

Bridges to the Object World



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Bridges to the Object World

Step by step, moment by moment, sexuality during late latency-early adolescence pursues a predestined course, from an evocative, narcissistic, fantasy symbol-oriented discharge organization to one with predominantly communicative, altruistic, reality-oriented discharge function. It is necessary for the personality of the child to make a series of changes, primarily cognitive, in order to negotiate this shift. At first the changes are internal. For instance, drive energies begin to intensify under the pressure of increased secretion of sexual hormones and the form of representations to be used as symbols more and more takes on the shape of humankind. Playthings give way to real things. Symbols are chosen less and less for their ability to evoke a private world of memories and feelings, and increasingly for their ability to serve as communicative links with the real and object world. The father of the past comes to serve less as a guide, while the reality of future potentials organizes, guides, and reshapes fantasy until it becomes future planning. All these changes reflect maturational modifications within the ego. Internal changes in the strength of drives and in cognition reshape the potential forms of sexual discharge of the child in late latency-early adolescence. They activate and energize the child's ability to find gratification in reality. They do not provide the loved one.

The work of growing up and finding a partner in late latency- early adolescence could be likened to the tasks of an explorer traveling to a new land. Much preparation is necessary before his ships can cross the unknown sea. Some image of the new land must be formed. Upon this, planning can be made and provisions stocked. Then, once embarked, the new land must still be found; and even then, the secrets and the reality of the new land must be incorporated to change the explorer's image of the land if it is to be won or colonized. So it goes with the child. Daydreams shape impressions and fantasies about potential real objects of love. These reassuring images make incursions into reality seem possible and safe. Fantasied familiarity enables approaches to the unknown. Then new realities make known the true nature of the person to whom the child is now bound by object ties that are slow to dissolve. At that point, the child must reshape his or her behavior to conform to the needs of the real object in order to hold it and seem to win it.

The function of internal changes in the strength of drives and in cognition may be likened to that of the supporting pier on one side of a bridge. To stretch a span to reality from the pier requires the dynamic influence of three processes that make it possible to engage the loved one in the real world. These parts of the bridge to the object world consist of

1. masturbation as a means of mastering intense affect and trial action,
2. projection of reassuring images, and
3. maturation of the observing object in the mind's eye.

Masturbation as a Bridge to the Object World

Though there was emphasis in the preceding chapter on the use of masturbation as a kind of holding action (i.e., a way in which drives can be turned from the object world toward the self for gratification), there is an aspect of masturbation that adds a plank to the bridge to the object world. The realignment of masturbatory fantasy and the act of masturbation that occurs during late latency-early adolescence serves this important purpose. Through masturbation, the maturing organism learns to test, experience, bear, and finally enjoy the welling sensations of orgasm before he is called upon to experience them after having established a relationship with an object in reality. The content of the concurrent masturbation fantasies in turn provides patterns for the search for a life partner. Passive fantasy invites aggressive partners. Therapeutic interventions can help at this age to reshape a future of which the masturbation fantasy is a warning harbinger. Laufer (1968) emphasizes the role of conscious early adolescent masturbation fantasies as a tool to be used by the developing person to experience, in "trial action[,] . . . adult sexual behavior" (p. 115). In addition, it provides the therapy with topics and wishes that would be unavailable otherwise.

Affects

Disguised sexuality tends to decrease during adolescence. As a result, masturbation becomes more overt. Orgastic feelings, which accompany masturbatory acts and fantasies, are sometimes overwhelming and create fears in the child of the intense affects to be expected with sexual intercourse. This widens rather than bridges the gap between the drive and the potential loved one. The intense physical

response requires "getting used to." Masturbation aids in this reorientation. Solely in charge of the activation of his feelings, the masturbating child can master and get used to intense orgasmic feelings at a rate that is adjustable to the individual tolerance. Children should not be pressed to embark on sexual activities with others until this task has been mastered.

