg does not address a central question, one which, given his Marxian interests and his appreciation for distinct levels of organization, one might have anticipated he would discuss. This is the question of the role of social structure and the principles that organize it in the



formation of affect. Zilboorg discusses only the influence in the converse direction, namely the ways that affects organize both the individual and society.

### Samuel Novey

Samuel Novey wrote two papers on affect, of which only the second is discussed here. In this paper, Novey (1961) brings together affect and object representation, which had been another interest of his (Novey, 1958). His central points in this paper are that affect plays a critical role in object representation, and that cognition and affect are intermingled in object representation and in all other mental phenomena as well.

Much of the paper is taken up with an elaboration of the concept of object representation, which Novey (1958) had drawn from Melanie Klein and W. R. D. Fairbairn, while rejecting many of their views. He compares his view of object representation to the psychological theory of "apperception", citing Murray (1938), among others. Novey's view of object representation is that it consists of interpretations of the concrete behavior of real people, as these interpretations are remembered and organized. Novey emphasizes that all responses to people, and thus all personality structure (which is based on internalizations of others), depend on such subjective interpretation.

Affect is so much involved in these interpretations, Novey (1961) maintains, that it predominates over cognition in the content of object representations. Not only does affect control the content of representations as they are acquired, but it controls the form taken by them at any given time.

Novey was the first writer after Brierley (1937) to underline so forcefully the intimate connection between affect and object representation. Unfortunately, he does not go beyond a statement of the importance of this connection to a theoretical account. His discussion is limited to a series of observations concerning the frequent interaction of subjective interpretations of people, intrapsychic conflict, and emotion. In effect, he advocates a change in psychoanalytic theory but does not offer a way to carry it out.

### **The Anxiety Controversy**

In the early fifties, there appeared a series of papers dealing with the issue of "automatic" anxiety and the concomitant issue of Freud's "anxiety-neurosis". The contradiction between the psychological formulation of anxiety as a response to perceived danger (Freud, 1926) and the physiological concept of automatic anxiety could no longer be ignored, and several attempts were made to resolve

it, with varying degrees of success. The issue derived its urgency from the centrality of anxiety in psychoanalytic theory and from the deep divergence between the two views of anxiety; the dispute involved the question of whether psychoanalysis was a biological or a psychological discipline.

In *Inhibition, Symptom, and Anxiety*, Freud had overturned his discharge theory and had entirely altered the psychoanalytic picture of anxiety. Where previously, anxiety had been an "automatic", quasi-physiological reaction, it became a psychological appraisal of danger, carried out by the ego. The earlier theory was not entirely abandoned by Freud, however, and was maintained by some followers (e.g., Wilhelm Reich). Analytic theorists were thus faced with two formulations of anxiety, one in harmony with Freud's neurological, physiological model, the other a product of the psychological model and an indication of its growing predominance in psychoanalytic thought.

Elizabeth Zetzel, in "Anxiety and the Capacity to Bear It" (1949), advanced a dual scheme that accommodated both of Freud's conceptions. Zetzel attributed anxiety to mounting instinctual tension, in harmony with Freud's early work. She distinguished between primary and secondary anxiety. Primary anxiety is the direct consequence of tension that has risen beyond a certain threshold which is constitutionally given. Such anxiety characterizes infants,

adults in a traumatic state, and adults who fail to develop and tolerate secondary anxiety. The latter type of anxiety is a signal of an "internal danger situation", prototypically a rise in tension (i.e., impulse). It requires maturity of the ego, and offers crucial adaptive advantages.

Zetzel gives the example of facing an examination. Secondary anxiety, she writes, offers alertness, vigilance to misleading questions, and heightened mobilization of intelligence. Primary anxiety leads to disorganization, confusion, and finally panic. The scheme parallels Fenichel's (1941) distinction between primitive and tamed affects, with the difference that Fenichel portrays affects as a raw source, much like instincts, which the ego confronts and tries to tame, whereas Zetzel describes secondary anxiety as a product of the ego, created by it for its own purposes over the course of development.

Zetzel's most significant departure from Freud's conceptions is in her view of the role of biology in secondary anxiety. Freud had little to say on this, and one assumes that biology was of relatively little importance in his concept of signal anxiety. Zetzel, however, emphasizes the biological origins of secondary anxiety, and finds in secondary anxiety most of the "unequivocally purposive" psychological and physiological components of fear. She mentions the "fight-flight" response, and implies that



secondary anxiety, despite its appearance relatively late in individual development, is an inherited adaptive response--what Freud would have called "instinctive" as distinct from "instinctual".

