

CHAPTER FOUR

DISPLACEMENT AND OBSESSION

We have come to view the human as a poly-ego casting forth throngs of displacements, paradoxically in order to recapture instinctive certainty and so reduce the level of one's anxiety. "Paradoxically," I say, because there is a heavy return flow of displacements; they are in the mind and hence cannot simply be cast off, but are to be regarded as transactions: what goes out must come back.

From this elementary state of human nature, the morphology of thought emerges. It begins like a person who seeks to build a crude dam across a brook. He seizes and places rocks in the path of the flood, intending to embed enough of them to block the flow, and, after a time, he does, but there is leakage, and there are diversions of the water, and anyhow the flow must continue by some means. But still he has a structure. In the mind these would be obsessions. And the rocks of obsessions are also of different forms, which we call compulsion, habit, attention, and memory, all of which we shall define here.

Before confronting the ideas of displacement and obsession, an aside may be permitted, an apology. For it seems that I am culpable for using metaphoric language in describing a neurological and behavioral world, as with the analogy of bridging a stream. But not only this, which may be excused if the metaphor does not beg the question; further, I may seem to choose terms too often out of the jargon of psychopathology, as with "displacement" and "obsession," perhaps even preferring them to terms describing normal behavior. I have found, however, that the terms most useful in describing mental operations are technical words tinged with reproach, as if a person should not ordinarily engage in such an activity. In the very first chapter, it will have been noticed, I took the step of distinguishing human nature largely by what would be considered a fault in animal behavior and hardly sounds nice when attached to people – an instinct-delay. And then "schizo" itself. I must warn that this verbal situation may become worse.

But names come out of attention and identities. A family will love a dog and while away many an hour talking about "what old Shep is thinking of now. Look at him! He knows a lot more about us than we think he does. Too bad he can't speak." I should hardly wish to challenge such a statement, which would arouse a united family against me, but what word would we use for the process going on in the people if not "projection," the ascription to "old Shep" of ideas that are our own. Much more could be made out of the simple remarks quoted, too, but we must move along.

The qualities of humans that one cherishes are aspects of the qualities one dislikes. And, because the empirical science of psychology has been built upon what is problematical and evident, the most helpful terms may be those conferred upon disliked qualities. The "good" comes out of "bad," so to speak. One takes what one gets, as in evolution where the marvelous

eye comes out of a "damaged" skin, the tongue from the endoderm, the leg from a fin, the breasts from enlarged sweatglands, the cerebral cortex itself called a successful tumor, etc.

If it were not for the throngs of displacements, we would be able to attend to very little of what we are pleased to attend to as humans. And without projection, a delusion certainly, we could not "know" the world. The "sick" propensity to displace and project in uncontrollable quantity is the fundamental basis for human behavior and its competences. To speak of "cures" for these mechanisms is like asking how we may best perform cerebralectomy. The most clever humans are those whose displacements and projections are the most varied, free, abundant in hypothesis, while stupidity can be readily associated with an inability to perform these operations whether because of blockage or hominidalism.

Some words I might otherwise use would belong to a defunct theology and philosophy that prospered for 2000 years from Aristotle to Descartes, which, as will be described in another chapter, employed ideas of man as a rational being, much of whose behavior would be termed irrational. In that vein, savants spoke of "reason against faith," and argued interminably but inoperationally over the conflict between the two faculties.

Most people still use the language of, and tackle problems of human nature in the manner of, Aristotle and Saint Thomas Aquinas, so that we have an additional task set for ourselves, namely, to show that one does not get very far in understanding human nature by this traditional route. But again, the analysis of reason is for Chapter Seven.