Fantasies

Age-appropriate increase in overt sexual activity is both an outcome of an increase in sexual drive and the product of a decrease in the influence of latency defenses. Distortion decreases and reality orientation of manifest fantasy increases in the child. A retreat to the use of evocative fantasy as a means of discharge for sexual drive is blocked as the result of maturation. Overt fear-inducing masturbatory fantasies become potentially threatening and a cause for retreat when they seem to describe the nature of reality. Cognitive maturation both pushes the child toward reality objects and opens the door to anxiety and fear about growing up as the result of the articulation of fear fantasies with reality. The child therapist must be careful in exploring such fantasies that panic reactions are not induced by encouraging object-finding through the analysis of fear (masturbatory) fantasies that inhibit social growth. Here one proceeds with care. For example, a 14-year-old girl with a masturbation fantasy that revolved around being raped was caused to retreat from dating situations by her fear of the aggressiveness that she read into sexual situations.

Even when an object has been found and a love relationship established, planning and acting in the area of sexual drive discharge are still very much fantasy-dominated in early adolescence. However, at this time the fantasy has normally begun to be modified by awareness of the needs of the partner. In pathological states of falling in love (sexual thralldom), primitive fantasy components persist, or the needs of the partner must be excluded or very special partners with congruent fantasy-dominated sexuality sought. Libidinal cathexes are then said to be directed more toward one's inner fantasies than toward loved objects. This state of pathological narcissism, which often extends into adult life (fixation), parallels the distribution of cathexes of libidinal energies seen in the secondary narcissism of late latency. Fixations at this stage of the developmental continuum contribute to pathological sexual adjustments in adult life.

Projection as a Bridge to the Object World

Projection is a mechanism of defense that is most often associated with pathological states. Prohibited urges and wishes generated within the self are projected onto others. Even an acceptable urge—such as anger—when it exceeds the tolerance of a person, may be assigned (projected) to someone else. This produces distortions of perceived reality. The role of projection in the production of impaired reality testing tends to give projection a bad name. In actuality, projection is a complex form of displacement. Displacement in every phase of development distorts the relationship between the self and differentiated objects. When love objects are first sought, the initial bridge to the object world is established through the reassuring belief that the new object can be forced into the mold of the past as though it were an extension of the self rather than something with an existence of its own. A sense of control of the object is created. Even though the wish that is projected onto the new object as a generalized identity is hostile and generates fear, it is not as much to be feared as the possibly benign reality of the new person. (The devil that one knows is less to be feared than the angel who comes as a stranger.) Projection of a familiar fantasy permits the establishment of a bridge to the object world.

Shift in Projection

During late latency-early adolescence, there occurs a change in projection. There is also a definitive change in its uses. The change in projection is seen in a shift in its basic component defenses. There is a shift from projection associated with repression, which is supported in achieving a decathexis of original content by the formation of masking symbols, toward projection associated with denial, which is supported in achieving disavowal of original content by the use of displacement of the origin of urges and wishes to real objects. Even though real objects are utilized in the latter situation, they still serve as symbols as long as they are used to serve evocative ends. Real objects once introduced into fantasy projections provide a pathway for the shift from an evocative mode to a communicative mode. This makes possible the modification of one's world view through the introduction of reality. With this in mind, the child therapist can strengthen reality testing by actively exploring the difference between the child's fears of the nature of people and reality experiences. Even without such interventions, there is, according to Pumpian-Mindlin (1965), an "... 'acting out' of the omnipotent phantasies in reality, thereby submitting them to testing. Gradually, as they are tested against reality, the diffuse omnipotent

energies are channelized to modify the omnipotent fantasies in accord with the demands of reality” (p. 9). Consequently, there is a modification of masturbatory demands to conform to reality.

