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'Pleonexia': A Modern Pathology of Self

George R. Ingham
Smith College

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ABSTRACT

This study is an examination of the compulsion to shop or acquire commodities seen as a culturally and historically distinctive pathology of the modern self. The Greek term 'pleonexia' ('acquisitiveness') is borrowed as a convenient and more accurately descriptive term than the common 'shopaholic'.

Pleonexia is seen as a complex, habitual, impulsive behavior which attempts to maintain order and continuity in the sense of self. Pleonexia represents a failure in self-cohesion, an attempt to counter feelings of emptiness created by the fragmentation and objectification of desire in our commodity culture. Such internal functions as regulation of feelings, self-esteem, as well as non-harmful techniques of self-soothing are what become pathological in the pleonexic.

The question of personal freedom of action is central to the analysis. In chapter one, it is the question of possible external coercion -- that is, manufactured desire, or what is labeled 'the manipulationist thesis'. In chapter two, the issue of internal compulsion or appetitive internal forces is seen as Freud's major revolutionary contribution to a new (and much more complex) theory of action and desire. Trapped in a consumption pattern where coercion and desire correspond, the pleonexic has a frozen behavior pattern of insatiable craving.

It is argued that this heteronomy is best seen as a directed disposition to acquire; and, the analysis of character traits, therefore, plays an essential role in its understanding.

The concluding chapter utilizes the format of DSM-III-R as a convenient framework to offer some observations on the diagnostic criteria, predisposing factors, associated features, impairments and differential diagnosis of this disorder. These findings are necessarily highly tentative based on the virtual silence in the psychiatric literature since the pioneering studies of Freud's early followers.

The thesis concludes with some observations on the implications for social work practice; borrowing from the 'life-model' and feminist treatment approaches.

'PLEONEXIA': A MODERN PATHOLOGY
OF SELF

A project based upon an independent investigation,
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Social Work.

George R. Ingham

Smith College School for Social Work
Northampton, Massachusetts 01063

1989

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CHAPTER I

THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND

"Still pangs for gold the millionaire,
He's never done.
To many Fortune gives too large a share,
Enough to none."

- Martial, Epigrams

"...the most characteristic quality of modern man; the strange contrast between an inner life to which nothing outward corresponds, and an outward existence unrelated to what is within. It is a contrast unknown to the Greeks."

- Nietzsche, Gesammelte Werke
VI, p. 258

In 1913 Freud wrote about the "powerful sexual factors" which are involved in the value set upon money, and he noted "...that money questions will be treated by cultured people in the same manner as sexual matters, with the same inconsistency, prudishness and hypocrisy." (Freud, 1913, pp. 143-144) Seventy-five years later, the very kind of reticence to discuss the role money plays in pathological behaviors which Freud called attention to seems to have infected his own creation. Despite Freud's own keen interest in the role of money in character development, and the many articles of his immediate followers, recent theorists of psychoanalysis have remained virtually silent on subjects relating to money (an interesting exception to this generalization is the question

of client fees). This silence is all the more remarkable given the increased prevalence of pathological behaviors relating to the accumulation of money and commodities in our society. And yet, as this thesis hopes to demonstrate, recent developments in psychoanalysis offer the tools for a more sophisticated and less reductionistic analysis of disorders relating to acquisitions; while, in turn, shedding valuable light on the critical issue of compulsive and addictive behavior patterns.

Any study of the role of acquisitiveness in pathology cannot dispense with references to the influence which cultural factors play in nourishing such behaviors in our society (there is an important distinction being drawn here between "nourishing" and "causing"). As Jules Henry stated "psychopathology is the final outcome of all that is wrong with a culture." (Bordo, 1985-86; Lasch, 1979, p. 34). Such an approach is consonant with the more inclusive models of social work practice (see, e.g., Germain & Gitterman, 1980; Soloman, 1986; Leonard, 1984 - more on this in the discussion of treatment issues in chapter 3 below). However, the relationship of individual pathology and social influencing factors is not simply linear causal. As Philip Rieff explains the connection: "history changes the expression of neurosis even if it does not change the underlying mechanisms" (Rieff, 1966, p. 372). Clement (1982) and Richards (1984, pp. 136-141)

warn against the dangers of overextending psychiatric models (such as narcissism) for broad social analysis and cultural critique (even Christopher Lasch, the target of much of this criticism of the use of psychoanalytic categories for macroanalysis, has warned against the "confusion" it can create - Lasch, 1979, p. 34, 1984, p. 25).

However, each society appears to have its own "prevailing forms of suffering" (Levin, 1985, p. 5). It is one matter to argue, as this chapter will, that social factors help to nourish the development of a particular form of pathology, and another matter entirely to see one form of societal structure as the cause of that pathology. In an article on "Narcissism and the Crisis of Capitalism", Russell Jacoby, following Otto Kernberg's assertion that narcissistic patients are "often not dysfunctional but well adjusted", draws the broad conclusion that such a "character disorder is, therefore, not an individual, but a social disorder" (Jacoby, 1980, p. 60). There is a sense in which such a statement might be considered helpful. The very definition, for example, of what is seen in any society as a disorder of excess is interwoven with cultural norms. Witness the extreme misuse of such norms in the concept of 'adrapomania', which was once used to pathologize slaves who repeatedly tried to escape the plantation (Garter & Edwards, 1988, p. 76). As one theorist of addiction states "excess is not absolute but is personally and socially defined" (Orford, 1985, p. 321).

Also, the very reticence to discuss issues of money noted above is itself a cultural factor which must be accounted for. As Wilhelm Reich was perhaps the first to note, "every social order creates those character forms which it needs for its preservation" (Reich, 1946/1970, p. XXLL). This thesis will argue that what Reich said about the effects of social structure on character (Reich, 1946/1970, 1973) applies with even greater force in the case of the "money neurotic" (the phrase comes from Borneman, 1976, p. 11). Money is an overdetermined symbol in our society, and there are many ways in which it enters into pathological behaviors. This thesis will be concerned with only one of these behaviors, albeit a very prevalent and devastating one - viz. the compulsive acquisition of commodities.

Borrowing from Alastair MacIntyre's highly influential work, After Virtue (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 137, 1988, pp. 111-112) the descriptive term 'pleonexia' will be used as a convenient label for this disorder. Although coming from the Greeks, the term is part of the English language (Webster, 1986, p. 1740) being defined there as "avarice", "covetousness". But as Webster (1986) points out the Greek original is literally "to have or want more". MacIntyre, therefore, finds Friedrich Nietzsche's "haben und mehrwollhaben" (literally "to have and to want to possess more") as a particularly felicitous translation. The standard

Greek-English Lexicon (Liddell & Scott, 1953, p. 1416) refers to Plato's and Aristotle's use as 'excess gain," "a larger share of a thing". The important point for MacIntyre is that translations, such as J.S. Mill's, in terms of the vice of avarice miss the point that "the vice picked out is that of acquisitiveness as such, a quality that modern individualism both in its economic activity and in the character of the consuming aesthete does not perceive to be a vice at all" (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 137, emphasis in original). In a more recent study (MacIntyre, 1988, pp. 111-112), MacIntyre draws a distinction which will be important for this thesis. He takes issue with Hobbes' translation of pleonexia by the word 'greed' because the latter is "the name of a type of desire, whereas 'pleonexia' names a disposition to engage in a type of activity; and in English we treat 'greed' as the name of one motive for activities of acquisition, not as the name of the tendency to engage in such activities simply for their own sake" (MacIntyre, 1988, p. 112). The distinction that MacIntyre is drawing here is one central to understanding Freud's motivational theory and his use of such terms as "unconscious desire" and "intention" (subtle differences in the use of 'desire', 'want' and 'intention' will be ignored for purposes of the analysis in this section; see chapter 2 below for more on these terms). It is, therefore, of prime importance to any project which hopes to shed light on the

nature of addiction through the use of psychoanalytic categories (for this reason these issues will come up again in relevant sections of subsequent chapters). The important distinction that MacIntyre is drawing here is one which he elaborated on earlier in his work on The Unconscious (MacIntyre, 1965, pp. 55-60; cf., Helene Deutsch, 1965 for another example), and which can be traced to Gilbert Ryle (Ryle, 1949, pp. 83-153). For Ryle a 'disposition' is an ability, tendency, or proneness to act or react, or fail to act or react, in a certain way under certain circumstances. In other words, a disposition is a behavior pattern or quality of character. Those individuals who have the "character trait" of acquisitiveness demonstrate a tendency to aggrandizement no matter what their motives or intentions (as MacIntyre notes - 1965, p. 59 for humans dispositions always include the possibility of avowal of intention, even if, in the case of the neurotic, it may require psychoanalysis to bring unconscious motives to consciousness).

Under most circumstances we can determine what a person 'desires' or 'intends' either by asking her or by observing her behavior. "We ordinarily regard the individual himself as the final authority on the question of what he wants " (Alston, 1967, p. 406). Behaviorists, influenced by Gilbert Ryle, wished to restrict the use of such terms to observable actions. For Ryle (1949, pp. 83-153), as just noted, a

disposition is a certain inclination toward specific action. However, Freud was most interested in those problematic cases where what a person maintains and her actions are at variance (Freud's views on such cases will be examined in chapter 2 below). Freud's great contribution was to extend the use of the concept 'motive' to make it applicable to involuntary behavior. This extension, as Thomas Smythe maintains (Smythe, 1972, pp. 423-424), is all the more important and understandable in the case of compulsive behaviors, where unconscious motives play an even greater role. It is in such compulsive actions that there is often a conflict between avowed desires and those denied; the use of unconscious desires is, at least in part, to explain the strength and persistence of actions which the agent often disavows. The dispositional analysis of motives, in this expanded version, postulates the existence of unconscious tendencies which constitute systems of wants rather than a want in isolation (Alston, 1967, p. 404). It is this systems aspect of our wants and corresponding beliefs which helps to explain their overdetermined role in compulsive behaviors. It also helps to explain how social factors can influence such behaviors: for as Alston maintains "...whatever else a want may be, it makes action tendencies susceptible to increase by beliefs; in other words, it brings it about that our beliefs have an effect on what we do" (Alston, 1967, p. 404). And Alston adds, such

influences can be subject to repression just as desires can (Alston, 1967, p. 406).

The distinction which MacIntyre makes between an individual motive, such as greed, and a disposition, such as pleonexia, is the difference between a particular aroused desire and a more latent behavior pattern or quality of character. Those individuals who have the "character trait" of acquisitiveness demonstrate a tendency to aggrandizement no matter what their particular motives or intentions (MacIntyre, 1965, p. 59). Whereas greed has been an almost universal motive, it is this latter tendency which MacIntyre sees as a defining characteristic of modern society.

The important point is that our social norms, unlike those of Greece and most previous societies, sees the tendency to acquisitiveness simpliciter as unproblematic (cf., Coblentz, 1965 for a history of this difference). The new propensity to consume is nourished by an economic system based on limitless growth. It is important to distinguish here between the motive of greed, which has always been with us, and this new tendency of pleonexia. As Coblentz notes "...we cannot point to many previous eras in which the child, almost from the cradle, has been so thoroughly taught that life's flower and summit is acquisition" (Coblentz, 1965, p. V). As Erich Fromm put it "man has transformed himself into a "homo consumens", a new "character type" with an "insatiable"

appetite for commodities (Fromm, 1964, p. 179). This new character is narcissistically "consumed in its consuming" (Levin, 1987, p. 65). What are the major differences which distinguish this frenzy of acquisition from consumption patterns in other cultures?

Social anthropologists who have examined the role of goods in traditional societies point to several key differences from our modern pattern (Douglas & Isherwood, 1979; Herskovitz, 1960; Coblentz, 1965). Douglas and Isherwood point to the "rituals of reciprocity" in which goods make and maintain social relationships. A good example is the Kula trade examined by Malinowski (Wilden, 1984, p. 20), where an emphasis on accumulation would have destroyed the basic function of the exchange system, namely the social relationship between the exchanges themselves.

On the other hand, "large-scale consumption patterns" are seen only where goods are used as "weapons of exclusion"; for example, in societies like the Yurok (and like our own) in which "unfettered individualism" characterizes the social structure. Art, culture, and solidarity rituals are at a minimum in such societies (Douglas & Isherwood, 1979, pp. 131-137). Such groups have often been forced into traditional patterns. As Coblentz notes, even in these exceptional societies which show a pride in ownership and display, this arises "not so much from possessions in themselves as from a

sort of anti-possessiveness - the largesse, extravagance, or destructiveness with which possessions are abandoned"; an acquisitiveness "for non-acquisitive purposes...that serve little purpose except exaltation of the ego" (Coblentz, 1965, pp. 7-9; the similarities with our own "throw-away" society, and with Veblen's 1925 analysis of its "leisure class" rituals are striking. More on these similarities at the end of this chapter). In such individualistic societies goods take on a new and aggressive meaning. This alienation from traditional symbols and structures stemming the "commoditization process" was documented by Michael Taussig in his influential study of two South American societies (Taussig, 1980). Taussig contrasts Marcel Mauss' classic study of The Gift rituals of the Maori with Marx's famous concept of commodity fetishism to show the major change in the social function of goods from precapitalist to capitalist societies. For the Maori, as well as Taussig's South Americans, goods only have meaning as personalized signs for social relationships. Whereas, "in the case of commodity fetishism, social relationships are dismembered and appear to dissolve into relationships between mere things..." (Taussig, 1965, pp. 35-37). Taussig shows how traditional societies attempt to resist this change by incorporating it within their mythic structure of evil and the devil. Jean Baudrillard argues that a large part of our societies difficulties with "consommation" stem from the lack

of a similar myth to explain this reification of commodities and relations (Baudrillard, 1970; in Baudrillard, 1981, he finds both the Marxist and psychoanalytic "myths" of the subject to be inadequate - Baudrillard's work will be examined at the end of this chapter).

The historical process by which this change in the meaning and function of commodities has come about in our western societies, and its psychological effects is the topic of an ambitious and stimulating analysis by Colin Campbell (Campbell, 1987). The anthropologists have shown that commodities have a dual function: they serve both to satisfy needs and to communicate meaning as part of a hermeneutic order or signifying system (Leiss et al., 1986, have applied this anthropological analysis directly to our culture as "privileged discourse through and about objects" (Leiss, 1986, 264-296; cf. also, Marx's distinction between "use-value" and "exchange-value" in Schneider & Wilson, 1975). Campbell has documented a modern form of hedonism, with its roots ironically in our puritan past, one which employs a strong role for imagination, as the central change leading to our consumer-oriented society. Campbell argues that it was in the eighteenth century rather than the nineteenth that this new form of hedonism began to flourish. He demonstrated the shortcomings of three popular models of the rise of consumer culture: (1) "instinctivism", which postulates an "acquisitive

instinct" (see Ferenczi's unfortunate term "capitalistic instinct" - Borneman, 1976, p. 46; this misuse of 'instinct', and the related notion of "true/false needs" will be further critiqued in the first part of chapter 2 below). This is the view that our wants and desires are biological in origin and therefore can be assimilated to the category of 'needs' (Campbell, 1987, pp. 42-45). There are many problems with this effort to equate wants and needs: (1) it was historically used to try to discount the influence of social and cultural factors; (2) it traditionally has functioned in economic theory as something "taken-for-granted" which limits empirical investigation; (3) by equating humans with lower animals (like "jackdaws" which have an innate disposition to acquire shiny objects -Campbell 1987, p. 237n30) it ignores the "extreme plasticity" of our acquisitive behavior and makes it very difficult to explain our "equally marked tendency" to "disaquire and dispose of goods"; (4) it suffers from "the fallacy of retrospection" by invoking "as evidence in support of the existence of the concept of latent want exactly that behavior (the presence of demand for a product) which the latent want is supposed to explain" (Campbell, 1987, p. 44). Campbell argues against the view (most closely associated with Abraham Maslow) of a needs/wants hierarchy - the theory that wants are higher-order motives added to a base of biological needs in an ascending order of increased civilization. Not

only is the anthropological evidence against such a view, it also has overtones of "evolutionary ethnocentrism", associating the higher ends with Western civilization. But most importantly for this thesis, this hierarchical view suffers from the many problems associated with any motivational theory based on biological needs (Campbell, following Wallach & Wallach 1983, pp. 196-225, cites only the tautological flavor given by the tendency to "explain" the 'satisfaction' of a need at one level by postulating the appearance of a 'higher' need. Chapter 2 of this thesis will take up other problems with this biological needs model; but, see also, the excellent critique of the neo-Freudian concept of 'true/false needs' in Springborg, 1981, chaps. 8 & 9).

The second group of models criticized by Campbell are the various forms of "manipulationism". This is the view which attributes consumer demand to a conspiracy created by advertisers and businessmen (Campbell, like Baudrillard, 1970, uses Vance Packard and John K. Galbraith as prime examples; however Packard 1957 gave many humorous examples of how advertisements failed in their attempt to manipulate consumers). This model, in sharp contrast to instinctivism, might be characterized as the nurture view; one which recognizes only acquired tendencies, attributing a passive role to the consumer. Campbell notes a continuum of manipulationists, from the extreme idea that mere exposure to

advertisements creates desires to the trivial views which hold that the media simply influences demand. However, he is concerned with those who maintain that consumers are consciously 'forced' to act against their own inclinations, and often against their own self interest. Campbell offers the following arguments against this model: (1) advertising is only one of the many cultural influences acting on the consumer (he doesn't mention the most obvious counterforce, the so-called "consumer-protection" agencies); (2) the great heterogeneity of marketable goods and audiences modifying the effects of media messages; (3) the large body of empirical evidence which shows that consumers do not simply 'ingest' commercial messages in an unthinking manner. Rather such messages interact with existing dispositions in a much more complex and active manner. The whole existence of market research, after all, is predicated on the need to discover what the pre-existing dreams, desires and wishes of the consumer are and to design ads which appeal to them. Campbell argues that it cannot be the underlying motivational structure of consumers which is being manipulated, since it is this very structure of dispositions which is being accounted for in such research. Campbell draws a distinction here between the 'exploitation' of existing motives and 'manipulation' which creates new motives. He further distinguishes between the manipulation of the symbolic meanings attached to various

products and the manipulation of the underlying motives which may become associated with such symbols. In short, what advertisers do is manipulate messages rather than individuals. This argument changes the focus to the issue of how do symbolic structures influence the creation of new wants and desires (the limitations of this symbolic turn in the argument will be examined in the discussion of Baudrillard later in this chapter). Campbell argues that it was utilitarianism which artificially designated the "intrinsic utility" of the product as the sole source of gratification rather than any images or ideas which might be associated with that product. Words, images, and symbolic meanings, Campbell maintains (1987, p. 48) play a very "real" role in gratification. The economic utilitarians wanted to maintain that the market was based on rational calculation of motives; therefore, any introduction of emotion and imagination would indicate manipulation of the consumer. However, as Campbell clearly shows, the role of affective attachment is as basic to consumption, if not more so, than rational calculation; so that the mere existence of an emotional component to advertising does not signal 'manipulation'. In sum, this model ignores the differences between manipulation and exploitation, and reduces the consumer to a purely passive receptor of artificial wants (see Leiss et al., 1986, pp. 33-38 for more arguments against manipulationism).

The last of Galbraith's three models of consumer demand which Campbell criticizes he calls "the Veblenesque Perspective" (Campbell, 1987, pp. 49-57). Thorsten Veblen was highly critical of what he saw to be the inadequate psychology which served as the foundation of economic theory in his day (his classic The Theory of the Leisure Class was published in 1899, just one year before Freud's Interpretation of Dreams; for a work which explores the interesting parallels between Freud and Veblen, see Schneider, 1948). Veblen's highly influential view sees the consumer as motivated primarily by status emulation and such motives as envy and pride (economists now term these "Veblen effects" on consumer behavior; and they include 'bandwagon' effects and 'snob appeal' as examples - see Baudrillard, 1981, pp. 205-210). Keynes called such effects "needs of the second class", i.e. the "insatiable need" to "keep abreast or ahead" of others. (Galbraith, 1958, p. 125; Campbell notes that 'getting ahead of the Joneses' is closer to Veblen than the formula usually associated with his name - viz. 'keeping up with the Joneses' - Campbell, 1987, p. 239n58). Veblen was interested in "the surplus of motives which economic abundance made possible and inevitable", and in the "seductive" quality of these motives (Riesman, 1953, p. 60). He introduced a non-rational component to consumer demand; and one which he maintained could not be reduced simply to hedonism. He also saw that "the same objects

may be pursued for a variety of motives, and a variety of objects for the same motive" (Schneider, 1948, p. 86n96). Veblen's model has the decided advantage of seeing the consumer as an active participant in the creation of wants.

