



S. Freud. *Re Instincts and their Vicissitudes*, Coll. Papers II, 1915,  
p. 60 - 83 [ARAGC] E16

We might at a pinch say of an instinct that it 'loves' the objects after which it strives for purposes of satisfaction, but to say that it 'hates' an object strikes us as odd so we become aware that the attitudes of love and hate cannot be said to characterize the relations of instincts to their objects but are reserved for the relations of the ego as a whole to objects. But, if we consider a colloquial usage which is certainly full of meaning we see that there is yet another limitation to the significance of love and hate. We do not say of those objects which serve the interests of self-preservation that we love them; rather we emphasize the fact that we need them, and perhaps add an element of a different kind in our relation to them by words which denote a much lesser degree of love - for example to be fond of to like, to find agreeable.

So the word 'to love' becomes shifted every further into the sphere of the pure pleasure-relation existing between the ego and its object and finally attaches itself to sexual objects in the narrower sense and to those which satisfy the needs of sublimated sexual instincts. The discrimination of the ego-instincts from the sexual, a discrimination which we have imposed upon our psychology, is seen, therefore, to be in conformity with the spirit of our speech. Since we do not customarily say that the single sexual component-instinct loves its object, but see the most appropriate case in which to apply the word 'love' in the relation of the ego to its sexual object we learn from this fact that the applicability of the word in this relation begins only with the synthesis of all the component-instincts under the primacy of the genitals and in the service of the function of reproduction.

It is noteworthy that in the use of the word 'hate' no such intimate relation to sexual pleasure and the sexual function appears: on the contrary, the painful character of the relation seems to be the sole decisive feature. The ego hates, abhors and pursues with intent to destroy all objects which are for it a source of painful feelings, without taking into account whether they mean to it frustration of sexual satisfaction or of gratification of the needs of self-preservation. Indeed it may be asserted that the true prototypes of the hate-relation are derived not from sexual life, but from the struggle of the ego for self-preservation and self-maintenance.

So we see that love and hate which present themselves to us as essentially antithetical, stand in no simple relation to each other. They did not originate in a cleave of any common primal element, but sprang from different sources and underwent each its own development before the influence of the pleasure-pain relation constituted them antitheses to each other. At this point we are confronted with the task of putting together what we know of the genesis of love and hate.

Love originates in the capacity of the ego to satisfy some of its instincts auto-erotically through the obtaining of organ-



pleasure' It is primarily narcissistic, is then transferred to those objects which have been incorporated in the ego, now much extended, and expresses the motor striving of the ego after these objects as sources of pleasure. It is intimately connected with the activity of the later sexual instincts and when these have been completely synthesized, coincides with the sexual trend as a whole. The preliminary stages of love reveal themselves as temporary sexual aims, while the sexual instincts are passing through their complicated development. First amongst these we recognize the phase of incorporating or devouring, a type of love which is compatible with abolition of any separate existence on the part of the object, and which may therefore be designated ambivalent. At the higher stage of the pregenital sadistic-anal organization, the striving after the object appears in the form of an impulsion to mastery, in which injury or annihilation of the object is a matter of indifference. This form and preliminary stage of love is hardly to be distinguished from hate in its behaviour towards the object. Only when the genital organization is established does love become the antithesis of hate.

The relation of hate to objects is older than that of love. It is derived from the primal repudiation by the narcissistic ego of the external world whence flows the stream of stimuli. As an expression of the pain reaction induced by objects, it remains in constant intimate relation with the instincts of self-preservation so that sexual and ego instincts readily develop an antithesis which repeats that of love and hate. When the sexual function is governed by the ego-instincts as at the stage of the sadistic-anal organization, they impart the qualities of hate to the instinct's aim as well.

The history of the origin and relations of love makes us understand how it is that love so constantly manifests itself as 'ambivalent' i.e. accompanied by feelings of hate against the same object. This admixture of hate in love is to be traced in part to those preliminary stages of love which have not been wholly outgrown, and in part is based upon reactions of aversion and repudiation on the part of the ego-instincts, which in the frequent conflicts between the interests of the ego and those of love, can claim to be supported by real and actual motives. In both cases, therefore, the admixture of hate may be traced to the source of the self preservative instincts. When a love relationship with a given object is broken off, it is not infrequently succeeded by hate, so that we receive the impression of a transformation of love into hate. This descriptive characterization is amplified by the view that, when this happens, the hate which is motivated by considerations of reality is reinforced by a regression of the love to the sadistic preliminary stage, so that the hate acquires an erotic character and the continuity of a love-relationship is ensured.



The third antithesis of love, the transformation of loving into being loved, represents the operation of the polarity of active and passive, and is to be judged in the same way as in scopophilia and sadism. We may sum up by saying that the essential feature in the vicissitudes undergone by instincts is their subjection to the influences of the three great polarities that govern mental life. Of these three polarities we might describe that of activity -- passivity as the biological, that of ego - external world as the real, and finally that of pleasure pain as the economic respectively.

That possible vicissitude undergone by an instinct which we call repression will form the subject of a further inquiry.