In this chapter, stress is placed upon the major mental strategy that the human mind employs to exist and ply through

life. I employ the word "strategy" realizing that it is teleological and that things without purpose should not be granted purposes. (But not such usages as: "The strategy of the French generals in World War II was obsessed with the Maginot Line complex." That is, strategy can be both conscious and unconscious.) I can also use the word "mechanism" leaving to some demiurge the purpose of constructing this "mechanism." I mean by "strategy" or "mechanism," of course, a system by which the human operates, but again one must beware of the word "system" because that implies an order, and again an author or a demiurge or a will to operate systematically. Shall we say that by these words we mean: "It happens that a pattern (or gestalt) is evident when a human acts"? And, given the operational pattern, typical consequences follow." Thus we can rationalize some suspicious terms here, and also in the chapters to come and in the past chapter, where we talked of the urge to re-instinctivize, a pattern of behavior that is largely unconscious, uncontrolled, and unwilled.

Upon the elementary state of human nature, the morphology of thought is erected. It hardly matters that some of its aspects are regarded as "normal" and others as "abnormal." It is like a mountain that is a precipice when viewed from the north, and a slope when seen from the south; the core can be of the same mineral substances. The basic shape of thought occurs by displacement and obsession.

DISPLACEMENT

Personal histology and history cast their images against the screen of instinct delay. A major effect is the human displacement complex. Animals displace, but humans do so with a plenitude and magnificence that lets us be astonished at ourselves.

N. Tinbergen, an authority on the stickleback fish, unsurprisingly took examples from the animal in his general treatise on instincts. A male stickleback cannot ejaculate sperm until he seduces a female into depositing eggs in the nest that he has built. If two males are forced to nest closely together, they dig nests continuously "and the result is that their territories are littered with pits, or even become one huge pit." Their nest-digging activity here is part of their fighting repertoire. Similarly, "herring gulls, while engaged in deadly combat, may all at once pluck nesting material..." American television seems at times to follow only one plot: "Sex and Violence: guess which is which?"

Tinbergen writes, "The motivation of an instinct when prevented from discharging through its own motor pattern finds an outlet by discharge through the centre of another instinct." Further, "the fact that a displacement activity is an expression, not of its 'own' drive... but of a 'strange' drive..., makes it possible for it to act as a signal to fellow members of the same species, provided it can be distinguished from the 'genuine' activity, activated by its 'own' drive." As I've heard boys jeer at truculent comrades, "Are you tough or hungry?"

Every action involves an emotion, which is the sensing of action, therefore an experience. And every other experience involves an emotion. Every experience invites a response, an experience feedback of some affect. Both the experience and the feedback cross the neural synapses and are in the human manner delayed at the crossing. Wherever they may wander, while waiting for their vaguely denominated neurotransmitters, they inspire a new activity, a new experiencing, which is a displacement.

The human has all the instinctive foundations of the animal. But once unleashed, human instinctive behavior can rarely reach its target, if such can be discerned, but expresses itself all over the cerebrum in a splatter of displacements.

Tough *and* hungry *and* devout, the Aztecs cannibalized their enemies. The Hebrews of *Leviticus* devised fulsome logic to accompany the slaughter and eating of a beast.

It is a basic proposition of anthropology that in a "pure" culture, all practices and artifacts are interrelated. Human culture is one grand intermeshing of displacements. The result, working backwards, is to defeat the blind workings of the brain. Everyone is given to know, and to see it proven, that displacements, no matter how remotely scattered among the recesses of the central nervous system, are logical and under control. "Hold onto your mind! Nothing happens but that it is all of a piece." The stickleback and the seagull have relatively so few displacements (although even these were hard to discover and label), that Tinbergen can readily assert that they are genetic. I think that only the infinite variety of human displacements lets *homo schizo* congratulate himself on his large imagination, splendid lucubrations, ingenious associations, and poetic invention. It is important, all-important, "what we live for," etc., but who says so is ourselves – judges in our own trial. The human is sufficiently depressed instinctively, and thereupon anxious enough, and has enough continuously active positive and negative feedback operating, amidst ample grey matter, to support a world of delusions, no two of them alike.