Campbell argues, however, that Veblen's account, though an important step toward recognizing the importance of cultural and symbolic factors in consumer demand, operates from too simplistic a theory of motivation. For one thing, Veblen concentrates on the symbol of price, but there are many other messages which the consumer may wish to convey by the purchase of a product, for example, 'taste' and 'style'. Similarly, the "other-directed" influences motivating the consumer are more complex than Veblen recognized, in that there are often a variety of different "reference groups" to which the consumer may relate in "positive, negative, comparative, and normative" ways (Campbell, 1987, p. 51). What is more, Campbell argues, Veblen assumes an "aggressive" theory of motivation, one which sees the individual as motivated by "a race" to "outdo" others in conspicuous consumption, rather than the more "defensive" stance of maintaining one's position in line (Campbell, 1987, p. 52; Schneider, 1948, pp. 85-94 shows how this aspect of Veblen's theory was derived from the 'instinctivist' psychology of his day. Schneider offers a further critique of 'instinctivism'). Again, Campbell maintains that studies in reference group

theory demonstrate a more complex system of influences. Veblen's own model is complicated by his stratification theory which postulates a leisure class at the top which sets an ideal standard (both moral and aesthetic) which becomes the source of emulation by the rest of the community. Campbell offers two criticisms of this view: first, that Veblen confuses competition with imitation. Rivalry between "a close-knit community of peers (such as athletes or actors)" is not the same as social mobility based on adopting a new lifestyle. Furthermore, "individuals may gain success over their competitors through innovation rather than imitation ... and social classes may actually be in conflict over the very question of the criteria to be employed in defining status" (Campbell, 1987, p. 53). Secondly, Campbell argues that Veblen assumes a homogeneity of values which simply doesn't exist in our highly mobile society, where the richest classes do not dictate fashion (as will be seen below, Georg Simmel offered a more sophisticated analysis of the social role of "fashion" and envy).

But Campbell's most important criticism of Veblen, from the viewpoint of this thesis, concerns the limitations of his psychological assumptions. For Veblen, the primary lesson to be learned about modern consumer behavior is what it tells us about social status. But, as Campbell notes, there is another significance for such behavior; namely, what it can tell us

about the nature of individual character. As Campbell (1987, pp. 55-56) puts it:

In so far as Veblen's theory rests upon the assumption that modern consumers are all committed to a policy of aggressive conspicuous consumption, then one form of insatiability is only 'explained' in terms of the problematic assumption of another; in this case the claim that people are motivated by an overwhelming desire to get the better of their fellows, is a psychological explanation about as useful (and convincing) as the older explanation of insatiable consumption as motivated by greed.

Finally, Campbell holds that Veblen's famous thesis fails to distinguish the uniquely modern and western characteristics of consumer behavior - viz. its insatiability and never-ending desire for novelty (Campbell, 1987, p. 55). However, when Campbell comes to describe his own model, he disappoints for very similar reasons, by assuming a too "rationalized" and autonomous hedonism to fit the uniquely modern picture of consumer reality.

Campbell's model of "modern autonomous imaginative hedonism" does point to the air of unreality which seems to pervade our consumer culture, which he calls its "as-if" quality. The day-dreaming, self-illusory quality of consumer behavior is captured in such fictional characters as Walter Mitty and Billy Liar. "[The] modern hedonist is continually withdrawing from reality as fast as he encounters it, ever casting his day-dreams forward in time, attaching them to objects of desire, as and when they are attained and experienced" (Campbell, 1987, pp. 86-87). Campbell sets

himself the formidable task of explaining this complex behavior through a number of historical paradoxes: how a culture of pleasure-seeking could take root in puritan soil; how it could receive its "dynamism" from a Romantic ethic which spent much of its time condemning the "waste of getting and spending"; how this "new propensity to consume" could combine such seemingly contradictory features as the primacy of the object-as-sign, the pleasure in longing with the disillusionment with gratification, the never-ending, restless quality of acquiring with the rapid "disacquisition". It is no wonder that his analysis falls short of explaining this daunting agenda (however, he does have some interesting psychological insights about the role of the ideal self and the search for perfection in narcissism, which will prove useful in the concluding chapter of this thesis).

In an effort to combat the simplistic model of the manipulationist and to demonstrate the role of the individual consumer's autonomy and "rationalized" hedonism, Campbell underestimates the social pressures, as well as the impulsive-forces which nourish the addiction to consume. As one author stated forcefully: "Compulsive spending is our most communicable disease" (Delattre, 1986, p. 135). This more pessimistic side of our peculiar form of hedonism has been the subject of many social critics (among the most prominent being Herbert Marcuse who wrote of our "self-subjugation" and

"consumption repression" - Marcuse, 1964, p. 108, 1968). Christopher Lasch, another noted critic of this darker side of consumption, has objected entirely to the use of the term "hedonism" in connection with consumerism, because it covers up the role played by acquisitiveness in our "uneasiness and chronic anxiety" (Lasch, 1984, p. 27n).

The futurist critic William Simon (building on the insights of Durkheim and Robert Merton) has labelled this aspect of consumerism "the anomie of affluence" (Simon, 1974, 1976). Simon points to the increasing lack of gratification (both "consummatory" and "constraining") in consumer behavior, and how this tends to loosen community bonds. The very "mentalistic" form of pleasure-seeking, which Campbell argues convincingly distinguishes modern consumer society, encourages this atomization and impulsiveness. There is a substitution of individual for social metaphors, with a corresponding shift in advertising from "symbolization of formal status ("If you've got it, flaunt it") to the symbolization of access to experience ("For the free spirit in nearly all of us.")" (Simon, 1976, p. 369). As for impulsiveness it is hard to improve upon Durkheim: "[modern man] aspires to everything and is satisfied by nothing...this morbid desire for the infinite which everywhere accompanies anomy [sic.] may as readily assail this as any other part of our consciousness...When one is no longer checked, one becomes unable to check one's self" (Simon, 1976, p. 364).

Simon's own analysis of this "characterological condition" underscores the same role for fantasy and imagination which Campbell calls attention to. Simon points to the "psychologically overdetermined" quality of this dynamic. Comparing Durkheim and Freud, Simon notes that "...waiting, anticipation, denial, anxiety and guilt often amplify fantasy to levels far beyond those that reality can meet" (Simon, 1976, p. 367). It is this overdetermined quality which plays a psychological role in the insatiability and addictive aspect of pleonexia. Simon offers a typology of those characters who adaptively respond to these social forces, with the pleonexic seeming to combine features of types three and four: type three, "the compulsive achiever", is the individual who seems compelled to achieve compulsively because she is "lacking a capacity for experiencing congruent gratification" (Simon, 1976, p. 371). This person focuses on the rewards of "having made it", but is driven by "an unquenchable thirst" to achieve more and more. The fourth type, the "conforming deviant" searches endlessly for new pleasures, new "modes of gratification" and "given the overdetermined character of their pursuit of the unreachable, their quest for new experiences...begins to consume them" (Simon, 1976, p. 372). However, Simon leans too heavily in the direction of Durkheim and away from Freud in his concept of "sociomorphic thinking" (Simon, 1974, p. 145, 1976, p.

375). It is not a question of imputing aspects of social life to the organism. Rather, an interactionist model is closer to the facts, as can be seen in Stuart Ewen's most recent contribution, All Consuming Images (Ewen, 1988; cf., also, Ewen 1977, and Ewen & Ewen, 1982).

Ewen, like Campbell and Simon, gives a large role to what he calls "the capitalization of imagination" in the "rise of the commodity self" (Ewen, 1988, pp. 102, 72). However, Ewen's analysis has the added virtue that it acknowledges both the "liberating" and "oppressive" aspects of the new commercial order. In an earlier work (Ewen, 1977) Ewen exposed the claims of the pioneers of marketing that they were simply extending democracy as rhetoric masking a strong authoritarian and conformist motivation. In All Consuming Images Ewen presents the case for this freedom as a "fragmentation and deception"; and style as the dreamlike release of unconscious id impulses. Campbell could argue, with some justification, that Ewen is simply another in a long line of manipulationists. However, it is Ewen's emphasis on the conflicting outcomes of liberation for the self, "both disorienting and promising", which helps to explain the dynamism that Campbell wished to understand. Ewen demonstrates how the advertising industry takes advantage of the ego's dream to achieve wholeness and identity by transforming the objects of desire (commodities) into

subjective images. But Ewen does not ignore the part played by the consumer in this tension between inner self and outer image (reminiscent of Nietzsche's famous quote at the opening of this chapter). Ewen argues that two forces led to this emphasis on the realization of personal identity through style: (1) a new concept of freedom (articulated by Jean-Paul Sartre) which is predicated on personal self-determined action; and (2) the routinization and fragmentation of production which denied the actualization of wholeness and identity in the workplace. This left only the consumer arena as the place for "the desire for freedom, the freedom to desire". In the twisted logic of the marketplace, "To have is to do" (Ewen, 1988, p. 105).

It was Georg Simmel who was arguably the first and most sophisticated analyst of this fragmenting of the self in consumer society. In two works in particular, The Philosophy of Money (Simmel, 1907/1978) and his essay "Fashion" (Simmel, 1971a), Simmel pointed to the role which commodities came to play in filling the void left by the growing fragmentation and individuality of modern (especially urban) life. It was, Simmel argues, this psychological drive of the ego to achieve wholeness and identity that made acquisitiveness more obsessive in nature. Like Marx, Simmel was concerned with the alienation of relationships brought about by their growing commodification and exchange nature. But unlike Marx,

Simmel's concern was mostly with the effects of such alienation on our inner life (unsres Inneren), the domination of the objective over the subjective, "the dissolution (Auflösung) of fixed contents (der festen Inhalte) in the fluid elements of the soul" (Simmel, 1911, p. 201). Also unlike Marx, Simmel was mostly concerned with the consumer commodities, and with the "Neurasthenie", the nervous tension created by the restless and insatiable quality of consumer pursuits (Simmel, 1907/1978 - an important exception is Marx's "psychological footnote" analyzed by Anthony Wilden, 1984, pp. 29-30, 251-255 - more on this below).

Simmel was one of the first and most astute theorists to analyze some of the important features of "the remarkable psychological mania for accumulation" (Simmel, 1907/1978, p. 239). The first of these features Simmel examined under the headings "cynicism" (Zynismus) and "the blase attitude" (blasierteit - Simmel, 1907, p. 265). Simmel argued that these are defensive responses to the rapidly shifting stimuli of consumer society and urban life (Simmel, 1971b, pp. 329-30 - this is an anticipation of the important notion of "fatigue" in addictions research to be examined later). It is significant that, in The Philosophy of Money, Simmel contrasts cynicism and the blase attitude with greed and avarice, two of the most common misleading translations of pleonexia; and, that, in the original German, Simmel writes of the "Zynischer

Disposition". What Simmel means by Zynismus is a tendency to level all values, which, he maintains, is nourished by money's capacity to reduce values to one common denominator (Marx's exchange or abstract value - Simmel, 1907/1978, pp. 255-6). Unlike the gambler, who attempts to find meaning in the meaninglessness of coincidence, the cynic is concerned with the "disparagement of all old values." This "subjective reflex" (subjektivem Reflex) has another related effect in the blase attitude, the effect of "satiated enjoyment" (erschöpfende Genüsse, literally, "drained or exhausted enjoyment - erschopft also mean "to spend"). Simmel composes two basic character types (both of whom, he argues, are more similar than is usually recognized, and, therefore, often combined in the same individual): the person who gets pleasure out of wasting or spending (Die Lustam Verschwendung), and the miser (der Geize - Simmel, 1907, pp. 253-4). Simmel maintains that the pleasure involved in wasting needs to be contrasted with the pleasure in ostentation and in acquisition or consumption. The former is fleeting, and like the abstract and leveling quality of money, it is independent of the use-value of the object purchased.

For the spendthrift, the attractions of the instant overshadow the rational evaluation either of money or commodities...The spendthrift is indifferent to the object once he possesses it; his enjoyment is doomed never to find repose and permanency; the moment of his possession of an object coincides with the negation of his enjoyment.

(Simmel, 1907/1978, p.

Simmel's model combines a strongly biological view of the effects of excessive nervous excitation with a social psychology of capitalism. On the biological side is the belief that the rapid and frequent bombardment of the senses creates a hyperaesthesia, and a corresponding defensive reaction of indifference - the nerves simply cease to react after too much stimulation. On the psychological side, this same restless and fragmented social life helps to create an equally fragmented and fluid sense of self which leaves the individual prey to the obsessive quality of fashion. The addict attempts to incorporate commodities into the self but by their very nature they remain separate thereby leading to frustration (Simmel, 1907/1978, p. 351, Simmel 1971a). On the social side, the abstract nature of money takes away the kind of controls which would come from the "consummatory enjoyment of the object" (Simmel, 1907/1978, p. 255; compare Simon on "consummatory repression" page 10 above); leading to an immoderate and irrational pursuit without external or internal constraints. Simmel recognized that these addictive tendencies would only be multiplied by the growth of a credit society, though he could not have imagined the extent to which this has become the case (Simmel, 1907/1978, pp. 479-481).

Finally, Simmel extended the Marxian notion of the fetishism of commodities, by analyzing the psychological effects when commodities become increasingly external and

autonomous to the consumer. External and material values take on a greater importance, with a corresponding devaluation of the inner self; a process encouraged by the fashion industry. This impoverishment of the internal reinforces the obsessive quality of buying in a vicious circle of a pathological nature. The consumer becomes oppressed by the products of his own labor. There is restricted room in such a society, for the self to express its will and feelings, adding to the growing tendency to "covetousness and addiction" (die Begierde und Hingabe - Simmel, 1908, p. 314)

The abstract quality of Marx's exchange value analyzed by Simmel is extended and nicely complicated (i.e. opened up) still further by the analysis of the French social critic Jean Baudrillard (without mention, however, of Simmel's pioneering work). Baudrillard draws heavily from the linguists and anthropologists of the structuralist school for his critical tools, but also increasingly from psychoanalysis. The anthropologists (including non-structuralists like Mary Douglas) demonstrated how the commodity combines its natural use function with its role as a source of ritualized meaning for a society (e.g. the gift function). Baudrillard, in his early work (Baudrillard 1968, 1970) starts from the assumption that commodities function as a system of meaning, like a language or a kinship system, and proceeds to analyze the psychosocial implications of this fact for modern western

societies. In addition to satisfying needs the commodity also serves to communicate meanings in social relations. However, in a later work (Baudrillard, 1981) Baudrillard greatly complicates his earlier analysis, coming up with four logically distinct (but never experientially separate) categories of significance for commodities: (1) the functional or use value; (2) an economic exchange value (Marx's exchange value); (3) a symbolic exchange (l'échange symbolique - e.g. the gift which symbolizes the social relationships of giver and receiver, like a wedding ring); and, most abstract of all (4) a logic of sign value (valeur d'échange signe - Baudrillard, 1981, pp. 66-67). Interestingly, Baudrillard's move to increasing abstraction, from the symbol function (with its alleged grounding in desire) to the sign, parallels a similar move (one which will be examined in Chapter 2 of this thesis) in the psychoanalytic analysis of the psychological role of commodities (an analogous linguistic turn toward increasing levels of semiotic abstraction can be seen in family theory).

In his earlier works, Baudrillard starts from a critique of the rationalist and utilitarian concept of homo economicus (in its modern form of homo psychoeconomicus), the view which holds simply that commodities function to satisfy natural needs ("les besoins empiriques" - Baudrillard, 1970, pp. 93-105). In a more recent work (Baudrillard, 1981, pp. 130-142)

Baudrillard expands this criticism to include Marx's theory that human need invests commodities with value. Ironically, according to Baudrillard, Marx ends up contributing to the ideology of modern capitalism by failing to see that it is the other way around; i.e. it is the commodity system and use value which produce this ideology of desire as their rationalization. Baudrillard points to the basically empty and tautological character of this utilitarian myth. The individual consumes a particular commodity because she wishes to conform to a certain social group, and the individual belongs to the group because she consumes this particular commodity. This "naive psychology" of the consumer as motivated by biologically given needs and "confronted by real objects as sources of satisfaction" hides an "unconscious social logic" in the same way in which the manifest dream content masks over unconscious material (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 63). Baudrillard accepts the advantages of the manipulationist's view which holds that it is the need to generate demand brought about by almost unlimited productivity, rather than this classical notion of a demand driven by individual need or desire, which is the dynamic of consumer society. This manipulationist concept of the "conditioning of needs" (conditionnement des besoins - Baudrillard, 1970, p. 97 - emphasis in original) through advertising and marketing techniques is the way in which the

(classical) "freedom of choice is imposed on [the consumer]" (imposé la liberté de choix - Baudrillard, 1970, p. 99, emphasis in original). Baudrillard's critique of this manipulationist social theory (which includes Marx's famous concept of alienation) is his major contribution to the analysis of this thesis. The manipulationists (Galbraith is his principle example) accept a false theory of motivation based on a notion of fundamentally stable human needs and drives which place a limit on consumer impulses unless they are manipulated by "artificial accelerators" (accélérateurs artificiels - Baudrillard, 1970, p. 100). Baudrillard takes strong issue with the whole notion of "artificial" needs (a notion which goes back to Marx, 1973). He points out that, since from the perspective of the consumer the gratification is experienced as equally "real" in each product, there is no basis for defining what is artificial from what is not (Springborg 1981 in her critique of Reich, Fromm, and Marcuse offers further arguments against the Marxian true/false needs distinction; cf. chapter 2 of this thesis for further discussion of this issue). Furthermore, the motivational theory of the manipulationists suffers from "une grave lacune psychologique" and a "vue simpliste sur l'homme", with its idea that one need is produced for each new object created, thus making "la psyché du consommateur...au fond qu'une vitrine ou un catalogue" (Baudrillard 1970, p. 102). Baudrillard

criticizes the manipulationist's theory as too atomistic. He takes issue with any hedonistic version of this naturalistic reductionism, pointing out that in modern society consumption has become a citizen's duty (devoir du citoyen - Baudrillard, 1970, p. 112, emphasis in original). He argues that in our society use value has become a rationalization, a simulacrum for the social role of the commodity. It is "as elements of a system" and not simply as the "relation between an individual and an object" (comme éléments de système, et non comme rapport d'un individu à un objet - Baudrillard, 1970, p. 104 - emphasis in original) that needs and pleasures are to be understood. Baudrillard would also take issue with Colin Campbell's history of the emergence of a modern hedonism out of the ashes of our puritan past. There has been no such "revolution of morals", the puritan ethos is still a major force in consumer society; in fact it is what gives consumption and need "its compulsive and unlimited character" (lui donne ce caractère compulsif et illimité - Baudrillard, 1970, p. 105, 1968, p. 219). Baudrillard can maintain this paradoxical view because, at this stage in his analysis, he sees the forces which motivate consumption as simply the extension of productive forces which work by defining subjects as needing objects (an extension, of course, of Weber and Marx). Baudrillard attempts to move the commodity to a more "fluid and unconscious field of signification" (de champ

mouvant et inconscient de signification - Baudrillard, 1970, p. 107), a more abstract level for the social forces of desire. At such a level, the objects of desire are "substitutable like the symptoms of hysterical or psychosomatic conversion" (substituables come les symptômes de la conversion hystérique ou psychosomatique - Baudrillard, 1970, p. 107). To trace a need to a specific object is like performing traditional therapy on a specific hysterical symptom, rather than treating the "general hysteria" (hystérie généralisée - Baudrillard, 1970, p. 107 - emphasis in original). The specific symptom is merely the expression of something insatiable because it is founded on a want or lack ("manque"), namely "the desire for social meaning" (le désir de sens social - Baudrillard, 1970, p. 108 - emphasis in original). It is this general craving for social meaning, rather than a specific object or pleasure that is the driving force behind insatiable consumer behavior. Unlike pleasure, which is something autonomous and final, consumption, for Baudrillard, is a collective endeavor, an obligation, for the individual, governed by a social code of interchangeable signs (Baudrillard, 1970, pp. 109-113). The object (T.V., car, washing machine) takes on the unconscious role as "a token of recognition, of integration, of social legitimacy" (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 54). The compulsion to consume is not psychologically determined, in the sense of a biological drive

or instinct; nor is it simply a matter of the compulsion of fashion ("une simple contrainte de prestige" - Baudrillard, 1968, p. 238). Rather it is because of its idealistic quality, and the fact that consumption of objects takes the place of interpersonal relations that it is "irresponsible" (Baudrillard, 1968, pp. 232-239; elsewhere he calls advertising and consumption "the cold seduction" of objects, quoted in Racevskis 1983, pp. 158-159). This view goes beyond the psychoanalytical view of advertising which sees it as unleashing id forces ("forces profondes") which elude the control of the superego ("Libérez-vous de la censure! Déjouez votre surmoi! Ayez le courage de vos désirs!" - Baudrillard, 1968, pp. 226). Like Simmel, Baudrillard is aware of the new dimension in the compulsion to spend brought about by the introduction of credit (Baudrillard, 1968, pp. 189-190). The abstract or idealized quality of the sign is even more pronounced in a credit economy. In such an economy:

An object is not an object of consumption unless it is released from its psychic determinations as symbol; from its functional determinations as instrument; from its commercial determinations as product; and is thus liberated as a sign to be recaptured by the formal logic of fashion, i.e., by the logic of differentiation [i.e. the atomization of social relations]." (Baudrillard, 1981, p. 67 - emphasis in the original).

