

of being left by her husband. It was only at that point that her God representation showed the infantile basis of its foundation and its obvious dependence on the external existence of the oedipal object of replacement, her husband. The phobia showed that her God representation could not offer her sustenance, continuity, and a sense of being watched over if there were no real object that could in fact protect. I consider this evidence that the elaboration of that representation ceased during the latency period and could not become separated from its sources because it was not reworked and reelaborated during puberty, adolescence, or adulthood.

The process by which phobic symptoms were formed may be outlined as follows:

1. a. Mobilization of intense anger against a God who does not fulfill his promise of protecting her;
b. mobilization of intense anger against the abandoning object: husband;
2. a. displacement and transformation of the anger toward God into fear of dying in church (claustrophobia);
b. displacement and transformation of the anger toward her husband into fear of being out with other people or alone in the house without him. Her phobia forced him to stay with her and only with her.

Both phobias provided her considerable gratification by requiring her husband "to watch over her" constantly in the way she expected of God. Part of her phobic reaction to churches may also have been related to the fact that she had to attend so many funerals of relatives, where the incompatible facts of death and expected protection from God were unmistakably juxtaposed.

In her case, as in most phobias, "the advantage offered by the displacement is that the original offensive idea does not become conscious . . . [because] those who threaten are hated" (Fenichel, 1945, p. 198). In her case, as in that of little Hans (Freud, 1909), she no longer felt threatened by the impending lack of protection from her God, but by church and crowds, and so spared herself the need to hate her God. This phobic maneuver permitted her to keep intact her self-image as a good, loving person, and God could remain as a loving object. In her case both maneuvers were necessary for her to maintain two more sustaining relations—with God and with her husband. Had she not done that, she would have had to face a major religious crisis, possibly quite similar to an adolescent crisis of doubt and soul searching, for which she was by no means prepared. She would have had to face the sorrows and pains of life and accept the limitations of human happiness. That, however, was more than she could afford. She had believed quite sincerely that she was watched over by a protective Providence which, in Freud's words, "will not suffer us to become a plaything of the overmighty and pitiless forces of nature." She found herself at the mercy of unpredictable death, however, and in her deserted anguish protected both her God and herself with a phobic reaction.

7

A God in the Mirror

When Douglas O'Duffy was asked to draw a picture of God as he felt him to be, he drew the picture (fig. 4) reproduced on the next page. While drawing, he explained, "I know that God is there inside me—I don't know what it is.¹ I have to find out inside me." After he had completed the picture to his satisfaction, he wrote these cryptic words: "I feel that God may be me² in a mirror and that the only way I can open the Door is to know me³ completely and honestly."

In presenting Mr. O'Duffy I will attempt to demonstrate, following the schema proposed for all cases, the following propositions.

1. In relation to his belief in God he belongs to category number two, that is, those wondering whether or not to believe in a God they are not sure exists.

2. Developmentally, his representation belongs in descriptive terms to the last stages of separation-individuation. In psychoanalytic terms it belongs to the anal retentive phase with its narcissistic ambivalent attachment to the object. In terms of narcissistic development it belongs to a late stage of the need for mirroring and admiration of the exhibitionistic child (Kohut, 1971; Winnicott, 1967).

3. In relation to its connection with parental objects the God representation draws its characteristics mainly from the mother. The maternal representations used to form that image also belong to other later levels of development, but the ambivalently cathected image of the mother of the mirroring phase and the compensatorily aggrandized self-image prevail. The maternal representa-

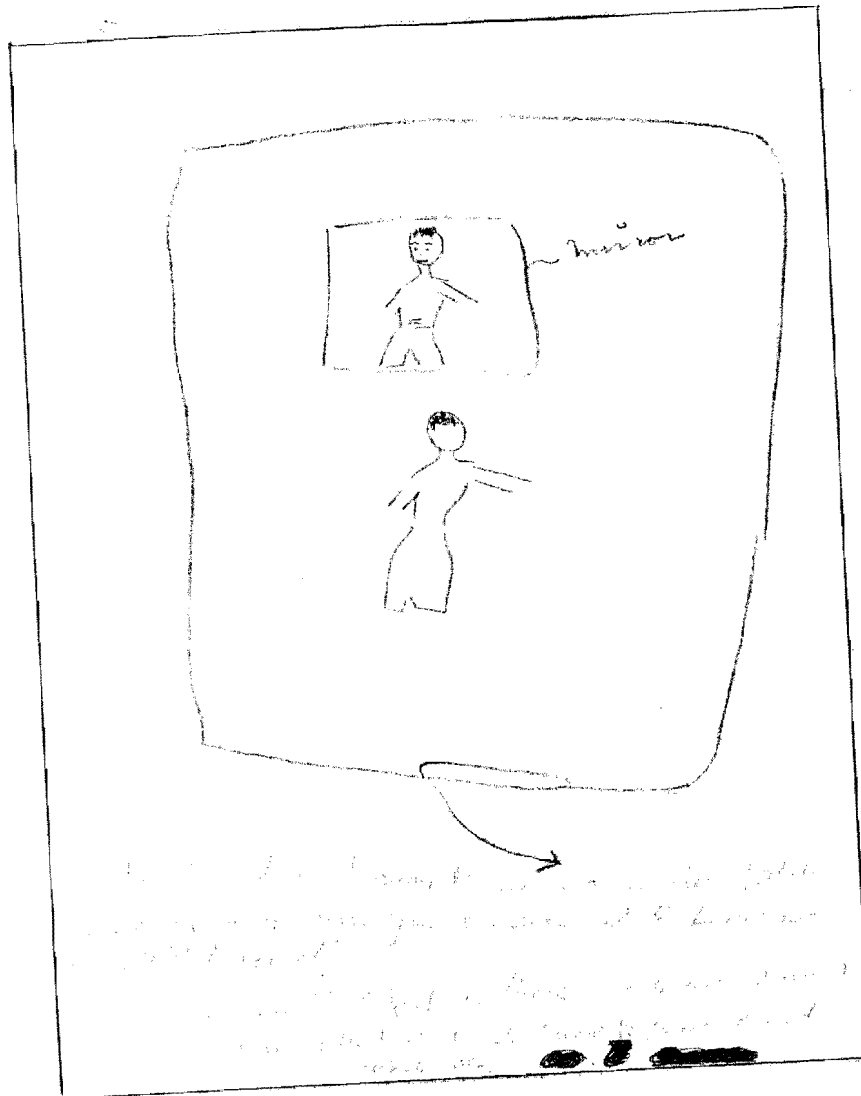


Fig. 4

tion as such is kind and appealing but is experienced as ignoring him and his need for appreciation.