We can appreciate then how absurd it is to attempt physiological distinctions between good and bad (healthy and unhealthy) displacements and projections, just as it is to divide good from bad (healthy from unhealthy) psychosomatism. Nor can we even speak of true and false displacements and projections. Once the brain casts its affect upon the external world, that world is physiologically real. When a god suffuses the starry heavens and a lover glances covetously at a stranger, what happens to the brain is as real as what happens when one

drinks a wine or receives a blow in the stomach. All are *real* experiences.

Displacement might be conceived very broadly as one's sensing of anything as having effects upon one. Surely it is animal, yet the concept is the same in ethology and psychoanalysis.¹ Thanks to displacements, a great world exists that has no "excuse" to exist. But it is a virtual cornucopia in humans. "Anything" means just that; no matter is ineligible as an object of human displacement. Attempting to segregate logically or empirically those things – an enemy, a swamp – that will surely affect one, and other things – a sound, a shape – that will most certainly not affect one is largely useless. We merely say, an animal displaces little, while a human displaces much.

DISPLACEMENT AND PEDAGOGY

So it is with projection, which is a common feature of displacement; anything can be a subject of projection. Projection is the animation of the universe. Everything potentially is sensed to have a will with regard to oneself. The breeze sings to one, the birds call one, the volcanoes command one, one's automobile refuses to run, the enemy possesses one's thought. Displacement and projections operate in the thousands in the human mind. While the mammal tends to a few things, the human extends almost unlimited attention to the world, an attention containing affect, that is, psychic involvement.

Displacement is accompanied by affect or emotion. The human, and for that matter the animal, does not pay attention to anything unless it invests the thing with emotion and anxiety. This process seems predictable, inasmuch as the

¹ Tinbergen, *A Study of Instinct*, 113-9.

reason for the displacement in the first place is to test the capacity of the displacement object to receive a neural load that is not being fully unburdened by an instinctive reaction to a stimulus.

The displaced affect being unloaded may be called positive or negative depending upon the instant state of the discharge. The perception of hovering vultures in the distance is a cultivated interest, with an ambivalent response, to which a new positive or negative affect is added, depending upon whether one imagines them to be focused upon a foreign body or a body with which one is identified. It is clear, too, that ambivalence accompanies attention to a great many displacements, even gods and spirits whose presence has signified both benefits and deprivations in times past. Indulgence and deprivation become forever related to the identification-affection nodes.

The central nervous system is laced with interconnections of affection. Once the larger world opens to the baby, he must begin to accept those displacements that his attendants point out as the true sources of indulgences and deprivations. His teachers, while pointing to certain nearby objects with a cause-and-consequence nexus fairly obvious even to the inexperienced human are especially interested in indicating to him some very great abstractions as ultimate causes of his well-being or ill-being; they are not at all scrupulous, even if they could be, in pursuing cause-and-consequence in such cases.

For most teachers, logic has an authoritative meaning. The myriad names of gods and spirits are short-hand vulgar logic. So it happens that their obsessions with gods and laws and great natural forces are imprinted early upon the young. A consensus of obsessions is achieved, along with some disrespect for necessary causal connections between the

objects of identification and the actual production of benefits and evils.

To inculcate in a child the determination to use only a special pot for his toilet needs can be, depending upon the age of the child and criteria of correct performance, a massive exercise in the transfer of obsessive behavior from adult to child. The displacement of toilet-training obsessions upon many other objects occurs readily, whether the object is an administrative routine (a "clean desk") or the traits of god, so the Judaeo-Christian god is not imagined to have an alimentary canal, but many other cultures dwell upon the excretions of their gods, the very word "urine," for instance, being originally from the god "Uranus," who rained many things upon the Earth.

TIME AND REMEMBERING

Man practices displacement and projection in creating space and time. The space dimension is little more than the scope of displacements, to begin with. Measure the area of displacement and one has the boundaries of space. The poly-ego can fill space; put another way, all space can be internalized so that a most remote object - a star, say - or a thought or an hallucination can vie with an insect bite for his attention, even affecting the way in which he scratches the bite. A person, and not necessarily a savage, feeling guilt before his god, may scratch himself roughly.

