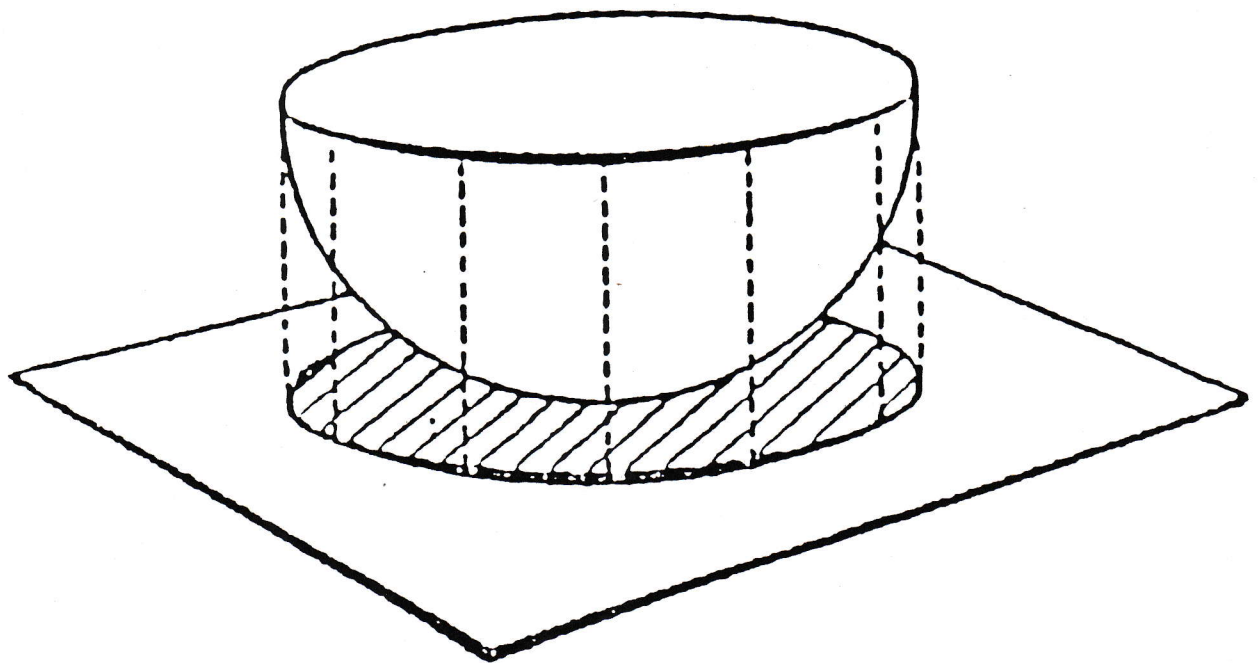


Centre
for
Freudian Analysis and Research

NEWSLETTER



MAY/JUNE 1989 No. 17

23 Primrose Gardens, London NW3

Texts sent for publication in the Newsletter must reach us by
20th July and 20th August 1989 for the next two issues respectively.
Please send contributions to: M Dury at 69 Foyle Road, London SE3 7EQ.

CONTENTS

	Page
1. Reflections: 'On Narcissism' and the Mirror Phase by M A O'Donnell	1
2. Kagemusha (or The Other in the Mirror Phase) by F Nakano	9
3. The Elusive Image by Marc Dury	17

Reflections: 'On Narcissism' and the Mirror Phase

by M A O'Donnell

Narcissus, seeing his own face mirrored in a pool of water, 'Without knowing that what he saw was himself...fell in love with what he saw, and as he looked with love at his own reflection, the face into which he gazed looked back at him with love also' (Rex Warner: 'The Stories of the Greeks' - Noonday Press NY 1967). Thus, according to the myth, narcissism may be defined as loving the image of oneself as other; a psychic state considered by Havelock Ellis, in 1898, as an "extreme form" of autoerotism (Laplanche/Pontalis: 'Auto-erotism': 'The Language of Psychoanalysis, 1988), and by Paul Nacke, in 1899, as a perversion, indicating 'the attitude of a person who treats his own body in the same way in which the body of a sexual object is ordinarily treated' (Freud: 'On narcissism', 1914 v.II.p.65.P.E). But in 1909, according to Ernest Jones, 'Freud had declared that narcissism was a necessary intermediate stage between auto-erotism and object-love' (ed. note, 'On Narcissism', vol II, P.E.), and in his 1914 paper: 'On Narcissism', he develops 'the conception of a primary and normal narcissism...a measure of which may justifiably be attributed to every living creature' (Freud: 'On Narcissism', p.66.).

Freud's theory of narcissism is developmental, in that it indicates a stage in the infant's life located in time, and structural/economic, in that it describes a particular distribution of sexual energy or libido, whereby the subject's own ego is cathected as object: 'we form the idea', he states, 'of there being an original libidinal cathexis of the ego, from which some is later given off to objects, but which fundamentally persists, and is related to the object-cathexes much as the body of an amoeba is related to the pseudopodia which it puts out' ('On narcissism' pp.67/8). According to Freud's account of infantile development, 'sucking at the mother's breast is the starting-point of the whole of sexual life, the unmatched prototype of every sexual satisfaction', the mother's breast being, for the infant, 'the first object of the sexual instinct(drive)' (Freud: 'The Libido Theory and narcissism', 1916-17: 'Introductory lectures', No.26. p.356.P.E).

Freud uses the term 'sexuality' very broadly, to cover the whole of the individual's libidinal evolution, claiming that 'manifestations of the sexual instincts(drives) can be observed from the very first' ('Totem and Taboo', 1912-13.

vol.13 p.146.P.E), and he frequently uses the term 'object' to indicate part-object, e.g the mother's breast, or a part of the infant's own body. Lacan's use of the word 'sexual' is more specific, indicating gendered difference, which is acquired by each individual at the conclusion of the Oedipus, through the operation of the Paternal Metaphor, which offers the child subjective status in language as male or female.