4. In relation to the type of elaboration and transformation of the maternal representation into a God representation, one may safely say that it is minimal. God is a direct and undisguised continuation of the maternal representation and its ambivalent cathexis. The type of representation which prevails is symbolic and preconceptual, composed mostly though not exclusively of visual images. Other types belonging to later moments of the formation of representations are present, but most of the time their significance seems to be subordinated to the psychic influence of preconceptual images.

5. In relation to the defenses prevalently used against believing in this representation, this person commonly uses repression, reaction formation, and an aggrandized self-image. By repressing he refuses to make himself aware of the God he has. Reacting violently against his need for a God and a mother, he makes himself exceedingly independent and self-sufficient.

6. The prevalent use of the God representation is as an object for displacement of the narcissistic rage experienced with the mother. God is denied existence, respectability, and the right to be taken seriously. Such displacement, I propose, permitted Douglas O'Duffy to have a less painful experience with his mother and keep his relation with her on relatively good terms until she died.

7. Among the cumulative traumas (Kahn, 1963) which interfered with his normal development, as well as with his ability to continue the elaboration of his image of God, two are predominant: his mother's limited ability to respond to the child's need for recognition, admiration, and self-aggrandizement, and his poor health as a boy surrounded by powerful male figures. His fear of believing is the "dread of repeating" (Ornstein, 1974) narcissistic exposure, feeling neglect and humiliation, and fear of acknowledging his need for his mother and her caring for him. For him to be able to accept both, he would need to work through his narcissistic expectations and the ensuing rage upon their frustration.

8. In connection with his official religion, the God offered by his local Roman Catholic church coincides with the God he might believe in, that is, the unconscious component of the God representation. That aspect of God is kind and appealing.

9. As for the need for a God, he feels that God's existence would give meaning to his life and the world.

10. In APA terms Mr. O'Duffy's psychic decompensation was diagnosed as a "reactive depression to occupational trauma (car accident) in an obsessive compulsive personality." In a psychoanalytic formulation it may be described as a reactive depression following the shattering of a sustaining, admired, and admirable self-image which maintained his narcissistic balance in his dealings with society as a maternal substitute.

THE STORY OF DOUGLAS O'DUFFY

Douglas O'Duffy, a giant of a man, is an officer of the Pennsylvania state police who describes himself as an "honest cop." He can support his claim with numerous citations for courageous service above and beyond the call of duty.

At thirty-nine he is a well-established, middle-class, Roman Catholic Irish-American, righteous, determined, and intensely frustrated by the evils of a society where corruption is rampant. He boasts about his own contrasting brave actions and his incorruptible behavior. He is also a tender, loving man very much in love with his wife of seventeen years and his three children.

When I met him he was suffering from intense nervousness manifested in facial tics, headaches, and pain in the back of his neck. He was obviously depressed and extremely angry. He had lost weight, was unable to sleep, and had not worked for six months. The symptoms started after an accident that occurred while he was driving a patrol car. He had been hit by another automobile and knocked unconscious for a few minutes. After being seen by a physician, he was sent home because he had no injuries. He went to bed and remained there, waited on hand and foot by his wife. His headache required constant use of Demerol. His personality changed noticeably. He became bitter, depressed, angry, intensely afraid of going back to his duties; he ruminated constantly on his life, the accident, and, most specifically, on the ungrateful public and the lack of concern of his superiors and fellow officers. The legal aspects of the accident were quickly settled. Careful neurological evaluation failed to reveal any consequences from the trauma. But it was obvious that the accident had brought about a major change in his personality. Family and friends agreed in saying that he had not been himself since the day of the accident. He had reversed roles with his wife: he was now cooking and taking care of the children while she worked to balance their income. The tension created by this situation was beginning to affect a marital relation which had been mutually satisfying up to that point. Mr. and Mrs. O'Duffy agreed that they did not want that to continue and accepted psychiatric help. They decided to consult a Boston psychoanalyst whose reputation inspired confidence in them. He was very eager to be helped and entered the therapeutic process with a solid alliance with his therapist.

Douglas O'Duffy was the tenth and last child born to an Irish family in Philadelphia. The second boy and another had died in infancy. Both dead children remained very much alive in the mother's constant thinking about them. The other living children were three boys and four girls, in that order. The family never mentioned the second dead boy's name or the details of his death, or when he was born. Apparently the boy was born between two of the sisters. The first dead boy was referred to constantly by name.

At the time of delivery, Douglas was a normal child. Later, however, he became "a skinny, sickly, ungainly, awkward child" who contracted

rheumatic fever between the ages of three and six (the dates are not precise because the patient had trouble remembering this very emotional detail). For three months during the first or second grade, the rheumatic fever confined him to bed. To help him recover, his mother took him with her and her sister to a Caribbean island for a period of two months.

He felt very lonely during his childhood, and very different from his admired and athletic brothers. He resented his mother's giving him shots for his ailments, and felt that he hated her during most of his early childhood. He also hated her constant involvement with religion. He could remember no happy memories from that period. He admired his father to the point of hero worship. The father, a state policeman much loved by officers, bums, and crooks alike, was a jolly, efficient, caring man always personally interested in anyone he met.