There is a need to sense time, one more empire for the mind to conquer. Memory is of the animal, too, and so is the ability to reach back for the pattern of experiences to relate to an immediate or approaching experience. The distinction of human memory arises from its flexible control of recall. Since man's experience is rich, his memory impressions are richly

patterned. It is one more great area to which he can resort for the resources of control. He can play one film against another, like a curator of a hologram museum, until he selects one or imagines a new one that will cope with an ongoing experience. Once more, fear drives him over the stubble field of instincts.

The delayed impulses that are aroused by experiencing flow out electrochemically in all directions through the mind and back and forth between the hemispheres of the brain. They excite the glandular and muscular system. The feedback of "flowback" is voluminous, too. The irrelevance of much of the activity does not embarrass the brain. It highly stimulates it. Some twenty percent of the typical person's oxygen intake is consumed by the brain.

What effect does this have upon the level of fear? It makes the universe fearful; for owing to projection, now the fear which is displaced upon others returns, relevant, and reinforced. But, at the same time, the fear is probably thus rendered more bearable, at the price of weakened identity and a great many unnecessary involvements.

What, then, happens to the need to control? "*Divide et impera*": the more one's displacements are scattered, the more the selves feel secure. The need to control, already strongly felt respecting the alter egos, is also pointed towards the outer world, other people, things, notions, the sky, the phantoms out there. The great power-seeker of the universe is *homo schizo*. He seeks to control everything onto which he displaces and projects. Where his fear is sensed to lie, there he will seek control.

Time is an expansible contoured traveling bag to carry displacements, indexed by the pockets they occupy. Old memories rest as imprints that become expectations in present action. The present is a developing succession of snapshots

upon used film, especially film containing analogous memories from the file. Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans thinks: "We can expect the British troops to attack us in rows and frontally, as they always do," and they did and were mowed down. An hallucinator says: "Members of my family were across the football field yesterday and that made it easier for me to talk to the crowd on the other side;" and he asked his family really to attend the following week, to lend further aid. Time's veritable meaning in any person's life is almost entirely a plastic envelopment of shapeless experiences, erratically related.

Cultures take over the obsession with time that the individual cannot avoid and *pro bono publico* define the intervals of time that must be mastered. This requires certain schizoid distortions of time. "Pure time," or "absolute time," does not exist save as another delusion yet one of the greatest of all cultural drives since the beginning has been to find absolute time. Lunar time is a mass of obsessive behaviors – rites, lore, and scientific study – surrounding a fairly expectable cycle. Past bad experiences and their anticipated reoccurrences are probably the chief factors in the choice of time clocks and the ways of using them. Disputes over time-reckoning and calendars have precipitated many bitter struggles in human history.

The "rational" student protests: "See the big pay-off from marking time: planting, hunting, saving resources, warfare, rendezvous." No doubt, these are the pragmatic effects (gains) from partially restoring animal instinctive capacities. And they can only come when a culture's people succeed in frightening themselves into observances of certain obsessions. As an *aide de peur*, gods and suns and terrible memories are called upon to assist as *aides-mémoires*. In consequence the obsessed biologist and souvenir-hunter can calculate exactly the time to arrive at Cape Cod when the instinctively driven horseshoe crabs arrive to breed.

Time is also a way of watching oneself, hence watching the world of one's displacements. The sky-watcher is fascinated in part because he can see how "absolute time" is up there and controlling his destiny. As Immanuel Kant once said: "Two things fill the mind with ever-increasing wonder and awe, the more and the more intensely the mind of thought is drawn to them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me."² There ensue the obsessions of mental discipline, the routines by which life is conducted so as effectively to generate, in individuals and groups, those technologies, artifacts, and means of subsistence that so exceed the capabilities of other species.