This shift is supported by a number of phase-related developmental phenomena, the most important of which is the passing from prominence of the typical ego structure of latency (Sarnoff 1987a). Residues of the structure of latency persist in daydreaming, future planning, and sublimations, but the use of symbols and fantasy structures diminishes. Direct involvement of drives with objects, instead of involvement with fantasy representations, now takes place. This may be seen clinically in a patient’s shift from fear of attack by robbers to fear of being forced into sexual acts by peers. There is a spontaneous thrust in the direction of communicative symbols, speech, and language to carry relationships into the province of reality.

There is a similarity of psychic events in late latency-early adolescence to psychic events in the separation-individuation phase of infancy. In both, there is an experience of separation from the mother, with increasing individuation manifested in the child’s increasing executive functions. Problems of passivity coupled with fear and eagerness for the fusion that is implied in passivity are present in both phases. Most striking is the fact that in both phases there is awareness of changes in the body. In the adolescent there is massive growth and the development of secondary sexual characteristics. In the infant the sense of bodily change is related to the developmental-maturational growth of cognitive functions, with a concomitant constantly modifying perception of body form. The parallel between the two periods sets the stage for a regression in the adolescent that permits the utilization of defenses, i.e., denial and displacement, appropriate to the earlier period.

Changes in the Content of Projection

During late latency and early adolescence there is a change in emphasis in the content of projections, with a shift from projection of id impulses to projection of superego introjects. Through projection, the superego is externalized. Peers or respected teachers appear to the child to be the sources of ego-ideal imagery. This is a step in removal. It is a manifestation of the urge to rebel against the parent, and is also a derivative of the thrust toward a communicative involvement with the world, which dominates the age period. At first this imagery consists primarily of parental commands and respected

prior ethical and cultural conditions projected onto teachers and peers. Thus, the initial content of the externalized ego ideal is based on the child's prior experiences; but peers or teachers have ideas of their own. These are added to the external ego ideal, creating a new ego ideal, which is imbued with characteristics of the ego ideal of the new object. Reinternalization of the ego ideal is an ongoing process. The projection-reinternalization involved is a dynamic series of events. Projection is part of the process of preadolescent ethical and personal individuation, which encourages projection of preconceptions onto newly perceived objects in their separateness in an attempt to make them familiar. Reinternalization is a manifestation of introjection. It is fueled by introjective defenses used to deal with aloneness, partings, and separations. The same individuation, removal, and socialization that encourage the externalization of the ego ideal trigger reinternalization as a compensation for loss.

As a result of the fusion of the projected ego ideal and new cultural, peer-based content, a new ego ideal is synthesized. With reinternalization, modifications of the internalized superego occur. In this way the self-observing functions of the superego take on new guidelines. That is, an observing object comes to be developed in the mind's eye, which guides and provides an unconscious sensitivity to the needs of readers, lovers, audiences, or society. The process is closely related to recruitment and metamorphosis, in which the child recruits others to play a role in their own fantasy and, once the person has come close, adds the reality experiences imposed by the presence and needs of new people to the body of memory data through which the world will be interpreted and from which the conditions and elements of future planning will be derived.

Changes in the use of the mechanism of projection can be expected during late latency. It is used more intently and for purposes different from those that produce evocative pathology, such as fear fantasies, paranoia, and phobias. Intensification of projection, often manifested in these syndromes, can be seen at or just preceding puberty. Eight-year-olds with adultiform paranoid schizophrenia and premature puberty are an example of this. Acute paranoid reactions during ethical individuation also illustrate this.

The cognitive shift of late latency-early adolescence toward the communicative mode affects projection as it affects symbols, and projection becomes a useful mechanism which serves socialization, altruism, and the ability to fall in love through its participation in the process of projection-

reinternalization. These normal changes in the use of projection during late latency-early adolescence provide a healthy alternative to the negative prognoses made as a result of the presence of persecutory fantasies during latency. Failure during late latency-early adolescence to achieve a communicative mode for projection produces grandiose (narcissistic) states and paranoia, which begin to be identified at this time.

