

Ideology, Conflict, and Leadership in Groups and Organizations, by O. Kernberg

a. Quotes:

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b. General Notes:

• Chapter 1 - Psychoanalytic Theories of Groups (pg. 3)

- "In Freud's view, people in mobs have an immediate sense of intimacy with one another that is derived from the projection of their ego ideal onto the leader and from their identification with the leader as well as with their fellows. The projection of the ego ideal onto the idealized leader eliminates moral constraints as well as the superego-mediated functions of self-criticism and responsibility, and the sense of unity and belonging protects the members of the mob from losing their sense of identity. This projection is accompanied by a severe reduction in ego functioning. As a result, primitive, ordinarily unconscious needs take over, and the mob functions under the sway of drives and affects, excitement and rage, all of which are stimulated and directed by the leader." (pg. 3)
- "Bion explained these processes in terms of three basic group emotional assumptions (basic-assumptions groups), which are the foundation for group reactions that potentially exist at all times but that are activated when the task structure or "work group" breaks down. The first is the basic group assumption of "dependency." Members perceive the leader as omnipotent and omniscient and themselves as inadequate, immature, and incompetent. They match their idealization of the leader with efforts to extract knowledge, power, and goodness from him. The group members are thus both forever greedy and forever dissatisfied. When the leader fails to live up to their ideal, they react first with denial and then by rapidly and completely devaluing the leader and searching for a substitute. Thus, primitive idealization, projected omnipotence, denial, envy, and greed, together with their accompanying defenses, characterize the basic dependency group. The second basic-assumptions group operates under a "fight-flight" assumption, united against what it vaguely perceives to be external enemies. This group expects the leader to direct the fight against such enemies and also to protect the group from infighting. Because the members cannot tolerate opposition to their shared ideology, they easily split into subgroups, which fight with one other. Frequently, one subgroup becomes subservient to the idealized leader while another either attacks the subservient group or flees from it. Prevalent features include the group's tendencies to try to control the leader or to experience itself as being controlled by the leader, to experience closeness through shared denial of intragroup hostility, and to project aggression onto an out-group. In short, splitting, projection of aggression, and projective identification prevail. In the fight-flight group, the search for nurture and dependency that characterizes the dependency group is replaced by conflicts over aggressive control, suspiciousness, fighting, and dread of annihilation. The third basic-assumptions group operates under a "pairing" assumption. Members tend to focus on a couple within the group, one that is usually but not necessarily heterosexual. The focal couple symbolizes the group's positive expectation that it will, in effect, reproduce itself and thus preserve the group's threatened identity and ensure its survival. The pairing group experiences general intimacy and sexual developments as potential protections against the dangerous conflicts over dependency and aggression that characterize the dependency and fight-flight groups. Although the latter two groups have a pregenital character, the pairing group has a genital character." (pg. 4)
- "Fear is the counterpart of the provocative behaviors that group members sometimes express at random but usually direct at the leader. Gradually, it becomes evident that those who try to maintain a semblance of individuality in this atmosphere are the ones who are most frequently attacked. At the same time, efforts of homogenization are prevalent; any simplistic generalization or ideology that permeates the group may be easily transformed into a conviction of absolute truth. In contrast to the rationalization of violence that characterizes the mob, however, the vulgar or commonsense philosophy of the large group functions as a calming, reassuring doctrine that reduces all thought to cliché. For the most part, aggression in the large group takes the form of envy - envy of thinking, of individuality, and of rationality." (pg. 5)
- "The psychology of the group, then, reflects three sets of shared illusions: (1) that the group is composed of individuals who are all equal, thus denying sexual differences and castration anxiety; (2) that the group is self-engendered—that is, as a powerful mother of itself; and (3) that the group itself can repair all narcissistic lesions because it becomes an idealized "breast-mother." Chasseguet-Smirgel (1975) expanded on Anzieu's observations, suggesting that under these conditions any group, small or large, tends to select leaders who represent not the paternal aspects of the prohibitive superego but a pseudo-paternal "merchant of illusions." A leader of this kind provides the group with an ideology, a unifying system of ideas; in this case, the ideology is an illusion that confirms the individual's narcissistic aspirations of fusing with the group as a primitive ego ideal—the all-powerful and all-gratifying preoedipal mother. Basically, the small- or large-group members' identification with one another permits them to experience a primitive narcissistic gratification of greatness and power. When violent groups operate under the influence of ideologies that have been adopted under such psychological conditions, their violence reflects their need to destroy any external reality that interferes with the group's illusionary ideology. The losses of personal identity, cognitive discrimination, and differentiating individuality within the group are compensated for by the shared sense of omnipotence. In this conceptualization, the regressed ego, the id, and the primitive (preoedipal) ego ideal of each individual are fused in the group illusion." (pg. 6)
- "I proposed that we might better understand the strikingly regressive features of small groups, large groups, and mobs by using the concept of the internalized object relations that predate object constancy and the consolidation of the ego, the superego, and the id. From this viewpoint, one might consider **two levels of internalized object relations.** A basic level would be characterized by multiple self- and object representations that correspond to primitive fantasy formations linked with primitive impulse derivatives. The second and higher level would be characterized by sophisticated, integrated self- and object representations linked with higher levels of affect dispositions. These higher-level object relations reflect the early childhood experiences of the individual and his or her conflicts with real parental figures and siblings more accurately than do the basic-level object relations. At the higher level, the integrated self-concept, together with realistically integrated object representations that are related to the self-concept, constitute ego identity. When integrated concepts of the self and others are lacking, the syndrome of identity diffusion develops." (pg. 6-7)
 - "Impressive clinical evidence indicates that regardless of the individual's maturity and psychological integration, certain group conditions tend to bring on regression and activate primitive psychological levels. Small, closed, and unstructured groups—as well as groups that are large, minimally structured, and lacking clearly defined tasks to relate them to their environment - tend to bring about an immediate regression in the individual, a regression that consists in the activation of defensive operations and interpersonal processes that reflect primitive object relations. The potential for this regression exists within us all. When we lose our ordinary social structure, when our customary social roles are suspended, and when multiple objects are present simultaneously in an unstructured relationship, reproducing a multiplicity of primitive intrapsychic object relations in the interpersonal field, primitive levels of psychological functioning may be activated. On the basis of observations of small groups, large groups, and mobs, propose that group processes in general pose a basic threat to personal identity, a threat linked to the proclivity in group situations for primitive psychological levels to be activated, including primitive object relations, primitive defensive operations, and primitive aggression with predominantly pregenital features (Kernberg, 1980b, 1980c). Turquet's explanation of what happens in large groups describes the basic situation for the activation of defenses in a group of any size. The horde's idealization of the leader described by Freud; the group's idealization of the group ideology and of leaders who promote its narcissistic self-aggrandizement described by Anzieu and Chasseguet-