According to Freud, what for him is the infant's pre-oedipal sexuality, is not unified, but fragmented into component drives. What perhaps could be more properly termed sensual, rather than sexual, satisfaction, is at first analitically dependent on the taking of nourishment from the mother's breast, thus connecting the infant's sensual sucking activity with the drive for self-preservation. In Freud's description, it is in the moment of separation from the mother's breast, that 'the need for repeating the sexual satisfaction becomes detached from the need for taking nourishment ('Essays on Sexuality', 1905. vol.7.P.E.p.98), thumb sucking providing the infant with an auto-sensual substitution for the lost breast. This is the moment, at the onset of what Freud designates as the autoerotic stage, when the sexual drive as such, begins to separate itself from the simple satisfaction of biological needs. During the autoerotic stage, says Freud, the separate component drives 'work independently of one another to obtain pleasure and find satisfaction in the subject's own body' ('Totem and Taboo' vol.13.P.E.p.146). During the stage of narcissism, however, which, for Freud, divides the autoerotic stage into two parts, 'the hitherto dissociated sexual instincts(drives), come together into a single unity and cathect the ego as an object'(ibid, p.147).

For Freud (and later, Lacan), 'a unity comparable to the ego cannot exist in the individual from the start; the ego has to be developed. The autoerotic instincts(drives) however, are there from the very first; no there must be something added to auto-erotism - a new psychical action - in order to bring about narcissism'. ('On Narcissism', p.69). For Lacan, as Benvenuto and Kennedy suggest, it would appear that this 'new psychical action' is that moment of captation by the image, at the onset of what he describes as the mirror-phase, in which the infant, supported in the arms of its mother, recognises what it perceives as its own self, in the apparently unified form of reflected 'other'. Freud describes the ego as a 'mental projection of the surface of the body' (quoted by Benvenuto/Kennedy, in 'The Works of Jacques Lacan' F A books 1986,p.56). 'The ego', he states, 'is first and foremost a bodily ego; it is not merely a surface entity, but is itself the projection of a surface (Freud: 'The Ego and the Id' 1923, P.E.vol.II.p.364) which, as Benvenuto/Kennedy also point out, can be compared to the projection of the infant's body on to the surface of the mirror (Ibid,p.56).

Freud makes an interesting link between individual psychic mechanisms operative in narcissism, and collective modes of thought belonging to the animistic phase of early human history, a period when, according to Freud, the 'Omnipotence of Thoughts' ('On Narcissism' p.67) took precedence over material reality, and 'primitive man', by a process of projection, 'transposed the structural conditions of his own mind into the external world' ('Totem and Taboo' p.149), magically mistaking ideal connections for real ones (Ibid. p.136). Connecting the 'primitive' social to the so-called 'civilised psychic, in 'Totem and Taboo', he states that: 'the projection outwards of internal perceptions is a primitive mechanism, to which, for instance, our sense perceptions are subject, and which therefore normally plays a very large part in determining the form taken by our external world' (Ibid. p.120). That is, our perception of reality is, to a greater or lesser extent, constructed by what we subjectively project from inside - to outside - the 'inside' therefore being perceived as 'outside', which throws into question the assumed stability of these categories.

For Lacan, the mirror-phase, which begins at about the age of six months, is, in fact, a metaphor for the structural formation of the ego. For the infant, the jubilant recognition of its mirrored 'self' creates an illusion of mastery, enabling a movement from the experience of its own body as fragmented, to an anticipation of wholeness, reflected in the glass. But this doubled image indicates a fundamental split - a mastery of self through alienation - the infant appearing in the image where it is not - in the place of the specular other, thus already experiencing its own lived reality as fiction. As Lacan states: 'This form situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction'. ('Ecrits', Sheridan tr. Tavistock 1977 ed. P.2). The infant is 'duped' by its own image. (Nakano: 'Kagemusha' 1988). Held in front of the mirror by its parental prop, the child is also 'held' by what it perceives as itself, outside itself. Transfixed by its own gaze, it identifies with its own perceived image: 'in a series of gestures in which he experiences in play the relation between the movements assumed in the image and the reflected environment, and between this virtual complex and the reality it reduplicates - the child's own body, and the persons and things, around him' (Ibid. p.1).

The ego is thus an imaginary construct, and the mirror-phase the 'symbolic matrix' which allows the 'primordial' coming-into-being of the 'I' through narcissism. It is only possible to be narcissistic through an other, and the child can only recognise its own image through the mediation of an Other. As Lacan, in his later theory explains, it is not simply the determination of the ego by the image of the other - there is also a symbolic function at play, in that the infant, as well as recognising itself, also recognises, and is recognised by, the Other, at this point represented

by the M/Other. The infant situates himself socially in relation to an other, and, as Anika Lemaire states: 'It is important to the child to recognise someone able to recognise him, and even more important, to impose upon him and dominate him' ('Jacques Lacan' RKP ed.p.177).

The 'I' which the child perceives in the mirror becomes its ideal ego, and the basis for its later identification with others, through which dialectical process, it will attempt to resolve the fundamentally 'irreducible' gap between its idealised image and its own reality. But the discordance between the infant's actual fragmented body and its unified ideal image creates a rivalry between self and other, aggressivity being closely linked to narcissistic identification, in which the not yet fully constituted subject has to find its place, not just in relation to, but in confrontation with, the other, where the choice appears to be one of domination or annihilation.