The change to the communicative mode in the use of projection is seen in the shift from the primary role of the defense from fantasy and symptom formation to an important role in (1) testing fantasy against reality, (2) sublimation and creativity, and (3) opening up the superego to contemporary cultural influences and the development of the observing object in the mind.

Fantasy as a Bridge to the Object World

The development of healthy object ties in adolescence is the product of a multitude of forces. Foremost among these forces is the influence of the communicative mode. Through tertiary elaboration, which is strongly influenced by the observing object in the mind's eye, the communicative mode reshapes the fantasy content of expectations of reality object contact to fit that which is generally expected by the world beyond the self. In this way the needs and wishes of the child part company with demanding personal fantasies. The child's needs and wishes are brought into line with the world's demands and those wishes which in reality one might have some hope of fulfilling.

Communicative symbols are used for fantasy formation as a means of effecting this task.

In early adolescence, fantasy models of contact derived most of their content from evocations of drives, previous repressed affects, unprocessed or unmastered traumatic experiences, and fantasy distortions. The transmutation of id forces and unconscious contents into latent fantasy is an important example of the contribution of the evocative mode to creativity and object ties. The transmutation of latent fantasy into socially acceptable planning and behavior through tertiary elaboration is an important example of the contribution of the communicative mode to creativity and acceptable functioning in the object world.

Creativity in the form of fantasy formation plays an important part in defining the subject's role in

object relations. Through the formation of a fantasy, a highly personalized trial action is devised. Evocative symbols are the means through which personalization is effected. Their communicative component brings a dimly seen world beyond the self into a province whose boundaries enclose influences of the unconscious and the id. Through their role in fantasy formation, evocative symbols participate in the communicative acts of adolescents. Around personalized trial action, excursions can be planned into *a world beyond the self*, a world beyond primary objects.

One part of the work of adolescence is to establish a pattern of people and behavior around oneself that will permit a reality-oriented area in which the sexual and aggressive drives, identities, and ambitions can be realized. During late latency-early adolescence there is a transition phase in which these parts of the life arena are tried, tested, and deserted and—sometimes—regressed from. With healthy resolutions the adolescent eventually finds his place in this world.

If at first there is not at this time a regular, reliable, sustained outlet for drives, a shift toward self-gratification, evocative symbols, and evocative-mode fantasies threatens. It is the work of the therapist to counter such regressions through confrontation and reality testing.

Drives have force, and will claim their way. If objects and reality do not provide gratification, there will be a shift to a reassertion of the latency-age use of fantasy as a drive (sexual) outlet. The ego is tempted away from reality toward gratification in self and in fantasy. This is countered by the process of puberty, which brings the first ejaculation or menarche, ludic demise, and the function that walks as their shadow—the ability to use objects in reality as symbols in the formation of fantasies for active and passive drive discharge. In this way, regression to fantasy does not mean a return to latency evocations of past moods. Instead, it provides an arena for trial action and planning that, using communicative-mode symbols, will ready the child to seek again real people. Puberty provides the maturation of an organ that seeks a partner for sexual drive discharge and so establishes the need for an object in reality. Should the real object not wish to cooperate in a permissive context, the reticent real object can be loved in an accepting though limited context in planning fantasy that takes the real object's needs into account. As a result the evocative mode becomes less influential. To aid the process, the child psychotherapist should encourage fantasy more and more akin to future planning.

Symbols with immediate links to the real world are invested with a strong potential communicative mode. This use of reality guarantees some freedom of the ego from the influence of the id. This is a form of repression. Such a recruitment of elements in reality to serve to hold the attention of consciousness at the expense of latent fantasy and inner drives is called counter-cathexis. As a result of the heightened ability during late latency-early adolescence to use reality as counter-cathexis, evocations and their derivatives play a role during adolescence that is less than primary. The child therapist should encourage repression of evocations through the enhancement of reality hyper-cathexes.