In his earliest work (Baudrillard, 1968, especially pp. 153-160) Baudrillard borrows heavily from the French psychoanalysts in his examination of the unconscious fantasies and defenses generated by commodities and fashion. However,

beginning with L'Échange symbolique et la mort (1976)

Baudrillard's views on psycho-analysis become increasingly critical, as well as abstract (see, Baudrillard, 1981b for a summary article of his critique; both in Baudrillard 1976, p. 8 and in 1979, he elaborates on his view of "the death of psychoanalysis").

Baudrillard's works are, for the most part, completely devoid of empirical references. His social theory is highly abstract, lacking in concrete historical materiality, in any grounding in nonmental and nonlinguistic reality. Many of his later works, especially, have a strongly nihilistic message and revolve around concepts like illusion (leuvre), simulacre and the imaginary. In the words of one critic, his work "recognizes nothing beyond a play of mirrors destined endlessly to reflect signs and images "that have no meaning outside the infinite regress of definitions of definitions" (Raceviskis, 1983, p. 163; see Rochberg-Halton, 1986, pp. 95. for a similar criticism of Baudrillard's "tendency to sunder meaning from experience", Rochberg-Halton, 1986, p. 59).

For the purpose of advancing understanding of the social forces effecting the development of pleonexia, the work of William Leiss on satisfaction, needs and commodities (Leiss, 1976) is of greater importance than any of the previous authors examined, including Baudrillard. Leiss concentrates his concern on the negative psychological effects

of our high consumption life-style. More specifically he focuses on the instability of personality, as well as certain pathological internal "dispositions" engendered by the bewildering array of rapidly changing commodities.

Every individual, in no matter what culture, must find a way to match her needs to the opportunities available for satisfaction, Leiss maintains (1976, p. 14). One of the paradoxes "of the high-consumption life-style is to induce individuals to become more and more indifferent to each of their specific wants in proportion to the increasing amount of time and resources expanded on the total activity of consumption" (Leiss, 1976, p. 16). The crucial result of this process is "that each aspect of a person's needs tends to be broken down into progressively smaller component parts, and therefore ... it becomes increasingly difficult for the person to integrate the components into a coherent ensemble of needs and a coherent personality structure" (Leiss, 1976, p. 18). Every individual has an essential need to develop personal identity, self-esteem and the esteem of others, Leiss argues. As a result certain "internal dispositions or personality traits" are cultivated, as well as a corresponding concern for external experiences. However, as a result of the "fragmentation" process of the rapidly changing commodities there is a corresponding fragmentation of personality, Leiss asserts:

What is unique to the high-intensity market setting is the necessity for being able to identify states of feeling systematically with appropriate types of commodities. The vast number and variety of material objects enjoins the person to break down states of feeling into progressively smaller components and instructs him in the delicate art of recombining the pieces fittingly. The 'wholeness', the integration of the components tends to become a property of the commodities themselves ... the fragmentation of needs requires on the individuals part a steadily more intensive effort to hold together his identity and personal integrity. In concrete terms this amounts to spending more and more time in consumption activities (Leiss, 1976, p. 19).

What Leiss has in mind can best be seen in the case of personal appearance. The vast number of products for the adornment and enhancement of the body, which must be combined in the proper arrangements and proportions to be socially acceptable, provides the consumer with a confusing and constantly changing array of choices for personal expression (and can easily become the vector point for self-esteem problems). This contrasts sharply with more traditional societies, Leiss would argue, where personal expression can take more predictable and stable forms.

Some of the most important observations which Leiss makes concern the ancient issue of 'the instability of wants'. Leiss argues that, at least in high-consumption societies, the link "between desires and types of satisfaction" is a lot more complex and ambiguous than is usually assumed (Leiss, 1976, p. 25). Leiss sees a breakdown in what he calls "craft

knowledge", the degree of familiarity with objects, which in traditional societies helps the individual interpret his/her environment in order to make a proper assessment of the suitability of commodities to meet needs. Leiss uses the example of environmental cues and obesity (although he never mentions Stanley Schachter's ingenious experiments, which showed that obese subjects are affected by external cues such as the sight of food, its availability, and apparent passage of time, whereas subjects of normal weight respond more directly to inner sensations; this appears to be the sort of evidence that Leiss is relying on here. Schachter's work shows, once again, the importance of symbolic factors, such as "labeling", in consumption -- Schachter, 1971). The obese person, Leiss argues, misinterprets the relationship between her needs and available means for satisfying them, thereby leading to damaging over consumption. Leiss cites evidence that obesity, in some individuals at least, is related to anxiety and depression, which in turn is related to such social needs as "for acceptance, approval, and achievement".

The obese person remains fixated on one set of wants and interprets all of the messages, cues, and stimuli in his environment in terms of a single overriding mode of gratification, instead of following the normal pattern and distributing the objectives of his wants among different sets of commodities (Leiss, 1976, p. 25).

Leiss fails to show how the individual becomes fixated on this particular mode of gratification, and the link between social needs for acceptance, etc., and overconsumption is not

entirely clear; but Leiss is, nonetheless, pointing to how the high-consumption society encourages individuals to "depend upon social cues to guide them in deciding how extensively to use any commodity or sets of commodities" to gratify their internal needs. Pleonexia, Leiss would maintain, "results from refracting all interpersonal and market stimuli through a particular fixation" on a commodity or set of commodities (Leiss, 1976, p. 26).

What is more, the effect of social pressures is to encourage the individual "to shift his ensemble of satisfactions and dissatisfactions continually from a smaller to a larger set of commodities (or sets of commodities with more elaborate characteristics" (Leiss, 1976, p. 27). The reason for this enlargement in purchases is the "destabilization" and "fragmentation" of needs into smaller and smaller units described earlier. What Leiss is describing is a failure in that socialization process which would have normally assisted the individual to develop a "holistic" and integrated personality for interpreting her needs (as will be seen in the next chapter, the concept of 'integration' is a key one in psychoanalytic analysis of character). The high-consumption society, in part at least, has this effect because it deflects other avenues of self-fulfillment into an exclusive satisfaction through the use of commodities.

Note that Leiss is not arguing for a simple manipulationist view, one in which society or powerful groups

within a society work to create a new set of artificial needs. Reciprocal needs for such things as approval and affirmation exist in every society. "In all social settings wants and needs represent complex states of feeling for individuals, and in an advanced stage of a market economy the linkages between desires and types of satisfactions are highly ambiguous" (Leiss, 1976, p. 25).

However, it would be inappropriate to attribute the fragmentation process, as Leiss tends to do, solely to economic factors; without taking into account such other factors as the breakdown in shared rituals which give integrity and coherence to personal identity (partly through the use of symbolically understood roles).

Nonetheless, Leiss is pointing to the important fact that commodities as "materially-symbolic entities" incorporate the "dualistic character of human needing", that is, its inseparable material and social characteristics (Leiss, 1976, pp. 66, 74; here he takes issue with Baudrillard, who maintains a mistaken belief that the symbolic can be separated from its material base). It is the present-day tendency "to embed the network of symbolic mediation that shape the character of human needing exclusively in material objects (or more precisely, to orient needs entirely toward commodities)" which is the key to pathology (Leiss, 1976, p. 67). It is not a question of "a pathological state of desire", Leiss asserts,

"for certainly there is nothing wrong with seeking happiness -- but a pathological state of the objectification of desire." By the latter phrase, Leiss means "the widespread acceptance of grossly exaggerated claims about the importance of such great numbers of commodities for the satisfaction of needs" (Leiss, 1976, p. 85, emphasis in original). Leiss, on page 88, summarizes the four most problematic features of "intensified commodity circulation" as:

- (1) a fragmentation and 'destabilization' of the categories of needing; (2) the difficulty of 'matching' the qualities of needs with the characteristics of goods; (3) a growing indifference to the qualities of needs or wants; and (4) an increasing environmental risk for individuals and for society as a whole.

What is pathological is, not just that individuals come to "interpret feelings of well-being more and more exclusively in terms of their relative success in gaining access to higher levels of consumption"; but also that the "want for larger and larger numbers of things means that the individual must pay correspondingly less attention to the particular qualities of each want and each thing itself" (Leiss, 1976, p. 90). In sum, "the realm of needs becomes identical with the range of possible objects, while the nature of the object itself becomes largely a function of the psychological state of those who desire it" (Leiss, 1976, p. 93).

This analysis of the ambiguous relationship between desire and satisfaction, created in part at least by our high-

consumption society, will prove most useful in succeeding chapters of this thesis.

The next chapter will examine psychoanalytic writings on what the radical analyst Joel Kovel has called our "neurosis of consumption" (Kovel, 1982, p. 106). It will be seen that their analysis parallels in many ways the social theorists described in this chapter: moving from the biologically determined need and its symbols to our social and existential needs and their signs.

CHAPTER II

THE PSYCHOANALYTIC CONTRIBUTION

Freud's interest in the psychological role of money can be dated as far back as 1898, when in one of his letters to Fliess (letter 82) he wrote: "Happiness is the deferred fulfillment of a prehistoric wish. That is why wealth brings so little happiness; money is not an infantile wish" (Freud, 1954, p. 244). The issues relating to this early psychoanalysis of money are central to the whole development of Freud's ideas: for example, the roles of 'instinct' (trieb) and 'symbol', and their interrelationship in society; the whole idea of erotic stages of development; and, most centrally, the concept of 'character' (des Charakter Begriff) and the technique of 'character analysis' (the latter most closely associated with Wilhelm Reich). Freud's ideas on money evolved from this early remark to a more complex analysis of the "infantile" component in the drive to amass wealth. But Freud was not alone in his interest in the role of money. Most of the leading early psychoanalysts (especially Abraham, Ferenczi, Fenichel, and, of course, Reich) made substantive contributions to our understanding of the role money plays in our psychic life. This chapter, therefore,

could not hope to examine all the issues, or all the theorists involved. Instead, after a very brief look at the issue of the relationship of 'instinct' and the symbolic function of money, the chapter will focus primarily on the issue of what psychoanalysis has to say about the way in which the social conditions outlined at the end of chapter 1 are internalized in the development of certain 'character traits'. The importance for psychoanalysis of this last named area of investigation was best summarized by Karl Abraham, when in 1925 he wrote:

In psychoanalysis we view abnormal character in close and constant relation to all other manifestations of the persons psychosexual life ... Psychoanalysis is by no means simply confronted with the task of curing neurotic symptoms in the narrower sense of the word. It often has to deal with pathological deformities of character at the same time, or even in the first instance (Abraham, 1925/1948, p. 417).

However, before turning directly to this central concern of dispositions and character formation, it will be necessary to take a brief look at two of the most common critiques of the Freudian approach to psychic reality: (1) the first is a criticism of Freud's general methodology; (2) whereas the second issue has to do with the problematic nature of the instinctual and the symbolic in psychoanalysis, specifically the relationship between these two key concepts as they relate to the psychic role of money. The direct relevance of these issues to the main concern of this chapter will be made apparent in the

section on "character traits" which immediately follows this discussion.

One of the most common criticisms of Freud's methodology is that he confuses causal (deterministic) explanation with descriptive (meaningful) understanding (cf., MacIntyre, 1959, pp. 50-70; Ricoeur, 1970, pp. 87-114; Izenberg, 1976, pp. 108-165; Schafer, 1976, pp. 223-34). This argument was put most concisely by MacIntyre (1958) in his book on The Unconscious: "One may ask 'Why?' and expect an answer in terms of reasons, intentions, purposes and the like; or one may ask 'Why?' and expect an answer in terms of physiological or psychological determining antecedent conditions" (MacIntyre, 1958, p. 51). In its most extreme versions this criticism holds that these two types of 'why' question are totally incompatible; for instance, that explanations in terms of unconscious motives can never be equated with causal explanations (cf., e.g., Toulman, 1948; Flew, 1954 -- Flew was to later modify his position in Flew, 1956). Another version holds that, in his desire to legitimize psychoanalysis as a natural science, Freud missed the "true" significance of his discovery as a discipline concerned with intentional acts such as self-reflection and subjective meanings (it is this rewriting of Freud which Adolf Grünbaum criticizes as "the hermeneutic version of psychoanalysis"; Grünbaum, 1984, pp. 1-95; more on Grünbaum below). Ludwig Wittgenstein, in his

1931-3 lectures was perhaps the first to argue that Freud's "real genius" was in describing human nature and not in giving causal explanations for actions (Wittgenstein, 1980, p. 33). Since Freud was one of his favorite authors (Wittgenstein, 1967, p. 41), no doubt Wittgenstein was aware that Freud himself states that sometimes he uses key concepts, such as 'unconscious', both in a descriptive and a causal or dynamic sense; and, that Freud asserts most unequivocally that it is causal explanation which is the basis of psychoanalysis (see, e.g., Freud, 1915, G.W. 10, pp. 271-2). But, like most of the other early philosophical critics, Wittgenstein rejected the bulk of Freud's causal theories as unscientific. (For a reply by a psychoanalyst to these criticisms, as well as an analysis of Freud's "scientific" use of disposition terms, cf., Frenkel-Brunswik, 1954 -- especially, pp. 278-9. Frenkel-Brunswik points out that a common important feature of 'dispositions' in psychoanalysis and other sciences is that, like unconscious wishes, they can be present without manifesting themselves.)

MacIntyre's position is more respectful of Freud's unique contribution and sophisticated theory. He begins by noting that our ordinary explanations of a person's 'intention', 'purpose', 'motive', 'wish' or 'desire' involve both a necessary reference to that individual's actual behavior and, at least the possibility of her avowal

of the meaning of that behavior (even if such an avowal requires lengthy psychoanalysis). Human dispositions, as opposed to causal properties of non-human objects, require a reference to both types of explanation "in both the ordinary and Freudian applications of the concepts of motive and intention" (MacIntyre, 1958, p. 59; Frenkel-Brunswik fails to note this important distinction when she argues that psychoanalytic disposition concepts are the same as concepts such as "magnetism" -- Frenkel-Brunswik, 1954, p. 279; cf., Shope, 1970, for further critique of Frenkel-Brunswik on disposition terms in psychoanalysis. Rubinstein argues that another major difference between psychoanalytic dispositions and purely physical ones is that the former are clearly "hypothetical" or probabilistic -- in other words, a person is only more likely to respond in the predicted manner -- Rubinstein, 1967, p. 37). However, it is clear, MacIntyre maintains, that what Freud was most interested in were those cases which seem to represent counter-examples to this more straightforward model of intentionality; namely, those cases where an individual's behavior (including verbal behavior) seems to run counter to her "likely or professed intentions" (MacIntyre, 1958, pp. 56-7; cf., Frenkel-Brunswik, 1954, pp. 320-4, for more on this role of the concept of self-deception in psychoanalysis). MacIntyre uses the example of a man involved in an unhappy

love affair, which he vows to break off, but nonetheless continues to see the woman and to bring her gifts. There are several possible explanations here (including deliberate insincerity), but the one that Freud is most interested in are those cases where an individual "appears unable to recognize a conflict between what he says and what he does" (MacIntyre, 1958, pp. 54-55). Adolf Grünbaum (following several psychoanalysts, including Freud) argues against those (Habermas in particular) who see the client's avowal of the accuracy of an interpretation as the criterion for a successful analysis. Such avowals are subject to "massive self deceptions," as well as denial. Evidence for the overcoming of repressions involves more than simple avowal (Grünbaum adds that there is strong evidence "that even in the case of consciously motivated behavior, a subject does not enjoy privileged cognitive access to the discernment of the motivational causes of his various actions" -- Grünbaum, 1984, pp. 25-30, emphasis in original). It will be argued in chapter 3 of this thesis that the addictions are clearly cases where an individual's intentions as apparent in her actions are at variance with her avowed intentions as spoken or thought. Roy Schafer (1983, pp. 241-2) makes a good case for the importance of the defensive use of "disclaimers" of avowed intention, that is, those speech acts where an analysand "disavows responsibility" by "attributing agency" to her "thoughts

and impulses" (some might argue that the very concept of 'unconscious motivation' can be misused as such a disclaimer of personal responsibility, e.g., in legal proceedings). Once again, the addictions are a place where such 'disclaimers' are commonly utilized, along with other examples of denial. Stuart Hampshire calls these cases of self-deception examples of "concealed dispositions," in order to distinguish them from conscious inclinations (they are "inhibited" or "repressed" dispositions, and they become the basis for the repetition-compulsion, Hampshire maintains -- Hampshire, 1962, pp. 59-68).

It was precisely to explain such examples of apparent self-deception, R.S. Peters (1960) maintains in his book on The Concept of Motivation, which led Freud to postulate the concept of an "unconscious motivation," a concept which introduces efficient causality where it is not readily apparent (of course, there were other major reasons which led Freud to this concept, such as his experiences with post-hypnotic suggestion -- Freud, 1912, G.W.8, p. 431 -- and such "mental acts" -- psychische Akte -- as dreams and parapraxes -- Freud, 1915, G.W.10, p. 265). MacIntyre argues that Freud's great insight was to extend the dichotomy between purpose and cause "in a paradoxical fashion, seeing intentions and purposes where the pre-Freudian would have seen only causes, and seeing causes where the pre-Freudian would have seen none" (MacIntyre,

1958, p. 52). Peters maintains that the concept of "unconscious wishes" is introduced by Freud to explain situations where "explanation in terms of habits and conscious purpose break down" (Peters, 1960, p. 53). Peters goes on to argue that "Freud's theory was one of unconscious wishes, not of unconscious reasons" (Peters, 1960, p. 62). By 'reason' here, Peters seems to mean what MacIntyre refers to as "inner mental planning," something which implies consciousness of means and ends; but, also 'reason', Peters holds, might include physiological effects, character traits or "directed dispositions" like aggressiveness. Whereas, 'unconscious wishes', according to Peters, is a term used by Freud only to refer to physiological effects. Peters (and here MacIntyre agrees) argues that it is precisely here that Freud's "confusion" comes in, for "he tries to treat unconscious motives both as purposes and as causes" (MacIntyre, 1958, p. 60). The textual justification for this reading (used by Toulmin, Flew and MacIntyre) comes from The Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, Lectures 17 & 18. As Flew (1954) reads these lectures, when Freud is being descriptive, and sticking close to the case material, "he talks of finding the motives and purposes of obsessive acts, and of interpreting their meaning" (Flew, 1954, p. 8). But when Freud switches to the theoretical mode, he talks about

mental processes as if they were physical entities which have concrete measurable effects.

In an important and densely packed paper "On the Psychoanalytic Theory of Motivation," the psychologist David Rapaport takes issue with Peters' reading of Freud (Rapaport, 1967, pp. 853-915). Rapaport accepts that "while all behaviors are causally determined, not all causes are motives, and not all behaviors are motivated." But he rejects Peters' equation of motive with reason, and his relegating "not only the physical, chemical, and social effects, but also the effects of instinctual drives, to the category of causes" (Rapaport, 1967, pp. 862-3). Peters wishes to show that not all behaviors are caused by drives, that some actions are "motivated by 'reasons' involving social rules" (Rapaport, 1967, p. 883). However, in insisting that instinctual drives are only causes and not motives, Peters takes too narrow a view of both causes and reasons; and he ignores the fact that behaviors are often overdetermined ('overdetermination' will be examined later in this chapter). As Rapaport defines instinctual drives, they include, not only the passive and compulsive character of causal factors, but also the "purposive directionality" which is characteristic of 'rule-following' behaviors, and other 'motives'. Rapaport defines 'motives' as "appetitive internal forces" with four characteristics: (1) "Peremptoriness" or a "mandatory character"; (2) a "Cyclic

character" in which their peremptoriness increases and decreases with "consummation" followed by increased compulsion; (3) "Selectiveness" -- that is "the direction of the motive force" is determined by the "object" and "the path by which the object is obtainable"; and (4) "Displaceability" -- other objects related in some way to the object of a motive can become its substitute (Rapaport, 1967, pp. 865-6; these categories will prove useful in defining pleonexia). These categories, of course, are closely related to the four different aspects of Freud's concept of 'instinct' (namely, pressure, source, aim, and object -- cf., Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, p. 21).

