When Leonardo succeeded in reproducing in the face of Monna Lisa the double sense comprised in this smile, namely, the promise of unlimited tenderness, and sinister threat (in the words of Pater), he remained true even in this to the content of his earliest reminiscence. For the love of the mother became his destiny, it determined his fate and the privations which were in store for him. The impetuosity of the caressing to which the vulture phantasy points was only too natural. The poor forsaken mother had to give vent through mother's love to all her memories of love enjoyed as well as to all her yearnings for more affection; she was forced to it, not only in order to compensate herself for not having a husband, but also the child for not having a father who wanted to love it. In the manner of all ungratified mothers she thus took her little son in place of her husband, and robbed him of a part of his virility by the too early maturing of his eroticism. The love of the mother for the suckling whom she nourishes and cares for is something far deeper reaching than her later affection for the growing child. It is of the nature of a fully gratified love affair, which fulfills not only all the psychic wishes but also all physical needs, and when it represents one of the forms of happiness attainable by man it is due, in no little measure, to the possibility of gratifying without reproach also wish feelings which were long repressed and designated as perverse.[63] Even in the happiest recent marriage the father feels that his child, especially the little boy has become his rival, and this gives origin to an antagonism against the favorite one which is deeply rooted in the unconscious.

When in the prime of his life Leonardo re-encountered that blissful and ecstatic smile as it had once encircled his mother's mouth in caressing, he had long been under the ban of an inhibition, forbidding him ever again to desire such tenderness from women's lips. But as he had become a painter he endeavored to reproduce this smile with his brush and furnish all his pictures with it, whether he executed them himself or whether they were done by his pupils under his direction, as in Leda, John, and Bacchus. The latter two are variations of the same type. Muther says: "From the locust eater of the Bible Leonardo made a Bacchus, an Apollo, who with a mysterious smile on his lips, and with his soft thighs crossed, looks on us with infatuated eyes." These pictures breathe a mysticism into the secret of which one dares not penetrate; at most one can make the effort to construct the connection to Leonardo's earlier productions. The figures are again androgynous but no longer in the sense of the vulture phantasy, they are pretty boys of feminine tenderness with feminine forms; they do not cast down their eyes but gaze mysteriously triumphant, as if they knew of a great happy issue concerning which one must remain quiet; the familiar fascinating smile leads us to infer that it is a love secret. It is possible that in these forms Leonardo disavowed and artistically conquered the unhappiness of his love life, in that he represented the wish fulfillment of the boy infatuated with his mother in such blissful union of the male and female nature.

[Illustration: JOHN THE BAPTIST]

V

Among the entries in Leonardo's diaries there is one which absorbs the reader's attention through its important content and on account of a small formal error. In July, 1504, he wrote:

"Adi 9 Luglio, 1504, mercoledi, a ore 7 mori Ser Piero da Vinci notalio al palazzo del Potestà, mio padre, a ore 7. Era d'età d'anni 80, lasciò 10 figlioli maschi e 2 feminine."[64]

The notice as we see deals with the death of Leonardo's father. The slight error in its form consists in the fact that in the computation of the time "at 7 o'clock" is repeated two times, as if Leonardo had forgotten at the end of the sentence that he had already written it at the beginning. It is only a triviality to which any one but a psychoanalyst would pay no attention. Perhaps he would not even notice it, or if his attention would be called to it he would say "that can happen to anybody during absent-mindedness or in an affective state and has no further meaning."

The psychoanalyst thinks differently; to him nothing is too trifling as a manifestation of hidden psychic processes; he has long learned that such forgetting or repetition is full of meaning, and that one is indebted to

the "absent-mindedness" when it makes possible the betrayal of otherwise concealed feelings.

We would say that, like the funeral account of Caterina and the expense account of the pupils, this notice, too, corresponds to a case in which Leonardo was unsuccessful in suppressing his affects, and the long hidden feeling forcibly obtained a distorted expression. Also the form is similar, it shows the same pedantic precision, the same pushing forward of numbers.[65]

We call such a repetition a perseveration. It is an excellent means to indicate the affective accentuation. One recalls for example Saint Peter's angry speech against his unworthy representative on earth, as given in Dante's Paradiso:[66]

"Quegli ch'usurpa in terra il luoga mio Il luoga mio, il luogo mio, che vaca Nella presenza del Figliuol di Dio, Fatto ha del cimiterio mio cloaca."