When Douglas was nine years old, his playmate, a boy of his own age, and a woman neighbor who visited him frequently when he was ill in bed both died suddenly. The boy died of pneumonia. Little Douglas was shaken by the experience. The playmate had also been a sickly child. Douglas felt that the friend "couldn't make it." He went to the funeral, saw the dead child's face, and in his shock reflected on his dead siblings, especially the first boy, whose death had upset his parents and whose memory the mother kept alive through the years. Another friend, a young soldier, the son of his woman neighbor, was killed in war service overseas.

At eleven his rheumatic fever had been controlled. He decided that he wanted to succeed in sports like his brothers, to undo the image of the sickly child. The doctor advised against this, but he was determined to be an athlete and he practiced football, basketball, and baseball. He practiced "to the point of exhaustion" to achieve mastery. During that time he also developed the habit of looking into the sun even though he knew how harmful it could be. But he was committed to total mastery over his body. He achieved his goal. He developed into a very tall, well-coordinated, aggressive, competitive athlete. His satisfaction was so immense that he derived "all happiness from it." He had proved to himself and others that he could be "extremely independent, exceedingly good with my hands . . . and good enough to win," but he remained "always wanting to be better." But his intense frustration about feeling different from everyone else did not subside. He felt that his family (with the exception of his father) was uninterested in his achievements and continued to treat him as "the kid brother." It infuriated him that no matter what he did or how good his performance at sports was, he could never impress them and obtain the "accolades" of attention or admiration the others did. At that point Douglas accused his parents of having enough love for eight children (seven living and the first dead boy), but not for ten (himself and possibly his other dead brother). He brooded on the idea that he should not have been conceived, because his mother did not realize she had a younger

son. He could not understand why anybody would conceive another child if they did not feel enough "compassion" for that child. (He was referring to himself and his other dead sibling never mentioned by the parents.) He concluded that in his family "there was enough love to go only eight pieces deep. They should have had only eight children. I was different from anybody else."

He was especially critical of his mother, who seemed so unaware of him as the person he was. This was especially painful because the mother was so aware of whatever was going on in the family. She was the one who set limits. "She was the one who would read the riot act, or take TV-radio privileges, assign work details, be waiting up when you came home stoned, or knew when you were going hot and heavy with the girl next door." He also complained bitterly about his oldest sister who seemed "occupied and distant as if [she] could care less if you were around."

He also resented the intense religious atmosphere in the house which the mother created with crucifixes, holy water, prayers, the Bible, and her demands that the children go to church. It infuriated him that his mother said that a person without "blind faith was nothing." He had felt very ambivalent about religion and God since childhood. Now, in his early adolescence, he set out to prove to himself and others that priests and religious people were hypocrites who impose moral rules on others to control them while they do what they please. He began to spy on priests and to collect stories about their sexual escapades (though they preached chastity) and their greed for money. He felt that reason would prove religious people wrong and concentrated his efforts on the dogma of the virgin birth, the notion that salvation outside the church is impossible, and life after death. In his bitterness he concluded that a dead person is "in the category of your dog." During adolescence, however, he surprised himself by singing in the church choir and by finding that he could be friendly with one particular priest. Nonetheless, his task of discovering hypocrisy drove him to follow priests around to witness their escapades with "little dolls." He was delighted to find a priest having an affair. He laughed and said to himself, "They are as human as you and me." He was sixteen years old, doing well in school, and dreaming about an athletic college scholarship. He worked very hard for it and was convinced he could get it. He was competing with his older brothers, who had gone to Yale and Princeton, had become acquainted with well-known people, and were now in high government jobs. The parents had paid for the brothers' education, but Douglas was determined to be totally independent, to show that he could do it without help. He knew that his intense independence could "hurt people," but he was driven by his need. His coach promised to recommend him to Princeton but recommended a relative instead. Douglas felt cheated and let down. In his frustration he accepted a scholarship from a local Catholic college. There he settled and at the age of twenty-one met his wife. He described the experience

by saying, "We hit it off. It was not exactly what you call love. I pretty much wanted to marry her." His marriage plans, however, were interrupted by his father's developing a fatal illness. The older siblings were well-established people living in other states. His brother Peter and he were the only ones around. Douglas felt that he "had to terminate" his college education to help repair his father's finances. The father's final days were clouded by a scandal of major proportions, and he was eventually found guilty of accepting bribes. Douglas suffered a profound shock, because he had always admired his father, especially "his responsibility, efficiency, and sense of duty." He was dismayed at having to accept what his need to admire his father had not permitted him to see—that his father's accommodating behavior was related to a flexible conscience. In his grief, after the father's death, he gave up his dream of becoming a lawyer and joined the state police under the excuse that it would offer him "the security of a steady job." Underneath, however, was the determination to be the ideal public servant he had thought his father was, admired, beloved, incorruptible. In his painful deception, his childish admiration of his father did not permit him to see that in the practicalities of everyday life, "beloved" and "incorruptible" were contradictory terms.

Soon after he married, he had children and tried as hard as he could to be a good trooper. He had problems with his superiors, however, because he was so impatient with their frailties and limitations. His own actions were like examples for them to observe: he would be the first man on the spot in an emergency, the first to extend a hand, the last to leave; he was the one who used his free time to protect the poor and the solitary. His superiors did indeed notice his exemplary actions, and they piled citations on him. But they did not promote him because he was impossible to get along with: he was far too much of a solo performer to work in a team.

During his late twenties several members of his numerous extended family died. He considered each death a personal loss and still remembers the exact date, hour, and details of each individual death. When he was thirty, his mother, who had rejected his offer to live with him, died. He had visited her frequently and engaged in serious conversations with her. He felt that in her last hours he had come close to her and realized, to his relief, that "she was human too," when she complained of pain and discomfort. He tolerated her death well, though he is still a bit confused about it. He cannot clearly remember the dates of his mother's and father's deaths.