Before turning directly to the passages from Freud's Lectures which are the basis of Peters' attack, it is necessary to take a brief look at Freud's theory of causality, which, from the very beginning of his career, turns out to also be much more complex than his critics seem to realize. In "A Reply to Criticisms of My Paper on Anxiety Neurosis" (Freud, 1895a, G.W.I., pp. 357-376), Freud answers those who argue that he confuses the "psychic derivation" (psychische Ableitung) of anxiety with his own physical causation by "sexual noxiae" (sexuellen Noxen -- Freud, 1895a, G.W.I., p. 360). The first important point that Freud makes here is the "overdetermined" nature of such causes (überdeterminiert is used, in the sense of "several factors," mehrere Faktoren, acting in conjunction

-- Freud, 1895a, G.W.I, p. 367). This term itself, it might be argued, carries with it the confusion of cause and meaning, in that it is used here to refer to multiple causes and used elsewhere (e.g., Freud, 1900) to refer to a series of meanings (cf., Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, pp. 292-3). However, what Freud means here by "factors" is something much more complex than this criticism understands. First of all, what can be overdetermined includes 'traumatic events' (cf., e.g., Freud & Breuer, 1895b, G.W.I, pp. 241-2), 'symptoms' (cf., Breuer's contribution to Freud & Breuer, 1895a), as well as 'meanings' in the sense of 'Deutungen' and 'symbols' in dreams -- Freud, 1916-17, G.W.II, pp. 234-5). What is more, Freud offers a more sophisticated theory of causality, with four different varieties, each of which needs to be taken into consideration: (1) preconditions (Bedingungen -- literally, stipulations) -- either innate or acquired dispositions; (2) specific causes (spezifische Ursache -- 'ur' -- has the connotation of 'origin' or 'source') -- these are sufficient conditions (though they require, of course, preconditions), in that they are "never absent when the effects actually take place" and they suffice "in the required quantity or intensity, to bring about the effect"; (3) Contributory causes (konkurrierende Ursache -- the adjective carries a meaning of concurrent and competitive) -- these are neither necessary nor

sufficient to produce the effect alone, but they "cooperate with" (the sense of the German is more literally "when added to") the other causes to bring about the effect (this is where the social "nourishing" items of chapter 1 above come into play); and, finally (4) the exciting or releasing cause (Veranlassung oder auslösende Ursache -- the first adjective carries the added meanings of 'motive' and 'inducement' and auslösende can be translated as 'redemption') -- the immediate precipitating cause or the final cause in the sequence.

Freud's primary concern in this "Reply to Critics" was to argue against the view that hereditary predisposition alone, without the other causal factors (particularly sexual noxae as specific causes) can account for the neuroses. However, when one examines the various causal factors which he introduced throughout his writings, one again notes, not only the complexity of his view of science, but particularly the blending of 'intentional' and 'efficient' causes and mental factors. Freud clearly saw not only physical forces as causal agents, but mental forces as well. Many of the critics of Freud examined at the beginning of this chapter attempt to distinguish between an 'early Freud', who presumably used mechanical and deterministic explanations, and a 'later Freud', who, though never totally abandoning explanations in terms of such causal factors, nevertheless introduced 'intentional

concepts' as parallel understanding. However, when one looks more deeply into Freud's early works, a number of concepts appear to go well beyond the purely mechanical (to mention only two: (1) 'purposive ideas' -- Zielvorstellung, Ziel carries meanings of 'goal', 'end' or 'objective' and vorstellung, which Freud borrowed from German idealist philosophy, means 'representation', as well as 'mental image'; and, (2) 'unconscious phantasy', which as Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, pp. 314-19 point out, refers to the whole "world of the imagination," rather than "the faculty of imagining" -- Laplanche & Pontalis, 1968, p. 1). And, when one examines Freud's last published work (Freud, 1941, G.W.17) his evolutionary and biological foundations are still very clearly apparent throughout. (Goldberg, 1988, pp. 33-42 shows how Freud's early works as well include many 'intentional' elements of the so-called 'late Freud'.)

Before concluding this section, it will help to further clarify what is and what is not being argued, to take a very brief look at some works on Freud which go too far, either in the direction of trying to "humanize" him (by down-playing his clearly scientific foundations), or in playing down the important role of 'intentional' concepts in his work.

The first work is a small book by Bruno Bettelheim (1983). Bettelheim demonstrates persuasively that many of

the standard English renderings of key German terms in Freud have the effect of making these concepts sound mechanical and abstract by ignoring the 'intentional' connotations in the original. Freud clearly had a penchant for adopting common German words for his own uses (as Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973 note a number of times; cf., e.g., p. 131). For example, Freud describes the German word Verdrangung, commonly translated as "repression," as the "cornerstone," "most essential part," and "sine qua non" of psychoanalysis (quoted in Grunbaum, 1984, pp. 5, 10). Bettelheim notes that the original carries the connotation of "a strong inner motive or urge" (Bettelheim, 1983, p. 93). An equally important term, and perhaps the one which has been most misleadingly translated (although Goldberg's example of Seele -- "soul" as "psychic apparatus" would be a close contender -- Goldberg, 1988, p. 17), is 'Trieb', usually rendered as "instinct". Bettelheim notes that the original German comes closer to "impulse" -- "an impelling force; a sudden inclination to act, without conscious thought; a motive or tendency coming from within" (Bettelheim, 1983, pp. 104-5). Examples like these could be multiplied, and this thesis has added a few new ones to Bettelheim's. However, the conclusions which Bettelheim draws from his exegesis sets up two false dichotomies: (1) the early Freud versus late Freud reading, that is, the early scientist who later became a

humanist (Bettleheim, 1983, p. 32); and (2) the natural sciences (Naturwissenschaften) versus humanistic sciences (Geisteswissenschaften) dichotomy -- that is, the view that there are two very different types of science, one for natural objects and one for the study of man (Bettleheim, 1983, pp. 41-2). One passage, written as late as 1933 will serve to show the falseness of both views (Freud, 1933, G.W.15, especially pp. 187-190). For here, in a relatively late work, Freud makes it very clear (as he does again in several other late works, e.g., Freud, 1925) his strong and unequivocal allegiance to one view of science; one in which the logic of science is basically the same as other forms of reasoning (this XXXV Lecture, in Freud, 1933, also includes a statement about the importance of psychological factors in economic behavior and the cultural differences in these behaviors -- Freud, 1933, pp. 191-2, 195; more on this below).

Another psychoanalyst who very early on (1927) rejected the view that psychoanalysis is a branch of Geisteswissenschaften, and a discipline which deals with meaningful connections as opposed to causal explanations, was Heinz Hartmann. In an essay on "Understanding and Explanation" Hartmann (1927) argues against the "hermeneutic version" (Grünbaum's term) over thirty years before that reading of Freud had received its canonical formulation. Hartmann's main concerns in this very

interesting essay are to demonstrate the limits of a purely phenomenological or descriptive approach to psychology and to argue that psychoanalysis deals with causal explanations, albeit with a more complex theory of causality. Hartmann admits that psychoanalysis, "to a far greater degree than other schools of scientific psychology," deals "with psychological connections that are also understandable" (Hartmann, 1927, p. 376 -- "understandable" is the translator's term for verstehende, which is more commonly rendered, by the hermeneutician's for example, as "meaningful"). However, Hartmann argues that psychoanalysis goes beyond the mere description of intentional acts or states by offering explanations and constructing hypotheses, that is, "from the causal point of view" (Hartmann, 1927, p. 375). Hartmann draws a distinction between the phenomena which psychoanalysis attempts to describe, which are capable of being experienced with "sympathetic understanding" (Nacherleben means to "attempt to reproduce in one's own experience what someone else has experienced"), and the methodological "goal of psychoanalysis" which is causal explanation (Hartmann, 1927, p. 377). What is more, the kind of causal explanation introduced by psychoanalysis recognizes effects which proceed, not only from the physical to the mental, but also from the mental to the mental (Hartmann, 1927, p. 378). Psychoanalysis, as a science, needs to be concerned

with the validation of both types of causal connection; and 'empathic understanding' alone cannot verify such relations. Subjective 'meaning-connections' cannot be self-evident, Hartmann points out, because of the very phenomena of self-deception discovered by psychoanalysis (and described above in the discussion of MacIntyre and behaviors which run counter to avowed intentions).

Hartmann notes that a good deal of our behavior is unintentional, in the usual sense of lacking a conscious instrumentality or goal-directedness. Of course, Freud's great achievement was to expand on that usual sense; in the words of MacIntyre: "he alters completely the boundary between the intelligible and the unintelligible"

(MacIntyre, 1958, p. 63. It was in The Psychopathology of Everyday Life that Freud was, perhaps, clearest about this goal of demonstrating how "unintentional performances" have "valid" and "determining motives," Freud, 1901, pp.

239-279). Of course, Freud's achievement was also to expand our notion of the 'intentional' as well. He took over the idea of the mind as 'intentional', (i.e., an amalgam of purposive mental states directed towards objects by means of representations) from his teacher Franz Brentano (cf., McGrath, 1986, pp. 111-127, & passim).

However, Freud's great contribution was to introduce a whole new category of intentional entities which, though likewise directed toward objects, were not accessible to

conscious reflection. And "it is these unconscious representations which motivate us" (Dreyfus, 1987, pp. 69-70; the term 'representation' is a rendering of 'Vorstellung' and 'Vorstellungsrepräsentanz', usually translated 'idea'; but actually technical terms from German 'intentionalist' philosophy -- cf., Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, pp. 200-1, 203-5). These unconscious representations do have meaning, in the sense of functional purpose (Edleson, 1988, p. 248; Edelson's example is the "wish-fulfillment"). In the provocative words of Philip Rieff, "Freud detected meaning in everything," while at the same time reacting to what he saw as "the overvaluation" of our rationality (Rieff, 1961, pp. 92, 161).

Hartmann's comments about the nature of the phenomena examined by psychoanalysis brings to mind two explanations for why Freud needed to expand existing psychological methods: First, there is the purely logical requirement that a theoretical model must be richer or more powerful than the explanandum, in order for the explanandum to be subsumable under comprehensive general principles (cf., Hempel, 1965, pp. 437-445); and, second, in the words of Robert Paul Wolff:

... if the speaking self is complex, many-layered, capable of reflection, self-deception, ambivalence, of unconscious thought processes, of projections, introjections, displacements, transferences, and all manner of ambiguities -- in short, if the history of the self is directly present as

part of its current nature -- then only language containing within itself the literary resources corresponding to these complexities will suffice to speak the truth (Wolff, 1988, p. 35, emphasis in original).

Even though Freud used words and concepts already in common parlance, as Stephen Toulmin points out, "their incorporation into theory involves some change in meaning or a language shift" (quoted in Suppe, 1977, p. 670, emphasis in original). It is this relationship between common and transformed meaning which Lacan described as "dialectical" (Lacan, 1968, p. 55). It is also part of the basis of Freud's concept of 'over-determination' (in the sense of 'Überdeutung', cf., Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, pp. 292-4 for examples of this use of the concept). Just as the individual is an amalgam of social, cultural and economic influences (like those described briefly in chapter 1 of this thesis), so are her immediate behavior, symptoms and unconscious symbols "a plurality of determining factors" (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, p. 292) which give meaning to her actions. It is part of the argument of this thesis that complex behaviors, like pleonexia, cannot be understood in any other way . (Rapaport, 1967, p. 867 suggests that even behaviors which appear to be the result of "nonmotivational causes" have present "highly neutralized derivative motivations or motivations of little actual effect.")

However, as Hartmann notes, it is precisely in the area of complex character or personality traits that we need causal explanations that go beyond subjective evidence ('Evidenz', as used here is close to our 'introspection'; Hartmann, 1927, p. 383), and can account for personal and interpersonal deception. Here one is dealing with complex motives not apparent to casual observer and actor alike. There are two areas, Hartmann asserts, in which psychology needs to proceed beyond the limitations of sympathetic experience (Nacherleben): the first, as already noted, is unconscious motivational processes; and, the other is "somatic intrusion" (Hartmann, 1927, p. 389). By the latter term, Hartmann means the influence of somatic states on moods, feelings and actions, and he assumes a principle of "universal psychophysical parallelism" (Hartmann, 1927, p. 392). But here Hartmann goes too far in the direction of a simplistic mechanical reductionism for Freud. Once again, Freud's position is more complicated (too complicated to go into much detail here). Suffice it to say, that, although Freud did maintain a psychophysical dualism of sorts (as Sulloway, 1983, pp. 48, 50-1 shows); at other times he, also, specifically rejected "psychophysical parallelism" (psychophysischen Parallelismus) as having "insoluble difficulties" (unlösbaeren Schwierigkeiten -- the latter term also means 'obstacles' -- Freud, 1915, G.W.10, p. 266). Freud notes

that, since we are totally ignorant of such somatic causes, it would prematurely close off debate to involve them.

Elsewhere Freud notes that:

... an 'instinct' appears to us as a concept on the frontier between the mental and the somatic, as the physical representative of the stimuli originating from within the organism and reaching the mind, as a measure of the demand made upon the mind for work in consequence of its connection with the body (quoted in Rapaport, 1967, p. 870).

What is more important for this thesis is the fact that, as has been noted throughout this chapter, the intentional categories' -- "ideas, purposes, resolutions and so forth" are the "latent mental processes" involved in unconscious activities (Freud, 1915, S.E.14, p. 164). Hartmann, himself, goes on to note that psychoanalysis utilizes "psychological concepts where previously explanations would have been based solely on physiological processes" (Hartmann, 1927, p. 393). What is involved here is another type of "understanding," an unconscious type, one which is over-determined by a number of different factors. Hartmann states that "in this extended sense of understanding, assumptions are made about the presence of certain mental states on the basis of knowledge of other understandable connections, and these assumptions make understanding possible" (Hartmann, 1927, p. 394). The example Hartmann puts forth is one of particular interest to this thesis; namely, the transition from anal eroticism

to avarice (as will be seen shortly, this transition involves all four of Freud's types of causality).

However, Hartmann's main concern is that an approach to the mind based on 'understanding' can degenerate into purely linguistic arguments about symbols and meanings; and, that such an approach cannot hope to answer questions about the "somatic intrusions". What is more, Hartmann expounds a 'value free' methodology for psychoanalysis, a position which he himself was to modify greatly over thirty years later (compare Hartmann, 1927, p. 395 with Hartmann, 1960). But what is more important for this thesis are Hartmann's concluding remarks about the expanded view of causal explanation in Freud's work. On the one hand, Hartmann correctly notes that the basic motivational terms of Freud's theory were not intentions and purposes, but instinctual drives or impulses. It is true that despite many successive revisions of his instinct theory, it clearly remained rooted in lawlike generalizations of a biological nature (cf., Jones, 1953, p. 366; also Sulloway, 1983, passim -- Sulloway notes Freud's continued ambivalence toward biology). On the other hand, Hartmann (like MacIntyre and Peters above) recognizes that "Freud does not ... always clearly differentiate between 'meaningful' and 'causally determined' in his writings. Hartmann reiterates that that was because the factors being investigated are of intentional nature (he uses the term

'teleological'); and, that these factors are assigned a 'meaningful' relationship to other factors of the mind (Hartmann, 1927, p. 400). Like Grünbaum, Hartmann maintains that the connections between these meaningful or purposeful factors can and need to be verified empirically. However, Hartmann also recognizes that the type of causal explanations utilized by psychoanalysis includes 'teleological' interpretation (Hartmann, 1927, p. 402; for an excellent discussion of the role of purposive interpretations in psychology, cf., Boden, 1978). In fact Freud states that a "basic pillar" of psychoanalysis is his theorem that: "when conscious purposive ideas are abandoned, concealed purposive ideas assume control of the currents of ideas" (quoted in Edelson, 1988, p. 270; Edelson offers a very interesting analysis of the importance of purposive interpretations in psychoanalysis, one which also recognizes the complexity of Freud's principles of causality -- cf., Edelson, 1988, p. 252 for Edelson on Freud's use of 'cause').

Grünbaum's extensive and sophisticated contribution to this debate can only be touched upon here in those areas where it directly relates to the concern of this thesis. His main concern in his critique of the "hermeneutic version" is to argue against the "pernicious myth that, precisely insofar as explanations in psychoanalysis are indeed motivational or supply unconscious "reasons" for our

actions, they cannot be a particular species of causal explanations" (Grünbaum, 1984, p. 52; Grünbaum examines Habermas, the early Ricoeur, G.S. Klein, and R. Schafer; for a very recent collection on hermeneutics and psychoanalysis, cf., Messer, Sass, & Woolfolk, 1988). These hermeneutic interpreters of psychoanalysis misconstrue, not only Freud's complex causal theory, but his theory of "meaning" and "purpose" as well. Grünbaum makes two different forms of critique against the authors he examines: the first is exegetical -- that is, that their reading of Freud is in error; the second is to show errors in their logic or philosophy of science. It is easiest for Grünbaum to demonstrate that Freud did not see his work in the way these authors characterize it; much more difficult to show that his causal arguments are the same as those in any other science. Following Robert Shope's careful and exhaustive reading of Freud's various uses of the term 'meaning' (Bedeutung or 'significance' and Sinn, which can be translated 'disposition'), Grünbaum is able to show that such mental phenomena as "dreams, symptoms or parapraxes" have "meaning" for Freud as signs which are stand ins for unconscious desires, rather than symbols which stand for the (content of) the wish in the sense of referring to it" (Shope quoted in Grünbaum, 1984, p. 67, emphasis in original; cf., Shope, 1973 and 1985; this is a different use of 'sign' than the one given by

Jones in his famous article on "The Theory of Symbolism" -- cf., Jones, 1961, p. 88).

Grünbaum's critique of hermeneutic logic derives from what he characterizes as the "reasons versus causes" thesis (Grünbaum, 1984, p. 69). This is the thesis (already examined earlier in this chapter) which holds that a person's reasons for her actions cannot be a cause of these same actions. Grünbaum first notes that Freud firmly rejected this dichotomy:

For he deemed explanatory reasons to be a species of motive, and motives -- whether conscious or unconscious -- in turn, a species of the genus cause. Moreover, he allowed that some 'motives' might not even be mental. Thus, he characterizes the psychoanalyst's quest for 'sufficient motives' as a refined implementation of our 'innate craving for causality'" (Grunbaum, 1984, p. 70, emphasis in original. The Freud quotes are from Freud, 1910, S.E.11, p. 38).

However, looking at the original passages quoted here by Grünbaum it is apparent that Freud does refer to both the causal and intentional use of 'motive'. First, in the passage just before this one, he refers to how "symptoms and chance acts" (Symptom-und Zufallshandlungen) "express" both "impulses and also purposes" (wiederum Impulsen und Absichten Ausdruck -- Freud, 1912, G.W.8, p. 37). And in the passage quoted by Grünbaum, after noting that for psychoanalysis there is "nothing trifling, arbitrary or fortuitous" (nichts Kleines, nichts Willkürliches und Zufälliges) in mental life, and the broadening of the

concept of motivation (noted earlier in this chapter), Freud refers to the "manifold motivation" (mehrfache Motivierung) of these "psychic effects" (seelischen Effects -- literally 'soul effects'), instead of "our alleged inborn causal need is explained satisfactorily by a single psychic cause or motive" (Unser angeblich eingeborenes Kausalbedürfnis sich mit einer einzigen psychischen Ursache für befriedigt erklärte -- Freud, 1912, G.W.8, p. 39). Grünbaum (and Shope) are correct, however, when they maintain that Freud's primary use of the term 'motive' is the 'etymological' one of that which "instigates" or "moves us to action" (Grünbaum, 1984, p. 71; the German word 'Motiv' is derived directly from the word 'Motion').

The relevance of this debate to the main concern of this chapter can best be seen by turning briefly to a few comments by the early exponent of the 'reasons vs. causes' thesis -- Ludwig Binswanger (as quoted in Izenberg, 1976, pp. 136-8; for Binswanger's statement of the 'reasons vs. causes' thesis cf., e.g., Binswanger, 1968, pp. 156-8). Binswanger is giving his critique of Freud's derivation of the character trait of miserliness from infantile anal eroticism. First, he maintains that "psychoanalysis saw in a character trait such as miserliness an 'unintelligible basic motive [Befindlichkeismoment,' that is to say a purely irrational manifestation" (Izenberg, 1976, p. 136). Binswanger's point, according to Izenberg, is that, despite

some suggestive literary allusions, Freud is unable to demonstrate any "subjectively meaningful connection" between gold and feces (Izenberg, 1976, p. 136).

Binswanger accepts the connection, Izenberg maintains, but argues that "what made the equation possible for the subject was the common denominator in both activities of filling up an emptiness" (Izenberg, 1976, p. 136, emphasis in original). In Binswanger words:

Thus filling is the a priori bond which furnishes a common denominator for gold and feces; only on this basis does there arise the possibility that in the course of development of the individual gold addiction can 'originate' from retention of feces. In no way, however, is the latter the 'cause' or the motive of miserliness. This motive lies, as we have said, deeper than and behind both. We must always convert psychoanalytic derivations or genetic interpretations in this way (Izenberg, 1976, p. 137, emphasis in original).