From a vocabulary of symbols derived from the surrounding world are chosen the words and symbols used by tertiary elaboration. Unconscious fantasy is transmuted in this way by tertiary elaboration to become a bridge to the object world. It becomes the armature around which conscious behavior and motivation will be shaped by the influence of reality. This process makes its greatest developmental strides during late latency-early adolescence. This fact is the theoretical underpinning of a number of aspects of psychotherapy during this period. For instance, free association tends to take the patient's thoughts to descriptions of a multitude of distinct relationships between peers.

The high school student speaks of the girls and boys he observes or the movies he has seen, and not, apparently, of himself. His choice of couples and stories is a key to his involvement in life. Why is it that he observes while others are involved?

The therapist must be alert to common themes that reflect the subtly hidden evocative contribution to the choice of the people, situations, or events of which the patient chooses to speak. Since the world of the late latency-early adolescent child is in its beginning, the goal of therapy is less emphatically on changing the present than on changing the future. A mind in transition is malleable. Therapeutic intervention can be directed to analyzing sources of evocative areas within a given symbol derived from past experiences. These cause distortions in future planning.

A youth exposed to ridicule as a child had fantasies of being teased for small size by a sexual partner.

A girl whose father called her frazzle nose was afraid to go to a party for fear she would be rejected for "ugliness."

A boy from a foster home was afraid that he would be asked by a girl on a date to get her a radio. He had no idea that one could refuse the request of a girl in this situation.

A boy whose father and older brothers continually spoke of their sexual prowess feared that he would not know what to do, and would be unfavorably compared, if a girl demanded sexual intercourse on their first date.

The selection of countercaathexes can be encouraged by the therapist to take a direction most apt to provide preparation for communicative and constructive function in adult life. Cathexis of inner fantasy at the expense of reality can be discouraged through confrontations that enhance reality testing.

The Audience: The World

A most important factor involved in the formation of the personality, trial action fantasy, creative process, and the personal contribution to the shape of life in the years of adolescence and beyond is the audience. During psychotherapy, the therapist is the audience. In school, it is the teacher and peers. In loving, it is the lover.

As removal progresses, the influence of parents yields to that of the world. In essence, sources of symbols in the world beyond the self, which had been summoned to populate fantasy evocations for use in drive discharge, cease to be passive vessels that carry the drives. Instead, now they provide, in part, a source for the fantasy. They insinuate their own identities and needs. The communicative poles of such "borrowed" symbols reshape fantasy to a new mold. The object hunger of the maturing child pulls him toward change. Unwilling to take life's first steps alone, the child develops new shapes of fantasy and character in order to win the audience that is his world. Whether the product is the self as a work of art, or is a more conventional artifact, the child pays attention to the communicative aspects of the self or product. The form of the product takes shape from the influences of the borrowed symbols. The aggressive child who takes on the characteristics of a mythic hero in his fantasies channels his character to fit the patterns of the hero. Projection of wishes onto a new object, borrowed to play out a role in a fantasy, extends the boundary of the child to include the new object. Aspects of the object become a part of the self. If the real object so chosen is then to be wooed, won, and held, it becomes a part of the expectant and powerfully influencing audience. The fantasy must be changed to suit the needs of the loved one.

The shape and direction taken by the communicative mode in the use of symbols within fantasies that express drives connected with being in love are guided by the lover through the observing object in

the mind's eye. The act of borrowing symbols to serve evocative needs is often accompanied by such an epigenetic internalization. This leaves a mark on the tastes and choices of the child that transcends the moment and leads into the future. Influence is present even when an act of creation occurs when the child is alone, and the prospective audience or lover is absent in reality. The audience, the observing object—which shapes the aesthetic aspect of the creative act—and the details of love exist for the child in that circumstance in the *mind alone*. The internalized, remembered audience continues to shape creativity and hopes.

The will of the internalized, remembered audience augments the internalized “contents of the superego demands.” Here are the sources, stored within the self, that shape the influences of tertiary elaboration; here are the sources of the words and customs that make it possible to enter the strange land of the world beyond the self with a sense of familiarity and ease.