His life was now devoted to his duties and his family. For several years this existence continued uneventfully, marked only by other family deaths and two minor accidents on the job which sent him to the hospital for a few days but which had neither psychological nor physical consequences.

The children were growing up, and he felt the pride of being a husband, a provider, a father. He decided to raise his children as Roman Catholics. His

reasoning was that "it may save them some little doubt and make it easier for them.⁴ I won't coerce them." Their family life was reasonably happy. His wife obviously loved him. She felt he had good communication with her and with the children. She described him as warm and friendly in his relations with them. Her only complaint was that he worked too much.

It was in this context of home life and duty that the accident which had such drastic psychic consequences occurred. It had been preceded by a series of tragic events in the state police; two months before, two troopers had been killed on duty, and an officer friend had committed suicide with his own revolver. Douglas O'Duffy, always so deeply affected by death, reacted with sorrow and brooding. His own accident, though medically irrelevant, was the final straw.

In looking at the process of his decompensation and recovery we can infer a sequential order of events:

1. The accident itself in which Douglas O'Duffy was knocked unconscious for the first time in his life.
2. His violent psychosomatic and emotional reaction characterized by
 - a. intense rage at the public and the police for their failure to give him the recognition due him;
 - b. intense headaches and irregularity in his biological rhythms: sleep, appetite, and libido;
 - c. a depressed mood centered around intense brooding over having been a "tin Jesus," thinking he could do something for others but finding himself rebuffed by those whose admiration and gratitude he counted on;
 - d. brooding and regret about having invested so much of his heart and time in the public rather than in his family;
 - e. retreat into bed, needing to be totally cared for by his wife. (The period he stayed in bed was the same he had been in bed at age six when he had rheumatic fever.)

One may consider this first stage a regression to a childhood state.

3. The first move toward recovery. This was spontaneous and consisted in his getting up, taking over his wife's duties in the house, declaring himself incapable of returning to work, and accepting his wife's support.

One may consider this second stage of recovery a transitional period of identification with his mother.

4. The final move toward recovery, in which he fully realized his condition, sought help, wanting to be a good father and husband now. He decided to resign from his job and get a civilian job, and he did this, allowing himself more time for his family.

One may consider this third stage a renunciation (after failing to attract the world of people his father had in his final days) of his identification with his father, the well-liked man, and a decision to identify instead with his father as the loved and loving family man. This move seemed to provide him sufficient self-esteem and satisfaction to restore his emotional equilibrium.

DOUGLAS O'DUFFY'S GOD REPRESENTATION
AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR
HIS PSYCHIC EQUILIBRIUM

In analyzing Douglas O'Duffy's composite God representation I have found that it originates mostly from his interactions with his mother. Among those interactions four elements stand out. They are, in order of importance (1) the frustrating mother, who failed to offer the child sufficient narcissistic enhancement; (2) the caring mother, colored by the wish that she also recognize and value him; (3) the fantasized and acted-out grandiose self-representation elicited to compensate for narcissistic injury (Kohut, 1971); and (4) the God the mother presented to the child in words and actions as an existing being, "all-powerful and all-merciful," capable of knowing your thoughts. Table 2 below records statements made directly by the patient or written by his therapist or nurses which support this formulation.

Table 2. Sources of Douglas O'Duffy's God Representation

THE FRUSTRATING MOTHER	THE CARING AND WISHED-FOR MOTHER	GOD (composite representation)	GRANDIOSE SELF-REPRESENTATION
"From three to six years old I hated my mother. She was the one who was giving me the shots . . . I was sick in bed. Nobody was helping me."		"I do not feel close to God because I feel [that] if there is a God he could do a great deal more to prevent human suffering."	"I used to look at the sun. It hurts. I did it."
"If they [parents] did not feel enough compassion why would anyone want to have a child? My mother did not realize she had a younger son."		"The feeling I get from my relationship with God is one of total, complete, utter frustration because of double standards."	"I became independent, extremely independent, hard-headed, pugnacious. . . . I always wanted to be better. The biggest deflection* was to be good enough to win." "I consider God as my conscience, the part of me that strives for perfection."

THE FRUSTRATING MOTHER

"In my family there was love to go only eight pieces deep. They should have had only eight children. I was different from anybody else."

Resident's notes:

"The patient grew up with a chronic resentment of the lack of real warmth in his mother."

"His mother constantly stated that a person without blind faith is practically nothing."

"No matter what I did you were still the kid brother. There was never the accolade of attention profused on me as it was on the older boys. The only one who came to the game [when the patient was a player] was my father."

"No matter what you did there was no recognition. There

THE CARING AND WISHED-FOR MOTHER

"An ideal mother for me is a mother interested in me as a human being more than in a God-damn God in person. A mother who realized she had a younger son. More interested in me as a human being rather than one in the group, a number."

"A mother that makes you feel that you belong, that you are part of the group. A mother interested in me as an individual rather than a number."

GOD (composite representation)

"Prayer is not important to me because it is like one crying in the wilderness. Nobody hears them or even listens."

"I do not pray because I feel that God will not answer because he does not exist as I know him."

"For me my love for God is not important because hypocrisy and deceit is not the cornerstone of trust."

"I think that God sees me as I see me† in the mirror."

"For me the world does not have an explanation without God. In my belief I feel I am an agnostic. There may be a God or some being but his power, Glory, Warmth, reason, compassion have never manifested themselves on me. . . . There may be a supreme being but where and who may it be I am not particu-

GRANDIOSE SELF-REPRESENTATION

"If I am in distress I do not resort to God because I got myself into this mess and I'll get me † out." "If I have to describe God according to my experience with him I would say that he is what I find in me that is good; the part of me that finds contentment."