Izenberg argues that Binswanger's "equivocation between 'cause' and 'motive'" here is a recognition on his part "of the peculiar logical structure of psychoanalytic explanation" (Izenberg, 1976, p. 137). In other words, the true meaning of the connection between the character trait and the retention of feces is not to be found in a physical impulse, "but the defense against the feeling of emptiness or the danger of losing something that was vital to the integrity of the self" (Izenberg, 1976, p. 137).

That this is a radical departure from Freud's theory can be seen by turning to his essay on "Character and Anal

Eroticism" (Freud, 1908, G.W.7, pp. 203-209). Freud begins the essay by referring to the "organic connection" (organischer Zusammenhang) between the type of character and the behavior of an organ; and adds "that no theoretical anticipation [theoretische Erwartung] played any part in that impression [Eindrücke]" (Freud, 1908, G.W.7, p. 203). His first inference is one about genetic predisposition of "exceptionally strong accentuation of erotogenicity of anal zone" (line überdeutliche erogene Betonung der Afterzone -- Freud, 1908, G.W.7, p. 204; in Freud, 1905, G.W.5, Freud had introduced most of these ideas, using the German word 'Anlage' -- 'disposition' in sense of 'natural tendency' but also 'talent', cf., especially, pp. 140-141). The key process in the movement from this predisposition to the dispositional traits of "orderliness, frugality and obstinacy" (ordentlich, sparsam und eigensinnig) is "the diversion or deflection" (abgelenkt) of the "sexual goal or aim" (sexuellen Zielen) to other purposes -- namely, the process of "sublimation" (Sublimierung -- Freud, 1908, G.W.7, p. 205; also, Freud, 1905, G.W.5, pp. 79, 140; as noted by Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, pp. 431-4, the term 'sublimation', not only blends purpose with mechanism, as can be seen in the passage just quoted, it also combines the art-criticism concept of the 'sublime' with the scientific concept of a chemical process, i.e., passage from a solid to a gaseous state).

In a later essay on "The Disposition to Obsessional Neurosis" (Freud, 1913, G.W.8, pp. 442-52) Freud adds the important defense of "reaction-formation" (Reaktionsbildungen -- Freud, 1913, G.W.8, p. 449; also introduced in Freud, 1905, G.W.5, pp. 78, 79, 140) to sublimation as the processes which, when generalized, can lead to character-traits (the reaction-formations are particularly active in 'anal characters' and in 'obsessive traits' -- cf., Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, pp. 377-8). Otto Fenichel notes that reaction-formations make for "a 'once-and-for-all', definitive change of the personality." In other words, this defense becomes a habitual part of the individual's personality structure in anticipation of future danger, rather than a reaction to an instinctual danger in the present (Fenichel, 1945, p. 151; the German suffix 'bildung' holds an important place in literary history, with its connotation of sophisticated cultivation).

Finally, following his daughter's codification of The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense (A. Freud, 1936), Freud expanded on his concept of the "modification or alteration of the I or Ego" Ichveränderung -- Freud, 1937, G.W.16, p. 80; Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, pp. 25-6). Anna Freud had been influenced by Wilhelm Reich's concept of the "armor-plating of character" (Charakterpanzerung) or what she calls the "permanent defense phenomena" (A. Freud,

1936, p. 33; Reich's ideas will be examined later in this chapter). Such character-traits as "arrogant behavior," Anna Freud maintains, are "residues of very vigorous defensive processes in the past" (A. Freud, 1936, p. 33). The problem for psychoanalysis is that such "modes of defense" become, in the words of Sigmund Freud, "fixated in the ego" (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, p. 25); and, are, thereby, not subject to the same forms of manipulation (whether from internal or external desires and temptations). And, therefore, these dispositions are particularly intractable to treatment. In his essay on "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" (Freud, 1937, G.W.16, pp. 64-5) Freud acknowledges two different types of 'disposition', depending on their mode of origin: the first are those individual tendencies that a person is born with (her particular constitution); and the second are those acquired "modifications of the I," which can come from accidental trauma or from the course of development (Freud's Lamarckian ideas about inheritance tends to muddy the distinction here, but it is clear also from Freud, 1913, G.W.8 that these are basically two separate but related categories; or, to be more specific, two poles of a continuum). So here, toward the very end of his career, Freud returns to the complexity of causality and aetiology which was examined earlier in this chapter in Freud, 1895, G.W.1, pp. 357-76. Only now there is a certain pessimism

for the outcome of treatment, given not only the "constitutional strength of instinct" (die konstitutionelle Triebstarke), but also given the possibility of "an unfavourable modification of the ego in the defensive conflict" (die im Abwehrkampf erworbene ungünstige Veränderung des Ichs -- Freud, 1937, G.W.16, p. 64 -- 'erworbene' carries a meaning of 'loss' in the business sense, and 'ungünstige' carries a meaning of 'malignity'). Freud further notes that:

The stronger the constitutional factor the more readily will a trauma lead to fixation, with its sequel in a disturbance of development; the stronger the trauma the more certain it is that it will have injurious effects even when the patient's instinctual life is normal (Freud, 1937/1963b, p. 238).

What Freud means here by the conflict of the instinctual and defensive factors is further analyzed by Rapaport, 1967, pp. 864-7 under his definition of 'motives' as "appetitive internal forces"; except that for Freud, at least in the case of 'modification of the ego', social pressures do play a part (Freud, 1937/1963b, p. 253). In the case of instinctual forces, Rapaport is correct to point out that the individual experiences such motives as "compulsions", which are often "ego-dystonic instinctual impulses", and against which the ego takes up a defensive attitude (Rapaport, 1967, p. 864). However, as Freud (1937/1963b, p. 253) notes the ego, in part at least, treats these "instinctual demands ... like external forces

... because it understands that satisfaction of instincts would lead to conflicts with the external world." (This conflict is described in a number of places -- cf., in particular, Freud, 1915, G.W.10, p. 210. It is the origin, among other things, of the important process of 'substitute gratification or satisfaction' -- Ersatzbefriedigung -- Freud, 1926, G.W.14, pp. 122, 148; a concept important, not only to symptom formation, but to characterizator formation as well -- Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, p. 434; Rubinstein, 1967, pp. 30-31. This process also plays an important function in formation of pleonexia, as will be seen in Chapter 3 below.)

As Philip Rieff states in his usual colorful prose, Freud's mature view of man can be characterized as the conflict between "two objective forces -- unregenerate instincts and overbearing culture" (Rieff, 1961, p. 29). To a large extent this battle gets played out in a struggle between the instinctual and the symbolic (e.g., in his article on "Repression," Freud notes that it is the 'ideational representatives' of the instincts that gets repressed -- Freud, 1915/1963c, p. 106). A person's character, on this reading of Freud, becomes the individualized way in which she resolves this conflict. To quote Rieff once again: "since the individual can neither extirpate his instincts nor wholly reject the demands of society, his character expresses the way in which he

organizes and appeases the conflict between the two" (Rieff, 1961, p. 29; as one psychoanalyst stated "Character is a solution forged over time" -- Fromm quoted in Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983, p. 110; Yankelovich & Barrett note that "conflict is probably the key notion throughout all Freud's thinking; Erikson states that psychoanalysis is the view of man as conflict" -- Yankelovich & Barrett, 1970, p. 29. Roy Schafer states that Kohut is arguably the one exception to this rule -- Schafer, 1989).

However, at least two issues arise if one is to maintain this view of character formation: (1) First, it is clearly the case, as noted earlier, that 'modes of defense' may be maintained even when the conflict underlying them has long since become quiescent; (2) but, more important for purposes of this thesis, it is clear from the kind of evidence put forth in Chapter 1 that some types of dispositions to behavior are nourished by a particular society rather than being the result of such conflict.

One psychoanalyst who dealt with some of these issues of the relationship between the development of character and the influence of society, specifically as it relates to pleonexia, was Otto Fenichel. As Russell Jacoby notes, Fenichel accepted the view that "history stamps neurosis with its insignia"; however, he also was concerned with the kind of cultural reductionism "that treated cultures as

individuals, categorizing them as oral, anal and genital types" (Jacoby, 1983, p. 102, the language here is Jacoby's). In fact, Fenichel rejected any form of reductionism, including the biological variety, as well as "culturalism". Fenichel basically accepted the formulation of a conflict between the instincts and external social constraints as outlined above. He was particularly concerned that the social psychoanalysts (the Neo-Freudians) were giving up too many of the key insights from instinct theory (as can be seen from his letters quoted by Jacoby, 1983, pp. 98-117). Fenichel begins his important essay on "The Drive to Amass Wealth" by affirming the existence of a specific instinct to strive for wealth, with an active aspect of "acquisitiveness" and a passive function of "being supported on an oral level" (Fenichel, 1938/1954, pp. 89-109). At first glance this would appear to be an example of the kind of circular and vacuous use of the 'instinct' concept criticized by Frenkel-Bruswik (1954, p. 287). In her critical view, creation of a specific instinct for "every variety of manifest behavior" renders the concept of 'instinct' in a purely descriptive and "superfluous" role from the point of view of causal explanation. The concept of 'instinct' is supposed to bridge the gap between explanations in terms of causes and effects and explanations in terms of intentions and purposes, but fails to perform this task when confined to

such a purely descriptive role. The problem is one central to the methodological difficulties of biological reductionism, which commits a petitio principii by pushing back the causal question to the innate level (this would appear to be, in part, Borneman's Criticism, alluded to in chapter 1 above, of Ferenczi's "Capitalistic instinct" as an "unfortunate terminus technicus" -- Borneman, 1976, p. 46). However, this is not Fenichel's understanding of the drive to amass wealth. First, because he notes, (following Freud 1926) that such "highly specialized" instincts allow further reduction to a "source" in more "primal instincts" (Fenichel, 1938/1954, p. 89). Freud (cf., Freud, 1915, G.W.10, p. 214 for a clear statement) distinguished between an instinct's "impetus, its aim, its object and its source" (Drang, Ziel, Objekt, Quelle des Triebs; parenthetically, the term Tribschicksale, translated as "Vicissitudes" in the English title of this essay, carries the teleological meaning of 'entelechy' and 'fate'). In Freud's last book (Freud, 1941, G.W.17, p. 70), after noting that one can distinguish "an indeterminate number" (unbestimmte Anzahl) of instincts, Freud goes on to further note that "instincts can change their aim (by displacement)" (die Triebe ihr verändern können (durch Verschiebung) and can even replace one another.

However, even more importantly, for both Freud and Fenichel (and this thesis), both the specific aims and the

objects of our instincts are largely socially determined (it is not possible here to trace the complex vicissitudes of these terms in Freud's writings, cf., Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, pp. 21-4, 273-6 for references). As Fenichel states: "biological facts are modified by social facts" (Fenichel, 1938/1954, p. 90; Freud notes in 1917, G.W.10, p. 407 that the child has only the concept of a "present or gift" (Geschenk) which only with age and social circumstances gets replaced by "money" (Geld)). Fenichel goes further in this direction of seeing the influence of the social on instincts than Freud does, however (though not as far as Borneman, 1976, pp. 44-70, who goes to the extreme of social reductionism); for he argues that, not only the specific goal of accumulating money, but the whole drive of acquisitiveness is, in part at least, socially determined.

In fact, Fenichel introduces an important issue: if a particular behavior is considered "rational" in a given society, such that its absence as a motivating influence would be considered a manifestation of abnormality, how is it possible to consider that behavior to be a form of illness. After all, in a society such as ours, it is a "rational motive" to believe "that the more money one possesses, the better one can satisfy one's needs" (Fenichel, 1954, p. 90; Fenichel does not actually spell out this dilemma, but it can be extracted from his essay).

Of course, this is not a problem which is peculiar to the pleonexic. Freud was constantly reminding us that the boundary between the normal and abnormal is a "fluid" one (cf., e.g., the concluding pages of Freud, 1904, G.W.4; cf., also, Fenichel, 1945, p. 581; Hartmann, 1964, pp. 1-18). And this was particularly true in the case of "character anomalies," which are "subtle and most often experienced without pain, and anxiety or displeasure" and are "rationalized away with terms such as 'it's his nature'" (Briehl, 1977, p. 74). Though this issue is common to a number of psychoanalytic categories of psychopathology, it is, nevertheless, particularly pronounced in the area of this study. The problem, for instance, is related to Marcuse's concern that people, far from feeling alienated in advanced capitalist society, actually "recognize themselves in their commodities" (Springborg, 1981, p. 178 -- she adds that Marcuse is concerned with how what he considers to be "false needs" get introjected. This concept of true/false needs, which was criticized in chapter 1 above, receives some weak or putative foundation in Freud's idea of "innate needs" -- mitgebrachten Bedürfnisse -- literally, needs that come with the organism -- Freud, 1941, G.W.17, p. 70. However, Freud's concept is better understood as an example of what Marks calls a "dispositional desire," for example "the desire to run away when threatened", which is a state

rather than an event -- Marks, 1986, p. 8. Desires which arise from events or situations Marks calls "occurrent desires"; cf., also, Hampshire, 1960, p. 176).

A partial response to this issue will involve some of the same methodological points made earlier in this chapter. The first thing to note is that:

there are two conditions which are usually associated with psychopathology: (1) feeling distress in situations which normally ought not to be distress producing and (2) maladaptive behavior. In most cases both conditions are present, but either may be present without the other (Irani, 1978, p. 7).

In the case of pleonexia, depending on the financial position of the patient, distress over her compulsive spending may or may not be present; but, in all but the rarest of cases, such behavior can be considered maladaptive. In addition, there are also times when one's needs or desires take an intentional state as their object, such as when an addicted person desires to cease to desire to shop (Marks, 1986, p. 4). Also, of course, the examples of an individual who acts contrary to her professed desire, which were seen earlier to be basic to the psychoanalytic view of pathology, can mean that feelings of distress are absent in situations which normally ought to be stress producing (a situation not necessarily accounted for in Irani's criteria; although it would probably be considered part of the definition of 'maladaptive behavior' to be examined shortly). Irani notes that both his criteria of

psychopathology presuppose intentions and purposes: in the first case through "feelings" and other such states of consciousness; and in the second, the very "notion of adaptation implies the notions of function and purpose" (Irani, 1978, p. 7).

How then is maladaptive behavior, such as pleonexia, defined by psychoanalysis? Irani recognizes two separate types of explanation which both involve intentional states (his analysis basically summarizes views already covered earlier in this chapter): the first is the case in which an overt act B differs from an avowed or intended act A because a conscious motive G differs from an unconscious motive W' (here it is necessary that the individual have at least one unconscious motive; two conscious, though conflicted, motives would not count as a psychoanalytic explanation for a maladaptive act). The second explanation involves the introduction of defense mechanisms and character traits. Here what is postulated are certain:

Unconscious states, S', which for one reason or another cannot be manifested in behavior, and which have generated a set of attitudes or dispositions, D', characterized by wants and styles of behavior. The overt act, B, must now be interpreted as the behavior of an individual with G having an attitudinal and dispositional set D', and which, without D', may have led to act A (Irani, 1978, p. 8).

Irani goes on to note that defense mechanisms are "much more likely to alter the motives rather than just the act"; thereby introducing another set of goals; and the overt act

would then be considered an appropriate implementation of these goals (Irani, 1978, p. 8). Of course, a lot is left out of this description: for example, it says nothing about the key issue of how these "unconscious states, attitudes or dispositions" get their original formation. What is missing, in part is any notion of primary and secondary dispositions, such as Stuart Hampshire provides. At every stage in life new dispositions or inclinations to respond in certain ways to certain situations are being formed. The contribution of psychoanalysis is to show how these new or "secondary dispositions can be traced back to unconscious memories of primitive satisfactions and frustrations of instinctual needs, modified by complicated processes of repression, projection, displacement, transference, and so on" (Hampshire, 1960, p. 176).

One final point needs to be made on this issue of 'abnormality' and pleonexia, before returning to Fenichel's essay. It was noted earlier that one of the key defenses involved in the formation of character traits (especially of the compulsive inclinations) is reaction-formation. From the very first introduction of the concept of this defense (in Freud, 1905, G.W.5, p. 78f) Freud noted its importance for normal development. However, (in Freud, 1926, G.W.14, pp. 144-5) Freud also notes that such normal traits of character can become exaggerated ("Übertreibungen") and can take on "the force of a symptom"

(Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, p. 378) as in the compulsive neurotic. So once again, it can be seen that the normal/abnormal dispositions are more like a continuum than hard and separate categories.

Returning to Fenichel's important essay on "The Drive to Amass Wealth," there are three "irrational" forces which he argues lie "behind" the rational reasons to "accumulate possessions." For the first of these, he borrows a phrase from Nietzsche and Adler, namely, "the will to power." Adler was interested in the question of what determines healthy adaptation to the environment, as well as the dispositional factors which impede such adaptations. He postulated a natural striving for mastery and better adaptation (Adler, 1959, pp. 1-15; Adler, 1964a, pp. 55-6; Adler was also strongly interested in the social and political determinants of adaptation -- cf., e.g., Adler, 1964b; Adler, 1964c. However, he was strongly criticized by other psychoanalysts with this same interest -- for example, Wilhelm Reich -- for his overemphasis on the teleological concept of 'aim', rather than the causal factor of instincts, as well as his conservative emphasis on adaptation to current social conditions -- cf., Reich, 1972a, pp. 18, 54-5; Reich, 1972b, p. 169nl). The "will to power" was seen as a neurotic response to feelings of insecurity rather than the universal human trait which Nietzsche assumed (Adler, 1907). The term 'power' is

defined broadly by Fenichel to include what he calls here and elsewhere "narcissistic needs" (Fenichel, 1938/1954, p. 95; Fenichel, 1945, p. 40), in particular the need for "self-regard" or "self-esteem". Here Fenichel acknowledges ego and interpersonal motivations of equal importance to "the instinctual requirements of the id" (Fenichel, 1938/1954, p. 95). The obverse of this "will to power" is "pathological fear of impoverishment" because the "loss of love and of possessions that is feared means always a loss of self-regard, a diminution of power" (Fenichel, 1938/1954, p. 91; like the English word, the various German words for 'power' carry the connotation of efficacy and mastery).

The connection between self-regard and power is a social one, Fenichel maintains, based on the honor and power which is bestowed upon the rich in our society. But it also has its basis in the infant's feelings of omnipotence, which are dependent on satisfaction of the "primal desire" for food. Fenichel was influenced here by Sandor Rado, who attempted to explain both the effects and the causes of addiction to drugs in terms of what he called "metaerotism" (Rado, 1926, pp. 396-413; Rado's greatest contribution to the study of addiction was probably his observation that addicts have a low frustration level when it comes to gratification, something he called "tense depression"). Rado noted a tendency to regression to a

pregenital level in the addict, a "turning away from real [i.e., genital] love-objects." He noted, following Freud (1904) and Abraham (1924), the very strong oral component to "the flight into morbid craving", as well as the links with mania and melancholia -- (Rado, 1926, pp. 396-413; more on Abraham shortly). In this view of Fenichel's, money serves to supply the individual with her quota of self-regard in a manner analogous to how food relieves the infant's hunger. The equation between riches and power and respect in our society is why "the original instinctual aim is not for riches" but these narcissistic needs (Fenichel, 1954, p. 96).

The second of the "irrational" motives for the drive to amass riches is a generic "collecting instinct", so that the former drive is a subdivision of a more basic acquisitive instinct. This more general "desire to possess" is a "direct expression of the narcissistic need to enlarge as much as possible the compass of one's own ego" (Fenichel, 1938/1954, p. 97). How does this differ from the first 'narcissistic need' (i.e., self-respect)? What is involved here is a somatic notion; that is, the bodily expansion of the ego through possession (first of all clothing -- Fenichel was influenced here by Freud, 1923; cf., Fenichel, 1945, pp. 36, 261, 419). This "bodily narcissism" can result from "an overcompensation for fear of loss of parts of the body" (Fenichel, 1938/1954, p.

97). These "pregenital fears of bodily injury" become associated with the loss of money through the familiar money equals feces equation. However, Fenichel criticizes the more extreme exponents of this view (e.g., Ferenczi) who maintain that money was "expressly invented for the purpose of satisfying" the anal instinct (one is reminded of Voltaire's satirical remark about those who maintained that the nose was intended for the purpose of holding glasses). Fenichel states that this is an unwarranted "extrapolation to phylogenesis from ontogenetic data", for our social system, for its own political purposes, simply appropriates this erogenous pleasure in collecting to strengthen its hold on economic conditions (Fenichel, 1938/1954, p. 99). Fenichel makes a very important point when he notes that "not only the unconscious attitude toward feces but also the attitude toward introjections of every kind can be projected onto money" (Fenichel, 1938/1954, p. 99). One example which he uses, one which adumbrates a number of recent insights from feminist theory, is of women whose striving for money (one could add for possessions in general) is, at least in part, a compensation for "a whole series of introjected objects that have been withheld from them" (Fenichel, 1938/1954, p. 99; one hastens to add, so as not to be accused of an anachronism, that Fenichel was far from being a feminist -- cf., Fenichel, 1945, pp. 67, 335; the notion of

'introjected objects' was used by Abraham, in an important essay -- Abraham, 1924, pp. 454-461 -- to explain the "positive and negative narcissism" of the manic-depressive. Following Freud's insight in 1917, G.W.10, p. 428 that the melancholic introjects the lost love-object, Abraham notes that the self-reproaches and lack of self-regard of the depressive phase "emanates from this introjected object" -- Abraham, 1924, p. 461.