- Smirgel; and the small-group processes described by Bion are all ways of defending against the situation Turquet defined. Obviously, large-group processes can be obscured or controlled by rigid social structuring. Bureaucratization, ritualization, and well-organized task performance are different methods with similar immediate effects. Large-group processes also highlight the intimate connection between threats to the individual's identity and the individual's fear that primitive aggressions and aggressively infiltrated sexuality will emerge. Through group and organization processes, an important part of nonintegrated and unsublimated aggression is expressed in vicarious ways. In the group processes of organizations and institutions, for example, the exercise of power constitutes a channel for expressing the aggression that in dyads and triads would ordinarily be under control. Aggression emerges more directly and intensely when group processes are relatively unstructured. **Narcissistic personalities, as I have pointed out elsewhere (Kernberg, 1980b, 1984c), are ideally constituted for the assumption of leadership under the conditions of large-group processes. Such peoples' lack of deep conviction regarding their own values makes it easy for them to go along with the group. A narcissistic personality who can communicate effectively can provide the large group with an acceptable ideology and convey a sense of certainty without triggering the group's envy against individualized thinking. These abilities make such a leader the soother of the large group's tensions.** By the same token, the large-group members' identification with the narcissistic leader reinforces some of the pathologically narcissistic characteristics of "static" crowds (Canetti, 1960). These groups are conventional, ideologically simplistic, conformist, and able to indulge themselves without guilt or gratitude; they lack a sense of personal responsibility or a deep investment in others. Another striking characteristic of group life is the activation of infantile sexual features. In the small group, sexuality emerges when the basic assumption of pairing serves as a defense against primitive aggression. In the large group, sexuality is either denied or expressed in sadistically infiltrated sexual allusions. In the large group, sexuality usually goes "underground," or is "split off": couples form secretly as a direct reaction to and defense against large-group processes. In the horde, the unchallenged idealization of the leader has its counterpart in the group's intolerance of any couple that attempts to preserve its identity as one. Freud (1913) saw the crowd's intolerance of sexuality as a result of something akin to the original danger that faces the primitive horde: namely, the sons' rivalry for their mothers and sisters. He proposed that totemic exogamy protected the social structure at the cost of repressing sexual urges within it. Anzieu (197t) and Chasseguet-Smirgel (1975) both stressed the denial of oedipal sexuality in unstructured group processes. The projection of superego functions onto the group and its leader and the related submission to authoritarian leadership do protect against both violence and the destruction of couples within the group. It is condensed, however, with the prohibition against incest and the most infantile aspects of sexuality. Thus, group morality veers toward a conventionalized desexualization of heterosexual relations, toward the suppression of erotic fantasy insofar as it involves infantile polymorphous trends, and toward acknowledging and sanctioning only the more permissible love relations. In large groups, the alternative to these defensive efforts—and to their miscarriage in repressive ideologies—is the eruption of a crude and anally tinged sexuality that is reminiscent of the sexualized group formations of latency and early adolescence." (pg. 7-9)
- "Within this model, psychopathology may be conceptualized as a breakdown of the control function, a failure to carry out the primary task, and a threat to the survival of the system. In the case of the individual, we see the breakdown of the ego and emotional regression; in the group, the breakdown of leadership and paralysis in basic assumptions; in the institution, the breakdown of the administration, failure to carry out the institutional tasks, and loss of morale. The breakdown of boundary control is the principal manifestation of a breakdown in the control function." (pg. 16-17)
 - "As mentioned earlier, Freud (1921) explained that the emotional climate of hordes or mobs, their sense of immediate closeness, and their impulse-ridden behavior all derive from the projection of their ego ideal onto the leader and their identification with the leader as well as with one another. Freud linked these concepts to his hypotheses regarding the historical origin of the primal horde (1913). He suggested that the totemic law that regulates the life of the horde and protects it from both self-destructive rivalry and incestuous endogamy derives from the alliance of the sons, who have killed their father—an act he sees as endemic to the primal horde. Because of their unconscious guilt, the sons replace the father's living laws with the totemic law that symbolizes the father's law. The idealized leader therefore represents both the oedipal hero who killed his father and the alliance of the sons. Ultimately, he also symbolizes the father and his law, which the horde obeys out of unconscious guilt over the patricide." (pg. 19)
 - Chapter 2 - Identity, Alienation, and Ideology in Adolescent Group Processes (pg. 23)
 - "[T]he syndrome of identity diffusion, which is characteristic of borderline personality organization, consists of a lack of integration of the self-concept and the concept of significant others and, by the same token, a loss of the sense of continuity of the self-concept, cross-sectionally as well as longitudinally, and of the capacity for understanding oneself and others in depth. Identity diffusion may be reflected in chronic feelings of emptiness and alienation but, as we shall see, under different circumstances from those activating the acute sense of alienation in normal adolescents. Even for adolescents in emotional turmoil (a condition that is far less prevalent than used to be thought [see Offer et al., 198r]); for those in whom relatively rapid shifts in identifications with a social group, an ideology, or a lifestyle are reflected in dramatic changes in their external appearance; or for those in whom severe conflicts with their parents produce regressive behavior, it is possible to differentiate the normal and neurotic adolescent with an identity crisis and a sense of alienation from the borderline adolescent with identity diffusion. The normal or neurotic adolescent in an identity crisis retains the capacity to describe the most important people in his life in depth, even his parents (with whom he may be having intense conflicts) and highly idealized teachers or friends. He cares about people and has social and cultural interests, value systems, and intellectual pursuits beyond the gratification of immediate narcissistic needs. He is also able to experience feelings of guilt and concern for himself and others, reflecting the capacity for experiencing ambivalence and for tolerating superego pressures in addition to the development of a normal ego ideal. All this reflects a solid ego identity and a corresponding consolidation of the self-concept and of object relations in depth. This sense of alienation, then, is normal; it reinforces the adolescent's need to protect himself from the intensification of his emotional interactions with parents and siblings under the influence of reactivated oedipal and preoedipal urges. At the same time, this development fosters the adolescent's tendency to overidentify with his peers and explains the homogeneity in appearance, behavior, and preferences of the early-adolescent same-sex group. The borderline personality does not usually experience this sense of alienation in early adolescence. On the contrary, he or she may externalize intense conflicts around sex and aggression at home and at school and within the peer group. **Splitting mechanisms, denial, and projective identification permit the adolescent to rationalize aggression while attributing its causes to a hostile environment.**" (pg. 23-24)
 - "When a society is transformed into one huge, regressive mob, the capacity to feel subjectively alienated may be considered an adaptive warning signal to protect ego identity. This brings us to the function of ideology as an expression not only of regressive group processes but also of normal value systems." (pg. 27)
 - "I use the term ideology in a broad sense, following a definition proposed by Althusser (as found in Green, 1969, p. 212): **"An ideology is a system (with its corresponding logic and rigor) of representations (images, myths, ideas, or concepts) that possess a historical existence or function within a given society"** (translation mine). Ideology, for Althusser, was an unconsciously determined system of illusory representations of reality, derived from the dominant conceptions a social group harbors about its own existence and internalized as part of the consolidation of the oedipal superego. Two related aspects of ideologies require emphasis: the content of the ideology and the nature of the individual's commitment to it. Green suggests that the developmental stages of idealization may provide an important means of determining the level of psychological maturity involved in ideological commitments. From earliest narcissistic omnipotence through the intermediary stages of idealization of parental objects and the final consolidation of the ego ideal, the nature of the individual's commitment to ideologies would be determined by the extent to which they reflect the projection of an omnipotent self or the externalization of a mature ego ideal. The nature of the commitment may also influence the type of ideology

- selected, or the subtype within an ideological spectrum. I agree with Green that the developmental stages of the mechanism of idealization, from the primitive idealization of good objects (split off from bad objects) to the projection of a pathological grandiose self to the idealization of objects out of an unconscious sense of guilt and, finally, to the establishment of ideal value systems as a reflection of the consolidation of the ego ideal determine the level of commitment to ideologies. The incapacity to commit oneself to any value system beyond self-serving needs usually indicates severe narcissistic pathology. Commitment to an ideology that includes sadistic demands for perfection and tolerates primitive aggression or a conventional naiveté in value judgments indicates an immature ego ideal and the lack of integration of a mature superego. Accordingly, identification with a messianic system and acceptance of social clichés and trivialities are commensurate with narcissistic and borderline pathology. By contrast, identification with more differentiated, open-ended, non-totalistic ideologies that respect individual discrimination, autonomy, and privacy and that tolerate sexuality while rejecting collusion with the expression of primitive aggression are characteristics of the mature ego ideal. An ideology that respects individual differences and the complexity of human relations and leaves room for a mature attitude toward sexuality will appeal to those with a more mature ego ideal. Here, the liberation of the late adolescent from group mores as he or she moves toward couple formation becomes crucial. The capacity for falling in love and the development of love relations in late adolescence lead the couple to search for a shared system of values, an ideology that transcends the group and cements the couple. The romantic attitude of the single adolescent who is capable of falling in love leads her in the same direction. Thus, the search for an encompassing system of beliefs and for an ideology the couple can share in middle and late adolescence compensates for the sense of alienation that arises as the individual and the couple emerge from the group and links the late adolescent to the cultural and historical values of her society." (pg. 27-28)
- "A messianic ideology is particularly attractive as a solution for the experience of alienation for many patients with borderline personality organization, including those narcissistic personalities who function on an overt borderline level. In late adolescence the borderline personality cannot tolerate the loss of the protection of the conventional group as his normal and neurotic peers form into couples. The resulting exacerbation of his interpersonal conflicts, both in his home and in his immediate social group, might force him to withdraw socially while experiencing severe alienation or to reorganize the conventional large adolescent group into a small fight-flight group with antisocial behavior. Severe feelings of alienation usually emerge in mid- and late adolescents with borderline personality organization. Alienation may take the form of schizoid withdrawal (see chapter 8), the adoption of a lonely and rebellious stance ("a negative identity" [Erikson, 1956]), severe polysymptomatic neurosis, or chronic impulsive acting out and self-destructive behavior. Narcissistic personalities may, in addition, arrogantly reject their environment. An alternative solution is to move into a messianic cult that both reinforces and controls primitive defense operations, replaces the lack of internal controls by firm social control, and gratifies dependency needs by allowing identification with the group and its idealized leader. The extent to which the adolescent can freely express his aggression and the messianic group can rationalize it will determine the extent to which the group either legitimizes his sadism and criminality or protects him from them. The channeling of aggression in messianic cults takes various forms. In one, the devaluation of the parental home and its culture is rationalized, which may allow violent attacks against the parents while masking the aggression. Similarly, masochistic submission to cultist demands for obedience, including requirements to beg in the streets and the like, may foster reaction formations against aggression. The direct physical attack on enemies of the group socializes primitive aggression in its crudest forms. **Groups that form around a messianic ideology usually present the following characteristics: they divide the world into good and evil, which promotes the splitting of interpersonal relations into good (within the group) and bad (with rejected out-groups); they stress the totalistic quality of their belief system in the sense that they claim that it will resolve either all the problems of the world or all the problems of the group; they promote an enormous sense of power and meaning by promising a golden future while demanding complete submission to group rules and regulations in addition to full obedience and submission to the group's leader or his representatives.** This kind of ideology requires a total commitment. Typically, it does not tolerate couples that have not been sanctioned and do not submit to the strict regulation of their private life, and it is often subtly or crudely anti-sexual in its ideology. In addition, it regulates many of the details of the members daily lives. Messianic group ideologies constitute a closed system of beliefs that is binding on all group members; all other values are reorganized in terms of the group's ideology. Messianic groups typically condense the personal lives of members with their political and ideological endeavors so as to eliminate individual boundaries, and they discourage private thinking and the acquisition of any knowledge that might threaten their belief system." (pg. 30-31)
 - "Other groups with totalistic ideologies maintain relatively firm control over their members expression of primitive aggression. Many religious cults in the United States, for example, serve as protective havens for adolescents with severe identity diffusion, borderline personality organization, and the incapacity to maintain relations with a large social group or even with a single other person. The religious cult provides controls over the individual's daily life, and these improve ego functions and gratify needs for dependency, closeness, and feelings of power and significance. The greed that motivates the leaders of many cults is usually unknown to the cult members, who may beg in the street and whose self-sacrifice serves sublimatory functions and as a defense against aggression by masochistic reaction formations. The emotional security provided by a religious cult—protection against the painful alienation related to identity diffusion and the denial or restriction of aggression - compensate borderline adolescents for what they are renouncing in terms of personal privacy, freedom of thought, and a meaningful love relationship. Relatively normal adolescents, however, soon find the vague and simplistic ideology of cults insulting to their intelligence and rebel against the restrictions. **Practically all the patients I have examined who have long-term commitments to religious cults presented severe types of character pathology.** Because the early adolescent with borderline personality finds it easy to adjust to peer groups, he gives the impression of normalcy. Later on, however, his adherence to a cultist ideology may surprise those who knew him in earlier life. There are group-centered ideologies that do not present the totalistic characteristics of religious cults and political terrorism. Street-gang psychology prevails when the group ideology directly affirms the indiscriminate expression of sexuality and aggression in combination with antisocial behavior. A group bound by this type of ideology may be socially the most maladaptive, the kind of group from which a member can free himself most easily, for it provides a milieu for its members without compensating them for the symptom of identity diffusion, and it tolerates the eruption of primitive sexuality and aggression." (pg. 32)
 - "The alienated borderline patient has not achieved an integrated sense of identity and lacks a mature, integrated superego. The establishment of a pathological grandiose self to compensate for this identity diffusion results in a narcissistic personality. Both the identity diffusion of the borderline patient and pathological narcissism lead to a wish to submerge the self in large groups and mobs, because such groups offer the illusion of power and meaning that patients with these pathological character formations desperately seek. The patients incapacity to achieve a stable sexual union with another that maintains firm boundaries separating it from the surrounding social group complements the pathological alienation of these patients." (pg. 34)
 - Chapter 3 - Mass Psychology (pg. 36)
 - "Freud described the primitive, emotionally driven, unreflective behavior of hordes or mobs. He explained the sense of immediate closeness or intimacy in mobs as being derived from the projection of members ego ideals onto the leader and their identification with the leader as well as with one another. The projection of the ego ideal onto the idealized leader eliminates individual constraints along with the higher functions of self-criticism and responsibility that are mediated by the superego. (Throughout his essay, Freud used the term ego ideal rather than superego, which had not yet become part of his theoretical vocabulary.) The mutual identifications by the members of the mob bring about a sense of unity and belonging (which protects them, we might say today, from losing their sense of identity) but are accompanied by a severe reduction in ego functioning. As a result, primitive, ordinarily unconscious, needs take over, and the mob functions under the sway of emotions that are stimulated and