The rules of memory and the rules of forgetting are the two sides of the same coin. Who says remember, says select. Who names memory, names forgetting. In the earliest human, memory was a desperate structuring of current events to retain on the surface of the mind what was necessary to be human – that is, a sense of time, a manipulation of symbols and projections, and the practical means of ordering the environment – while relinquishing to the subconscious the impressions so intense that they would catatonize or panic the organism.

The sharpness, detail, and durability (in conscious and subconscious form) of remembering is proportional to the gravity of a trauma, that is, to the deepness and adverseness of its effect upon one or all areas of life. Forgetting speeds up with the intensity of the trauma. Thus a severe memory and its forgetting in all or part go hand-in-hand, and they follow upon the heels of the traumatic event.

The most intense memories occur without being willed. They emerge encased in dreams and myths. The less intense

² *Critique of Practical Reason*, conclusion.

memories ride upon and cover over the more intense ones. Disorders of recall, of forgetting, otherwise unexplainable, can be interpreted as the effects of what is memorable having become willy-nilly attached to the un-rememberable, and often relate to the symbols and affects of the repression of the great disaster, that is, the primal conditions that established the rules of the conscious human.

Memory and forgetting operate like a bookkeeping system to keep the mind in balance. Little is forgotten, and therefore the balance will continue to show a profit or increase throughout life. Like many bookkeeping systems in commerce, memorial bookkeeping has numerous ways of casting a balance. With the forgotten material, the mind works to create myth and art, even scientific hypothesis. By storing and re-categorizing forgetfulness, the mind achieves its ability to maintain consciousness and behave with instrumental rationality (that is, with a cause and effect logic in relation to practical goals).

Memory, in the specifically human sense of ability to recall at will, is inseparable from the sense of time. One can bring back the past in part voluntarily. This past can be shared with others through signs, symbols, and language. It can also be cast into the future, just as other current and past experiences are cast forwards in time.

The future-thought is born and partakes of the delusional quality of human nature in general. For time is a concept whose only existence is that given it by the time-keeper. Yet its implantation in humans gives them a tool for mental expansion and environmental control (as well as for suffering), not otherwise recognizable in the plant and animal kingdoms.

Culture institutes furious rites to make people remember something that they are forbidden to remember in all of its detail. Saturnalias, the prototype of all anniversaries,

famous scenes of joy and orgy, are masquerades literally of the end of the world. They must be compulsively celebrated in order, by aggressive joy and wantonness, to cover up, to ensure the amnesia, of events that cannot be forgotten. People create an elaborate mnemotechnology, to use Friedrich Nietzsche's term, to assure that they do not forget whatever it is that they have forgotten, that is, suppressed. In this same sense, a great paradox emerges: we remember most emotionally what we forget most determinedly.

Memory of animals is set into "naturally" occurring categories by the predictability of instinctive response. "As I respond, so must the world be," would be a fancied animal or plant cosmological formula. The information storage and retrieval system are automatically coordinated for the most part. The human has the unique problem of determining what data to store and in what forms to retrieve it.

He is very much helped by instinct, of course. Like the beginnings of most modern computer data banks, the material going in is predetermined – bank cheques, social security accounts, tax records. Thereupon, however, the human stores immense amounts of material that an animal computer technician would call "garbage." The vast weird human universe of displacements is duly punched into the memory bank. When the experience is recalled, it emerges not in the pristine sharpness of the original experience, nor even in a dulled image of it, but as a new thing, like a raised rusty anchor encrusted with weeds and shells. It entails various distortions, suppressions and reinforcements.

OBSESSIONS, COMPULSIONS, HABITS

Lorenz tells of a goose that at sundown habitually climbed a flight of stairs, always stopping on the landing to look through a window. One day, she climbed the stairs in too great

haste, forgetting to stop at the window. She was very agitated in consequence; to relieve herself from her agitation, she climbed the stairs back down, and then up again, stopping dutifully to look out of the window before proceeding, now in a becalmed way.