Abraham's insights about the manic phase, in this essay and elsewhere, will prove important when it comes to differentiating pleonexia from this disorder; cf., Freud, 1923/1960, pp. 18-20 for more on introjection and objects). Fenichel offers another example, that of men who identify money with "their potency, who experience any loss of money as a castration." His final example is those impulsive individuals:

who -- according to their attitude of the moment toward taking, giving, or withholding -- accumulate or spend money, or alternate between accumulation and spending, quite impulsively, without regard for the reality significance of money, and often to their own detriment (sometimes unconsciously desired) (Fenichel, 1938/1954, pp. 99-100).

The last of the four factors which Fenichel sees as having an effect on acquisitiveness he labels "The sociological source". Although instincts represent general tendencies, Fenichel argues, the "specific form" which such tendencies can assume depends upon "certain definite social

conditions" being in place; in this case a capitalist economy of commodities (Fenichel, 1938/1954, p. 101). Given the overdetermination of human motives and actions, the problem is to learn "What is essential, what is accidental?" (Fenichel, 1938/1954, p. 102). Fenichel would appear to answer this question in favor of social forces; for he believes that even such biological structures as anal-erotism depend "to a large extent upon social factors" (Fenichel, 1938/1954, p. 104n20). Once social institutions are in place, at least, they have direct effects on our instinctual life (the separate question of how these specific institutions come about, Fenichel asserts, can only be answered after detailed anthropological and historical investigations, such as were sketched in chapter 1 above -- Fenichel, 1938/1954, pp. 106-7). However, Fenichel's real answer is to oppose the notion of a single determining force or set of forces: only through the "continual reciprocal action" of specific social and instinctual needs, under specific historical, as well as economic conditions, could give rise to a drive to amass wealth.

The psychoanalyst who made the most concerted effort (at least in his early writings) to understand this reciprocal action of biological, social and political factors on character development was Wilhelm Reich. There is room here only to briefly look at how his early

(pre-1935) ideas can shed some light on the etiology and differentiation of pleonexia. According to Jacoby, Fenichel and Reich, despite their common concern with social and political influences on character, parted company partly because of what Fenichel considered Reich's "sexual reductionism" and "romanticism", as well as his failure "to understand Marxism" (Jacoby, 1983, pp. 105, 109). Reich, however, did "reject eclectic attempts to combine 'instinct' and 'economy' arbitrarily" holding that the child of these parents was "more than the sum total of his parents"; and, he also rejected what he called "vulgar Marxism" (Reich, 1970, pp. xxiii, 25; arguably no psychoanalyst has been more misrepresented in his ideas than Reich. A classic example can be found in Gabriel, 1983, pp. 173-183, where she argues that he left out of his synthesis of Freud and Marx "the one common ingredient of the two original theories, conflict" -- Gabriel, 1983, p. 182. Nothing could be further from the truth, as can be seen repeatedly in Reich, 1933/1972b, pp. 152-168 where 'conflict' plays a major role. What is true, however, as Michael Schneider points out, is that Reich believed, unlike Freud or Marx, in a "natural sociability," "capacity for love", and "spontaneous joy in work" which was simply perverted by social repression. Schneider argues convincingly that Reich lost some of the subtleties of

Freud's instinct theory which have been examined above -- Schneider, 1975, pp. 47-56).

In fact, there are a number of points of contact between Fenichel and Reich: for one thing, though it was seen earlier that Reich rejected Adler's emphasis on the purposeful to the neglect of the biological, nonetheless, like Fenichel, Reich also rejected the notion of capitalism springing whole cloth from the instincts (Reich, 1972a, p. 42n44); in addition, like Fenichel, Reich took seriously the issue that acquisitive pursuits have a strong "rational" component, although his answer to the dilemma sketched above is slightly different. In a discussion of sublimation, Reich notes that irrational and compulsive pursuits begin with a rational element that undergoes a transformation. These "socially rational" pursuits begin with "infantile -- instinctual actions serving the rational urge for pleasure." It is the social (familial) repression of the infantile wish which forces it to become irrational in the form of the symbolic satisfaction of an unconscious wish (in this case through the process of sublimation -- Reich, 1972a, pp. 43-46). Reich thought he detected in this back and forth process in the human psyche the same sort of dialectical transformation which Marx called attention to in the historical/economic sphere (Reich, 1972a, pp. 27-30).

However, the important point, from the perspective of this thesis, is not how the debate between Fenichel and Reich (as to who is most correct in his interpretation of Marx and Freud) should be resolved; but rather the fact that both authors were limited by their adherence to an orthodox Marxist view which has real difficulties accounting for major changes in a late stage capitalist society such as exists today (where, e.g., the economy is highly regulated; most significantly, there is a greater emphasis and proliferation in the area of consumption -- this issue was touched upon in chapter 1, and room does not permit for further elaboration here -- cf., Benhabib, 1986 for a good summary; also, Schneider, 1975, pp. 213-244 for how it relates directly to this thesis). An example of such a limitation, from Fenichel's essay, can be found on page 92, where he talks as if it is only the "capitalist" who "must strive to accumulate wealth" (Fenichel, 1938/1954, p. 92, emphasis in original). In our present society, almost all sectors or classes are now subject to such compulsion. As noted in chapter 1 above, Reich was criticized by at least one contemporary Marxist for "starting with consumption" rather than "production" (Reich, 1972a, p. xix). However, it turns out that the consumption referred to here, is sexual activity and not consumer products; and, although Reich, as will be seen, had some very interesting things to say about the addiction

to work, he failed to address directly the issue of addiction to consumption. This having been said, there are still a number of areas where Reich advances the argument of this thesis.

Reich's greatest contribution was in the analysis of the formation and nature of character; in particular, how social ideology gets reproduced "in the head". "Reich's psychology emphasized the historical flexibility of the instincts and the social specificity of the frustrations they encounter" (Cohen, 1982, p. 140). The process by which society "reproduces" its economic and political ideology begins, Reich asserts, well before the formation of the superego (out of the parental superego); it begins with "the earliest frustrations and identifications", with the pre-oedipal beginnings of the formation of character (Reich, 1933/1972b, p. xxv). The agent for this reproductive process, in our society, is the patriarchal, nuclear family (here the question of manipulation, addressed in chapter 1, gets pushed back to an earlier stage of development). Reich's historical and anthropological speculations about the origins of this family structure and its sexual suppression, (based largely on Engels and Bronislaw Malinowski), like Freud's similar ventures, are one of the weakest points in his theory (for a feminist critique of Engels on family origins -- cf., Sayers, Evans, & Redclift, 1987; for a reevaluation of

Malinowski on the oedipus complex -- cf., Spiro, 1982). However, it is not necessary to accept the specifics of Reich's pioneering theory to see that his main point about the socializing influence of different types of family structure is important for this thesis (Nancy Chodorow's own study of this "reproduction" process begins with Reich's observation -- Reich, 1933/1972b, p. 163 -- that in our society, during the crucial early years of the formation of character, the mother is the primary socializing agent -- cf., Chodorow, 1978). The specific mode of repression which the infant experiences "is itself a historically specific act which reflects the individual's internalization of the prevailing mode of social relations" (Kovel, 1984, p. 107; Kovel's very different views of this process will be examined at the end of this chapter). Unlike Freud, Reich did not accept the conflict between the instinctual and the social as an inevitable feature of life, but rather as the outgrowth of the needs of our historically specific authoritarian society (Cohen, 1982, p. 146; this contrast between Reich and Freud can be seen in their very different views of the superego -- in Reich's case as "a foreign body taken from the threatening and prohibiting outer world" and for Freud "as the representative of the internal world of the id" -- quoted in Chassequet-Smirgel & Grunberger, 1986, p. 139). It follows that in a less repressive society the kind of

character pathology sketched below would not be found. (One should not draw this contrast between Freud and Reich too sharply, however: once again, things are more complicated, in that Freud held that each generation was forced to uphold the repression handed down by former generations, a view similar to Reich's concept of 'tradition' -- compare Freud, 1914, G.W.10, pp. 53, 101 with Reich, 1972a, p. 20n28; Reich, 1933/1972b, p. xxiv; also, Reich believed in a basic conservative principle of social change caused by the fact that character, once established, changes much more slowly than social institutions -- Reich, 1933/1972b, p. xxvi).

Reich's major contribution to an understanding of this process of character formation came in his major work on Character Analysis (Reich, 1933/1972b, esp., pp. 152-281). It was seen earlier in this chapter that Reich's concept of an "armor-plating of character" had a strong influence on Anna Freud's theory of defense mechanisms. Reich postulated what can be seen as a continuum, with flexibility at the healthy end and rigidity at the pathological pole (a parallel continuum could be drawn for the treatment experience, with increasing "character resistance" at the tenacious end). The purpose of this "hardening" process (in which characteristic modes of reacting -- or dispositions -- become increasingly chronic and automatic) "is to protect the ego from external and

internal dangers" (Reich, 1933/1972b, p. 155). The experience of "unpleasure" (Unlust), that is, the frustration of instinctual demands is what leads to the contraction of the armor around the ego (with pleasurable experiences having an opening up effect). This process of increased hardening of the ego has three parts:

1. It identifies with the frustrating reality as personified in the figure of the main suppressive person.
2. It turns against itself the aggression which it mobilized against the suppressive person and which also produced the anxiety.
3. It develops reactive attitudes toward the sexual strivings, i.e., it utilizes the energy of these strivings to serve its own purposes, namely to ward them off (Reich, 1933/1972b, p. 157).

There are a number of conditions (some of them social) which determine the development of a particular character structure (e.g., the stage of development and the specific instincts involved in conflict). These work together with specific defense mechanisms (in particular, identification, sublimation, and reaction formation) to help resolve the conflict. The specific way in which conflict is resolved depends upon the structure of the character. "And which instinctual forces are employed to establish the character and which are allowed direct gratification decides the difference not only between health and sickness but among the individual character types" (Reich, 1933/1972b, p. 174, emphasis in original). The character type, which Reich

discusses, which comes closest to the pleonexic is the compulsive character (Reich, 1933/1972b, pp. 187-193, 209-217); and, the defense linked closely with the compulsive is reaction formation. In reaction formation, Reich asserts, "all achievements seem to be imposed upon a rebelling id by a strict superego ... the act is important; the effect is secondary ... [and] the action does not have a libidinal accent; it is negatively motivated. It is compulsive" (Reich, 1933/1972b, p. 187). The idea here seems to be that the "reactive performance", rather than being motivated directly by a desire, comes about when an instinct is blocked, leading to increased restlessness, with growing "irritability and even anxiety" (Reich, 1933/1972b, p. 188). The example which Reich examines is, what would be called today, the 'workaholic', the person for whom "work is an escape from rest". (Reich believes that the achievements of this individual are "less successful socially", than in the case of sublimation, because there is a wider gap between latent capabilities and actual achievement; but why this should be is not made clear. In any case, the result is often "feelings of inferiority" -- Reich, 1933/1972b, p. 188. Reich maintains that work in our culture is much more often of this compulsive (and "robot"-like) variety, because of educational and social conditions; but again, he does not spell out why. The reaction formation has the effect of

turning the drive against the self; a process he calls "inversion". It is an example of repression, since the original goal remains active, though suppressed, in the worker's unconscious. For this reason, the reaction formation continues to have its effect, and has a tendency to spread throughout the personality (i.e., to become hardened -- Reich, 1933/1972b, p. 189). The compulsive activity, thereby, takes on other defensive qualities, such as denial and rationalization. A "symptom neurosis" can result because the unconscious sexual and aggressive drive has been "damned up" (a clear example of Freud's libido theory or hydraulic model). In a later section of the book (pp. 209-217), Reich outlines the well-known traits of the compulsive character which derive from anal eroticism (among others, he mentions in passing: "inability to husband money" and a "strong passion for collecting things" -- Reich, 1933/1972b, p. 210, emphasis in original). However, he adds nothing to explain why fixation on this particular erotic stage of development should lead to formation of these specific dispositions, other than the now familiar arguments of too-early toilet training and the symbolic equation of feces with money. Nor is the argument advanced, when it is learned later (pp. 221-224) that other forms of addictive behavior ("especially alcoholism") results from a fixation at the "phallic-narcissistic stage", a protection from "regression to the passive and

anal stages" (as will be seen in a moment, this same behavior was attributed by Abraham to a fixation at the oral stage). Reich's greatest contribution remains his recognition of the social and political determinants of compulsive dispositions. In a later work (Reich, 1942/1970, pp. 321-2), he summarizes these main influencing factors which are added to the biological. They include a "fear of freedom" which adds to characterological rigidity (in effect fear of flexibility), as well as an interest in money and power as a substitute for unfulfilled happiness in love. Before concluding this chapter with an analysis of how some contemporary psychoanalysts have built upon these insights, the contribution of one final contemporary of Freud -- Karl Abraham -- needs to be briefly examined. In a number of his papers, most specifically his short essay on "The Spending of Money in Anxiety States" (Abraham, 1917/1948, pp. 299-302), Abraham implicitly raises an issue of central concern to this thesis: namely, how pleonexia can be differentiated from several related inclinations (the principle topic of the third and concluding chapter below).

Abraham begins his essay on "Spending" by inadvertently calling attention to a logical dilemma in the psychoanalytic literature on character traits: namely, the fact that the same causal or etiological factor (i.e., fixation at the anal stage of development) is invoked to

explain what are very opposite types of behavior. Abraham notes that much had been written about the anal character traits of "neurotic avarice and the anxious retention of money", but in his experience there exists another group of neurotics who display the very opposite behavior of impulsive spending (a symptom which comes over them "like a kind of attack" -- Abraham, 1917/1948, p. 299; in a later essay he complicates things further by stating that it is the same group of neurotics which engages in both retention and liberal spending -- Abraham, 1921/1948, p. 383).

Although Abraham retains the explanation in terms of anal eroticism, he provides some additional explanations for this specific type of compulsive behavior based on his experience with three clinical cases. Before looking at these additional factors, a word needs to be said by way of possible clarification concerning this dilemma. One possible rejoinder might be that there is a more general character structure or disposition to behave in certain ways under certain circumstances, and what is being observed here is simply the variations in behavior caused by variations in circumstances. But this is clearly not what is being argued in these essays or elsewhere; and too general a character structure would prove quite vacuous when it came to explaining specific behaviors. Another possibility is that this is an example of the "mixed products of two different sources of character-formation"

which Abraham notes in an essay on "Oral Eroticism and Character" (Abraham, 1924/1948, p. 395). But, although this explanation would at least work, it is clearly not what Abraham has in mind when talking of anal eroticism. Perhaps the best defense would be to borrow Freud's notion of the different components of an instinct, and to say that what is being observed in these cases is the displacement of associated ideas or symptoms on to different objects. (The overall problem of the differentiation of a specific set of behaviors or syndrome will come up again in analyzing Abraham's important essay on "Manic-Depressive States and Obsessional Neurosis", where he states that "the same abnormalities of behavior in relation to money and possessions" exist in both the "melancholic character and the obsessional neurotic" -- Abraham, 1924/1948, p. 423).

No matter how this methodological issue is resolved, Abraham makes a number of interesting observations and suggestions concerning the compulsive spender. The major additional factor which he postulates is, what would be called today (following Margaret Mahler), an infantile problem with separation-individuation from the parental home. In terms of Freudian economics: "leaving the home signifies to the unconscious a detachment of the libido from its object" (Abraham, 1917/1948, p. 300). This process of separation creates the anxiety states, and the defensive reaction is to spend money as if it were libido.

In terms of Reich's theory: a false internal perception of ego flexibility is created in what remains a very rigid character structure. The end result is a quite temporary relief of anxiety which is soon replaced by a new flood (no doubt accompanied by added guilt over the expenditure). Abraham makes a couple of additional interesting observations in this densely packed essay: (1) he notes that his patients engage in certain rationalizations of their behavior (what he calls elsewhere, in an essay on alcoholics, "cover-motives" -- Abraham, 1908/1948, p. 88); (2) he, also, remarks on how one patient admitted to frequently intensifying her anxiety in order to have an excuse to spend (an addictive setup, also, frequently observed in alcoholics); (3) finally, he makes the very important observation that this form of compulsive behavior often acts as a "substitute gratification" for the love which their rigid character prevents them from giving and receiving. This latter factor is particularly strong in those individuals who buy and accumulate possessions in order to give them away (in the hopes of receiving love in return -- a feature that can be seen in kleptomania also); as well as those who strive for money and commodities because they believe it enhances their sexual appeal (a fact not lost on the advertising industry, as was noted in chapter 1 above). Abraham elaborates on this connection between addiction and erotic longing in his essay on

"Sexuality and Alcoholism" (Abraham, 1908/1948, pp. 80-89). In this early study, Abraham speaks more frequently of the social factors which contribute to the development and continuation of this disorder. In particular, the cultural link between the idea of 'manliness' and consumption of large amounts of alcohol. In addition, the important connection between intoxication and sexual excitement could be applied equally well to the addictive rush, (what Michael Schneider calls "commodity euphoria", the "narcotizing atmosphere ... which is a slightly psychotic condition where the ego denies a part of reality so as to surrender itself to the hallucinatory wish" -- Schneider, 1975, pp. 219-225), which comes with the acquisition of commodities by the pleonexic.

(Schneider notes that it is only within "the ritual of buying that the commodity has this narcotic effect.)

Finally, in his pioneering study of "Oral Eroticism and Character" (Abraham, 1924/1948, pp. 393-406), Abraham takes up again the issue of an "inordinate desire to possess" in an effort to differentiate between those disorders which stem from anal characteristics and those which come from a fixation or regression to the oral stage. He notes that for largely social reasons more of the oral component is allowed to continue in "normal" (i.e., "genital") sexual life (this has probably not been true in all cultures or periods of history, e.g., the ancient Greek). Most

importantly, he notes that abnormal parsimony and avarice have a close relation to an early oral or sucking component, which later gets transferred to the anal sphincter. And he appears, at first, to make the interesting observation that such behaviors can have a purely social cause, totally independent of "the anal sources of character-formation" (Abraham, 1924/1948, pp. 398-9). However, when he notes that these disorders are "often met within people who are inhibited from properly earning sa livelihood", he is not referring to the social effects of poverty on money disorders, but rather the effects of disappointment of oral desires in the early years, which leave these individuals with extreme anxiety lest they lose what they do possess. However, this observation on the early effects of deprivation could, in fact, be generalized to the hypothesis that it leads to greater craving for possessions in adult life.

Michael Schneider (following the psychoanalyst R. Reiche) makes some interesting suggestions about the relationship between anal and oral characteristics in the pleonexic (Schneider, 1975, pp. 219-244). Reiche had noted that the late stage capitalist need for increased consumption meant that the rigid and parsimonious features of the anal-compulsive character needed to be "loosened up". In other words, the old oral character traits, which Abraham noted are the foundation on which the anal traits

are built, needed to be "hailed out of their repressed state," so that the consumer could learn to respond to the "sensuous appeal" of commodities (Schneider, 1975, p. 220; this is the process which Campbell called the "new hedonism" in chapter 1 above). The late stage capitalist consumer, therefore, is subject to "oral-addictive" characteristics (in response to the process in which, as Wilhelm Reich observed, a society creates the character structures it needs). Of course, it can always be argued that, since the "experience of satisfaction" is an oral experience, then, (as Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, p. 288, note) "desire and satisfaction are forever marked by this first experience." In any case, this hypothesis of Schneider/Reiche, has the decided advantage of showing the many connections between pleonexia and such oral-addictive disorders as alcoholism.

Some of these connections are noted briefly in a paper on "Some Emotional Uses of Money" by William Kaufman (in Borneman, 1976, pp. 227-251). In a small section on "Compulsive Spending" (Borneman, 1976, pp. 237-242), Kaufman notes how the compulsive spender becomes increasingly anxious if "he is not able to immediately satisfy his slightest desire for spending" and will often go into debt rather than forego this satisfaction. Kaufman further notes that one unconscious motivation for "getting rid" of one's money, can be a desire "to return to a

passive-dependent status as a result of self-inflicted poverty" (an observation confirmed by Abraham, 1917/1948, p. 300, and a motive also present in the alcoholic).

Kaufman asserts that:

The history of many of these compulsive spenders indicates that they were overprotected in their early childhood by an overindulgent parent who guiltily substituted liberal money gifts for love and affection. Usually one parent was strict, but the other one overcompensated for his severity (Borneman, 1976, pp. 237-8).