Until the age of about eighteen months, the infant subordinates itself to the desire of the mother. The mirrored image, in that it stands in for something which is not there, an apparent totality, possesses already for the infant, the characteristics of the phallus, desired by the mother. The infant wants only what the mother wants, its desire being, therefore, the Mother's desire (thus all desire is mediated through an other). In an attempt to become the object of the mother's desire, the infant merges in imaginary identification with the phallus, in this way, as child/phallus, supplying the mother's lack. This, for Lacan, is the primary narcissistic phase in which the mother is the all-powerful phallic Mother, complete in the possession of her child, which is perceived, and perceives itself, as the phallic extension of her own body. Locked in a dual relation, which recognises no boundaries between self/image, self/other, self/Mother, the child reflects on to others, 'en miroir'(Rose), its own aggressivity - if it hits another child, it will say it has been struck; if it sees another child cry, it will also cry. Lacan points to what he perceives as 'the evident connection between the narcissistic libido and the alienating function of the I', and 'the aggressivity it releases in any relation to the other, even', he states, 'in a relation involving the most Samaritan of aid' ('Ecrits' p.6). And in agreement with Freud's early formulation of the libido theory, he indicates 'the dynamic opposition between this libido and the sexual libido'(Ibid,p.6). - an opposition redefined in Freud's later writings, as an antithesis between life-drives and death-drives - between Eros and Thanatos ('Beyond the Pleasure Principle', vol.II.P.E). Although the mirror-image precipitates the child into aggression, rivalry and alienation, it also provides the necessary fiction which will enable the subject to (mis)-recognise itself and, through a secondary symbolic identification with the 'I' of its own discourse, to participate in the symbolic social order. It is the Oedipus which, for Lacan, signifies the

final stage of the child's acquisition of subjectivity, when intervention from the place of the Father introduces the Third Term which represents the cultural Law forbidding incest, thus disrupting the dual relation between Mother/child. Confronted by Paternal Law, the child, through symbolic identification with the father as representative of the Law, is fully constituted as a sexed being, engendered as subject through his/her recognition of Symbolic castration/lack of the imaginary phallus.

The imposition of Paternal Law signifies for the infant the loss of its primary narcissism, which necessitates the setting up of a new ego-ideal, which, according to Freud, acts as 'the substitute for the lost narcissism of his childhood, in which he was his own ideal', and the formation of this ideal is also, for Freud, 'the conditioning factor of repression' ('On Narcissism' p.88). For Freud, the ego-ideal arises 'from the critical influence of (the child's) parents', and later, society, but he also identifies 'a special psychical agency', the conscience, or superego, which measures the ego's performance by the demands of its ideal (Ibid, p.89/90). But, according to Benvenuto/Kennedy, whereas the superego's function is punitive and aggressive, the ego-ideal brings into the superego 'a narcissistic element, the love for one's own ideal' ('The Works of Jacques Lacan', p.51).

In his second topography, Freud emphasises the adaptive function of the ego, its subordination to the 'reality principle' ('Introductory Lectures', no.22: 'Development and Regression', p.402 P.E0, whereas in his first topography, the ego's function is mainly one of defence against unconscious impulses. Lacan emphasises the ego's function of mis-recognition: 'our experience', he states, 'teaches us not to regard the ego as centred on the perception-consciousness system, or as organised by the "reality principle"...we should start instead from the function of meconnaissance that characterises the ego in all its structures' ('Ecrits', p.6).

Freud makes a distinction between what he defines as a primary and normal narcissism and a secondary pathological form, manifested in psychosis - notably, paranoia. He uses the concept of narcissism in order to differentiate between neurosis and psychosis. In the transference neuroses (hysteria and obsessional neurosis), although there is a withdrawal of libido from external objects, erotic cathexes are maintained in phantasy, but in psychosis, the subject 'has withdrawn his libido from people and things in the external world, without replacing them by others in phantasy' ('On Narcissism' p.66). This, according to Freud, results in megalomania, whereby 'the liberated libido becomes attached to the ego, and is used for the aggrandisement of the ego' ('Schreber', vol 9. P.E. p.211). The paranoid delusion is, in fact, according to Freud, 'an attempt at recovery, a process of reconstruction' (Ibid.

p.207). Schreber's end-of-the-world vision is an example of a 'delusion in which his ego was retained and the world sacrificed'(Ibid p.207). Schreber himself was "the only real man left alive" and the people around him "miracled up, cursorily improvised men".(ibid p.207). In his psychosis ~Schreber had withdrawn his libido from the external world, and his delusion is, for Freud, 'the projection of this internal catastrophe; his subjective world has come to an end since his withdrawal of his love from it'.(ibid p.207).

The opposite of paranoid withdrawal, and the highest point of development for Freud, of object-cathexis, 'is seen in the state of being in love' ('On Narcissism' p.68). The child's first sensual satisfactions are, as we have said, experienced in relation to the nutritive function, and according to Freud, 'the persons who are concerned with a child's feeding, care and protection become his earliest sexual objects: that is to say, in the first instance his mother or a substitute for her'.(ibid p.80). This type of object-choice is what Freud terms 'anaclitic' or 'leaning-on', but there is also a narcissistic type, whereby the subject's own ego is taken as a model. 'Both types of object-choice are open to each individual', states Freud: 'a human being has originally two sexual objects - himself and the woman who nurses him'(Ibid p.81). Homosexuals, according to Freud, demonstrate a narcissistic object-choice. In his study of Leonardo Da Vinci, whom Freud classifies as emotionally homosexual, the child, after repressing his love for his mother, 'puts himself in her place, identifies himself with her, and takes his own person as a model in whose likeness he chooses the new objects of his love' ('Leonardo Da Vinci', ch.III. vol.14.P.E.p.191). In later life, the boys whom he chooses as love-objects, 'are after all only substitute figures and revivals of himself in childhood - boys whom he loves in the way in which his mother loved him when he was a child' (Ibid.p.191).

Most men, says Freud, love anaclitically, anaclitic love involving a sexual overvaluation of the love-object which is derived from the child's original narcissism, and is, in fact, 'a transference of that narcissism to the sexual object' ('On Narcissism', p.82). Most women, however, are in Freud's view (and here we must remember the social-historical moment in which he is speaking), narcissistic, loving essentially 'only themselves' (Ibid.p.82), their prominent need being to be loved. Freud emphasises what he regards as 'the importance of this type of woman for the erotic life of mankind' (Ibid p.82), the 'charm' of 'another person's narcissism' (Ibid p.82) having, he says, 'a great attraction for those who have renounced part of their own' (Ibid p.82/3). The narcissistic person, he states, maintains what appears to be 'a blissful state of mind - an unassailable libidinal position' (Ibid.p.83), but he also points to the essential 'incongruity between the types of object-choice, which would seem to relate well to

what Lacan speaks of as the essential non-relation between the sexes, whilst also raising the 'question of the meaning of beauty as both formative and erogenic' ('Ecrits' p.3).