- directed by the leader. For Freud, the influence of the leader on the members of the mob is the primary cause of the mob's consolidation. By projecting their individual ego ideals onto the leader, the members of the mob create the precondition for their mutual identifications." (pg. 38-39)
- "...Freud argued against the origin of mass formation in the absence of a leader by pointing to the rivalry and envy between siblings and to the secondary, reactive nature of mutual identification in group formation in early childhood. Here, the earliest ties of the potential group formation of childhood (ties that, in Freud's view, are the basis of group and mass formations later on) are based on the reaction formation against aggression: the earliest ties, then, are aggressive, not libidinal. Also, as Freud describes the relationship between the primal horde and the primal father as its leader, the uncanny nature of this relationship parallels the uncanny aspect of the relationship that occurs in hypnosis. Freud describes the individual's fear of looking into the eyes of the leader, reflecting the representation of an all-powerful, dangerous, deified personality to whom the individual must react passively and masochistically. The horde wishes to be dominated by a personality with unlimited power, to bend and submit masochistically to that person's will. In his postscript, Freud reexamines the myth of the father of the primal horde, stressing that he was the ideal for each group member, simultaneously feared and admired, and that he thus gave rise to a community of brothers who had to deal with their guilt over his murder." (pg. 39)
 - "Owing to the nature of the regression that occurs in groups, group processes pose a basic threat to members' personal identity, a threat that is linked to the tendency for primitive object relations, primitive defensive operations, and primitive aggression with predominantly pregenital features to be activated in group situations. These processes, particularly the activation of primitive aggression, are dangerous to the survival of the individual in the group, as well as to any task the group needs to perform. I proposed that Turquet's (1975) description of what happens in large groups constitutes the basic situation against which both the idealization of the leader in the horde described by Freud and the small-group processes described by Bion (196r) defend. To follow the idealized leader of the mob blindly, as described by Freud, reconstitutes a sort of identity by identification with the leader, protects the individual from intragroup aggression by this common identity and the shared projection of aggression to external enemies, and gratifies dependency needs through submission to the leader. The sense of power experienced by individuals in a mob also gratifies primitive narcissistic needs. Paradoxically, the essentially irrational quality of mobs (that is, of crowds that are temporarily organized into groups by a shared idealization of a leader and a corresponding ad hoc ideology) better protects the individual against awareness or aggression than what obtains in large-group situations where there are no defined external enemies or in small groups where the enemy is part of the group itself. Large-group processes also highlight the intimate connection between threats to identity and the fear that primitive aggression and aggressively infiltrated sexuality will emerge. My observations from the study of individual patients, small groups, and group processes in organizational and institutional life confirm the overwhelming nature of human aggression in unstructured group situations. An important part of nonintegrated and non-sublimated aggression is expressed in vicarious ways by group and organizational processes. When relatively well-structured group processes evolve in a task-oriented organization, aggression is channeled toward the decision-making process, particularly when primitive leadership characteristics are evoked in people in positions of authority. Similarly, the exercise of power in organizational and institutional life constitutes an important channel for the expression of aggression in group processes that would ordinarily be under control in a dyadic or triadic relation. Aggression emerges more directly and intensely when group processes are relatively unstructured. The multiplicity of primitive self- and object representations that predominate as intrapsychic structures of the individual before the consolidation of ego, superego, and id (and, therefore, before the consolidation of ego identity) and the regressive features of part-object relations that evolve when normal ego identity disintegrates parallel the relationships that exist between individuals in a large group. There is a striking tendency in large groups to project superego functions on the group as a whole in an effort to prevent violence and protect ego identity by means of a shared ideology. The concomitant need of all group members to project and externalize superego functions onto the leader reflects not only sadistic and idealized aspects of primitive superego precursors but also the realistic and protective aspects of more mature superego functioning. The indissoluble union of primitive and advanced aspects of the superego makes this a tragic externalization: the morality of groups and institutions that are influenced by projection of primitive superego features comes closer to the primitive morality of the unconscious superego than to the conscious morality of the mature individual." (pg. 40-41)
 - "Within this regression, the projection of aggression onto parental figures, the re-introjection of such parental figures under the distorted conditions of projected aggression, and the consequent vicious circles involving the projection and introjection of aggression are dealt with by massive splitting mechanisms, which lead to idealization processes on the one hand and to paranoid, persecutory processes on the other. These primitive psychic operations, derived ultimately from the earliest dyadic relationship with the mother, resonate with later triangular problems, reflecting the oedipal situation, and transform the disposition to multiple preoedipal transferences into a displacement into typical triangular oedipal ones that become dominant in the relationship with authority. The distortion of rational authority resulting from these projective processes, in turn, leads to the defensive activation of narcissistic affirmation, regressive relationships to feared or idealized parental leadership, and finally a generalized tendency to re-project the more advanced aspects of superego functioning onto the total institution. The projection of superego functions onto the entire institution increases the subjective dependency of the individual on the institution's evaluation of him or her, decreases the individual's capacity to rely on internalized value systems, and provides a trigger for the individual's contamination by ideological cross-currents, rumors, and regression into primitive depressive and persecutory anxieties when objective feedback and reassurance in the organization fail. Under these conditions, there is a threat not only of emotional and characterological regression in the personality but also of regression in the moral dimension of individual functioning. Here the "paranoid urge to betray" (Jacobson, 1971a) is merely a logical consequence." (pg. 43)
 - "The nature of primitive, part-object relations related to splitting processes and expressed by primitive projective and introjective mechanisms in the group situation can be differentiated from more advanced types of internalized whole or integrated object relations that more clearly reproduce the dyadic and triangular relations of early family life. I propose that one can consider **two levels of internalized object relations**: A basic level would be characterized by multiple self- and object representations that correspond to primitive fantasy formations linked with primitive impulse derivatives. Each unit of self- and object representation carries a particular affect state and is split off from corresponding units with diametrically opposed affect states. The second and higher level of internalized object relations would be characterized by sophisticated, integrated self- and object representations that are linked with higher levels of affect dispositions. These higher level object relations reflect more accurately than do the basic level object relations of infancy and early childhood the experiences and conflicts between the individual and his or her real parental figures and siblings. At the higher level, the integrated self-concept, together with integrated, related, and realistically invested object representations constitute ego identity. Regardless of the individual's maturity and psychological integration, unstructured small and large groups that lack an operational leadership or clearly defined tasks that can relate them to their environment tend to cause an immediate regression in the individual. This **regression consists of the activation of defensive operations and interpersonal processes that reflect primitive object relations**. The potential for such regression exists within all of us. When we lose our ordinary social structure, when our ordinary social roles are suspended, and when multiple objects are present simultaneously in an unstructured relationship, reproducing in the interpersonal field the multiplicity of primitive intrapsychic object relations, then primitive levels of psychological functioning tend to be reactivated. It is this propensity to regress that determines the threat to personal identity and the fear that primitive aggression will be activated in unstructured group situations and that motivates the typical defensive operations in the groups I have described. This is the basic dynamic that promotes group psychology and underlies mass psychology at all levels. Another proposed modification of Freud's views concerns the nature of the symbolic meaning of the leadership of small and large groups. Here I draw on the work of Jacobson (1964) and Chasseguet-Smirgel (1975). In summary, the projection of superego constituents on group leadership depends on