Kaufman further notes that spending his parent's money at an alarming rate can be, in such cases, a way of punishing them for withholding their true affection. Spending on themselves in adulthood can become "an unconsciously overdetermined means of giving themselves something akin to love" (Borneman, 1976, p. 238). Kaufman notes also that some compulsive spenders engage in deprivations followed by spending binges, "enjoying the intense sensual pleasure of being able to buy anything he wants" (a process obviously akin to other addictions). Another group will engage in various antisocial activities in order to have this sensual pleasure (examples include: passing worthless checks, prostitution, and, of course, gambling). Finally, Kaufman calls attention to those individuals who spend compulsively during periods of depression; as a form of self-medication one might add. Kaufman's list of compulsive spending behaviors raises, once again, the issue of delineation of a

specific syndrome of pleonexia (i.e., whether what is being enumerated is simply a list of unrelated symptoms from different disorders, with the only common feature being the use of commodities to achieve one's end). Despite the fact that the same objection could be directed against any other addiction, it will be taken seriously and addressed in the concluding chapter. However, before turning directly to that project, a few brief remarks about contemporary psychoanalytic contributions will prove helpful.

It was noted at the beginning of this chapter that there has been virtual silence about the topic of this thesis from contemporary psychoanalysts (a similar silence can be seen in the feminist literature, despite strong anecdotal evidence that women suffer more from pleonexia -- two women who talk around the subject are Christine Delphy, 1984; Nancy Hartsock, 1983). Therefore, only a few suggestive observations from the psychoanalytic literature on addiction need be noted here before turning to the two exceptions -- Joel Kovel (even Kovel's remarks are unsystematic and sketchy, though important) and David Krueger.

In a textbook on the topic of Psychoanalysis of Drug Dependence, J. Winstead Adams (1978) provides a very brief survey of much of the relevant literature under the general heading of 'narcissism'; the principle assertion being that drug addiction is simply a symptom of this more general

preoedipal (pregenital) disorder (Adams, 1978, pp. 6-7). A more recent and more systematic study, one which recognizes the existence of specific addiction syndromes, will serve here as an example of this contemporary approach.

Chelton and Bonney (1987, pp. 40-46) give the following definition: "individuals with an addiction use a certain behavior pattern or activity that has become socially, physically, or psychologically harmful to them, and they use it repeatedly and persistently" (Chelton & Bonney, 1987, p. 40). A wide number of habitual behaviors used "to generate diffuse sensations and intense affects and feelings which help maintain order and continuity in the sense of self (aliveness, vigor, psychic cohesion, and calmness) could be said to be potential addictions" (Chelton & Bonney, 1987, p. 40). Among such behaviors the authors include "excessive spending" (Chelton & Bonney, 1987, p. 42). In their analysis of these harmful behaviors, the authors utilize the tools and categories of two psychoanalysts in particular -- Heinz Kohut and D.W. Winnicott. The primary understanding is that the addictions represent a failure in self-cohesion and self-development caused by regression; in less technical terms, an attempt to counter feelings of emptiness and personal isolation. Such internal functions as regulation of feelings, self-esteem, and maintenance of ideals and goals, as well as non-harmful techniques of self-soothing

are what are specifically lacking in these individuals. A number of different psychic strategies are used in a futile attempt to fill the inner void; including, "intellectualization, forced thinking, obsessive ritualistic behavior, and the creating of real or fantasized risk taking or crises" (Chelton & Bonney, 1987, p. 42). 'Cross addiction' is a frequent observation; and, the authors note that eating disorders are commonly seen with excessive spending. When it comes to the question of etiology these authors take strong issue with the drive theorists who have been the major focus of earlier pages of this chapter. For them the compulsive force behind the addictions is the more global need for interpersonal relations -- "a pull instead of a push" (Chelton & Bonney, 1987, p. 43). The type of drives represented by anal and oral needs are simply "fragmentation products" of this more general need, the results of inevitable "selfobject empathic failures". The terminology and concepts are borrowed from Kohut, an author whose ideas seem closest to the concerns raised by William Leiss in chapter 1 above, in particular the problem of fragmentation of self and needs created by commodities (Kohut will be examined indirectly through his influence on Kovel, an influence which was not uncritical).

Chelton and Bonney also make an interesting use of Winnicott's famous concept of the 'transitional object',

one which seems to fit the pleonexic best of all. They note that the transitional object plays an important role in the separation-individuation process by serving as "an inanimate substitute maternal selfobject" (Chelton & Bonney, 1987, pp. 44-45). During a healthy development the object "is given up when the child has developed significant self-regulating structure and has begun to establish a series of mirroring and idealized selfobjects, other than parental, in the family and with neighborhood peers" (Chelton & Bonney, 1987, p. 45). Chelton and Bonney suggest that if this step in the healthy development is less than adequate for whatever reason the result can be that "the use of the transitional object may be excessively prolonged and take on the characteristics of an addiction" (Chelton & Bonney, 1987, p. 45). In other words, the transitional object is maintained in order to provide the kind of psychic needs and feeling states alluded to earlier in their essay. It can be argued that the role of commodities and addictive collecting fits this mechanism best of all. It was seen earlier in the analysis of Fenichel that self-esteem and personal identity are pronounced problems, and both Abraham and Kaufman noted how separation-individuation problems are particularly pronounced in pleonexics. Finally, many examples of isolation from interpersonal contact can be found in pleonexics (the author of this thesis has known of one

example where a client spent many years of his life hiding in his apartment, fearful to answer the door or the telephone because of his many creditors. Incidentally, the devastating effects of such behavior patterns on family members is another way in which this addiction is like most others). Chilton and Bonney conclude from this, as well as from their own clinical experience, that peer-support groups are the most effective treatment approach with such addictive disorders (more on the topic of treatment in chapter 3 below).

Before leaving this topic of the relationship of narcissism and addiction, another author with a contribution to make needs to be briefly mentioned. Arnold Rothstein's book on The Narcissistic Pursuit of Perfection emphasizes the powerful role which man's delusional pursuit of perfection plays in narcissistic disorders, a process which can be itself an "addictive pursuit" (Rothstein, 1980, p. 99). The first thing to note is that Rothstein sees narcissism as a structural disorder in "the basic core of dispositions and trends" which make up an individual's character; and, as such, the behaviors involved are "chronic". What becomes distorted in these patients is the "ubiquitous potential" for "pursuit of illusions of narcissistic perfection" (Rothstein, 1980, pp. 43-69). Rothstein follows Kohut in seeing the addictions as one part of a subcategory of this characterological problem,

which Kohut labeled "narcissistic behavior disorders" (the other category is "narcissistic personality disorders"). This former category of patients is, in contrast to the latter group, capable of forming transference relations due to an inclination toward sadistic behavior. Kohut, therefore, calls the addictions "alloplastic" (borrowing a term from Ferenczi, 1930; cf., Kohut, 1977, p. 193 -- 'alloplastic' behaviors are those where the libido turns away from self toward external objects or persons. In an earlier work, Kohut had borrowed another label for such behaviors, calling them "other-directed" -- Kohut, 1971, p. 51). Although such relational behavior might appear to be an expression of health, they are actually dependent cravings based on pathologically damaged superegos (for this reason Kohut places them alongside other antisocial behaviors). In fact, Kohut maintained that drugs do not represent "substitutes for loved or loving objects, or for a relationship with them, but as a replacement for a defect in the psychological structure" (Kohut, 1971, p. 46 -- a view which would appear to be hard to reconcile with the position held by Chelton & Bonney, 1987, p. 43). In any case, the important contrast with early drive theorists is Kohut's assertion that it is need for relationships (rather than 'objects' in the usual sense of this word) which is the motivating force behind addictive behavior (Kohut, 1977, pp. 80-81).

These views of Kohut on addictions also had a substantial influence on the last two psychoanalysts who will be examined in this thesis (the only contemporary analysts with a major interest in pleonexia), namely, Joel Kovel and David Krueger.

Kovel's major work, The Age of Desire (Kovel, 1981) is a sophisticated blend of biography, case studies, fiction, and theory, written from a critical and politically radical perspective. The issues of most relevance to this thesis are not systematically examined; and, therefore, observations need to be pulled from different parts of the book. Although he was clearly influenced by Kohut and Lacan (among others), his is a maverick work, not beholden to any orthodoxy whether of the right or left. If there is an overall perspective, it is always to remain aware of the dialectical play of complex social, political and psychological forces (which include the activity and personality of the analyst), that go into the creation and maintenance of any behavioral disorder. For this reason Kovel's approach lends itself well to examination of a pathological condition with the complexity of influencing factors that go into the makeup of pleonexia. Among his principle concerns is the "split between historical role and personal characteristics" (Kovel, 1981, p. 27), which Alasdair MacIntyre recognized as one of the primary causes of modern disorders and

disaffections. Kovel always tries to remain aware of the role which power and domination play in creating and maintaining our social and psychiatric problems. Both Kovel and MacIntyre see the great theoretical need for "a notion of human potentiality, what men and women could be, given the overcoming of historical domination" (Kovel, 1981, p. 34; cf., MacIntyre, 1984, esp. pp. 23-35, 181-203). For Kovel, the great value of psychoanalysis as a tool to achieve this goal is that it is "the one variant of psychology that opens onto history and begins to regard the person as a totality" (Kovel, 1981, p. 61). The one element, in Freud, which retards progress is his "dualism" in which nature and civilization are opposed to each other." What Kovel calls "the dialectical position is monistic: we are part of nature but split from it so that it dwells, transformed, within us, while our own works are projected into and transform it" (Kovel, 1981, p. 62, emphasis in original). Psychoanalysis, nonetheless, recognizes "transhistorical" factors in human nature, such as "desire", and it is the "discourse" of these elements which the analysts seeks to illuminate. This desire includes the "earliest states of mind ... the fundamental unstructuredness of our infantile mind ... the prolonged dependency, which is a transhistorical concomitant of this unstructuredness, and ... the imagination" (Kovel, 1981, p. 70). Finally, the transhistorical element which sets us

apart is our basically social nature, what Marx referred to when he called the "self" an "ensemble of social relations". Like Reich, Kovel believes that there is no transhistorical need, however, for desire to become problematic, rather it is the culture of capitalism which necessitates the alienation and splitting which are observed in the pathologies of self (whether this basically optimistic view is accurate or not is really an empirical issue, but can dissolve into a futile nature vs. nurture debate). Like Rothstein, Kovel sees the transhistorical factor in desire which comes from the universal, narcissistic pursuit of perfection (Kovel, 1981, p. 216); and it is this aspect of desire which the cultural forces of capitalism use for their own ends. Note that narcissism itself, therefore, is not created by social forces. Rather, the very nature of desire is that it "tends to flow away from the object and toward the subject, that is, it tends to become narcissistic. The object becomes the Other, which collapses back into the self" (Kovel, 1981, p. 200, emphasis in original). Desire is on the boundary between the mental and the physical. On the one hand, are the instincts which represent the "configuration of desire"; on the other is "the historically arranged disposition of the object world". The interaction between these forces (which Freud termed the "source" and the "aim", as noted above) is "instinctual gratification

[which] is not only imaginary, it is historical as well" (Kovel, 1981, p. 234, emphasis in original. The similarity to views of Baudrillard, sketched in chapter 1 above, is not surprising given the common influence of Lacan). Like William Leiss (chapter 1) Kovel holds that consumer society contributes to a fragmentation of desire (also, cf., Kovel, 1984 for more on this).

Kovel's case studies all involve examples of such alienation, splitting or fragmentation of desire and self through the process of addictive production and consumption of commodities (although he does not describe a pure case of pleonexia). Each represents a case of self-estrangement or alienation from others; and their analysis illustrates the blending of transhistorical and historical factors. Many of the cultural forces which Kovel sees active in these cases were examined in chapter 1 of this thesis, and do not need to be reexamined here (for instance, the role of advertising in nourishing imagination; the need "that the commodity lead not to satiety but to restless reconsumption"; as well as the increasing fragmentation of self caused in part by proliferation of ever new and quickly obsolete objects). Kovel's contribution is not only to put these concepts into the terms of contemporary psychoanalysis, but to show how difficult it is in our society to carry on interpersonal relations which go beyond the purely instrumental interactions promoted by

consumption (i.e., to treat others as ends rather than means). And it is ultimately in the treatment process that the patient is asked to learn, not only what are the factors which block intimacy, but how to begin to practice it as well (Kovel's suggestions for an expanded treatment process will be examined further at the end of this thesis).

David Krueger (1988) is the only contemporary psychoanalyst to examine pleonexia in a systematic way (based on a computer search of five databases -- for details see chapter 3 below). As noted above, his approach to this problem is from a self psychology perspective. His general conclusion is "that compulsive shopping represents an attempt at affect regulation, especially to remedy depression and emptiness and is a chronic pattern" (Krueger, 1988, p. 574). Krueger sees 'pleonexia' (his term is compulsive shopping and spending) as a distinct disorder and, therefore, to be distinguished from a number of other symptom patterns which revolve around the use of money.

Krueger notes that the patients with pleonexia with whom he has had contact seem to have certain characteristics in common: (1) first, they have all been women (something which he notes only in passing; see below for a critique of this omission); (2) the developmental deficit common to this group "involves a developmental

arrest of the body self as well as the psychological self" (Krueger, 1988, p. 580); (3) all but one of his patients suffers from bulimia; (4) the onset of the disorder is usually in early adolescence; (5) parenting usually involves the substitution of material objects for needed emotional connectedness; (6) and, the compulsion to shop involves "an attempt to tangibly recreate a disrupted self/selfobject bond to an important other person" (Krueger, 1988, p. 580).

Krueger's main contention is that the pleonexic is driven by certain features of narcissistic character pathology: specifically, these women suffer from an inner emptiness and lack of "stable self-image". This manifests itself in an overconcern with personal appearance and all aspects of "body ego". Most of their shopping binges involve the purchase of clothing or other items for enhancing body self and image. These binges usually occur during periods of depression brought on by problems with significant relationships or from other narcissistic injury; and represent, Krueger argues, a feeble attempt at self-soothing. This connection of pleonexia with body image and clothing has been remarked on earlier in this chapter (particularly, in the discussion of Fenichel; note, also, that Chilton & Bonney discuss attempts at self-soothing and cross addiction to eating disorders). Krueger's brief analysis, in fact, brings together a number

of key points made earlier in this chapter, and will prove very useful in the effort to further differentiate this disorder in chapter 3 below. However, the absence of even a passing reference to gender or cultural issues in this regard is particularly glaring in Krueger's article (for more on this issue see chapter 3 below).

In the concluding chapter below, first pleonexia will be defined using a model derived from The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Some further thoughts about differentiation from manic states and obsessional neurosis will be offered. Some of the insights which pleonexia teaches about the nature of addiction will be mentioned. And the thesis will conclude with some ideas concerning optimal treatment methods and lessons for social work practice.

CHAPTER III

PLEONEXIA

The real measure of security is not what you have, but what you can do without.

Joseph Wood Krutch

but you must bind me hard and fast, so that I cannot stir from the spot where you will stand me ... and if I beg you to release me, you must tighten and add to my bonds.

Homer, The Odyssey

Whoever has the most stuff when he dies wins.

Graffito

The question of personal freedom of action has been central (though not always center stage) in the first two chapters of this thesis. In chapter one, it was a question of possible external coercion -- that is, manufactured desire or, what was labeled, 'the manipulationist thesis'. In chapter two, the issue of internal compulsion was seen to be Freud's major revolutionary contribution to a new (and much more complex) theory of action and desire. Unconscious intentional states (impulses, desires, ideas, or motives) came into conflict with internalized norms in the form of the superego; and are, therefore, repressed. But, nevertheless, they continue to exert a repetitive, compulsive or pressing force on behavior. This force leads to anxiety and, ultimately, the

construction of compromise intentional states which are symbolically associated with the original states. psychoanalysis was, therefore, from its very beginnings concerned with the existence of internal conflict and coercion; and the goal of therapy was "to replace compulsive and uncontrolled behavior by voluntary and deliberate conduct" (Flew, 1956, p. 168). Freud, like Hegel and Schopenhauer before him, was a proponent of the futility of desire; but, unlike his predecessors, Freud saw the insatiability and compulsive nature of desire as an innate and biological process of the organism (for perhaps the clearest expression of these ideas, see Freud, 1920, G.W., 13; S.E., 18, pp. 3-64). Therefore, the external or social coercive forces play a subordinate role in his drama.

The principle contention of this study, however, is that both types of influencing forces, the internal as well as the external [are required to] reinforce each other in order to produce an ongoing disposition to perform compulsive behaviors such as pleonexia. For certain desires to take on a compulsive form, not only must the true source of the desire be unconsciously repressed, but the object and aim of the associated or compromise desire must be socially reinforced. Furthermore, for the behavior to become painful or otherwise problematic for the individual, it needs to result in socially and/or physiologically negative consequences. Psychoanalysis

needs to take into consideration such social factors in order to provide a complete theoretical explanation for one of the "central characteristics of addiction," that is: The fact "that people often are of two minds, simultaneously wanting to consume an addictive commodity and to avoid it" (Winston, 1980, p. 295). Freud's great contribution to an understanding of this ambiguity was to show that, not only are there often unforeseen consequences to what a person intends by her voluntary actions, either as the aim of her ends or those actions she aims at as means to her ends; but also there are situations where an individual intends a particular act, but yet is acting under a compulsion to perform it since it is a "derivative desire" of a forbidden impulse (cf. Blumenfeld, 1972, for more on the latter point). Pleonexia, it will be argued, is just such a case where coercion and desire reinforce each other. What may have started as a socially sanctioned attempt at self-soothing has taken on a life of its own. An hedonically complex attempt to deal with emotional conflict has itself become problematic. Not only are feelings of being "out-of-control", "helpless", ego-dystonic, but the consequences of the compulsion to buy (e.g., very large debts, feelings of guilt or disappointment, etc.) can bring greater emotional conflict (e.g., lower self-esteem, depression, etc.). But before this argument can be made totally clear it will be useful to define how pleonexia is different from other but similar disorders.

Diagnosis

It is perhaps a reflection of how much the same cultural forces which nourish the development and continuance of pleonexia have also affected the psychological establishment that of the literally thousands of studies published on topics of consumer behavior since 1966 only two works (one a three page case study - Winestine, 1985; and the other - Krueger, 1988) could be found in the professional literature on the topic of this thesis (based on a computer search of a number of descriptive terms in five databases, including:

Psychological Abstracts, Psych Alert, and Social Work Research and Abstracts from 1966 - present). The vast majority of articles which have been published would appear to be written with the hopes of assisting manufacturers in their efforts to increase demand for their products (an example, perhaps, of "making themselves one with their goalers" -- the phrase, Kerkermeistern gesellt, is borrowed from Freud, 1928, G.W., 14, p. 400, where it is used to describe Dostoevsky. Of course, there is another possible explanation for this silence in the literature: namely, the possibly small number of patients who present with pleonexia as their primary complaint. Perhaps such small numbers of patients is itself a reflection of the social sanctioning of impulsive shopping in our society). Whatever the reason for this silence (and one

is reminded of Freud's remark, cited at the beginning of chapter one above, about how money topics will become taboo), the end result is that the diagnostic criteria, to be outlined shortly, are not based on statistical analysis of a large number of case studies; rather, they are based on the few specific accounts in the literature, as well as the many related studies discussed in the first two chapters of this thesis. For that reason, what follows can only be considered as a suggestive working hypothesis, which will hopefully be heuristic for the much needed further research (some suggestions for further areas of research will be made at the end of this chapter). However, despite the highly speculative nature of these suggested criteria, there is additional supporting evidence which comes from pleonexia's similarities to certain other disorders -- primarily, disorders of impulse control and eating disorders. In fact, this thesis is perhaps closest in its approach to a number of recent studies of eating disorders (specifically: the pioneering work of Schachter, 1971, and Bruch, 1973; the excellent feminist approach of Bordo, 1985-6; and, the comprehensive and multidimensional analysis of Garfinkel & Garner, 1982). In order to provide a useful and established format for these remarks, they will be presented using the categories provided in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 1987, 3rd. ed. rev.; for some problems with this approach to classification, see

Kernberg, 1984, pp. 77-94). Although there are definite features of pleonexia which point toward a personality disorder (as noted in chapter two above), the DSM-III-R category which comes closest to defining this pattern is: "Impulse Control Disorders Not Elsewhere Classified" (American Psychiatric Association, 1987, pp. 321-328). There are currently five specific disorders in this category: Intermittent Explosive Disorder, Kleptomania, Pathological Gambling, Pyromania, and Trichotillomania. The general characteristics of this category are:

1. Failure to resist an impulse, drive, or temptation to perform some act that is harmful to the person or others. There may or may not be conscious resistance to the impulse. The act may or may not be premeditated or planned.
2. An increasing sense of tension or arousal before committing the act.
3. An experience of either pleasure, gratification, or release at the time of committing the act. The act is ego-syntonic in that it is consonant with the immediate conscious wish of the individual. Immediately following the act there may or may not be genuine regret, self-reproach, or guilt.
(American Psychiatric Association, 1987, p. 321).