Nurse's note: "The patient's most urgent emotional need throughout his life is to feel satisfied in living up to practically unattainable goals which he sets for himself. He has a need to be his own God." "Emotionally I would like to have the prestige that God has so I too could make profound (stupid) statements and not even be questioned."

"Religion is a very strong motivating force that keeps people from despairing—I mean, regardless if you believe in a chair or a tree it gives you personal solace and holds you together when normally you'd fall apart. It's useful for people who are trying to find themselves. But to me religion has neither been useful, helpful,

THE FRUSTRATING MOTHER

was too much competition." ‡

"My mother did not realize she had a younger son."

"The disciplinarian in my family was my mother She never abated or wavered from what she felt was right."

"I think this way—talking about ages three to six, I think this way: She was the Door. My father was the janitor."

"She was the one who would read the riot act, or take TV-radio privileges, assign work details, be waiting up when you came home stoned or knew when you were going hot and heavy with the girl next door."

THE CARING AND WISHED-FOR MOTHER

GOD (composite representation)

larly interested I am sad about religion. The aesthetic approach is fine but there has got to be some meaning for your life."

"I think that God is closest to those who believe and accept him (if you acknowledge his existence). The fear of God is not important, because I have strong reservations as to his existence."

"The most important thing I expect from God is to leave me alone to be myself and not to brainwash me."

"I think that God wants me to be good because he says it is compatible with his ["my" crossed out by the patient] own ideas of how you ought to behave."

"He wants us to believe so we can lead our tough little lives and not make waves."

GRANDIOSE SELF-REPRESENTATION

or comforting in any way, shape, or manner."

"I want to be so independent that it hurts people."

"I feel that God may be me in the mirror and that the only way I can open the Door is to know me completely and honestly. I know that God is there inside me. I don't know what it is. I have to find out."

THE FRUSTRATING MOTHER

"My mother had a hang-up on religion. The house was full of crucifixes and holy water. The Bible was always around. When I was sick she had the crosses and crucifixes again. I used to have to go to church. That was the way it was in my family: religion, religion, religion, religion. There is no salvation outside the church."

Psychiatrist's note:

"The mother was an extremely devout and religious woman who forced very strict Roman Catholicism on all of the children. She demanded blind faith."

* The word *deflection* conveys his irony. He was not supposed to win.

† The misuse of the pronoun points to language and self-images of early childhood.

‡ Douglas O'Duffy felt he was the "different" child for his mother. She could pay attention, praise, be excited about her other children, but she would never do the same with him. The others received those "manifestations" from the mother, were made to feel they belonged, and found in that experience a "motivating force." The mother believed in them, and them in the mother.

§ The patient's spelling.

Douglas's frustration with his mother's inability to appreciate him and what he did for her was never resolved. He tried to the end, but his mother died without giving him any satisfaction about this. Contrasting with such a painful experience were his experience with his father and the feelings he had about him. These he summed up when asked what father he would have liked if he could have selected the ideal father. He stated without hesitation:

The one I got. I would not change a thing. To be hit by him, punished by him. One thing I remember about my father, that is his infinite perceptivity

THE CARING AND WISHED-FOR MOTHER

GOD (composite representation)

"What I resent the most about God is that it is like an opiate that saps, controls people's minds, and inhibits them with utter phantasy,§ that is great until tested. People have blind faith and lose their ability to think."

"I think that in general as a person I have dissatisfied God because according to his standards I haven't taken all he has offered me on blind faith."

GRANDIOSE SELF-REPRESENTATION

to know when you needed help, to know when you wanted to talk; to know when to scold and when not to scold and give you a pat on the back and say: "What in hell has happened?" He was the most remarkable man I met in my life because of that quality. He knew people and he knew his children. He was there if I needed him. If [I was] really in a bind he always seemed to understand. He loved his wife and family and had great affection for all of us. He was fair in punishments and in rewards. When I was ill as a youngster he made me feel that even though I felt sick and rotten that in time I would feel better. He always sensed when I needed a boost or knew when to encourage and praise. He always was there when I needed him or needed advice. He was lovable.

This description permits two inferences: (1) that when the patient complained about lack of recognition he was referring exclusively to his mother; (2) that he was not able to use his paternal representation to form his image of God or to repair the narcissistic injury he experienced in his relationship with his mother. God never had the appeal his father had. He experienced God as opposed to him, frustrating, controlling, deceptive, and unresponsive, just the opposite of his tender description of his father, but identical with his perception of his mother.

However frustrating God may be, O'Duffy is sad about his religious situation and his inability to believe. He hopes that "the time will come when I am able to believe." A careful analysis of his God representation may give some clue to understanding the psychic processes that contributed to his present predicament with a God he knows exists ("I know that God is there inside me") but cannot allow himself to believe in. In technical terms, the God representation is not syntonic with the patient's present self-perception; God and the patient are incompatible as living psychological beings. Douglas O'Duffy knows that he needs the honesty he accuses God of not having ("hypocrisy and deceit are not the cornerstone of trust") if he is to make peace with God and grant him belief.