both the level of organization of an individual's superego structure and on the nature and extent of regression under which a group operates. Typically, under conditions of advanced types of large-group regressions in the static large group with either benign narcissistic leadership or a leadership that fosters an ambivalent narcissistic dependency and a moderately moralistic ideology, the individual's regression is to the latency period, and the projection is of the latency-period super-ego, with its typical infantile value systems. These values embrace a simplistic, conventional, black-or-white morality. In addition, oedipal prohibitions are in place, as is the corresponding dissociation of affective engagement from genital erotism. Mass culture also corresponds to this ideology and to its dominant artistic expression, kitsch; the corresponding leadership is perceived as akin to the oedipal father from the advanced oedipal stage of childhood. When regression develops further, from the narcissistic-dependent to the persecutory-paranoid type of leadership, the activation is of the early, prohibitive oedipal superego, the father who potentially threatens the child with castration for his untamed oedipal rivalry and violence. Here the leader is seen as the prohibitive - in contrast to the generous - father. Even further regression in the group situation brings us to the pseudo-paternal promoter of illusions described by Chasseguet-Smirgel (1975), who is characteristic of the primitive ego ideal that depends mostly on the introjection of the preoedipal, all-giving, all-gratifying maternal image. This ego ideal, in turn, protects the individual and the group against archaic aggression toward the mother and toward the distorted maternal image (resulting from projection), which is viewed as extremely threatening. This archaic level of aggression is typically expressed as violence against an external world that threatens the utopia of the gratifying group-breast described by Anzieu (1971). Finally, we may point to the mature superego derived from the post-oedipal parental couple—that performs the rational, protective, moral functions of the parents—as the symbolic meaning of the rational leadership of functional organizations, the polarity opposite to large-group regression." (pg. 45-46)

- "In light of contemporary contributions to the analysis of leadership functions, including those stemming from a psychoanalytic background, and in light of the nature of the regressive group processes I have examined, **I propose five major, desirable personality characteristics for rational leadership: (1) intelligence; (2) personal honesty and incorruptibility; (3) a capacity for establishing and maintaining object relations in depth; (4) a healthy narcissism; and (5) a healthy, justifiable anticipatory paranoid attitude, in contrast to naïveté.** The latter two characteristics are perhaps the most surprising and yet the most important aspects of task leadership, already pointed to in Freud's 1921 essay. A healthy narcissism protects the leader from an overdependency on the approval of others and strengthens her capacity for autonomous functioning; a healthy paranoid attitude makes her alert to the dangers of corruption and paranoiagenic regression (the acting out of diffuse aggression unconsciously activated in all organizational processes) and protects her from a naïveté that would make her unable to analyze the motivational aspects of institutional conflicts. The danger is that organizational regression will accentuate the narcissistic and paranoid features of leadership and will constitute powerful regressive forces that mobilize further regression along narcissistic-dependent or paranoid-sadistic lines. This regressive development, however, is precisely what characterizes mass psychology at all levels: the always present danger that the aggressive drive derivatives that infiltrate social and institutional life will corrupt the very mechanisms established to control them. I suggest a modified formulation of mass psychology. In essence, **both leaders and the people in groups regress along two axes: dependency, narcissism, primitive hedonism, psychopathy; and moralism, paranoid-persecutory control, sadism, violence.**" (pg. 47)
- Chapter 4 - Leadership and Organizational Functioning (pg. 51)
 - See text
- Chapter 5 - Regression in Organizational Leadership (pg. 69)
 - See text
- Chapter 6 - The Couch at Sea (pg. 91)
 - See text
- Chapter 7 - The Moral Dimension of Leadership (pg. 104)
 - See text
- Chapter 8 - Paranoiagenesis in Organizations (pg. 122)
 - See text
- Chapter 9 - Leadership Styles (pg. 140)
 - See text
- Chapter 10 - A Systems Approach to the Priority Setting of Interventions in Groups (pg. 158)
 - See text
- Chapter 11 - The Therapeutic Community (pg. 180)
 - See text
- Chapter 12 - Institutional Problems of Psychoanalytic Education (pg. 203)
 - See text
- Chapter 13 - Authoritarianism, Culture, and Personality (pg. 230)
 - See text
- Chapter 14 - Creativity of Psychoanalytic Candidates (pg. 238)
 - See text
- Chapter 15 - The Temptations of Conventionality (pg. 253)
 - "My focus is primarily on the entertainment offered by the press, radio, movies, and television, the content of which is intended for the broadest segments of the population. Although entertainment is not the only form of mass culture, it is universally recognized as its dominant form (Rosenberg and White, 1957; Horkheimer and Adorno, 1971). **Entertainment reveals most clearly the psychological characteristics of all mass culture.** The aspect of simultaneity of communication, common to these forms of entertainment, is important. I refer here to both actual and fantasied simultaneity. Freud's statement quoted above underlines simultaneity as a key condition of mass psychology. Although a gathering of people as passive spectators in a theater or cinema places the individual in an actual, temporary crowd, entertainment by the press, radio, and television provides simultaneity without physical contact. These media create by implication an invisible crowd in the fantasies of each of the isolated spectators sitting in their respective homes. The taped laughter of television comedies not only punctuates the jokes, it provides an illusory crowd of spectators that contributes to an illusory sense of community (Moscovici, 1981). This feeling is reinforced when one watches television in a foreign country in a foreign language one understands—an experience that may induce, at first, a strange sense of loneliness, as though one were an intruder into a community to which one does not belong. Reading the news in a newspaper or watching it on television also creates **the illusion of being a member of a crowd**; it focuses on the communication by a central figure of what is important and how one should view it, and brings us to another aspect of mass culture: pleasure to be had from passively receiving what is exciting and important without intellectual demands being made on one. Newspapers have to be read "fresh": they lose their appeal once the implicit mass of fellow readers has finished with them. And although they inform rather than entertain, any intellectual demand they make on the reader reduces their appeal. The idea that an authority is addressing a multitude of passive, implicitly equal, uninformed readers heightens the mass appeal of the communication. In soap operas, situation comedies, films geared to adolescents or the family, war movies, thrillers, and soft porn (the level or explicitness of the pornography is relatively unimportant; its characteristics remain the same), the characters typically presented are oversimplified: they are all good or all bad, without internal complexities, immersed in their immediate reality, with obvious motivations in their interpersonal behavior. All of this permits the spectator, who has seen similar shows, to predict their actions. In fact, to be