In some case, according to Freud, the sexual ideal may be substituted for the ego-ideal, whereby 'what possesses the excellence which the ego lacks for making it an ideal, is loved' ('On Narcissism', p.96). In a similar way, the ego-ideal may be subsumed under the heading of a social ideal, e.g. family, class, nation. The ideal, states Freud, 'binds not only a person's narcissistic libido, but a considerable amount of his homosexual libido, which is in this way turned back into the ego. The non-fulfilment of this ideal liberates homosexual libido, and this is transformed into a sense of guilt (social anxiety)' (Ibid. p.96/7). Idealisation, for Freud, concerns the object: 'that object, without any alteration in its nature is aggrandised and exalted in the subject's mind' (Ibid. p.88). Sublimation, however, concerns object-libido, and 'consists in the instincts (drives) directing itself towards an aim other than, and remote from, that of sexual satisfaction' (Ibid. p.88). He goes on to say that 'the formation of an ideal heightens the demands of the ego and is the most powerful factor favouring repression; sublimation is a way out, a way by which those demands can be met without involving repression' (Ibid. p.89).

I have a question here, relating to the formation of collectively maintained social ideals, which, at the subjective level, may demand too much from the ego, in terms of a sublimation of homosexual libido, which may consequently have to be repressed, the subsequent 'return of the repressed' resulting in a liberation of homosexual libido which, in order to avoid intolerable social anxiety, is narcissistically projected on to a stigmatised group. Having said this, can we point to a connection between, on the one hand, a collective idealisation of 'The Woman', and a denigration of women and homosexuals, and on the other, the oppression of whatever social or national group is perceived negatively as 'other'? I am thinking particularly of white western oppression of women and stigmatised minority groups at home, and the colonial oppression of what is perceived as the black or alien other, both at home and abroad. This is not, I hope, reducing the social to the psychic (each oppression has its own social/historic specificity - its difference), but an attempt to recognise some of the social implications of particular psychic mechanisms. To give an example - Homi Bhabha, in his introduction to 'Black Skin, White Masks', by Frantz Fanon (Pluto '86ed.), refers to Fanon's description of the social construction and sanctioning of narcissistic forms of identity in the stereotyped discourse of colonialism, which the colonised individual experiences as 'that crushing objecthood' (Fanon p.109). It is within what Fanon describes as the 'racial epidermal schema' (Ibid. p.111) of colonial discourse, that the oppressed subject is both recognised as

'other' in that he is black: "Look, a Negro!" (Ibid.p.111) and denied full humanity, in that he is not white. Fanon repeats the words of the terrified child who, on seeing him, shrinks from its negative recognition of black otherness: "I'm frightened!" (Ibid,p.111) to the safety of its narcissistic identification with the white skin of its mother, who is perceived as whole; a (w)hole whose lack is recognised and denied by displacement on to what is perceived as an 'alien' other.

These questions lead to a consideration of the disjuncture between historically specific social laws, and the unconscious laws which construct our psychic subjectivity, the question being: to what Law are human beings bound? Another question is whether it is possible to speak of a positive narcissism, in the sense of a salutary self-regard, or merely an informed awareness of the mechanisms of our narcissistic psychic structure? Marguerite Duras, perhaps, offers an example of this awareness, in her autobiographical novel 'The Lover' (Flamingo, 1985 ed. Tr. Barbara Bray) when, from the place of the narrator, she gives an account of the adolescent she once was, confronting her own constructed image in the glass:

"It's not the shoes, though, that make the girl look so strangely, so weirdly dressed. No, it's the fact that she's wearing a man's flat-brimmed hat, a brownish-pink fedora with a broad black ribbon. The crucial ambiguity of the image lies in the hat...but why was it bought? No woman, no girl wore a man's fedora in that colony then. No native woman either. What must have happened is, I try it on just for fun, look at myself in the shopkeeper's glass, and see that there, beneath the man's hat, the thin awkward shape, the inadequacy of childhood, has turned into something else. Has ceased to be a harsh, inescapable imposition of nature. Has become, on the contrary, a provoking choice of nature, a choice of the mind. Suddenly it's deliberate. Suddenly I see myself as another, as another would be seen, outside myself, available to all, available to all eyes, in circulation for cities, journeys, desire. I take the hat, and am never parted from it. Having got it, this hat that all by itself makes me whole, I wear it all the time...go everywhere in these shoes, this hat, out of doors, in all weathers, on every occasion. And to town. ('The Lover', p.p.15/16).

KAGEMUSHA

(or The Other in the Mirror Phase)

by F Nakano

The title of my brief talk, today, is KAGEMUSHA. Kagemusha has been translated as "The Shadow Warrior". I prefer to translate it as "The Other" or, more precisely, as "The Double". This title comes from a 1980 film by the Japanese director Akira Kurosawa (who has (for us) another very interesting film, "Rashomon", based on a short story by Ryunosuke Akutagawa called "In the Grove", where five different versions of the same event are presented. Thus, it becomes clear that there is no single truth, but truths, that is, only an individual truth, an individual reality). For those who have not seen the film, Kagemusha tells the story of a petty thief who, in the XVIIth. century, because of his striking resemblance to the dying warlord of a powerful clan, is saved from the hands of the hangman and after being trained to take the place of the leader of the clan, gradually begins to assume, after the leader's death, the chieftain's dignity and character. Most of the members of the clan - apart from the selected few who had plotted the situation - are fooled; but not the dead man's horse which, like Bucephalus, refuses to be mounted by this 'Other'. The discovery of the dupery leads to the downfall of the clan.

This story can, somehow, be linked to the structuration and decline of this thing generally known as early childhood - and, more particularly, to that period which is known as the mirror phase. I prefer the word "phase" to "stage" because, in my opinion, "phase" expresses much better the idea of unsequential transition than "stage" which is, for me, closely related to the idea of a biological development.