Charles Brenner, in a paper delivered in 1950 and published later in adapted form (Brenner, 1953), argued vigorously that Freud's concept of automatic anxiety, and the related clinical entity anxiety neurosis, could not be supported. He asserted that Freud's evidence for automatic anxiety--the association of anxiety with "unsatisfying" sexual practices and the "unanalyzability" of the anxiety in these cases--had been fallacious. He reviewed the literature on traumatic neurosis in war and peace, and concluded that it supported a view of neurotic anxiety as dependent in all cases on the mobilization of unconscious conflicts, never directly caused by the vicissitudes of "excitation". He urged the abandonment of any concept of automatic (physiological) anxiety, and proposed instead to regard anxiety as "an emotion (affect) which the anticipation of danger evokes in the ego" (p. 22). He denied that this emotion, and by implication any emotion, could exist in infancy--the state that other theorists had considered infantile anxiety (Spitz, 1950) Brenner argued could only be considered global unpleasure, a precursor to anxiety and other unpleasant emotions, which depend on memory, sensory perception, and other cognitive functions.

Abram Blau, in "In Support of Freud's Syndrome of 'Actual' Anxiety Neurosis" (Blau, 1952), did not refer to Brenner's paper but said anxiety neurosis was being widely thought of as "an obsolete concept". Blau's purpose was to re-assert the existence of anxiety neurosis as a clinical entity distinct from "functional psychoneurosis" and psychosis. Blau believed that "actual neurosis, a physiological or physiopathological reaction" (p. 363) was a real clinical entity, and that Freud's original description of it was correct.

Blau's definition of anxiety neurosis diverged from Freud's, however. Freud defined it entirely on the basis of its etiology; anxiety neurosis was anxiety with no analyzable psychological source and caused by physical factors, specifically unsatisfying sexual practices. Blau's definition is initially obscure. At the outset of the paper, he indicates he will adhere to Freud's view, and one anticipates he will follow early Freud in distinguishing anxiety with psychological and physical causes. A series of examples of proposed subtypes of anxiety neurosis including reactions to trauma, childhood conduct disorders and "habit disorders", and psychosomatic disorders suggests that Blau's concept of anxiety disorder was broader than Freud's and based on different principles.

In the end, it is difficult to know with certainty what Blau's definition of anxiety neurosis was. It seems to have

been equivalent to anxiety itself, with the added complication that he believed anxiety could take many forms. He regarded anxiety as "biological".

In essence, anxiety is a form of emotion and a natural biological phenomenon. To some degree it occurs at various times in all people. At root, it is a physiological visceral response to a counterbalance threats to the basic economy of the organism. (p. 369)

Blau's central thesis may have been that psychoanalysts deal frequently with symptoms that represent an automatic response, unmediated by psychological conflict.

The clearest insight into Blau's conceptualization is offered by his recommendations for treatment of anxiety neurosis as compared with treatment of conflict-based psychoneurosis.

In therapy each requires a diametrically different approach. For the psychoneurosis, psycho-analysis is indicated, while the actual anxiety neurosis needs some reality change either by the direct use of the transference relationship or an alteration of the environment. (p. 371)

For unconscious conflict, Blau made the familiar psychoanalytic prescription of insight through analysis. For anxiety neurosis, and for anxiety in the context of a psychoneurosis, he considered insight irrelevant. A change in the environment or, failing that, some form of reassurance and support were the pertinent measures. Blau went on to apply standard psychoanalytic formulations about anxiety to anxiety neurosis (e.g., that anxiety neurosis should be kept at an optimum level in analytic sessions),

demonstrating that he regarded anxiety and anxiety neurosis as equivalent, and saw both as automatic, physiological processes.

Schur's "The Ego in Anxiety" (1953) did not take Freud's two views of anxiety as its main focus, but it included a detailed assessment of them. Schur noted Freud's inability to integrate his anxiety theories.

Freud's difficulty was to reconcile his new findings with his old theories and clinical observations, his new approach to anxiety as a psychological problem with his previous "biological" anxiety theories. (Schur, 1953, p. 85)

Schur denied that Freud's earlier theory of anxiety as the direct "toxic" conversion of libido was viable, and pointed to internal contradictions and the absence of a plausible physiological mechanism. He remarked on the "tenacity" with which Freud held on to the early view. He then went on to argue that Freud's clinical observations, which Freud had advanced to support the toxic view of anxiety, could be accounted for by the signal theory, if one added to it the concept that frustration of instinctual wishes produces a danger situation, to which the ego responds with the anxiety signal. Schur's advocacy of the signal theory was with one proviso; Schur, like Rangell (1955), objected to the concept of the ego "producing" anxiety, since anxiety is experienced passively. He argued that the ego could create danger (e.g., through fantasy) as a means of causing a modest amount of anxiety, which could then be used as a signal.