Pleonexia

The essential features of this disorder are a chronic and progressive failure to resist impulses to shop or to otherwise acquire commodities, which behavior compromises, disrupts, or damages personal, family, or vocational pursuits (compare, American Psychiatric Association, 1987, p. 324). Pleonexia is a "dispositional disorder" (Peele, 1988, p. xiii) or a "life

style trait" (Rook, 1987, p. 196), and is long-lasting and shows a slow progression. However, the behavior most often occurs in a pattern of impulsive episodes or "shopping binges" (Krueger, 1988, p. 574); Rook, 1987). Items are often accumulated to a quantity well beyond their usefulness, often creating substantial problems of storage (MacAndrew, 1988, pp. 178-179 tells of one individual who was injured in an earthquake by the 9,900 books in his 12-foot-square hotel-apartment room). "The loss of control over the impulse to buy more than is needed or can be afforded -- even children's medical needs are often sacrificed -- is followed by depression, disillusionment, shame, and guilt" (Krueger, 1988, p. 574). There is a growing preoccupation with shopping and an extensive fantasy life which revolves around the ownership of commodities (see Winestine, 1985, for a good example of the latter). This preoccupation, as well as the urge or impulse, plus the behavior increases substantially during periods of disturbed mood, especially feelings of depression, depletion or inner emptiness and tension (compare, Leiss, 1976). Shopping binges or episodes are often accompanied by positive feelings of excitement or euphoria (a 'high'); but just as often can be accompanied by feelings of anxiousness, helplessness, guilt and even panic (Rook, 1987, pp. 194-195).

Problems that arise as a result of pleonexia (as based primarily on Krueger, 1988; Winestine, 1985; Chelton & Bonney, 1987; Kaufman, 1976; Goldberg & Lewis, 1978; and, Kovel, 1981;

with language modeled on American Psychiatric Association, 1987), include: defaulting on debts or other financial responsibilities, difficulties coping with rising levels of financial debt (often to the point of seeking professional help at consumer credit "clinics", where advice is given to the over-borrowed), disrupted family relationships, increased disapproval from significant others, a number of antisocial behaviors (including: shoplifting, borrowing from illegal sources, forgery, embezzlement, fraud, and tax evasion -- any criminal behavior, however, is typically nonviolent). There is often restlessness and irritability if the pleonexic is unable, for whatever reason, to stop.

Associated Features

Krueger believes, based on his case studies, that compulsive shopping occurs predominantly "in individuals who are very conscious of how they look and appear to others, who attempt to be pleasing to others, and whose fragile self esteem and sense of self depend on the responses of others" (Krueger, 1988, p. 575). This is based on the fact that most cases involve shopping for clothes, and that binges most often occur following "some narcissistic injury, especially the disruption of an emotional bond with someone important" (Krueger, 1988, p. 575). Formenek offers independent evidence that, especially for women who are beyond middle age in our society, "involvement with things may compensate for the loss of people, role, or status" (Formenek, 1986, p. 154). For

these individuals, shopping is not only a social activity, Formenek maintains, but a way of replenishing the self.

It would appear that a phrase in the American Psychiatric Association (1987, p. 67), though written on Anorexia Nervosa, would well apply to pleonexia: "Most people with this disorder steadfastly deny or minimize the severity of their illness," and do not usually present with pleonexia as their principle complaint (see, Winestine, 1985, for an example of this). There are often various other manifestations of denial behavior, as well as hiding of items and prices from self and others (e.g., by removing price tags before items have been brought home).

Other problematic behaviors concerning money and commodities may be common (such as pathological gambling -- cf., Bergler, 1959, for other examples).

The evidence indicates that many of these individuals also suffer from Bulimia Nervosa (see, especially, Krueger, 1988).

Finally, as was noted earlier in this chapter and in the previous chapters, pleonexia is strongly associated with Personality Disorders, especially: Narcissistic Personality Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and Antisocial Personality (see below for differentiating features).

Age at Onset

Age of onset is usually early to late adolescence, although this may be changing to an even earlier age due to increased affluence and media pressures.

Sex Ratio

Evidence would seem to indicate a greater prevalence among females in our culture (the emphasis is added because "resource allocation in marriage [seems to reflect] the pattern of inequalities in society, so that married women tend to have a lower level of consumption than men" --Taylor-Gooby, 1985. Therefore, in less affluent societies or where easy credit is not the rule, women would presumably not be in a position to become pleonexic as often as men). However, much more research is needed to determine the final answer to this question (more on this important issue below).

Prevalence

Little information is available. There is some prima facie evidence that the so-called "baby boomers" -- 30 to 40 year olds -- are more prone to this disorder (Is the consumer-credit...Economist, April 6, 1985, pp. 71-75).

Course. The condition waxes and wanes and tends to be chronic (cf., American Psychiatric Association, 1987, p. 323, on Kleptomania). Periods of binging may alternate with periods of normal consumption, or the condition may be progressive and unremitting.

Impairment and Consequences

There may be marked impairment of social, financial and occupational functioning. The disorder may result in failure to maintain financial solvency or provide basic support to

oneself or one's family. Such financial consequences can be a complicating factor in depression, and an alienating force in interpersonal relationships. Even in cases of extreme wealth, pleonexia can lead to "feelings of humiliation and worthlessness for being out of control" (Winestine, 1985, p. 71), thus contributing to depression. Impairment may also result from the legal consequences associated with antisocial behaviors.

Predisposing Factors

Personality Disorders, particularly Narcissistic Personality Disorder, predispose to the development of pleonexia. Other possible predisposing factors include experience of incest (Winestine, 1985), absence of a father in the home (Rook, 1987), and parents who give their children commodities in place of love (Krueger, 1988).

Differential Diagnosis.

In chapter 2 above it was noted that pleonexia is often seen in individuals with Personality Disorders, especially Narcissistic Personality Disorder. It will, therefore, be helpful to delineate, as much as is possible given the early stages of investigation, how pleonexia is similar to and distinguishable from various other related disorders, beginning with Personality Disorders (it should be kept in mind, as the DSM-III-R notes, "many people exhibit traits that are not limited to a single Personality Disorder" -- American Psychiatric Association, 1987, p. 336. In addition, if one

maintains with Wilhelm Reich that character formation is "essentially a narcissistic protection mechanism" - quoted in Morrison, 1986, p. 1 - or "that all forms of personality organization have narcissistic elements which influence the form of pathology" - Meissner, 1986, p. 104 - then one would expect to find that pleonexics display certain features of narcissism, if not Narcissistic Personality Disorder):

(1) Narcissistic Personality Disorder -- As Krueger (1988) notes, many of the features of this disorder can be present in persons with compulsive spending problems. In particular: preoccupation with fantasies of unlimited success; exhibitionistic need for constant attention and admiration; and, some of the features associated with disturbances in interpersonal relationships.

Some of the narcissistic features most commonly found in pleonexics have already been enumerated in chapter 2 above, and only need to be mentioned here:

(a) What Annie Reich calls "certain abnormal modes of self-esteem regulation" (Reich, 1986, p. 44). In particular, this feature tends to take the form of a 'grandiose-exhibitionistic body-self' and its extension through clothing (Fenichel, 1945, pp. 36, 261; Krueger, 1988; Kohut, 1971, p. 182) and food (Krueger, 1988). The inability to regulate one's self-image can lead to "repetitive, violent oscillations in self-esteem" (Reich, 1986, p. 52) between feelings of

worthlessness and dejection, on the one hand, and feelings of grandiosity on the other. The process is one of displacement of body and self-image on to material possessions (not unlike what Marxists, following Lukacs (1924) call 'reification'. There are some very important gender differences in the way such displacements get played out, which have largely been ignored by the authors in Morrison (1986). For a good summary of the social and political forces effecting women's body image, see Mintz (1986). One of the less obvious expressions of such gender factors can be seen in Krueger's case histories, where the women express a sense of power associated with shopping and clothing. It could be argued that, at least the strength of such feelings, is directly related to the limitations on personal expression placed on women in a patriarchal society. Annie Reich (1986, p. 52) points to the male counterpart of expressing power through their cars). If Annie Reich is correct that "overstrong body narcissism is rooted in traumatic experiences", one would expect to find a history of such trauma in pleonexics (something which is confirmed in the incest case described by Winestine, 1985. Following Kohut's suggestion about the anxieties of the fragmented 'body-mind-self' - Kohut, 1971, pp. 29-32, 65-68 - one would, also, expect to find an increased incidence of hypochondriasis in pleonexics; something not yet confirmed).

(b) Intimately associated with this first feature is that 'narcissistic perfection' described by Freud in connection

with the development of an ego ideal (Freud 1914, G.W. 10; S.E. 14; and later developed by Rothstein, 1980 and Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1985, among others). Once again, it is primarily in the area of physical beauty and strength that this pursuit of perfection contributes to the addictive quality of pleonexia. Annie Reich describes how "self-conscious" and "exhibitionistic" tendencies arising out of feelings of inadequacy can often take the form of what she calls "thing-love", or exaggerated pursuit of garments, cars or other commodities (Reich, 1986, pp. 52-59). The use of material objects by parents as a substitute for affection, which Karen Horney was one of the first to see as a causal factor in the craving for commodities (Horney, 1937, p. 185) can lead to an identification of the idealized parent imago with personal possessions. Krueger's cases illustrate these "primitive attempts to stimulate a body self-experience and representation" (Krueger, 1988, p. 582).

(c) The third feature, which was described in connection with Abraham and Kaufman in chapter 2 above, is the existence of anxieties relating from problems in the separation-individuation process. Kaufman, in particular, noticed that the kind of parental substitution of objects for affection, alluded to in (b), can lead to a desire "to return to a passive-dependent status as a result of self-inflicted poverty" and related to anxieties of separation (Kaufman, 1976, p. 237). The importance of this mechanism in the

development of Narcissistic Personality Disorder has been commented on by many authors (see, e. g., Bursten, 1986, pp. 394-5; as will be seen shortly, Bursten's subtype of this disorder which is most similar to pleonexia is, also, the type where he finds such separation-individuation problems to be most prominent). The evidence is very strong that, at least in part, compulsive shopping behavior is an effort to deal, albeit unsuccessfully, with such separation anxiety.

(d) The final feature common to the narcissistic personality and the pleonexic is the pathological expression of certain introjects. The process of introjection was intimately connected with the pleasure-ego and oral incorporation for Freud (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973, p. 230). and it is not surprising, therefore, to see it connected as well with pleonexia (as already noted, in the discussion of Fenichel and Abraham, in chapter 2 above). Meissner (1986, p. 428) describes two correlative forms of introject common in the narcissistic personality, which he calls the "superior-introject" and the "inferior-introject". Behind feelings of shame and worthlessness, Meissner argues, one can find feelings of entitlement and grandiosity (this view is not dissimilar to Abraham's insight, described earlier, that the self-reproaches and lack of self-regard of the depressive stage of manic-depressive disorder "emanates" from the introjected lost love-object (Abraham, 1924, p. 454). Krueger's case histories of pleonexics show several examples

of where binge spending is brought on by feelings of depression following the break up of a love relationship).

Before leaving the topic of the relationship of pleonexia and Narcissistic Personality Disorder, it will be useful to ask the question: which of the four subcategories of narcissistic personality described by Bursten (1986) best fits the pleonexic? It is clear that the category which Bursten calls "the craving personality" comes closest to the pleonexic. The "orally tinged" behaviors of this personality type, feelings of inner hunger which need to be filled by objects, as well as the "driven quality" of this dependent behavior best describe the pleonexic (Bursten's disclaimer notwithstanding, his nosology is greatly limited by the gender bias in his sampling. Specifically, his male clients show a more aggressive form of self-expression than has traditionally been allowed to females in our society).

(2) Manic Episode -- Some of the criteria of Manic Episode may be associated with pleonexia, especially during shopping binges. Specifically: (a) a distinct period of abnormally and persistently elevated, expansive, or irritable mood; (b.1) inflated self-esteem or grandiosity; and, of course, (b.7) excessive involvement in pleasurable activities which have a high potential for painful consequences, i.e., "the person engages in unrestrained buying sprees" (American Psychiatric Association, 1987, p. 217). Except when the two disorders coexist, the differential diagnosis is easily made

by noting the absence of the other features of Manic Episode (b 2-6, c, d, e, f) in most pleonexics. During a manic or hypomanic episode, loss of judgment and excessive spending may follow the onset of the mood disturbance, and may be followed by episodes because of the consequences of such behavior (compare American Psychiatric Association, 1987, pp. 324-325).

(3) Antisocial Personality Disorder -- as noted earlier pleonexics may be involved in certain behaviors associated with Antisocial Personality Disorder. Any antisocial activities which do occur are usually not violent, and are associated with the acquisition of money or commodities. However, there is no current evidence of a history of Conduct Disorder in pleonexics. In fact, except in cases where both disorders coexist, the only other criterion of Antisocial Personality Disorder commonly found in pleonexics is (4) repeated failure to honor financial obligations (cf. American Psychiatric Association, 1987, p. 345).

Diagnostic Criteria for Pleonexia

Maladaptive shopping or spending behavior, as indicated by at least four of the following:

- (1) the person engages in repeated episodes of unrestrained buying sprees.
- (2) increasing sense of tension immediately before shopping or buying commodities, feelings of pleasure or relief while shopping, followed by anxiety and/or remorse.

(3) a feeling of lack of control over shopping behavior during or following the shopping binges.

(4) frequent preoccupation with spending money or acquiring goods and with all aspects of commodities.

(5) frequent spending of larger amounts of money or purchasing more expensive or greater quantities of goods than intended.

(6) continuation of excessive spending despite inability to pay mounting debts, or despite other significant social, occupational, or legal problems that the person knows to be exacerbated by such spending.

(7) restlessness or irritability if unable to buy or shop.

(8) repeated failures to honor financial obligations, as indicated by defaulting on debts or failing to provide support for dependents on a regular basis.

(9) repeated efforts to reduce or stop spending behavior.

Some Implications For Practice

Consistent with the overdetermined character of pleonexia, this thesis has utilized a multidimensional analysis, what Clifford Geertz (quoted in Schafer, 1983, p. 265) calls "thick description" of the multiple interacting factors in its etiology. Consonant with this perspective is a multimodal and holistic approach to treatment (see the similar analysis and rationale for treatment of anorexia in Garfinkel and Garner, 1982, p. 259 and passim). One model of social work practice which attempts to take such an "ecological" perspective is the "life model" of Carel Germain and Alex

Gitterman (1980). Their model takes an "integrated" or systems view of complex problems such as pleonexia; one which sees all of life as a process of "adaptation and reciprocal interaction between people and their social and physical environments" (Germain & Gitterman, 1980, p. 10; for a similar "process" view of mental illness, see Kubie, 1971). The percolation of different levels of influence through the personality is an interactive process which requires both an ecological analysis, as well as a multifaceted approach to practice. Such a model assumes the fundamental social and political nature of clients and their problems, and what Charles Horton Cooley distinguished as "the carnal, social, and spiritual consciousnesses" (quoted in Rochberg-Halton, 1986, p. 138, emphasis in original). Another assumption is that there is a synergistic effect which comes from combining different intervention strategies adapted to the different needs of a diverse population.

However, evidence has also been presented here that points to certain common features of pleonexics, not the least of which is their usual gender. It is, therefore, encouraging to note that this model and approach to practice is also consistent with certain key tenets of woman-oriented therapies. Feminist inspired methods have developed with increasing sophistication to help women "understand the intricate relationships between public, systemic conditions and individual aspects of their experiences" (Kravetz, 1987,

p. 55; for example, one prominent symptom of pleonexia, noted above, is low self-esteem, which can be seen as both the result and the perpetuation of external oppression in a patriarchal society --see, Sanford & Donovan, 1984). Joel Kovel noted that various techniques of therapy and "praxis" have evolved to replace the lack of an authentic community and the artificial split between public and private aspects of being in our society (Kovel, 1981, pp. 205-214). Two of these techniques which have been refined by feminist therapists are: consciousness raising (CR) groups, and therapeutic self help groups. The first of these was perhaps best defined by Juliet Mitchell as: "The process of transforming the hidden, individual fears of people into a shared awareness of the meaning of them as social problems, the release of anger, anxiety, the struggle of proclaiming the painful and transforming it into the political..." (quoted in Longres & McLeod, 1980, p. 267; see also, Kirsh, 1974; Kravetz, 1987). Note that there are two dialectical aspects to this process: (1) using individual understanding about self as a basis for analyzing shared oppression; and (2) using understanding of oppression as an aid to individual understanding. Essential to the philosophy and application of the process is its 'dialogical' nature (this is a concept borrowed from Martin Buber, see, e. g., Buber, 1965, pp. 1-39); that is, a communicative relationship based on mutual respect, empowerment, and nonhierarchical equality (see, Freire, 1970

for the classical statement of this position; also, Longres & McLeod, 1980; Berger, 1974 offers a reminder of possible dangers in Freire's approach). The second technique mentioned - the therapeutic self help group - is also based on peer equality and mutual empathy (Hartman, 1987). This approach, labeled "inspirational group therapy" by Alvin Scodel (quoted in Herman, 1976, p. 100) is a feminist adaptation to a clinical setting of the self help movement (the self help movement for pleonexics has spawned such labels as "Spender Menders" and "Debtors Anonymous"). In these groups a greater emphasis is placed on fostering interdependence and peer support (which carries over outside the clinic setting), with the use of sponsors and dual facilitators (one of whom is a peer). Such groups (and the self help movement in general) foster the type of artificial therapeutic community which Kovel noted.

Some involvement with such a community would appear to be a necessary adjunct to individual therapy because of the peculiar problems of avoiding an addictive behavior such as pleonexia. One such problem is the tendency to substitute one addiction for another, which has been noted often in the literature (see, e. g., Peele, 1988, p. xiii). To the extent that pleonexia expresses an underlying dispositional disorder, then change of one addictive behavior represents what Roy Schafer calls a change in "content", as opposed to a change in "structure" (Schafer, 1983, pp. 158 - 160). Another problem,

one which is particularly strong for the pleonexic, is the virtual impossibility of total abstinence from the addictive behavior, since shopping and spending money are a necessity in our society. Since complete avoidance of reinforcing behaviors and environments seems unlikely, individuals may need the kind of support which can come from community and a sponsor. An additional benefit which comes from involvement with a self help community is noted by several feminist therapists; namely, that character can sometimes be changed by involvement in social actions, even regardless of the outcome of such attempts to change society (see, e. g., Rein, 1970, p. 18; Brodsky, 1976, p. 376 notes the same benefit in CR groups). For example, a pleonexic group may attempt to bring about some change in the way the advertising industry nourishes addictive behavior. The benefits of channeling anger, increasing self-esteem, and greater empathic support have been noted whether or not such group efforts are successful.

Before leaving the topic of group therapy, another method which should prove helpful with pleonexics needs to be mentioned briefly. Mary Bergner and her associates describe an approach, which though it is still based on "feminist therapy tenets", utilizes the cognitive restructuring principles of Rational Behavior Therapy and social learning theory in order to help women "restructure their sex-role stereotyped thoughts and feelings about their bodies in ways

that were useful to them" (Bergner et al. 1985, p. 27; similar methods have been used to enhance self-esteem and with compulsive eaters). Combining visual and kinesthetic techniques, this structured group approach helps members to see "how their internalized, culturally derived self-statements led to personal feelings of worthlessness" (Bergner et al. 1985, p. 25, emphasis in original). Cognitive restructuring, homework assignments, journal keeping and group processing of content are used to foster self-worth independent of body image. A strong educational component is used in all of these approaches to practice, in order to help the client see the wider hurtful consequences which have influenced her behavior (what family systems therapists call the 'context').

Many of these same methods and principles can be applied to individual therapy as well (see Brodsky 1976; Lerman 1976 for specific ways). In fact, as Greenspan (1988, p. 233) notes:

the traditional therapy goal of resolving unconscious conflicts and the humanist goal of emotional growth are not ignored by feminist therapy. Rather, these goals are included within the ultimate goal of women developing a sense of our personal and political power.

The question of personal freedom has been a major issue throughout this thesis. Every form of addiction ultimately ends up restricting freedom, and, to that extent at least is "bad" (Peele 1988, p. 178).

A good deal more research needs to be done on all aspects of pleonexia, including: (1) genetic or predisposing factors (perhaps along the lines of Daniel Stern's analysis of "personified things" in infancy - Stern 1985, p. 123); (2) a feminist critical analysis of cultural nourishing factors; and (3) the whole question of effective treatment methods. It is hoped that the ideas sketched in this thesis will prove helpful to those researchers and therapists who attempt to resolve this growing problem.

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