- watching the developments among people on the screen or in the script whom one seems to know completely, whose motives and moves one can predict, gives a feeling of pleasure and power, of superiority and amusement: here we find a narcissistic dimension of self-aggrandizement in the viewer. Drama is introduced by danger, which comes to the good characters through the obvious evil, criminality, violence, or dishonesty of one or several characters. This adds a paranoid dimension to the viewers emotional involvement with the content. Villains eventually develop in one of two directions: they either become sympathetic as their motivation becomes clear and are eventually received back into the community or else, incurably evil, they are finally punished, leaving the spectator feeling morally satisfied. Unhappiness appears in dramatic but not disturbing forms: joy, sorrow, rage, and fear are all portrayed so as to be reassuring. **Expression dominates over content, and sentimentality over sentiments. Sentimentality is often conveyed by means of an implicit or explicit nostalgia for the past, for familiar forms of happiness, with a particular emphasis on universally shared symbols of innocence, trust, and tenderness that are associated with the security of early childhood** (or a happy, safe, and contented old age). Nostalgia, the bittersweet longing for a lost or longed-for state of happiness, reunion, or fulfillment, evokes an idealized object of desire while implicitly confirming the possibility of its recovery. In war movies, although some of the heroes must die, a sufficient number of centrally important characters survive so that the spectator can happily identify with a survivor. The enemy is always evil, except in movies made after the war, when an actual historical change has resulted in a formerly hostile country's becoming an ally. In this situation, there will be wise and knowledgeable members of the enemy camp who agree that war is basically bad and that it should be replaced by universal love and friendship. In the German film *Das Boot*, for example, a huge popular success in many of the former Allied countries, the audience's identification with a Nazi submarine crew is facilitated by the submarine commander's obvious loathing of the Nazi leadership. Thrillers and films dealing with psychopathic killers are of particular interest to the study of mass culture in that the excitement of danger, the terror of the victims, the excitement of the pursuit of the criminal, and the implicit identification with the hero who finally destroys him all gratify aggressive impulses in the reader or viewer. The barely disguised gratification in fantasy of aggressive impulses as part of mass culture is central to its appeal. This is also true of war movies, but usually without the intense excitement of the identification with a particular hunter. If violence can be enjoyed vicariously but fully under these circumstances, the same is only partially true for sex. The dissociation of erotism from tenderness is sharp and consistent in mass culture and another of its central characteristics. Little direct reference is made to the erotic aspects of love. Explicit sex, if depicted, typically occurs between individuals who have no emotional relationship or as an expression of aggression (such as rape or a group-tolerated sexually rebellious activity against conventional mores). The protagonists may indulge in sexual behavior with other characters but not with the person to whom they have a romantic link. Or the sexual aspects of the relationship between two tender lovers are presented in a veiled and romanticized style. For example, in *The Breakfast Club*, a highly popular movie with its target adolescent audience, the details of lovemaking are limited to crude sexual encounters: when two of the protagonists fall in love, the sexual details of their relationship are totally eliminated. This basic characteristic of sexual portrayal in movies has not been affected by the apparent relaxation of film censorship. By the same token, pornographic films are usually empty depictions of mechanical sex between people who have an almost robotlike quality. The most striking dissociation of erotism from tenderness comes in connection with polymorphous perverse sexuality: this aspect of sexuality is almost entirely restricted to pornography, and totally absent in mass entertainment even in the exceptional instances wherein the protagonists are shown in bed together. When the cinematic and television entertainment I am describing deals with so-called philosophical questions, the ideas discussed are trivial: clichés and banality predominate. The complexities of life and of people are denied. Conventional assumptions predominate over individual thinking. These entertainments offer love and compassion for the underdog, consolation for the person who loses a competition, and applause for the one who triumphs after a long and difficult effort; justice usually prevails. The world is a safe and simple place, or, at least, there are safe havens for everyone in it. Similar characteristics are found in the news media. The perpetual focus on crime gratifies our excitement with dissociated aggression and violence, including, of course, our titillated horror at sex crimes. The subtly self-righteous, moralistic tone of oversimplified reports on world affairs is less self-evident but nonetheless present. News reporters implicitly divide the world into good and bad people, countries, and events. The stories reflect a latent assumption that the commentator's and the mass audience's views are morally superior. There is, in addition, an aspect of news presentation of particular interest: within the general flatness of the information conveyed, we find a tendency for the program to shift between the trivial (for example, a slightly ironic description of an event that is strange, incomprehensible, amusing, or entertaining) and the dangerous (the report of something close to home that runs counter to the value system the audience is assumed to share, a deed that would require urgent corrective action—a local crime, say. Here we find again the stimulation of both a narcissistic dimension in the receiver (our amused superiority) and a paranoid one (our justified suspicion, indignation, and revenge). The contents of what evokes fear, suspicion, and indignation, on the one hand, with what seems trivial, entertaining, and reassuring, on the other, vary quickly. The application of a simplistic morality to political and social matters, the philosophy of the situation comedy, one might say, applied to the social scene, takes the form of ideological clichés: if people of good will work together, they will solve any problem; or further study of a particular matter will make it possible for us to figure out the "right" way to view it. If we shift from the content communicated in mass culture to its forms of artistic expression, a number of related phenomena can be detected. There is a characteristic style in the presentation. Decor, background, and objects of art are usually mass-produced articles that appeal to conventional tastes: they show a preference for either bright colors to indicate dramatic atmosphere or a uniformly dull brown for homely places, sentimentality in the art objects and, particularly, in the background music, and the prevalence of symbols evocative of carefree happiness, innocence, and childhood. Paintings are sentimental landscapes or tragicomic clowns or trivialized imitations of yesteryear's dominant artistic expressions. The illustrations on mass-produced Christmas cards are a typical expression of this style. Taken together, **the characteristics I have enumerated also define kitsch: they are appealing, comfortable, reassuring, sentimental, and overloaded expressions of a culturally dominant style that is charged with conventional symbols of wealth, happiness, romance, or childhood** (Greenberg, 1946; Adorno, 1954; Moles, 1971; Deschner, 1980; Friedlander, 1984)." (pg. 254-258)
- "From a psychoanalytic viewpoint, **the picture of mass culture that emerges is of a world that strikingly resembles the internal world of the child of latency age.** In the psychoanalytic theory of child development, "latency" refers to the developmental period that begins with the consolidation of the oedipal superego and ends with the psychodynamic reorganization at the initiation of puberty. It roughly corresponds to the years between ages 5 and 10. A first major aspect of the child of latency age is the strictness, rigidity, and overdependency on simplified conventional notions of morality of his or her superego functioning. The latency child's system of morality affirms the trusted parental authority and is characterized by an unambiguous separation of good from bad (deeds as well as people), the transformation of sadism into (super-ego-integrated) righteous indignation, the enjoyment of morally justified aggression, the adaptation to a social environment of peers that provides the first experience of firm, simple, stable group norms (including norms of acceptable entertainment), and the unequivocal dissociation of (denigrated) anal sexuality from tender love (for the oedipal parents). It is the reassuring morality of a well-cared-for yet misbehaving child's reconciliation with his or her temporarily angry parents before bedtime. In general terms, we have a morality of brief, time-limited sequences of misbehavior, guilt, punishment, and forgiveness. The child is "in the know," however, regarding genital sexuality and its eventual though distant fulfillment in the future. At the same time, the latency child also harbors wishful fantasies of independence and power, along with the illusion of being independent of the parents. He or she is interested in adventure stories, with heroes and ideals that provide identification models for the future and that also gratify urges for control of the instinctual world through real and fantasied control of the social environment; the latency child is finding substitute gratifications for aggressive and sexual assertion. "Watching" adult life in reality and through cultural products is a new achievement. Illusions of independence and power are gratified by watching, with a sense of superiority, the predictable life of the "funny" grownups, while, simultaneously, fantasies of narcissistic reconfirmation are enacted by identification with supermen or superwomen, daring heroes who destroy dangerous monsters—all this within the stability of a loving and safe home. Berman's