The early 1950's group of papers on anxiety concluded with three papers published as companion pieces in the 1955 volume of the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*; two of these papers (Rangell, 1955; Zetzel, 1955) had been read in a symposium on anxiety the previous year.

Zetzel (1955) returned to her topic of 1949, but did not bring her distinction between primary and secondary anxiety into her discussion. The attributes she had divided between primary and secondary anxiety in 1949 appear together in her 1955 version of the concept. She reviewed Freud's changing views, and took his final view of anxiety--as a response to a "danger situation"--as the starting point for further discussion. She cited some recent biology, particularly Cannon and Selye, emphasizing the location of the concept of anxiety at the "borderline" of psychology and physiology and suggesting that psychoanalytic and biological formulations converge in this area.

Instead of her earlier distinction between primary and secondary anxiety, Zetzel (1955) proposed to make the distinction in terms of the ego's development rather than in the nature of the anxiety itself. When the ego is sufficiently mature, anxiety (an automatic, more or less biological response to a large variety of dangers) can be used by the ego as an indication that some coping measures are warranted.

Rangell (1955) focused on the dual views of Freud, and he announced in his subtitle ("A Statement of a Unitary Theory") that he intended to synthesize them. He reviewed the recent literature arguing the existence of actual neurosis and automatic anxiety, and the overlapping question of whether infants experience true anxiety. He then proposed his own view, which was that anxiety is always a reaction to some kind of danger, which was to say, it always has psychological content and is never "automatic" in the sense in which the term was being used. Rangell denied that infants experienced anxiety, calling their response to unmanageable overstimulation "unpleasure". He called the theory "unitary" because he felt he had included the essential element of anxiety neurosis under the heading of a "dammed up state", which he described as occurring when there is an excess of input and restricted possibilities of output. In the dual theory, according to Rangell, this was thought to lead automatically to anxiety, which represented a conversion of the excess energy. In Rangell's view, the anxiety in this situation was like anxiety in any other situation, a signal that a danger was present--in this case, the danger that helplessness will continue or worsen.

In the remainder of the paper, Rangell addressed the relation of his views to current theory of instinct, affect, and ego. He largely rehearsed familiar formulations. He felt that anxiety at moderate levels was consonant with the

work of the ego, but had a disorganizing effect at high levels, and that a strong ego was able to "tame" anxiety. Consequently, he felt anxiety was a more predominantly disruptive force early in life. He had denied that anxiety is a conversion of energy, but inexplicably felt obligated to discuss the "energy source" of affects; here he produced the novel notion that the energy for affects is derived from a pool of energy associated with instinctive defensive behavior patterns. Regarding the connection with instinct in the typical Freudian sense (libido and aggression), Rangell agreed with Freud's (1926) final view, that anxiety tends to appear in conjunction with high states of instinctual tension because such states represent various dangers, not because the tension spills over into anxiety, so to speak.

Rangell (1968) later returned to this topic, devoting his entire presidential address to the American Psychoanalytic Association to the issue of Freud's dual view of anxiety. He reiterated his "unitary" view, repeating that anxiety neurosis as Freud described it is a genuine clinical syndrome but that it is not caused by a different mechanism than ordinary anxiety. Rangell repeated at greater length his argument that "trauma" (i.e., an unmanageable influx of stimulation, a concept of enormous generality, encompassing events from an infant's mother leaving the room to a threat of death in battle) constituted

danger, and that therefore anxiety in traumatic situations represents a warning like anxiety in other situations.

In this later paper, Rangell also emphasized that signal anxiety is "automatic". In the literature on anxiety, "automatic" and "signal" anxiety were contrasted, but Rangell argued that this contrast ignored the fact that anxiety is experienced passively; he objected to speaking of the ego actively "producing" anxiety, and argued that all anxiety is "automatic".

The third of the three 1955 papers (Flescher, 1955), despite its title, "A Dualistic Viewpoint on Anxiety", has little to say about Freud's two views. Flescher's purpose was to advance a view of anxiety as a direct derivative of an instinct (as in Freud's earlier view), but of the aggressive instinct, not the libidinal one. Since Flescher argued that anxiety derives solely from aggressive energy (specifically, aggressive energy dammed up due to environmental or internal prohibitions), one is left uncertain about why he calls his viewpoint "dualistic". The term seems to refer to the simultaneous involvement of libido and aggressive energy in anxiety; the anxiety itself, though, Flescher held to proceed directly from aggressive energies.