Why, you may very well ask, make the connection between this "double", this horse, which is not duped, and the mirror phase? Why indeed! And why not? The link is, for me, the position, at first, of the infant who, like the members of the clan, is duped by this "double" who appears on the surface of the mirror; the infant, later, shifts his position to that of the horse, refusing to be burdened by this Other and throwing it "away", "off", thus freeing himself, at least at this point, of this double.

Some commentators see an antecedent of the mirror phase in Henri Wallon's article, published in 1931 ("Comment se developpe chez l'enfant la notion du corps propre". Journal de Psychologie, pp.705-748) yet is further developed by Lacan after he came into contact with studies carried out by members of the so-called Chicago school, in the thirties, together with other experiments concerning the perceptual relations in animal behaviour and reactions. As with everything else, Lacan gives a new meaning to all these data.

Wallon's descriptions, from mere experiments, became a theory about the imaginary organisation.

Lacan's first use of this expression is in a paper presented during the 1936 meeting of the IPA at Marienbad, text which is rewritten, edited and published for the first time in 1938, under the title of "The Family" (in Encyclopedie Franchise, vol. VIII, "La Vie Mentale") The full text has been republished, in full, in 1984, under the title "Les Complexes Familiaux" (Navarin Editeur). In this 84 text, we can read that the "extero, proprio-, and interceptive sensations are not, even after twelve months, yet fully coordinated, for the recognition of one's own body to be achieved, the same occurring with the correlative notion of that which is external to him"(pg.28).

Thus, the first proprioceptive sensations are, according to Lacan, related neither to the (Freudian) concept of auto-erotism, since "the ego has not yet been constituted", nor to that of narcissism, "for there is no image of an ego"(pg.30).

I shall, here, make a brief parenthesis to mention this use of the word "image". The Freudian use of the word IMAGO (first employed by Jung) is, in my opinion, without its exactness, since, the majority of analysts tends to take IMAGO to mean an image, a primordial image, albeit an unconscious representation when, in reality, the word means "an imitation, a likeness and even an apparition, a ghost, a phantom, a shadow". This IMAGE is, then, but a replacement of something forever lost. This imago, however, can take two positions: on the one hand, it is, at first, always salutary, for it allows other rapports to take place; on the other hand it can, through its resistance to these shifts, become what Lacan denominates "an agent of death factor" (could we say, death drive?), for, as he puts it, "by allowing himself to die, the human being is looking for the imago of the mother"(pg.34).

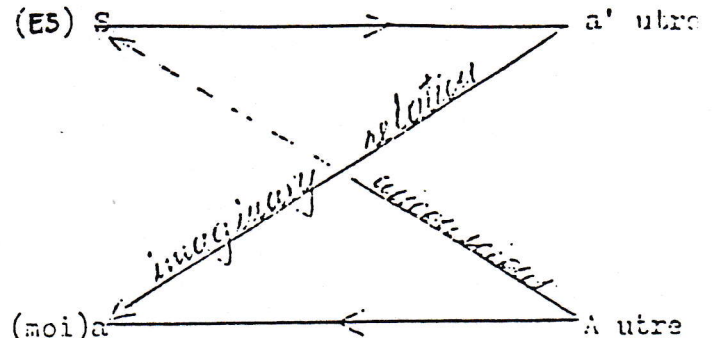
Let us, now, start....from the start.

Before his entrance in the mirror phase, the infant is not even a unity, for the infant is in the so-called "Saturnian Phase" (stade saturnien), where the conception of oneself is that of being formed by fragmented parts. This being is formed by two moments: anticipatory and retroactive. Anticipatory, because, as infant, he is not yet in possession of all the elements to be a complete being. When the infant enters in the mirror phase he is, so to speak, formed in a flash, through what we call the look. Living under the idea of having that which Lacan denominates the "fragmented body" this being, still experiencing total motor uncoordination, will have the impression of not only becoming a whole but also of taking possession of this image, assuming

it as being himself. This positioning, however, does not result in the formation of a subject. The establishment of a subject, as we shall see later, is something which takes place a posteriori. That which is established at this

An exemplification of this dual relation(ship) between the ego and the other, can be found in Lacan's 1957-58 seminar "The Formations of the Unconscious" (vol.2, pg. 145) where we find the so-called Schema L, which shows the dual relation between the ego and its projections. (This schema can also be found, amongst other texts, in Lacan's seminar of "The Purloined Letter", in his ECRITS - French edition, pg.11, or his Seminar II - French edition, pg.284).

The infant is only released from this alienating image through his entry into the symbolic register, that is, through the acquisition of language, when, from a mere being (the expression speaking subject is a pleonasm, for to be a subject, one has to be a speaking being) the infant becomes a subject. This specular identification



with an ideal (ego) only constitutes the subject in the position of the (real) father. The goal for this subject is, however, not this position, but this symbolic identification with the symbolic father, that is, with the representative of the Law, that is, not with the father himself, since it is both the Name of the Father "nom" and Interdiction "non". Here we find ourselves at the level of secondary identification.

In the mirror phase, there is, according to Lacan, the , so to speak, discovery, by the infant, through his (mis)identifications with the images, of somebody else's ego. This because misrecognition stands between the conscious reality of the ego and its unconscious desires, and, thus, one accepts another's image and desire as one's own. The term (mis)identification refers to the fact that the speaking being is alienated from himself for, before the "I", there is always the s/he. The infant, at this point, is not yet a subject, since, by definition, a subject is one who, when saying "I", not only means "I", but one who is also aware of the meaning of this "I". Even when saying "I", the infant is always referring to somebody else. This is similar to the situation encountered in analysis when, as Lacan puts it. "the subject talks to you without talking about himself" (ECRITS, pg.373) There is, furthermore, a problem, not only concerning this point but something else, for the "I" of the sentence - the so-called subject of the statement "le sujet de l'enonce" is unable to describe - and is so, only approximately - the subject of speech "le sujet de l'enonciation". Even though the subject of speech "Je" is distinct from the subject of identification "moi"

there is, nevertheless, a mutual interaction and as the two operate together they seem to be but one.