The Observing Object in the Mind's Eye

The observing object, which influences spontaneous creativity and behavior from adolescence into adulthood, first appears in infancy. It is important in the control of demeanor and behavior from early on. It contributes, for instance, to superego formation in early childhood.

During the latency age period, it influences symbolic form. Common tales provide symbols. These symbols draw the play of the latency child into the passive and rote use of socially determined nonverbal symbols and signs, and mythic images. These may be characters and symbols from stories, myths, *Mdrchen*, fairy tales and T.V. cartoons. When in early latency affectomotor memory is replaced with verbal concept memory, stories read to children or overheard or seen on television become the carriers of the affectomotor experience. Children whose minds are limited in their outward expression to symbols common to a dominating current culture—said to be ensnared by cultural capture—play out their fantasies using Shera, Batman, or Superman to express *themselves*.

Fantasies of future planning find their footing in reality through the symbols of the real that have been introduced in early latency. For a child in early latency the need to find new carriers for their complexes and memories weights apparently neutral symbols of a culture with the qualities of the

evocative mood. This means that secret implications can be carried into reality situations.

Reality symbols carrying memories that have been lost to the infantile amnesia are the characteristic representations from which are selected the evocative symbols used in latency-age fantasy activity. Not every symbol presented to the child by parents, peers, and teachers is retained and used for fantasy. Certain ones are chosen, above all others, to be the personal symbols that identify the child. Because fantasy at this age does not require the inclusion of an object in reality, the selection of symbols is dominated by the content implications of the evocative pole of the symbol. The observing object formed from those who provided the symbols will therefore be weak, since the child is more apt to be influenced by inner callings.

For the latency-age child, the pertinent aspects of chosen elements have a highly personalized appeal; they reflect experiences, feelings, and repressed affectomotor memory elements which cannot be shared with others. Even the mythic elements, which bind memory elements into repression at the same time that they sweep the verbal skills of the child into channels of expression that reflect cultural capture, are selected with little emphasis on communicative value. Companions and observers cannot crack this cryptic code of the unconscious. This serves well the purpose of fantasy in the latency years, since the purpose is to preserve mood and memory from being shared through the use of the evocative mode in selecting symbols. The observing object in the mind's eye has little demand to make in the world of creativity and the seeking of love objects during the latency years.

The shift to the communicative pole, the harnessing of fantasy to drive with discharge considering the needs of an object, changes the situation and orientation of the early adolescent child. At this stage, fantasy content is influenced by needs to entertain, communicate, and be coherent. These are part of the cognitive transformations of late latency. The need to pursue communicative speech becomes so strong that even in the absence of an audience, phrasing and symbol selection are dominated by it. With the strengthening of the need to use reality, the observing object in the mind's eye becomes stronger too. With the strengthening of awareness that will lead to planning that is acceptable to the world and the setting aside of personal evocations, the child is readied to cross a bridge into the object world.

The Observing Object In the Mind's Eye Transcends Late Latency-Early Adolescence

The observing object is a consistent element among the internalized structures of the personality. In this chapter we are concentrating on its activation to influence symbol formation and communicative speech in early adolescence. This should not, however, be taken to indicate a devaluation of its importance in early childhood and latency or its influence in adult life. The following clinical vignettes, which reflect the role of the observing object in the mind's eye during adolescence and adulthood, illustrate the more general nature of the psychological structure.

A patient's masturbatory activity from age 12 to 16 was accompanied by the thought that there was a television camera watching her, through which her father was able to watch her. When she moved to a new city, she began to keep a diary of her experiences and thoughts. The diary was written with me as the observing object. This continued her therapy even when I was no longer present. She continued certain resistances, keeping out of the writing material that she had kept out of therapy.