Obsession, not habit, we say, was involved. To specify the occurrence of an abnormal resistance to change in routine is not proper language when referring to a goose. But no clear line is to be drawn. Many a person is silly as a goose. In "normal" humans, we expect an acceptance of the frustration and an adaptation to the new condition. Why do we accept this? Because we appreciate that "normal" people are aware of what they are doing habitually and hence are capable of letting a frustration flow over into "irrelevant" spheres of activity. No sooner do we claim this, though, than we realize how few people are without severe reaction to a break to some of their routines. That is, most people are more or less obsessed. If they cannot find their shoes in the morning, they will behave strangely for a long time, until somehow they find the shoes, find substitutes, are given "reasons," or develop a new lifestyle for spending the morning without shoes.

Stern memories, pathologically called obsessions, are an important part of human memory. Obsession is "excessive," "unstoppable" attention to something (by which, as usual, we mean "anything"). An animal can be trained to "extra" obsessions. Humans are naturally obsessive. They can be obsessed with a pair of shoes, a piece of cow dung, an inner voice or pain, the Second Coming of Christ, or a line of poetry. This "obsession with obsessions" determines what is remembered, what is recallable from memory, what the person will spend his time on, where the important things of life are in his estimation to be found. Moreover, it will give him an enormous capability. A person will be able to abandon all other thoughts and temptations and stick to a task through thick and thin. With this one (or two) abilities, he reconstructs animal

instincts with some embellishments. That is, provided that he is compulsive as well as obsessive. Freud speaks of "the compulsion to repeat – something that seems more primitive, more elementary, more instinctual than the pleasure principle which it overrides. . . the pleasure principle – to which, after all, we have hitherto ascribed dominance in mental life."

A simple example of compulsion is the patient who insists upon playing the same chord a thousand times in succession. Or the repetition of nonsense syllables unendingly, which reminds one of religious liturgies that depend for effect upon an obsessive idea and the compulsion to repeat, which in turn must be related to the catatonic wish to stay as one is, forever in place. This again connects with the obsessive compulsive return to origins, to a recollected and imagined primordial set of events, *illud tempus* (that primordial time when ...) which M. Eliade has so well abstracted from primitive ceremonies.

The terms "obsession" and "compulsion" are separate but confused in the psychiatric lexicon. No special neurology is assigned to one or the other. Each can be tied to both behavior and thoughts. Obsession is of the family of memory, planning, and habit. It is a compulsion to repeat. Compulsion is the kind of driven act which is likely to become an obsession. Insofar as all major problems associated with the terms are internalized, they are indistinguishable. Furthermore, they may originate together and act together.

Existential fear, and the need to control it, pursue the logical line of reestablishing the human as an effective mammal. It is not our choice whether to vary from it. We have no recourse; if we seek to follow the smithereens of our explosion of attachments, we shall go to pieces ourselves, psychologically and shortly afterwards as living organisms. We must stay at home while our displacements travel adventurously, and here

recompose the hominidal character as best one may: hence, obsession and compulsion, or obsessed compulsiveness.

Obsessions are linked to habit. They are deemed "bad habits". Compulsion may be an urge to shout obscenities upon entering a church. Obsession may be an agonizing repetitive recall of an embarrassing scene, like the time one uttered a string of obscenities in a church. The relation of obsession to habit is clear in this case. The relation of compulsion is not, as in many compulsive behaviors the thought has preceded the deed and has occurred obsessively prior to the occasion when the act is finally committed. Then it is a habit of thought converted into a deed.

Obsession can be viewed as a form of deeply imprinted memory, which repeatedly calls the attention of the self to its selves. If a person suffers a fearful accident, the memory of it may occur with or without volition and despite a will to the contrary. At the same time, an obsession (and even faint memory is in a sense an obsession) is a repetitive trained behavior. Therefore it is a habit. It is also a compulsion, for one is compelled to recall.