- (1987) analysis of the psychology of James Bond and its correspondence to the latency conflicts of Ian Fleming provides an illustration of a psychoanalytic approach to the structure of commercial thrillers. To be entertained by striking images and displays of color, form, and motion; to be excited by violence without being threatened by it; and to feel sexual excitement without being threatened by the potential connection between eroticism and love are all characteristic of the latency child's internal world. These characteristics stem from both ego (narcissistic, erotic, and aggressive impulses framed in a latency child's perspective of ego-syntonic fantasies and wishes) and superego (a latency child's unconscious morality, which respects oedipal prohibitions and dissociates sex from tenderness). In fact, **the latency child as spectator of mass entertainment is probably the prototype of the gratified consumer of mass culture.** In this situation, the consumer is watching the entertainment in harmony with his or her superego, feeling loved by his or her parents, and accepting (unconsciously) the oedipal prohibitions while indulging in fantasy the total gratification of dependency needs and enjoying an illusionary sense of equality, regardless of sexual and generational differences, with his or her fellow consumers. The latency child's oral-dependent needs are gratified directly, and other sexual and aggressive needs are gratified by projection onto the spectacle and the socially sanctioned and encouraged identification with the actors. His or her psychological needs correspond to the characteristics of mass entertainment itself, the perfectly harmonious quality of mass culture that I have described. For the latency child, exciting stories or adventures that fit these general characteristics are not simply entertainment. They are socially sanctioned, culturally transmitted confirmations and expansions of the child's universe. These experiences are major events that reconfirm superego structure, provide cognitive learning experiences, and consolidate ego skills and controls over drive derivatives (Sarnoff, 1976; Shapiro and Perry, 1976). Social conventions expand the field of strictly intrafamilial conventions; they facilitate the latency child's integration in the broader world of peers and school. For an adult, the rigid adherence to social and cultural mores that constitute the normal world of latency reflect conventionality. **To the extent that adults consume mass culture, they become conventional.** The question thus arises of why conventionality - the excessive adaptation to social, cultural, and aesthetic norms—is a central aspect of mass culture, and why it is attractive to its consumers. How can we explain the consistent presence of latency age superego and ego features in mass culture? Why does it gratify, as it clearly does, most adults? Earlier psychoanalytic approaches to mass culture have focused on its conventional aspects and on personality characteristics fostering conventionality (Adorno et al., 1950). It was the conventional aspect of mass psychology that required explaining, and, secondarily, the mechanisms of the exploitation and induction of that conventional mass psychology by the "ruling classes" through the mass production of consumer goods. Before I discuss the relation between mass culture's conventionality and latency child psychology, let me review these theories briefly." (pg. 258-260)
- "As discussed in chapters, Adorno and colleagues (1950) considered conventionality to be a significant part of the authoritarian personality; it reflects an individual's disposition to excessive adherence to middle-class values, a consequence of instability in his own value system. Conventionality is characterized by the rigidity with which individuals adhere to popular values and with which they respond to external social pressure. Kitsch, as many theorists have pointed out, typically belongs to the middle class; and even when created for the culturally disadvantaged, kitsch conveys an idealized and sentimentalized version of middle-class values (Adorno, 1954). This is also true of "high-class kitsch" geared to the luxury trade (Greenberg, 1946). The underlying theory behind these definitions was that **individuals with authoritarian personalities are overly sensitive to external reinforcement of their internal, excessively strict superego demands, and that conventionality is related to excessive submission to authority as well as to an identification with "authoritarian" aggression** (aggression carried out by an authority in unfair ways that show excessive or "nonfunctional" use of power and that are rationalized or justified in the very process of abuse). The authoritarian personality would represent a prototype of identification with the aggressor, first in these personalities developing a sadistic, strict superego, and then in identifying themselves with their own sadistic superego. Although I agree with Adorno's linkage of conventionality and over-identification with a sadistic, infantile superego, he misses the contributions to conventionality of regressive group pressures: the mass-psychology aspect of conventionality. The views of Adorno and colleagues follow Reich's (1962 [1935]) efforts to integrate psychoanalytic thinking with Marxist theory and to explain the repressive nature of attitudes toward sexuality in Western society and in Soviet Russia. Generalizing from his understanding of German fascism, Reich proposed that the capitalist system had transformed the personality structure of all individuals by exerting authoritarian power through the paternalistic family. Where Freud thought that the repression of sexuality was the price paid for cultural evolution, Reich thought that the repression of sexuality, particularly of genital sexuality, represented the effect of a pathological superego, which in turn resulted from the social structure of capitalism. He traced a socially generalized submission to conventional mores to this same cause: conventionality was based on excessive repression of genital sexuality. In contrast to Reich, Marcuse (1955) felt that it was not genital sexuality that was repressed by the capitalist system but pregenital polymorphous infantile sexuality. Marcuse thought that this repression aimed at restricting sexual functions to the genital so that people's unsatisfied broader eroticism could be used in the service of social production. Marcuse suggested that it was the surplus repression of pregenital sexuality—a socially unnecessary repression—that constituted the main problem with the capitalist system. In fact, however, Marcuse noted an increasing tolerance of sexuality in the Western world, particularly the United States. He therefore coined the term "repressive desublimation" to refer to what he called a pseudosexual freedom, which encouraged the individual in capitalist society to consume unnecessary goods and distracted him from the repressive conditions of his existence. In thus presenting sex as a capitalist lure for consumption that eroticized advertising and created artificial consumer needs and demands, Marcuse pointed to the repressive and proselytizing aspects of mass culture, a social and economic pressure toward mindless conventional consumption. A similar view is eloquently articulated in Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Dialectic of enlightenment [1971]), where what they consider the degradation of culture in the hands of the modern entertainment industry is presented as a typical example of the attempt to destroy the individual's capacity for independent reasoning and making independent value judgments. Culture produced for and oriented toward the masses, they suggest, reflects how capitalist society both commercializes art and uses this commercialization to reduce the consumers capacity to resist mass-produced, degraded art, objects, and entertainment. The question of excessive conformity with the established social order has engaged many Marxist and neo-Marxist theoreticians in Western Europe since the early 1930s. It was a major focus of the Frankfurt school, of which Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and Habermas were leading theoreticians. The ascent of fascism in Western Europe and the evolution of Soviet Russia into a totalitarian state caused these theoreticians to consider the extent to which the proletariat was developing a "false consciousness." The working class, in fact, all social classes, seemed to become easy prey to the ideologies of the authoritarian regimes of the extreme Right and Left. Western European Marxists wished to develop their theory that common belief systems were created by ruling classes to ensure their hegemony over society. Gramsci (1959) first developed the notion that hegemony was a system of power (in this case, of the capitalist class) used to obtain a level of consent from the masses via cultural institutions and the development of a corresponding ideology. Several other Marxist writers developed this line of reasoning over the years, and Althusser (1976) used Freud's concept of the unconscious to construct a new theory of ideology. Ideology, for Althusser, was an unconsciously determined system of illusory representations of reality. This system derived from the internalization of the dominant illusion that a social class harbored about the conditions of its own existence. The illusion was achieved by the internalization of the "paternal law" as part of the internalization of the oedipal superego. In a related theoretical development, Habermas (1971, 1973) analyzed ideology as motivated by a false consciousness of social class and outlined the resolution of this false consciousness by means of a "critical theory" that would provide self-reflective enlightenment together with social emancipation. Habermas drew a parallel between the analysis of ideologies and the psychoanalytic situation, in which the patient also starts treatment with a "false consciousness" and is helped by the analyst to gain, by means of self-reflection and honest interaction with the analyst, an enlightenment aimed at freeing him or her from repression and neurosis. Although these Marxist and neo-Marxist writers, in part using psychoanalytic concepts, have rightly focused on the characteristics of conventionality and the superego-mediated receptivity of individuals to the conventional aspects of mass culture, their linkage of class-determined ideology to the characteristics of mass culture is