In another case, a woman in her 40s was preoccupied with her obituary. She repeatedly compared her obituary with the obituaries of men and looked forward to the day when analysis would free her from the emotional restrictions that kept her from being able to achieve more than the chores of a housewife, so that she would have an obituary that would be comparable to that of a man. In effect, she lived her life with the observing object in her mind's eye being the great unseen audience consisting of people who read the obituaries of those who have just died and judge their lives accordingly.

A man in his mid-fifties, who had excellent writing skills and was a Chaucerian scholar, suffered a writing block. He was unable to do creative writing because of his fear that the aggressive nature of the people who read what he had to write would lead to destructive reactions on their part.

The observing object in the mind's eye takes on special importance when the cognitive transformations of late latency-early adolescence place emphasis on communication and the needs of the audience in selecting symbols. The observing object becomes the focal point in the shaping of adolescent fantasy. With the beginning of adolescence, transmission of unconscious content is increasingly channeled into verbal conduits consisting of communicative symbols. There is a distinct change in the preferred symbolic forms to be used in creativity and in free association. Aesthetic and communicative considerations are taken into account in the selection of symbols through which latent fantasies are to be expressed. Even in the absence of a literal audience, the observing object persists and influences the symbolizing function to select symbols with high aesthetic and communicative potential.

From the standpoint of clinical manifestations, the introduction of aesthetic considerations pushes symbols toward adult mature forms with verbal emphasis. In the shift from latency to adolescence, this is

characterized by a change of the nature of the symbolic forms used in spontaneous fantasy formation as the evocative, personal-experience, and/or rote symbols of latency retreat before the communicative, aesthetically determined symbols of adolescence.

The Therapist as Observing Object

The shift to communicative symbols *requires* that the symbolizer have in the mind's eye an observing object for guidance in the shaping of symbols. The observing object in late latency-early adolescence becomes the internal manifestation of the shift of cathexis to extrafamilial objects that accompanies the child's emergence from latency. This influences the symbolizing function and the symbolic forms it produces. It causes the nature of the symbol to shift from evocation, which relates to the inner world, to communication, which relates to the observing object. Often, in this time of flux, the only consistent entity is the therapist. Whether or not he or she so wishes, the therapist's ways, words, and values shape the child's image of the world's expectations. A great deal of personal influence, often therapeutic, is unknowingly brought to bear during therapy sessions.

Inhibiting Aspects of the Observing Object

In adolescence, the effects of the observing object in the mind's eye are more far-reaching than the investment of symbols with communicative power. In using the observing object in the mind's eye for reaching toward real objects for drive discharge, the adolescent frequently clothes peers and authorities with attitudes and reactions derived from the internalized observing object. If the attitudes of this object are harsh and critical, the world becomes a place to be feared; new situations, performances, and activities may be avoided. Therapeutic techniques must be aimed at the exploration of reality, and analysis to find a source of the emphasis on the projections of condemning and controlling aspects of the internalized observing object. This negative influence of the internalized observing object occurs to some extent in every adolescent. The process is often at the root of mood swings associated with limitations of social activities. When this feature of the internalized observing object can be disentangled from reality, there occurs a decrease in the energy needed for the child's mastering of imagined humiliations.

The Role of the Observing Object in the Mind's Eye in the Shift from Evocative to Communicative Symbols

As noted earlier, scientists have investigated the influence on symbol formation of outside factors retained as memory elements and the way reporting news is formulated (see p. 64). Research has defined social factors in the psychology of communication (e.g., symbols, the writing of stories, and the effect of communicative needs on speech).

The observing object in the mind's eye represents the public in its absence. Even when alone, the child experiences the influence of society that contributed to the formation of his thought in the form of the observing object, which becomes more important and influences the symbolizing function to select symbols on an aesthetic (i.e., communicative) basis when the audience it represents becomes more important to the child. This occurs when the child acquires the capacity, through the setting aside of narcissism, to have sufficient need of the audience that he or she will shape communication to win its negative or positive attention. In the case of fantasy planning that involves drive gratification, the attention sought through the use of pleasing symbols and contexts is love.