Amazingly, the honesty he needs is to "open the Door" (capitalized by the patient) "to know me completely and honestly." What is the meaning of that cryptic sentence? In talking about his mother's giving him shots from ages three to six he concluded, after saying that she was the most hated person during that period of his life: "She was the DOOR [his emphasis], my father was the janitor. Let's put it that way." Obviously this is a dense statement and a complex metaphor. Taken, however, in the contexts both of opening a door to know himself honestly and of his affection for a protective father (who loved his mother deeply and always said so), one may conclude that one of the levels of meaning is that he himself can be found only behind the DOOR (mother). That is, the entrance to self-knowledge, as well as his knowledge of God, may take place only after passing the maternal door. This elaboration does not make the statement less cryptic unless one places it in some de-

developmental context that gives relevance to its meaning. The context that seems obvious from the clinical material is the mirroring phase of development (Lacan, 1949; Winnicott, 1967; Kohut, 1971). Winnicott reflects: "What does the baby see when he or she looks at the mother's face? I am suggesting that, ordinarily, what the baby sees is himself or herself. In other words the mother is looking at the baby and what she looks like is related to what she sees there." If the mother fails in this exchange because her face "is not a mirror," the baby "will grow up puzzled about mirrors and what the mirror has to offer. If the mother's face is unresponsive, then a mirror is a thing to be looked at but not to be looked into." In these cases of failure there is an exaggeration of the need: "The exaggeration is of the task of getting the mirror to notice and approve" because the person "has to be his or her own mother." Winnicott goes on to say of such a person, "In looking at faces he seems . . . to be painfully striving towards being seen." The importance of such a striving depends on the critical conclusion the child draws from the experience. "When I look I am seen, so I exist." Winnicott concludes that the general function of mirroring in psychic life is to contribute to people's feeling real, finding a way to exist as themselves, and having "a self into which to retreat for relaxation."

Douglas O'Duffy never felt that his mother was aware of him, not even when, in her last days, he did everything he could to gain her recognition. His profound bitterness originates in her lack of recognition of his existence. It was to no avail that his father and his brother Peter were exquisitely sensitive to his needs and wishes. He could not accept it that his mother paid no attention to him. His history, however, shows that the mother was in reality responsive to his needs for attention and for time with her, the best example being the three months she spent with him in the Caribbean during his recovery from illness. The mother of course was also perfectly capable of noticing people: the patient knew she recognized, admired, and was excited by the other children. The patient was sure (in his perception of the process) that if she wanted to, his mother could have looked at him and taken note of his existence. That is the mystery he is struggling with: that the mother could notice eight children but not the tenth. This figure provides us with a clue—a critical one. The mother had ten children, of whom eight were alive and two were dead. Of the dead children the first seemed important enough to be recalled constantly by name; the other was never mentioned directly, only by implication in the phrase "dead children." That omitted child seems to be the explanation of the mystery. The patient also never mentioned that child directly. From the history one may conclude that the child was born between two of the sisters. Douglas and that child (the two out of the ten) are the ones excluded from parental love, though counted as real children. The first dead boy is counted as receiving parental love. The patient included both children in the list of his personal losses. He stated:

Before I was born my mother lost a little boy. This was in 1914 [the patient was born in 1930]. The little boy died of diphtheria. My mother always referred to the children she lost. Although I didn't know them, I did, because she always referred to them. He was the first Paul Douglas O'Duffy. The Paul Douglas O'Duffy met unfortunate ends. [The boy who died in the war in 1945 had been named for the deceased elder brother.] My name is Douglas Franklin. The baby was buried in the morning—he was fifteen months old. My brother Robert was born in the afternoon.

The quotation illustrates both the presence and the absence of the second dead child, so present to his knowledge and so repressed from his feelings. The fact that this child is one he omits as recipient of his mother's love indicates that this child and he have something in common. One possible interpretation is that the mother was so preoccupied with the second dead baby that she had difficulty in fully relating to her new baby Douglas. That there was a preoccupation with the dead babies is indicated both by the patient's description and by the naming of the children. The patient then might have been exposed to a most anguish-provoking experience with his mother, a mother who was very much involved with her children and husband, capable of excitement, admiration, and of giving "accolades" to the other children, but who could not respond in a similar way to little Douglas. She had warmth and was capable of loving but may have had a problem in making full contact with the little boy. The fact that he was sickly throughout childhood ("a skinny, sickly, ungainly, awkward, little ferret") could have fed his mother's fear of losing him too, thus distracting her. He always sensed that he was different from anyone else and hated his mother's giving him injections and keeping him in bed while the others were playing. One may assume that the combined facts of his illness and his mother's losses contributed to a different relation between this child and his mother, one in which the child did not feel noticed as himself while he noticed his mother's capacity to respond to others (alive or dead) with affection and enthusiasm. I propose that this continued experience lent itself to the formation of a similar God representation, most specifically shown in the statement "I do not pray because I feel that God will not answer because he does not exist as I know him." What he seems to say is, "He does not exist for me the way I know he exists for others, from the way I see him behaving with them." Even more striking is the answer: "I think God is closest to those who believe and accept him (if you acknowledge God's existence)." The other statements are self-explanatory (see table 2, above).

That death and the fear of death relate to this man's difficulties is supported by the following facts:

1. In spite of his illness as a child he claims that it never occurred to him that he could die.
2. In puberty he became involved in sports in spite of the doctor's advice that his heart could not take it. He played "to the point of exhaustion."

3. During his high school summers he always took high-risk jobs, like being a tree surgeon, and felt exhilarated by the experience.

4. In college he collapsed from a ruptured appendix and was operated on under dangerous conditions, but he denied any fear of dying.

5. "Like a compulsive drinker or addict," he said, "I would be the first one in an accident or a fire. I went overboard."

6. He remembered the exact date of the death of any person who had meant anything to him.

7. The accident that prompted his decompensation seems to be an equivalent of death. For the first time in his life he was knocked unconscious. His wife used to say to him that he was so pugnacious and independent because he had never been knocked unconscious.

One may assume this behavior to be counterphobic and based on a grandiose self-image of being invulnerable and capable of defying death itself. He understood his own behavior as risking himself for others, as being the perfect servant of society. His rage after the accident was with the ungrateful public, who did not recognize his services. In his rage he knew he could kill. He said:

If I become angry I do not stop until the person is down on the floor. I am full of bitterness and resentment. I will meet violence with violence. If somebody crosses me I pull out my .38 and shoot. I have no warmth for society and the public, but resentment. I am extremely hurt by the public per se. Why did I ever go overboard? Why should I care for the public if they don't care about me?