- questionable. They had originally assigned these attributes of mass culture to capitalism, but they were forced to diagnose similar trends in communist cultures as well, which led to their concept of "false consciousness" (no longer attributed exclusively to the capitalist system). But in so doing they missed the historical continuity of conventionality and, particularly, kitsch, and the surprising universality of the appeal of mass culture across radically different cultures. (We see this in the appeal of Western mass culture to the youth and young adults of China, India, and South America.) Marxist and neo-marxist writers also failed to analyze the common structural properties of mass cultures that reflect opposed ideologies. Thus, for example, television soap operas in East Berlin during the communist dictatorship had the same mass-culture characteristics as those of the West. The villains differed; they corresponded to conventional communist rather than capitalist categories of good and evil. But the battle of good and evil remained the same. It is precisely the structure of mass culture, the structure of its conventionality, that is missed when the focus is exclusively on the motivation of the producers or operators. Another psychoanalytic approach to mass culture focuses on the absence— in contrast to hypertrophy—of normal superego functions. Mitscherlich (1963) pointed to the cultural consequences of the absence of the father as a principle of organization at the social and familial level. He described the rejection of the father in contemporary society as part of the rejection of traditional cultural values and the replacement of such values by overdependency on immediate social influences. He also noted the intoxicating effects of mass production, with its promise of immediate gratification of needs, and a consequent fostering of a psychology of demand for immediate gratification and the lack of a sense of individual responsibility. Mitscherlich described the new "mass person" as a classless individual. He stressed the combination of the real absence of the father in the contemporary family as a consequence of the organization of work with the loss of individual functions of the father in large institutions. The primary absence of the father, whose work functions are incomprehensible, is worsened by the secondary absence of the father in massive group experiences under the effects of the immediate gratification of mass consumption and the breakdown of taboos in society at large that leads to a loss of the capacity for full sexual gratification because of the concomitant dissociation of "immediate" sexual gratification from its link with emotional intimacy. Anonymous work, Mitscherlich stated, is complemented by anonymous mass entertainment that permits the projection of internal aggression onto external mass events. In the United States, Lasch (1977, 1978) concluded that the breakdown of the family as a moral guidance system, the avoidance of conflicts through compromise, and the accentuation of instinctual gratification all corrode the development of mature superego functions in the child. In short, for Mitscherlich and Lasch it is the failure of normal superego development, rather than the development of an excessively harsh superego, that characterizes the superego pathology that facilitates the submission to mass culture. For the psychoanalyst interested in the study of conventionality, the individual differences in adherence to conventional values would seem to be as important as the social determinants. As I mentioned in chapter 2, Green (1969) suggests that a relation exists between the developmental level of idealization and the type of ideological commitment one makes. These levels of idealization range from earliest narcissistic omnipotence through the intermediary stages of idealization of parental objects and the final consolidation of the ego ideal. The nature or quality of the commitment to ideologies, Green suggests, is determined by the extent to which the ideologies reflect the projection of an omnipotent self or the externalization of a mature ego ideal. In agreement with Green, I suggested that **the incapacity to commit oneself to value systems beyond self-serving needs usually reflects severe narcissistic pathology. The commitment to an ideology that includes sadistic demands for perfection and tolerates primitive aggression or value judgments of a conventional naiveté indicates an immature ego ideal and the lack of integration of a mature superego. Accordingly, to identify with a messianic ideology and to accept social clichés and trivialities is commensurate with narcissistic and borderline pathology. This contrasts with the identification with more differentiated, open-ended, non-totalistic ideologies that respect individual differences, autonomy, and privacy and tolerate sexuality while rejecting collusion with the expression of primitive aggression, all of which reflect characteristics of the value system of the mature ego ideal. An ideology that respects individual differences and the complexity of human relationships and that leaves room for a mature attitude toward sexuality will appeal to those with a more evolved ego ideal.** In short, Adorno, Green, and I agree that ego and superego aspects of the personality predispose an individual to depend excessively on conventional values and attitudes. To say that the specific content of what is conventional is influenced by social, political, and economic factors is reasonable: but the universality of the structure of conventionality in mass culture and its appeal to the masses still requires explanation." (pg. 260-265)
- **"The appeal of mass culture consists in the facilitation of a group regression induced by mass entertainment that is structured to appeal to the level of latency: reality and fantasy are clearly differentiated; instinctual wishes that can be gratified directly are differentiated from those that can be gratified only in fantasy or by proxy.** The oedipal prohibitions are in place, reflected by the dissociation of emotional commitment from genital eroticism; genital strivings, except for direct gratification of voyeuristic needs, are gratified only by proxy, and preoedipal polymorphous perverse sexuality is either suppressed or tolerated only in a highly mechanical, depersonalized, or ritualistic fashion. **Within the regressed group atmosphere of mass culture, superego functioning has regressed to a latency-phase level; it is weakened because personal responsibility is suspended or diluted when superego functions are projected onto the group** (the implicit group sanctioning of the spectacle in which the individual participates as a group member: Freud's basic mechanism of the projection of the ego ideal in mass psychology). **Individual thinking, decision making, value judgments, and discriminating functions are markedly reduced, together with higher levels of superego and ego functioning.** The social sanctioning of mass culture and the corresponding group regression that reflects mass psychology represent the combined approval from parental authority and peer groups that provides security to the latency child. A conventionality of values and interests confirms these sanctions and approvals and ensures personal safety and security. Kitsch, with its idealized and sentimentalized activation of nostalgia, gratifies dependency longings, while the identification with the characters or the heroes confirms autonomy and power by proxy. Dependency and independence, instinctual gratification and autonomy, moral justification, and longings for peace with oneself are thus ensured in an illusion that because it is socially shared seems real." (pg. 267-268)
 - "We now have the elements for a developmental schema of regressions in groups, with particular reference to mass culture and the nature of the leadership enacted within it by the anchor person, host, commentator, or columnist. I describe **two levels of regression: the first, milder level is typical of mass entertainment; the second is more severe.** The first level of regression occurs when people gather temporarily into crowds at celebrations or the theater or when they are part of an invisible temporary crowd that is created by simultaneous exposure to mass media (press, radio, and particularly, television) of individuals who are actually isolated in their homes. At this level the threat of losing personal identity that is a feature of unstructured large groups is compensated for by the common, shared purpose. The unconscious identification with the other members of the crowd not only compensates for the temporary loss of personal identity but imparts a sense of power, importance, and security. As long as everybody else is present, the individual is doing the right thing (Canetti, 1960). Because superego functions are projected onto the large group under conditions of group regression, and because of the need to counteract the uncertainty that initially emerges in all regressive group processes, the individual becomes dependent on his fantasies regarding everyone else's opinion of the quality of the cultural offering. When large-group leadership emerges under such circumstances, there is heightened respect for the leader as an authority and an increased willingness to accept his judgment, which is customarily expressed in simple generalizations. A benign father figure—even a firm but fair one—will strengthen the suggestive effects of conventional truth, and mild swings in either a paranoid or a narcissistic direction by such a leader will intensify the experience of group cohesion, of power and elation within the group (Kernberg, 1980a). Television anchors and newspaper columnists intuitively fulfill this function. The self-indulgent, self-satisfied, flattering attitude of the narcissistic person will produce a sense of sentimental and gratified well-being, while the mildly persecutory attitude of the leader who attacks immorality or whatever flies in the face of conventional standards will arouse righteous indignation in the group members that, in helping them identify with the leader, also strengthens their self-esteem. At this first level of regression there occurs a generally shared projection of the oedipal superego, but the individuals still preserve an integrated self-concept and the related, integrated, realistic object representations that jointly constitute ego identity. The preservation of ego identity is ensured by a partial or time-limited activation of group

processes in the context of social conditions or structures that allow the individual to maintain ordinary status and role conditions in life outside the group. In contrast, at the second, deeper level of regression the integrated concept of the self and the integrated concept of others are threatened by the loss of ordinary role-status conditions and by the simultaneous presence of many people who reproduce the multiplicity of internalized part-object relations at a primitive level of ego development. This second level of regression occurs in large unstructured groups. It can emerge under conditions of breakdown of ordinary structure in large organizations or in the temporary formations of mobs under conditions of social tension and unrest, a "power vacuum" in a previously well-organized social structure. A suspension of ordinary social roles, the presence of many people in a totally unstructured relationship, and the inability to escape from such a frightening social condition can be induced experimentally in small-and large-group situations like those studied by Bion, Turquet, and Anzieu. But a similar regression also occurs in ordinary social organizations when the work structure breaks down, when a failure of functional leadership produces immediate regression in all task systems, and when social upheaval, external threats, the disorganization of ordinary protective social structures or extreme social isolation by a social subgroup produce the conditions these authors describe (Kernberg, 1980b). Here, the projection of the integrated oedipal superego fails because of the lack of an integrated social structure or the loss of functional leadership on whom to project it. A regression into the preoedipal precursors of the superego and efforts at their massive projection parallels the regression into preoedipal constituents of ego formation. The regressive dependency and fight-flight groups described by Bion overshadow by far the pairing group and the remnants of oedipal sexuality; now the search is for the primitive ego-ideal leader who reflects preoedipal parental images of a wholly giving and gratifying kind. In the last resort, the leader is the pseudo-paternal promoter of illusions who represents the all-powerful and all-gratifying preoedipal mother described by Anzieu and Chasseguet-Smirgel. The mass rally of the Nazi party at Nuremberg depicted in the classic propaganda film *Triumph of the Will* illustrates these characteristics of group regression. Hitler is presented as a deity who descends from heaven and gives meaning to the life of the congregated masses. Under such conditions, the group illusion of total gratification (by the primary object represented by the leader) can be enacted as long as the minimal requirements for the earliest social-group formation (of latency) are met. The latency child's outlook on life and morality thus provide the unconscious preconditions (an unconscious "imprimatur") for an almost hypomanic, thoughtless, and irresponsible merger with the mass gathering. The other possibility is that under conditions of social upheaval, turmoil, or stress—and in the presence of a powerful paranoid leader—the group will shift to the opposite extreme and endorse a primitive, powerful, and sadistic leader who will assure the group that by identifying collectively with the threatening primitive aggression he incorporates, they will make themselves safe from persecution by becoming persecutors themselves. In other words, at this second level of regression, group processes activate the search for primitive narcissistic or paranoid leaders, depending on the extent to which external circumstances impose actual threats or frustration upon the group and thus reinforce the real threat of violence and the need to defend against it by projecting it outward. Under conditions of relative absence of such social threats and with the possibility of realistic gratification of primitive needs within a tolerant and flexible social environment, primitive narcissistic leadership may prevail. In any case, the swing of group emotions and leadership to either a paranoid or a narcissistic polarity of group orientation is extreme. One solution to a group's uncertain oscillation between narcissistic and paranoid orientations may be to combine primitive leadership of an extremely narcissistic and paranoid kind, which, in condensing primitive narcissism and aggression, reproduces the psychopathology of what I have called malignant narcissism. When narcissistic group formation prevails, diffuse polymorphous erotism may be idealized and sadistic aspects of sexual interactions denied and projected; with paranoid group formations, sadistic sexual behavior may become ego-syntonic and rationalized, as occurred, for example, in Jim Jones's religious cult. In large-group formations and political masses, violent destructiveness and murder can occur at this level of regression. What is the relation between the first and second level of regression? In the large group, narcissistic regression and leadership defend the group against a basic paranoid disposition. Are mass culture and mass entertainment "innocent" protections against more severe regressive potentials in group formation? Or is there a continuum of group regression that makes mass culture a dangerous springboard for potential further regression? The potential relation between the regressive group processes involved in "innocent" mass culture, on the one hand, and in severely regressive, paranoid mass movements, on the other—a potential relationship reflected in the commonality of many of their underlying processes—raises the question of whether mass media serve potentially dangerous or protective functions. Horkheimer and Adorno (1971) and Anders (1956, 1980) suggested that mass culture is a malignant process leading to infantilization and the control of the masses by capitalist or communist elites. On the other hand, Brantlinger (1983) considers mass culture a small price to pay for the gratification of regressive group processes at a relatively innocuous level—a small price in return for the availability of information, artistic communication, and entertainment to large segments of the population. Moscovici (1981), paraphrasing Engels, states that "communication is the valium of the people." The narcissistic world of the soap opera and the paranoid scenario of the thriller can be considered regressions in the service of the ego that are a far cry from the second-level, severely narcissistic and paranoid regressions in group processes and leadership under turbulent social and political circumstances. It seems likely that the level of group regression codetermines, together with the level of individual psychopathology, the level of regression of an individual's commitment to any group-sponsored ideology. The mildly regressive group ideology fostered by ordinary mass media supports the most trivial and conventional manifestation of it, such as, for example, lip service to Marxism in communist societies, or to Catholicism in Latin American countries. These same ideologies at a less conventional and trivial level and as part of the highly differentiated value systems of autonomous individuals may be expressed in strong, complex personal ideological commitments that have a quality of independence, ethical depth, and firmness of conviction and yet openness to specific individual circumstances. At the other extreme, these same ideologies may regress into primitive, sadistic, and psychopathic forms, such as the blending of terrorism and ordinary criminality in some Marxist groups or in the terrorist groups linked to fundamentalist Islamic regimes. The transformation of mass communication and entertainment into the propaganda machinery of totalitarian regimes illustrates the dangerous nature of the potential for group regression thus activated (Welch, 1983). **Perhaps the greatest danger to the democratic political process of a pluralistic society is the effect of mass media on the political process itself.** The understanding of mass psychology may be an important contribution of psychoanalysis to combating a development that can endanger intelligent participation in the political process. We do not yet know to what extent, in the long run, higher education can protect individuals against regressive group processes, or to what extent the triviality of mass culture and mass entertainment may simply illustrate a constant historical dialectic between the individual and the masses, gratifying regressive needs in socially adaptive ways and replacing historically earlier forms of ritualized social regression. Even if mass entertainment is exploited by economic and political interests, its effectiveness requires further exploration of what psychological needs it gratifies. The regression induced by and reflected in mass culture and mass entertainment actualizes value systems and morality of latency years triggered by large-group processes as applied to the invisible group activated by mass media. These latency characteristics include the participants' projection of the unconscious superego structure of the post-oedipal period onto the illusionary group, the reassurance of personal identity within this group that comes when conventionality is embraced, the dissociation of sex and tenderness, and the preoedipal (narcissistic and paranoid gratification at a mostly sublimatory level. The danger of more severely regressive large-group processes consists in the immediate activation of primitive object relations, the projection of preoedipal superego precursors onto potential leaders, and the corresponding activation of primitive narcissistic or paranoid tendencies in leadership, which may lead to violence, primitive equalization, and totalitarian control. Conventionality may be the price of social stability, but it may also indicate the ever-present danger of more severe group regression. By consciously manipulating the mass psychology activated by mass culture, political groups can expand the domain of conventional thinking or reduce that of individual judgment. For the individual, conventionality is a function of individual personality and of the activation of regressive mass psychology. Most people submerge themselves temporarily in the conventionality of mass culture for recreational purposes; for some, conventionality becomes a permanent prison." (pg. 268-272)