Compulsions as acts are distinguishable from habit only by intensity. A drug habit becomes a compulsion, or addiction, when the behavior that is represented in the mind forces itself upon the organism, consciously or unconsciously. It is impossible physiologically to distinguish between a compulsive tic of the eyelid and a compulsion to step on the brake when a deer surprisingly leaps out ahead of one's speeding automobile.

Furthermore, a great many compulsions are consummated repeatedly, especially when uninterrupted by the forces of law, the community, the family, another person, or by destructive reaction or nature of the objects, or by self-destruction as in the compulsion to commit suicide.

We have two further cases where a compulsive element is present: one when the act is singular in its nature, but lacks a history of obsession with it, and springs forth compulsively as an invention. Such would be an impulse out of nowhere, as a model worker for twenty years is seized by the idea of walking out of his office immediately, forever, and does so. We would surmise that the thought had been formulating in an obsessive form but unconsciously, for a long time. This contrasts with a case in which, after a decade of concentration upon a mathematical problem, a solution offers itself to a professor abruptly, and the obsession is extinguished. The place of habit in both cases, despite the compulsion and extinction upon their conclusions, is manifest. In this second case a compulsion might be exercised upon the completion of the compelled act. The professor might insist upon the correctness of his solution, despite all proof and urgings to the contrary, and then proclaim it, marking the close of his prolonged studies.

Habit and obsession are distinguishable in two ways, one misleading, the other appropriate. In Aristotelian terms, a good person is one of good habits, and habits are what are rationally accepted by the free will of man. In modern and preferable terms, habit is an obsession that is governed by awareness and instrumentalism; a habit can be broken or strengthened; conversely, an obsession is a rigid habit. A controllable obsession is then a habit. The habit can be generated, moderated, and extinguished, according to the consequences sought from its practice.

Only when the obsessive foundations of habit are understood, however, can the distinction be made. The human "naturally" is prone to obsession. This is because "the cheapest way to run the works" is to concentrate energy upon the most forceful options and derive security and profit from them. The infant gains all he can by means of affection, so his whole life becomes colored by the exercise of and the memory of the

affection he achieved in the beginning. All his other values are supplied *via* this one value which of course in its turn is not only a way to food and warmth but a way to reduce existential and immediate fear.

One ought not slip into half-way explanation, the sophistry of "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" Toilet training is an obsession that is culture-bound, varying widely. To be instituted it had to be preceded by an obsession for obsessions. The question is: "What generated the master strategy obsession?" And, once more, we revert to the theory of a disordered poly-ego that welcomes order and repetition as a substitute for instinctive reaction.

People speak of animal habits, though not of animal obsessions. It would appear that an animal habit is already an obsession. If a human trains an animal, too, the animal's habit is more obsessional, in our terms, than habitual. The same difficulties are encountered with the two words, in the animal and human settings, and we had better abandon any distinction here and regard the two concepts as interchangeable in the physiological context.

The human is obsessive-habitual because he cannot otherwise cope with existence. His obsession-habits are infinitely variable. They succeed, not precede – although the organic structure is partly in place – the basal human disorder and are the human method of correcting the disorder, with all due limitations and difficulties.

In the illumination provided by psychopathology, habit is more readily understandable as an obsession under some degree of control, but at all events as a repeated practice, the regularity of and insistence upon which makes it obsessive, and the social judgement of which makes it reasonable as opposed to pathological. So it goes with compulsiveness very often. One might say that all obsessions are compulsive, but not all

compulsions are obsessive; these latter are better called impulsive acts. Still, it would be rare that an impulsive act does not proceed from unconscious obsession, or from an impulsive character, typically given to such actions.

Examining behaviors known as memorizing, commemorative (as with the need to celebrate collective anniversaries), obsessive, bureaucratic, conventional compulsive, and ritualistic, we find in them the essence of habit. Habit originates in the need to control exploded behavior and unruliness. Fear or anxiety reduces in the presence of habit, increases in its absence. If fear diminishes, one can claim that instinctual behavior has been in some sense restored and the reduction of fear was anticipated in the creation of the habit.