One may see here the connection between death, dead siblings, denial of recognition and warmth, and the psychic imbalance produced by the failure of the grandiose self-representation (powerful, immortal, and admired by others) to protect him from the risk of dying and the absence of public respect and admiration.

That grandiose self-representation, based on an identification with his idealized father, sustained him and gave him endless energy for his duties. When the confrontation with reality was too much to maintain it, disillusionment and narcissistic rage emerged. But that self-image was formed mostly to deal with a mother incapable of noticing him. Throughout his life all his extraordinary efforts and deeds were aimed at being noticed by his mother (his father noticed him even before he said anything) or to convince himself that he was good enough to deserve being noticed by her. His failure was described in religious terms. He said sadly that he had always thought himself a faithful and loyal servant of the public but that in fact all he was was "a tin Jesus." That he was thinking about his mother and her love of God and her involvement with God, while he sought public recognition and authority, is best illustrated by his envy of God's "prestige": "Emotionally I would like to have the prestige that God has so I too could make profound (stupid) statements and not even be questioned."⁵

His downfall, however, experienced by him as being rejected and ignored by the public, seems a painful repetition (Loewald, 1971) of his childhood anguish with his mother. The event that appears to have been repeated was his childhood illness. The accident confronted him not only with the overpowering violence of others but with his own vulnerability to it. It is possible that he briefly experienced his repressed fear of dying. Then he went to bed for exactly the same period he had been in bed as a child and demanded that his wife take total care of him. While this was happening, his mind's eye was on the public and his superiors. He wanted recognition and care from them in return for his intense commitment to them, but they failed him. The public did not even notice what had happened to him, and his superiors looked at his accident matter-of-factly. But Douglas O'Duffy expected "the accolade of attentions" he never got from his mother. He waited and waited, with headaches and anguish, in his post-trauma bed. But they failed him. He experienced tremendous rage: "I am extremely bitter," he said, raising his voice to a shout:

I am extremely hurt with the public per se. Since I've been out, my officer friends have not been near me. For fifteen years I was a good officer. I have delivered thirty-five youngsters and got thirteen citations, and they are as useless as the public I've saved. . . . I must have been a damn fool.

It was at this point that his self-representation as an admired and admirable incorruptible public servant gave way to childhood brooding and became the painful self-representation of "a tin Jesus," a cheap copy of the admired original he could never be. He became again, in his feelings, "the sickly little ferret" his mother would not admire. He knew he did not want to hurt anybody, but he also knew that his frustration was bigger than he, and that in a moment of rage he could lose control. In that crisis he began to regain narcissistic balance by moving to a new stage in his identification with his father. His readily available warmth and tender feelings for his wife and children became the focus of his conscious attention. Knowing that he was capable of great affection and tenderness, he decided to quit the state police, obtain a civilian job, and become a better husband and father. The imposing giant of a man could now easily turn into the soft-hearted protective giant in need of affection. During those moments his voice would become soft, his face smooth with a faint smile, and his longings for warmth and affection would be undisguised. From that clinical evidence one may assume that the man did have tender exchanges with his mother, as he acknowledges, when she took him alone to the Caribbean for his recovery, as well as from his tender care of her when she was dying. He and she had long conversations, and he felt then that *he* got close to *her* and that in her fear of doctors and her own fear of death she appeared "human" to him. One may conclude that it was not that the mother denied him care and warmth but that the child did not find in her the mirroring, the recognition he felt he needed in his own right.

His situation as a sickly child in a family of very physical people injured his self-esteem and made him need his mother's admiration more deeply to compensate for the real limitations his illness imposed on him. He did not get that from his mother. He did not get her to see him as he saw himself. His efforts to obtain narcissistic balance and a feeling of being in personal contact with his mother failed. That experience, I propose, had the following consequences.

1. It started him in a lifelong search for people to mirror him and recognize him with "accolades" of warmth. That mirroring could help him put together his own aggrandized self-representation through the recognition of others. He did not, however, live this wish simply in fantasy. He paid the full price: he became an excellent athlete and an excellent police officer. But his wish, his longings, and his bitterness with his mother went beyond the call of duty and he constantly found himself in trouble with superiors and peers who denied him the mirroring recognition he needed.

2. It made him repress the representation of his caring mother.

3. It led him to reaction formation, doing what was the exact opposite of his wishes: he became independent of his mother and other frustrating objects to the point of "hurting people." The final point of that reaction formation was in fact identification with the aggressor. He denied to others what he felt was denied him, recognition of his existence as himself (Kohut, 1972). I propose that this component of his defensive maneuverings explains his doubt of the existence of God and his wish to prove to himself that he can be his own God. ("He has a need to be his own God," the nurses said.) This reaction had two roots, repression and reaction formation while facing the unfulfilled need for maternal recognition and narcissistic self-aggrandizement through a self-sufficient image of invulnerability and immortality which permitted him to need no one and to be his own God.

4. It gave him a dim but distressing awareness of his inner conflict and of not having made full contact with himself, as so beautifully stated in the sentence at the bottom of his drawing: "The only way I can open the Door is to know me completely and honestly. I know that God is there inside me."

5. It did not permit him to integrate his loving relation with his father into his God representation.

Now let us turn to find out how he arrived at that God representation.

THE CHARACTERISTICS AND ORIGINS OF DOUGLAS O'DUFFY'S GOD REPRESENTATION

The Location of God

Going from inside to outside, God has five locations for Douglas O'Duffy:

1. "Inside me," "part of me," "my conscience," "the part of me that finds contentment," "the part of me that strives for perfection."