Let us, now, briefly, present the sequence established by Lacan concerning the mirror phase and the several levels of identification.

Up to 1953, Lacan defended the idea that the image which the child saw in the mirror, that is, the image of a body of an other, was its totality.

From 1953 onwards, however, he shifted from this concept and presented two other positions. The child, when faced with this image in the mirror remains unsatisfied, for there is something else being demanded there: Lacan describes this something else, demanded by the child, as "un signe" - a sign - from the one who is occupying the place of the Other: the mother. It is only when this sign of recognition, of confirmation, is given to the child that the ego is constituted. This constitution, this identification, is not, however, with the physical reality of the body in the mirror, but with an unary trait (einen einzigen Zug), a pure signifier. In 1966, in his "De nos antecedents" (ECRITS, pp.65-72) he talks about this "exchange of glances", which we are to understand as becoming aware of being the object of the gaze of the Other.

The dominance of co-ordination is not only to be found on the surface of the mirror, but in the physical body of an other which is, first and foremost, the mirror in which the infant sees himself. At this first moment, when it is the body of others which act as a mirror on which the infant can see himself, we are at that point in which, as Lacan says, the infant is unable to distinguish himself from the other; once the infant reaches the mirror itself, the infant is capable of distinguishing the IMAGE of the other from the REALITY of the other.

The different positions in which the infant finds himself during the mirror phase could be divided into three moments;

1st moment: - there is here the total subjectification of the infant to the imaginary register, that is to say, the child takes the image in the mirror to be the thing which he is merely the reflection of. There is, at this stage, what we could describe as the prematurity of the infant, and his need of an other in order to survive.

2nd moment: - there is here the discovery, by the infant, that the other, in the mirror, is not a real being, but merely an image.

3rd moment: - it is, through the body of this other, however, that the infant's ego (ideal), that is, the Ideal-ich, is formed. The infant does not project himself in this image, but is constituted by this image. This image takes several levels of information to the infant:

- a) it is "in FORM", that is, it has a shape;
- b) it "in-FORMS" the infant about this shape;
- c) it is "in FORMAT", it offers the infant a shape;
- d) it is "in FORMATION", that is, it is still in the stage of taking the shape to be.

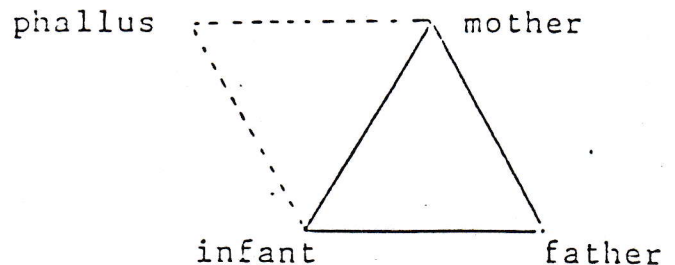
The end of the identification period of the mirror phase, that is, the moment when the infant's jouissance is represented by this feeling of having lost something which must be sought ever after through successive displacements, flows into the first moment of the Oedipus, when the infant is introduced into the realm of desire, when the infant identifies himself with that which he supposes to be the object of his desire, that is, the desire of the infant is to be the desire of the desire (of the (m)other). This is the result of the position in which the infant finds himself which, somehow, facilitates, as Lacan puts it in his seminar of January 22, 1958 "The Formations of the Unconscious", the positioning of the child as the object which the mother supposedly lacks.

The second part of this moment is the introduction not only of a bipolarity, this Hamletian dialectic of TO BE OR NOT TO BE the object of the (m)other's desire, but also an alternation between BEING and HAVING (the object). "By not having the object of his choice" writes Lacan in his seminar dealing with the "Crucial Problems for Psychoanalysis", "the being (le sujet) becomes one" (PG.126). The main characteristics of this moment are:

- a) the concept of PRIVATION for, so it seems to the infant, the mother is deprived of the phallic object. In Lacan's words, the lack is real and the object symbolic;
- b) the concept of FRUSTRATION, when the father seems to frustrate, to defraud the infant of his mother. There is, here, says Lacan, the "introduction of the object of love together with the possibility, through this frustration, of an identification with the love object itself" (ibid, pg.126). What we have here is the imaginary lack of a real object;
- c) the concept of INTERDICTION, when the infant feels that the mother is forbidden to him. The situation here is that which Lacan denominates as a "retorsion", that is, a centrifugal experience whose centre is the

subject himself. The moment of castration is then introduced, moment in which there is a symbolic lack of an imaginary object (the phallus). That which is at stake here is not the mastery of the visual aspect of the experience, but the scopic object, which Lacan describes as objet a, which can be absent in the field of the Other. Not, however, as a symbolic lack $S [\mathcal{A}]$ - but as a lack in the imaginary, that is, that which is described as this gap where the gaze, the objet a, can be inserted. In his chapter "From Interpretation to the Transference" (in "The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis"), Lacan tells us that "through the function of objet a, the subject separates himself off, ceases to be linked to the vacillation of being, in the sense that it forms the essence of alienation" (Penguin Books, pg.258).

I should, here, like to indicate, in my opinion, an important point concerning the introduction of castration which, it seems to me, is leading many to misunderstand this most central concept in the structure of the Oedipus. This is, possibly, the main clarification made by Lacan on this matter. In his 1957-58 seminar on "The Formations of the Unconscious" (vol.2, pg.172) we read that "it is very clear that the father does not deprive (castrate) the mother of something which she does not have". And he clarifies this point by saying that "in order to establish that she does not have it, it is necessary that, here and now, that which is to be projected in the symbolic be already a symbol". But that which is most important of all comes later, when he writes that "the one who is castrated, on this occasion, is not the subject, but the mother". It is here that the decline of the Oedipus brings to a close, not only the phallic rivalry with the mother but also imaginarily establishing the other who then becomes the possessor of the phallus and not the one who is it "celui qui a le phallus et non pas qui l'est" who, then, re-establishes the phallus as the desired object of the mother (ibid, pg.179).