Without Leonardo's affective inhibition the entry into the diary could perhaps have read as follows: To-day at 7 o'clock died my father, Ser Piero da Vinci, my poor father! But the displacement of the perseveration to the most indifferent determination of the obituary to dying-hour robs the notice of all pathos and lets us recognize that there was something here to conceal and to suppress.

Ser Piero da Vinci, notary and descendant of notaries, was a man of great energy who attained respect and affluence. He was married four times, the two first wives died childless, and not till the third marriage has he gotten the first legitimate son, in 1476, when Leonardo was 24 years old, and had long ago changed his father's home for the studio of his master Verrocchio. With the fourth and last wife whom he married when he was already in the fifties he begot nine sons and two daughters.[67]

To be sure the father also assumed importance in Leonardo's psychosexual development, and what is more, it was not only in a negative sense, through his absence during the boy's first childhood years, but also directly through his presence in his later childhood. He who as a child desires his mother, cannot help wishing to put himself in his father's place, to identify himself with him in his phantasy and later make it his life's task to triumph over him. As Leonardo was not yet five years old when he was received into his paternal home, the young step-mother, Albiera, certainly must have taken the place of his mother in his feeling, and this brought him into that relation of rivalry to his father which may be designated as normal. As is known, the preference for homosexuality did not manifest itself till near the years of puberty. When Leonardo accepted this preference the identification with the father lost all significance for his sexual life, but continued in other spheres of non-erotic activity. We hear that he was fond of luxury and pretty raiments, and kept servants and horses, although according to Vasari's words "he hardly possessed anything and worked little." We shall not hold his artistic taste entirely responsible for all these special likings; we recognize in them also the compulsion to copy his father and to excel him. He played the part of the great gentleman to the poor peasant girl, hence the son retained the incentive that he also play the great gentleman, he had the strong feeling "to out-herod Herod," and to show his father exactly how the real high rank looks.

Whoever works as an artist certainly feels as a father to his works. The identification with his father had a fateful result in Leonardo's works of art. He created them and then troubled himself no longer about them, just as his father did not trouble himself about him. The later worriments of his father could change nothing in this compulsion, as the latter originated from the impressions of the first years of childhood, and the repression having remained unconscious was incorrigible through later experiences.

At the time of the Renaissance, and even much later, every artist was in need of a gentleman of rank to act as his benefactor. This patron was wont to give the artist commissions for work and entirely controlled his destiny. Leonardo found his patron in Lodovico Sforza, nicknamed Il Moro, a man of high aspirations, ostentations, diplomatically astute, but of an unstable and unreliable character. In his court in Milan, Leonardo spent the best period of his life, while in his service he evinced his most uninhibited productive activity as is

evidenced in The Last Supper, and in the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza. He left Milan before the catastrophe struck Lodovico Moro, who died a prisoner in a French prison. When the news of his benefactor's fate reached Leonardo he made the following entry in his diary: "The duke has lost state, wealth, and liberty, not one of his works will be finished by himself."[68] It is remarkable and surely not without significance that he here raises the same reproach to his benefactor that posterity was to apply to him, as if he wanted to lay the responsibility to a person who substituted his father-series, for the fact that he himself left his works unfinished. As a matter of fact he was not wrong in what he said about the Duke.

However, if the imitation of his father hurt him as an artist, his resistance against the father was the infantile determinant of his perhaps equally vast accomplishment as an artist. According to Merejkowski's beautiful comparison he was like a man who awoke too early in the darkness, while the others were all still asleep. He dared utter this bold principle which contains the justification for all independent investigation: *"Chi dispute allegando l'autorità non adopra l'ingegno ma piuttosto la memoria"* (Whoever refers to authorities in disputing ideas, works with his memory rather than with his reason).[69] Thus he became the first modern natural philosopher, and his courage was rewarded by an abundance of cognitions and suggestions; since the Greek period he was the first to investigate the secrets of nature, relying entirely on his observation and his own judgment. But when he learned to depreciate authority and to reject the imitation of the "ancients" and constantly pointed to the study of nature as the source of all wisdom, he only repeated in the highest sublimation attainable to man, which had already obtruded itself on the little boy who surveyed the world with wonder. To retranslate the scientific abstractions into concrete individual experiences, we would say that the "ancients" and authority only corresponded to the father, and nature again became the tender mother who nourished him. While in most human beings to-day, as in primitive times, the need for a support of some authority is so imperative that their world becomes shaky when their authority is menaced, Leonardo alone was able to exist without such support; but that would not have been possible had he not been deprived of his father in the first years of his life. The boldness and independence of his later scientific investigation presupposes that his infantile sexual investigation was not inhibited by his father, and this same spirit of scientific independence was continued by his withdrawing from sex.