The Communicative Symbol Comes of Age

The communicative symbol dominates art and therapy from the beginning of adolescence. It is in turn dominated by society. This form of symbol takes into account the real world and the needs of the audience in the selection of the signifier, i.e., communicative symbols are shaped by choices based upon consensual recognition of meaning. Therefore, they play a significant part in communicative work, art, and writing.

The shift in symbol from those that function in the evocative mode to those that function in the communicative mode is strongly furthered by the internalized representation of the audience for which the work is conceived. Thus, the latency-age child conceives of the word as a means of expressing his drives, whereas the adolescent conceives of the word as a communication to an internalized representation. This change in emphasis marks the characteristics acquired during adolescence by the observing object in the mind's eye.

Limiting Drive Gratification for the Survival of the Group

“The transmission of traditions has provided man with the means of maintaining the identity and integrity of the group (the smallest unit capable of survival) (Sarnoff 1976, p. 379). A man is often powerless alone where a group can survive. The creativity of individuals which modifies reality provides both an evolutionary strength and a danger.” There is evolutionary strength in man’s evolutionary potential for adaptive survival, which depends on the sustained capacity for development of alternative potentials. Creativity is part of this; however, in order to survive in the group, this creative potential must sometimes be stifled. Therefore, the potential for the communicative, creative establishment of new, potentially group-dissolving patterns has to be suppressed if the old groups are to survive and function. Oneiric symbols provide a pathway for the occult exercise of the expression of individual wishes, and thus they serve a necessary function in the evolution of man. They preserve a skill. They provide an evolutionary adjustment which permits man to maintain flexibility while continuing to be bound by mythically organized group solidarity. At the point that creativity is needed, the ability for original thought is channeled into communicative forms of symbolization, providing new ways of perceiving the environment and organizing the world in the mental life of the individual. Once this new way of organizing the world has proved adaptive, the entire group patterns itself (establishes a guardian observing object in the mind’s eye) within this new set; and creativity once again becomes channeled into oneiric symbolic exercises, with its originality deflected from reality, to preserve the group’s survival potential. It thus appears that the development of play and dream symbols is influenced by social pressures.

Summary

For those who work with adolescents it is important to know that there is a natural maturational and developmental stage during which the capacity to fall in love emerges. The changes occur normally, and it therefore should not be attributed to therapeutic maneuvers. Therapy can only *enable* where development has been stayed by pathological factors. It is also important to realize that at times this normal step is not taken. Failure to develop the *capacity* to fall in love has very serious diagnostic and prognostic clinical implications. For instance, the child who does not move to communicative symbols, but continues to work within the area of highly personalized, egocentric (autistic) symbols, has failed to

move toward an object relatedness. Communicative symbols with shared and conventional meanings become the basic vocabulary of compromise, group planning and shared hopes populated by shared realities.

The successful shift to communicative symbols, communicative speech, and tertiary elaboration is necessary if the needs of society are to become operative in the formulations of a person as he creates future planning. They are the piers of a bridge to the object world. They form the operating ego activities and functions that permit the observing object in the mind's eye to influence behavior. When communicative symbols, communicative speech, and tertiary elaboration serve an observing object in the mind's eye that represents a *libidinal* object, the symbolizing subject will produce fantasies and planning while taking into account the loved one, on a preconscious level, quite voluntarily. When the loved one can be permitted to join the observing object in the mind's eye, two things happen: one is never again quite alone, and one's thoughts and actions are born out of an inner awareness of the loved one's needs. This is the state of being in love. The mature state is not inborn. Rather, it is a product of maturation and development during late latency-early adolescence.

The development of the capacity to fall in love interposes delay in gratification. This development depends upon the maturation of communicative symbols, communicative speech, and tertiary elaboration. Impairments in the capacity to fall in love reflect defects in these component ego skills. Diagnostic assessments in adolescence should mark these skills for evaluation in the case of selfish and narcissistic patients.