"When the mother appears to lack something the father seems to have", says Laurence Bataille in her seminar on "L'Objet petit a" (Ivy House, 20/11/85) he himself is obviously subject to a Law stronger than himself: the Name of the Father. He also wants something. The phallus, at that point in Lacan's theory wants something. The phallus, at that point in lacan's theory "The agency of the letter in the unconscious or reason since Freud", in ECRITS) signifies what is desirable. It is both the signifier of the desire and the object everybody is hunting for; but no one seems to

be able to find anything but approximative substitutes for it; they find only metonymies of this object. That is why Lacan called the phallus a metonymical object". She continues: "The mother, the father and others are in perpetual movement, looking for something, but obviously they do not know what it is. Not only do they lack an object which is symbolised by the phallus; they also lack the knowledge of what they desire". And she concludes: "Thus castration...means not only being deprived of having the penis...it means being deprived of one's own knowledge".

"To enter the domain of the signifier without being barred from it or covered over by castration marks the entrance into the order of the Law which is based on exclusion and difference" writes Victoria O'Donnell. "Through the Oedipus Complex, the child takes on the phallus as a signifier, and this permits him to identify himself with the Father through what Lacan calls the 'symbolic debt'. The phallus", she concludes, "as a mark of human desire represent a notion of exchange, a wish for what is absent or lacking. A person can function as a signifier in a system of exchange where the values of exchange or the absent objects of exchange have been fixed by those who hold power in society. Acceptance of this system permits the child to enter into the culture and become a subject entirely distinct from the parents, ready to enter the world of language, capable of articulating the difference between the imaginary and the real" ("The Great White Father and the Native American Son: An Oedipal Analysis of 'When the Legends Die'". In 'Journal of the University Film Association', vol.32, nos. 1 & 2, Winter-Spring 1980, pg.65"

THE ELUSIVE IMAGE

by Marc Dury

*"If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
But if I am for myself alone, wherefore am I?" Hillel*

Narcissism, primary or secondary, is not auto-erotism: no ego need be involved in the act which the libidinal subject celebrates on an erotogenic part of his body (whereas in hypochondria, which is an unconscious process rather than an instrumental action, there exists "for every change in the erotogenicity of the organs, a parallel change of libidinal cathexis in the ego" (Freud - on narcissism)); yet it is a libidinal relation. Nor is it egoism, though to fight, if necessary, for one's share of what is needed to preserve one as being, one needs to think oneself worth preserving in the first place. Primary narcissism is implied in the satisfaction of the "ego" - or "self-preservative instincts". But if it is not egoism, yet Freud calls it its "libidinal complement".

He also says "at first sexual drives are attached to ego-instincts". This 'at first' must be placed in the quasi-mythical time before the precipitation of the ego as such, a time in which the little "Lust-ich" still regards the breast, auto-erotically, as part of itself. For as soon as the fragmentation, consequent on object-loss, is re-assembled in an ego, before the birth of the 'subject', there is the possibility of another kind of love than love for the one who nourishes or holds one up before the mirror. In other words, it doesn't seem to matter whether egoistic love precedes egotistic love, whether an anaclitic object-choice precedes a narcissistic one. The fact that between the organism and its objects falls the shadow of the ego, makes both possible. Furthermore, sex and hunger are quite distinct.

Of course, now too, with the formation of the ego, the term "ego-instincts" no longer refers only to the organic needs of the individual, but also to the ego's relation to other egos in its struggle for prestige and space, the constitution of its "Umwelt".(1).

Narcissism, however, does not concern the difference between auto-erotism and object-love, nor the difference between this latter and egoism, or the way egoism triumphs over object-love in illness or sleep. It concerns the libidinal object-choice of self.

Let us restate Freud's comments

1. Autumn 1914. (Three Essays, 3rd ed)

"Narcissistic or ego-libido seems to be the great reservoir from which the object-cathexes are sent out and into which they are withdrawn once more. The narcissistic libidinal cathexis of the ego is the original state of things, realised in earliest childhood, and is merely covered by later extrusions of libido, but in essentials persists behind them".

2. 1918 (Infantile neurosis)

"The ego has no sexual currents but only an interest in its own self-protection and in the preservation of its narcissism".

3. 1922 (Ego and Id)

"Now that we have distinguished between ego and id, we must recognise the id as the great reservoir of libido". "At first all libido is accumulated in the id, while the ego is still in formation. The ego later tries to get hold of object libido sent out by the id. The narcissism of the ego is thus a secondary one, which has been withdrawn from objects".

4. 1938-40 (Outline of Psycho-analysis ch.II)

"It is hard to say anything of the behaviour of the libido in the id and in the superego. All that we know about it relates to the ego, in which at first the whole available quota of libido is stored up. We call this state the absolutely primary narcissism. It lasts until the ego begins to cathect the ideas of objects with libido, to transform narcissistic libido into object libido. Throughout the whole of life the ego remains the great reservoir...etc".

If we keep in mind that Strachey's 'Ego' does not always do justice to the various uses Freud's 'Ich' is put to in its context, something which comes closer to the Lacanian subject/ego distinction, (in 1938 quote) and if we also take 'reservoir' as literally that and not a 'source', then we can without further justification see here outlined the differences between a primary and a secondary narcissism which Freud will put to clinical use elsewhere. Under 'primary Narcissism' (1914, 1918 quotes) he will further range "an infantile satisfaction in which the infant is his own ideal" as well as the object-choice of self, as opposed to anaclitic object-choice, mentioned earlier under "secondary narcissism" (1922 quote) he places all the ego's identifications with the love-objects of the id as a way of attracting a share of that love to itself. It does this by way of the ideal which is a representative of the Id.