2. Outside him but in direct connection with him. "God may be me in the mirror," i.e., God is a reflection of him.
3. Outside him but capable of seeing him as he sees himself. "I think that God sees me as I see me in the mirror."
4. Outside him and antagonistic to him. "The feeling I get from my relation with God is one of total, complete, utter frustration." "The most important thing I need from God is to leave me alone."
5. Outside him and nonexistent in reality as known by the patient. "I do not pray because I feel that God will not answer because he does not exist as I know him."

The sequence in here moves from (1) the inner feeling (part of me), to (2) the external validation of God (me in the mirror), followed by (3) the wished-for validation by the other existing in reality (he sees me as I see me), and (4) frustration, wherein God refuses to validate his existence. The final step (5) is the defensive maneuver of denying existence to the frustrating object (Winnicott, 1967).

The Type of God Representation

1. God is obviously a full person, who may not exist as presented but is certainly a very living being who frustrates, does not answer, and constantly bothers Douglas O'Duffy.
2. God is also a person with eyes to see him as he sees himself.
3. God is that aspect of him which (a) strives for perfection, and finds goodness and contentment in himself, but (b) he does not know him and will not know him until he opens the Door.
4. God is, finally, Douglas O'Duffy's image in a mirror: the visual components of these images prevail to a striking degree.

In conclusion God is either a concrete person outside himself, his own image, or the best part of him as a real person.

These findings contrast with one of his responses in the questionnaire: "I do not believe in a personal God, because I feel there may be a Supreme Being, but I further feel it may not be as I've been taught." The contrast between the findings above and this answer illustrates the nature of his conflict: his efforts to find a God that makes sense within him, not a God imposed on him and unknown to his experience. One may conclude that God is a representation whose earliest traceable roots belong to the mirroring phase described by Winnicott, in which the maternal face (mirror) reflects the child to himself. If the child, however, on account of a specific failure of mirroring, has compensated with a precocious ego development, a maternal representation corresponding more or less to the real mother will be formed, excluding her capacity to mirror but including her other attributes plus some of the child's fantasies and wishes related to her. In the case of Douglas O'Duffy the mother was represented as capable of perceiving others but not him—capable of warmth and enthusiasm

but incapable of seeing anything in him to which she could respond with "accolades." The frustrated child seized that representation when in maturing it came time for him to elaborate his God representation. His frustration with his mother was never resolved. He hoped throughout his life to obtain the mirroring he did not obtain in childhood. He hoped that his extraordinary behavior and performance would cause his mother to notice him. But she failed him. That failure did not permit him to elaborate his God representation any further and left it permanently linked with the frustrating mother. The care and good feeling also experienced in his relation with his mother were repressed in relation to her and to God as well. The caring mother appears in the tender, caring side of God. The point is best illustrated in his answer about his wishes for the afterlife. He said, "I would like to be with God after death because it is a nice idea and it would make life easier." When asked if he would like to be united to God in the afterlife, his voice became soft and tender in saying, "Sure! I will enjoy that!" He immediately elaborated that he wanted his entire family with him, his father, his mother, his dead siblings, and his siblings' spouses and children. When asked if he felt close to God as a child, his voice changed again to a very tender pitch saying, "Yeah . . . when singing in the choir, going to mass, things like that." Then his ambivalence took over, "I often wonder, Did I go because I wanted to go or because I was forced to go? I don't know." He also decided to raise his own children as Roman Catholics to spare them the pain of doubt. He did not want to coerce them, however. One may conclude that the composite tender, caring, but narcissistically frustrating maternal representation used to form the earliest and most prevalent God representation met with two specific defenses: repression of its goodness to avoid the dreaded repetition of frustrated wishes for recognition, and denial of its true existence in reality as a combined result of identification with the aggressor (if you don't feel I exist I don't feel you exist either) and grandiose self-enhancement (I am me—my own God whether you acknowledge it or not—and I am good enough to exist on my own without your mirroring recognition). This use of the maternal representation to form the image of God may have served an adaptive purpose. Little Douglas O'Duffy, sickly, small and needy as he was, could ill afford a blunt rejection from a mother whom he needed more acutely the less able she was to make contact with him as he felt himself to be. God came in handy, to fight against, to disown, to disbelieve. The representation was benign and merciful, and there was no risk for him if he voiced his rage against God: although he claimed that God did not exist, he unconsciously counted on God's non-retaliatory tolerance of his noise and complaints about him.⁶ It never occurred to Douglas O'Duffy that if there was a God, he would be punished, or even held accountable for his harsh words. As a matter of fact, God seems to have had endless patience with his bitter complaints. Perhaps that is the best evi-

dence that his mother was a caring and protective person with a specific failure in mirroring.

Further evidence that the image was formed during the developmental period—in which the need for mirroring, admiration, and a sense of perfection prevail—comes from the aspect of the image of God he accepts without question: "I consider God as my conscience, the part of me that strives for perfection . . . He is what I find in me that is good; the part of me that finds contentment." One may infer that the narcissistically frustrated child was able to find some self-affirmation and worth in himself. That he calls that aspect of himself *God* permits a further inference: when he was searching for his mother's mirroring of his felt goodness and perfection, he must have been thinking about God or at least used the experience in later speculation. The evidence comes from the compounded God representation itself, which includes the dialectic exchanges between himself and his mother during that period, namely, his own goodness and perfection, her frustrating failure, her benign approach to the child and her tolerance of his anger, his wish to be seen as he saw himself, and the developmental battle for control. All these elements locate us in an early developmental period between the ages of one and three or four. Whatever happened later did not touch the God representation or these earliest exchanges with his mother. Repressed and reacted against, those early experiences remained with him, untouched by his good relation with his father and brother or, at present, with his wife. He obviously reached the oedipal crisis at other psychic levels and went through it without major difficulties. That development, however, did not touch his narcissistic problem. This is so clear that the patient himself knows that the only way for him to unravel the mystery of his God in the mirror is to "open the Door (mother) . . . to know me completely and honestly. I know that God is inside me. I don't know what it is. I have to find out."