If any one like Leonardo escapes in his childhood his father's intimidation and later throws off the shackles of authority in his scientific investigation, it would be in gross contradiction to our expectation if we found that this same man remained a believer and unable to withdraw from dogmatic religion. Psychoanalysis has taught us the intimate connection between the father complex and belief in God, and daily demonstrates to us how youthful persons lose their religious belief as soon as the authority of the father breaks down. In the parental complex we thus recognize the roots of religious need; the almighty, just God, and kindly nature appear to us as grand sublimations of father and mother, or rather as revivals and restorations of the infantile conceptions of both parents. Religiousness is biologically traced to the long period of helplessness and need of help of the little child. When the child grows up and realizes his loneliness and weakness in the presence of the great forces of life, he perceives his condition as in childhood and seeks to disavow his despair through a regressive revival of the protecting forces of childhood.

It does not seem that Leonardo's life disproves this conception of religious belief. Accusations charging him with irreligiousness, which in those times was equivalent to renouncing Christianity, were brought against him already in his lifetime, and were clearly described in the first biography given by Vasari.[70] In the second edition of his Vite (1568) Vasari left out this observation. In view of the extraordinary sensitiveness of his age in matters of religion it is perfectly comprehensible to us why Leonardo refrained from directly expressing his position to Christianity in his notes. As investigator he did not permit himself to be misled by the account of the creation of the holy scriptures; for instance, he disputed the possibility of a universal flood, and in geology he was as unscrupulous in calculating with hundred thousands of years as modern investigators.

Among his "prophecies" one finds some things that would perforce offend the sensitive feelings of a religious Christian, e.g. Praying to the images of Saints, reads as follows:[71]

"People talk to people who perceive nothing, who have open eyes and see nothing; they shall talk to them and receive no answer; they shall adore those who have ears and hear nothing; they shall burn lamps for those who do not see."

Or: Concerning mourning on Good Friday (p. 297):

"In all parts of Europe great peoples will bewail the death of one man who died in the Orient."

It was asserted of Leonardo's art that he took away the last remnant of religious attachment from the holy figures and put them into human form in order to depict in them great and beautiful human feelings. Muther praises him for having overcome the feeling of decadence, and for having returned to man the right of sensuality and pleasurable enjoyment. The notices which show Leonardo absorbed in fathoming the great riddles of nature do not lack any expressions of admiration for the creator, the last cause of all these wonderful secrets, but nothing indicates that he wished to hold any personal relation to this divine force. The sentences which contain the deep wisdom of his last years breathe the resignation of the man who subjects himself to the laws of nature and expects no alleviation from the kindness or grace of God. There is hardly any doubt that Leonardo had vanquished dogmatic as well as personal religion, and through his work of investigation he had withdrawn far from the world aspect of the religious Christian.

From our views mentioned before in the development of the infantile psychic life, it becomes clear that also Leonardo's first investigations in childhood occupied themselves with the problems of sexuality. But he himself betrays it to us through a transparent veil, in that he connects his impulse to investigate with the vulture phantasy, and in emphasizing the problem of the flight of the bird as one whose elaboration devolved upon him through special concatenations of fate. A very obscure as well as a prophetically sounding passage in his notes dealing with the flight of the bird demonstrates in the nicest way with how much affective interest he clung to the wish that he himself should be able to imitate, the art of flying: "The human bird shall take his first flight, filling the world with amazement, all writings with his fame, and bringing eternal glory to the nest whence he sprang." He probably hoped that he himself would sometimes be able to fly, and we know from the wish fulfilling dreams of people what bliss one expects from the fulfillment of this hope.