Lacan keeps the same distinction. Primary narcissism is an identification with, as well as an object-choice of, the body-image as precipitated in the mirror-stage as an ideal ego. Secondary narcissism is an identification with, or an object choice of, an other who is more or less likened to the ego-ideal, insofar as that other is a speaking being. The first is pre-Oedipal and structures the subject as a rival with himself. The second is Oedipal and pacifying.

Now, whatever the ego's supposed relation to reality, it is clear that we cannot speak of an ego, as construct or function, if not in relation to the position a subject occupies vis-a-vis the Ideal. We could say there is an imaginary axis in which the subject relates to a pure image which is his Ideal Ego; and a symbolic axis in which the subject identifies with a signifier of omnipotence which constitutes his Ego-Ideal. (see Subversion du Sujet in Ecrits). (2)

The tension between primary and secondary is supported by the fundamental dialectic which constrains the life of the subject as subject of a desire: between object-choice and the abandoned object-choice which is identification, between having and being. Freud tells us that identification entails a desexualisation which can either lead to a corresponding overvaluation of the object in the form of idealisation, a characteristic of the denegating ego, formed in "meconnaissance" of reality, or the secondary, narcissistic libido thus created can choose other objects and aims in sublimation. We still find the difference between an ideal-ego, in the idea of the wholeness and perfection of the object, and an ego-ideal, in the striving for goals which merit praise.

But the idea of 'narcissistic libido' remains ambiguous. We know the subject's own ego is cathected prior to any other egos, that is, primary narcissism is irreducible and a template, perhaps indispensable, for secondary choices and identifications. But the question remains what the jubilation the ego experiences at its birth in the mirror has to do with the pleasure felt in being loved. It is plain that 'jubilation' is of the same nature as the state of mania Freud describes in Mourning and Melancholia, the sudden lifting of some inhibition, a readiness for new cathexes. It is as if the ego has succeeded in becoming its own ideal. The self critical function is suspended.

The pleasure of being loved is the way the ego shares in the ideal which sustains it, without which it ceases to exist. Only the ideal defines what is lovable, and the ego has to identify with the other who partakes of it, or be loved by this other.

Two modes of satisfaction for two narcissistic strategies. The libidinal component of this satisfaction derives from the nature of the ego as image. Just as it can function like a subject without being a locus of subjectivity, the ego can function as an object, while not being a "part-object" (even though Lacan will describe it as the "clothing of the object (a)" in Etourdit); and so too, it can function as an erotogenic zone which is not localised. (cf its relation to the skin as envelope of the body as unity).

This is perhaps what Freud means when he discusses the libidinal subject's relation to the ego in The Ego and the Id: "Through its work of identification and sublimation it gives the death drives in the Id assistance in gaining control over libido, but in so doing it runs the risk of becoming the object of the death-drive and of itself perishing. In order to be able to help in this way it has had itself to become filled with libido; it thus itself become the representative of Eros and henceforward desires to live and be loved".

When Freud speaks of "representatives", as in "the superego loving the ego being a "representative" of the Id, we know a signifying structure is implied. That is why it ties in with what Lacan means when he talks of the symbolic function of the ego, or rather the ego as symbol. (Seminar II). The ego does not love but one loves with one's ego, one is loved as an ego(-ideal), one puts one's ego at stake in the love relation, it can function as the sign of a subject. This in no way diminishes its imaginary function which triggers-off the process in the first place. Rather, it shows that an ego, a unity, which is not organised in a circuit in which the subject counts itself as one unity among many, remains open to total "captation", an ego which cannot rest until it has assimilated other egos.

The passage quoted also points up the ambiguity of the notion of an "ego's strength", insofar as it is based on identification. For an ego derives its strength from sharing in the ideal through secondary identifications but not only are identifications alienating, they also, in mastering/sublimating the disturbing libido, strengthen the ideal, that is, the latter becomes more remote and severe. This is the mechanism Lacan emphasises in La Rochefoucauld's 'lust for glory', the impossibility of the ego's finding satisfaction on its own terms, which led him to call the ego "frustration in its very essence".

The strongest ego, however, is the ideal one. In neurosis, the subject can use it to block the enigma of the desire of the Other. In psychosis the subject doesn't use it, he is it, or loves himself as it. Here primary narcissism is the last foothold of the "sense of self", the other two

components - the gratification received from loved objects and the satisfaction of the desire for omnipotence, that is, the realisation of the ego-ideal - having been given up, though both are attempted in the delusion.

We find both this 'end-of-the-world' scenario associated with pure 'narcissistic libido' and the 'passionate love' of 'object libido' which Freud opposes to it, in Ovid's description of the original myth. Narcissus has rejected all the nymphs who loved him for not corresponding to his ideal. One day he comes across a clear pool. While drinking "he was enchanted by the beautiful reflection that he saw. Spellbound by his own self, he remained there motionless, with fixed gaze, like a statue carved from Parian marble...unwittingly he desired himself, and was himself the object of his own approval, at once seeking and sought, himself kindling the flame with which he burned".

This first stage corresponds to passionate love of the narcissistic kind. Narcissus loves his own ideal in another. He suffers the capture by the image of his ideal, which is of course derived from himself, from his mirror image.

Then, after days of a vain reaching out towards the object: "Alas! I am myself the boy I see.. what I desire, I have. Now grief is sapping my strength; little of life remains for me.. In death I shall forget my pain.." In this second stage, with the object lost, which here also means the world given up, with the ego, the reflection in the mirror, loved as ideal self, we have what Freud called the return to primary narcissism. The fact that Narcissus, refusing food and drink, mourns the object of his love as lost while also having identified with it ('narcissistically' in the most literal sense as opposed to hysterically'), beating himself while pitying himself, and knowingly turning his back on the world, finally wastes away, points in the direction of Melancholia, the disorder in which Freud pursued his investigation of Narcissism further.

I stop at setting out this preliminary framework.

Notes:

- (1) For a full discussion of the 'aggressiveness' inherent in narcissistic formations see Lacan's paper on the subject in Ecrits.
- (2) Both Freud and Lacan would give at least logical anteriority to such an identification in relation to any object-choice.