- Chapter 16- Ideology and Bureaucracy as Social Defenses Against Aggression (pg. 273)
 - "I proposed that Turquet's (1975) description of the loss of a sense of identity in large groups constitutes the basic situation against which both the idealization of the leader of the horde described by Freud (1921) and the small-group flight-flight, dependency, and pairing processes described by Bion (1961) are defending. I suggested that owing to the nature of the regression that occurs in groups, **group processes pose a basic threat to the members personal identities, a threat that is linked to a proclivity in group situations for the activation of primitive object relations, primitive defensive operations, and primitive aggression with predominantly pregenital features.** These processes, particularly the activation of primitive aggression, are dangerous to the survival of the individual in the group, as well as to any task the group needs to perform. Following the idealized leader of the mob blindly, as described by Freud, reconstitutes a sort of identity by identification with the leader; it protects the individual from intragroup aggression by this common identity and the shared projection of aggression to external enemies; and it gratifies dependency needs through submission to the leader. The sense of power experienced by the individual in a mob also gratifies primitive narcissistic needs. I proposed that, paradoxically, the essentially irrational quality of mobs provides better protection against painful awareness of aggression than what obtains in large-group situations with undefined external enemies or in small groups, where it is hard to avoid realizing that the "enemy" is part of the group itself. By studying large-group processes, we can recognize the threat to individual identity that occurs under social conditions where ordinary role functions are suspended, various projective mechanisms are no longer effective, and the relationships that exist among all individuals within a large-group situation replicate the multiplicity of primitive self-and object representations that predominate as intrapsychic structures of the individual before the consolidation of ego, superego, and id—and, therefore, before the consolidation of ego identity —and the regressive features of part-object relations that evolve when normal ego identity is not achieved or it disintegrates. Large-group processes also highlight the intimate connection between threats to identity and fear that primitive aggression and aggressively infiltrated sexuality will emerge. My observations from the study of individual patients, small groups, and group processes in organizational and institutional life confirm the overwhelming nature of the aggression in unstructured group situations. The point is that an important part of nonintegrated and non-sublimated aggression is expressed in vicarious ways throughout group and organizational processes. When relatively well-structured group processes evolve in a task-oriented organization, aggression is channeled toward the decision-making process, particularly by evoking primitive leadership characteristics in people in positions of authority. Similarly, the exercise of power in organizational and institutional life constitutes an important channel for the expression in groups of aggression that would ordinarily be under control in dyadic or triadic relationships. Aggression emerges more directly and much more intensely when group processes are relatively unstructured. In contrast to the dominant group characteristics of the unstable, threatening, potentially violent, and identity diffusing large group, small-group formation deals with the idealization-persecution dichotomy in the activation, respectively, of Bion's dependency and fight-flight groups. The activation of the pairing assumption may be considered an ambivalent effort to escape from primitive conflicts concerning aggression, primitive object relations, and primitive defenses by ambivalent idealization of the selected sexual pair. The two most striking mechanisms by which the large group protects itself from the threat of impending aggression are the development of an ad hoc ideology and the process of bureaucratization. The development of a simplistic philosophy as a calming, reassuring doctrine that reduces all thought to cliché described by Turquet (1975), the primitive, narcissistic ego-ideal characteristic of large-group processes described by Anzieu (197L), and the narcissistic ideology and idealization of a pseudo-paternal leader as the promoter of illusions described by Chasseguet-Smirgel (1975) all refer to the tendency to a narcissistic regression into a primitive ideology that transforms the large group into what Canetti (1960) described as the typical "feasting crowd." This group is engaged, we might say, in dependent and narcissistic behavior; it correspondingly searches for a calming, narcissistic, reassuring mediocrity in its leader. Such leadership never fails to appear. In chapter 15, I described this regression as characteristic of the mass psychology of conventionality, reflecting the type of ideology characteristic of a latency child's superego and represented typically by mass entertainment. As an alternative, as we saw in chapter 3, the large group may evolve not into such a static crowd but into a dynamic mob that is characterized by predominantly paranoid features and its selection of paranoid leadership; it is typically represented by the mass psychology of revolutionary mass formations. Conventionality, on the one hand, and violent, revolutionary movements with a totalitarian ideology, on the other, may be considered the corresponding mass psychological outcomes of idealization and persecution as basic group phenomena and, respectively, the containment by denial and reaction formation or the expression by violent acting out of aggression." (pg. 273-275)
 - "From a psychoanalytic viewpoint, what is of particular interest is the extent to which an ideological system includes a worldview that, by definition, excludes all those who do not share it, declares the outcasts enemies who must be controlled or eliminated, and aspires to dominate all aspects of social behavior. **These characteristics, which may be called the paranoid pole of ideologies, are found in totalitarian societies, fundamentalist religious movements, and certain cults. The division of human beings into loyal adherents and dangerous enemies may also be found in some racist and nationalist ideologies. A second characteristic of such ideologies is their invasiveness of family and intimate relationships, their supraordinate control over the relationships of couples. This is typically matched by an intolerance toward sexuality as described by Freud (1921). Family and sexual intimacy threaten the individuals complete identification with a totalitarian ideology. A third general characteristic of totalitarian ideologies is a conventional and conformist set of moral principles that regulate individual behavior, guidelines that are reminiscent of the superego of the latency years.** Fundamentalist religious groups focus this morality most specifically on the sexual behavior of the individual—in effect, mounting a massive defense against individual freedom to integrate erotism and tenderness." (pg. 278-279)
 - "[T]he individual's fixation at a level of primitive superego functioning that divides all values into all-good and all-bad, that aspires for an individual "justice" which reflects a system of rationalized envy and a hatred of others' rights and belongings, and that adopts a sexual morality which maintains an absolute split between tender relations and erotic ones reflects both a severe character pathology and a consonance with the characteristics of fundamentalist ideologies. While social, cultural, historical, and economic conditions may determine the level of ideological commitment sweeping a culture at any particular time, the individual's psychopathology or maturity of superego functions will determine if and when the individual enters the historical current." (pg. 280)
- Chapter 17 - Regression in the Political Process (pg. 285)
 - "Mass psychology relates to the reactions of individuals when they experience themselves as part of a large, unorganized mass. An open, democratic election can activate that mass psychology with particular effectiveness through the simultaneity of communication offered by the mass media. As the politicians vying for votes address the people through mass media, members of the open community experience themselves as an anonymous mass, as they receive this address simultaneously. I have described how this experience activates the projection of latency-level superego functions onto that anonymous mass, with regression to an infantile splitting of all value systems into good and evil. In this state, people absorb information in the context of their fantasy of how the population at large is responding to it. As a result of this process, people tend to see issues in simple terms; they become susceptible to conventional ideology and morality; and they lack the maturity and autonomy to judge the content of the information they receive independent of the imagined mass audience." (pg. 286)

c. Further Readings:

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