But why do so many people dream that they are able to fly? Psychoanalysis answers this question by stating that to fly or to be a bird in the dream is only a concealment of another wish, to the recognition of which one can reach by more than one linguistic or objective bridge. When the inquisitive child is told that a big bird like the stork brings the little children, when the ancients have formed the phallus winged, when the popular designation of the sexual activity of man is expressed in German by the word "to bird" (vögeln), when the male member is directly called *l'uccello* (bird) by the Italians, all these facts are only small fragments from a large collection which teaches us that the wish to be able to fly signifies in the dream nothing more or less than the longing for the ability of sexual accomplishment. This is an early infantile wish. When the grown-up recalls his childhood it appears to him as a happy time in which one is happy for the moment and looks to the future without any wishes, it is for this reason that he envies children. But if children themselves could inform us about it they would probably give different reports. It seems that childhood is not that blissful Idyl into which we later distort it, that on the contrary children are lashed through the years of childhood by the wish to become big, and to imitate the grown ups. This wish instigates all their playing. If in the course of their sexual investigation children feel that the grown up knows something wonderful in the mysterious and yet so important realm, what they are prohibited from knowing or doing, they are seized with a violent wish to know it, and dream of it in the form of flying, or prepare this disguise of the wish for their later flying dreams. Thus aviation, which has attained its aim in our times, has also its infantile erotic roots.

By admitting that he entertained a special personal relation to the problem of flying since his childhood, Leonardo bears out what we must assume from our investigation of children of our times, namely, that his childhood investigation was directed to sexual matters. At least this one problem escaped the repression which has later estranged him from sexuality. From childhood until the age of perfect intellectual maturity this

subject, slightly varied, continued to hold his interest, and it is quite possible that he was as little successful in his cherished art in the primary sexual sense as in his desires for mechanical matters, that both wishes were denied to him.

As a matter of fact the great Leonardo remained infantile in some ways throughout his whole life; it is said that all great men retain something of the infantile. As a grown up he still continued playing, which sometimes made him appear strange and incomprehensible to his contemporaries. When he constructed the most artistic mechanical toys for court festivities and receptions we are dissatisfied thereby because we dislike to see the master waste his power on such petty stuff. He himself did not seem averse to giving his time to such things. Vasari reports that he did similar things even when not urged to it by request: "There (in Rome) he made a doughy mass out of wax, and when it softened he formed thereof very delicate animals filled with air; when he blew into them they flew in the air, and when the air was exhausted they fell to the ground. For a peculiar lizard caught by the wine-grower of Belvedere Leonardo made wings from skin pulled off from other lizards, which he filled with mercury so that they moved and trembled when it walked; he then made for it eyes, a beard and horns, tamed it and put it in a little box and terrified all his friends with it."[72] Such playing often served him as an expression of serious thoughts: "He had often cleaned the intestines of a sheep so well that one could hold them in the hollow of the hand; he brought them into a big room, and attached them to a blacksmith's bellows which he kept in an adjacent room, he then blew them up until they filled up the whole room so that everybody had to crowd into a corner. In this manner he showed how they gradually became transparent and filled up with air, and as they were at first limited to very little space and gradually became more and more extended in the big room, he compared them to a genius."[73] His fables and riddles evince the same playful pleasure in harmless concealment and artistic investment, the riddles were put into the form of prophecies; almost all are rich in ideas and to a remarkable degree devoid of wit.

The plays and jumps which Leonardo allowed his phantasy have in some cases quite misled his biographers who misunderstood this part of his nature. In Leonardo's Milanese manuscripts one finds, for example, outlines of letters to the "Diodario of Sorio (Syria), viceroy of the holy Sultan of Babylon," in which Leonardo presents himself as an engineer sent to these regions of the Orient in order to construct some works. In these letters he defends himself against the reproach of laziness, he furnishes geographical descriptions of cities and mountains, and finally discusses a big elementary event which occurred while he was there.[74]

In 1881, J. P. Richter had endeavored to prove from these documents that Leonardo made these traveler's observations when he really was in the service of the Sultan of Egypt, and that while in the Orient he embraced the Mohammedan religion. This sojourn in the Orient should have taken place in the time of 1483, that is, before he removed to the court of the Duke of Milan. However, it was not difficult for other authors to recognize the illustrations of this supposed journey to the Orient as what they really were, namely, phantastic productions of the youthful artist which he created for his own amusement, and in which he probably brought to expression his wishes to see the world and experience adventures.

A phantastic formation is probably also the "Academia Vinciana," the acceptance of which is due to the existence of five or six most clever and intricate emblems with the inscription of the Academy. Vasari mentions these drawings but not the Academy.[75] Müntz who placed such ornament on the cover of his big work on Leonardo belongs to the few who believe in the reality of an "Academia Vinciana."

It is probable that this impulse to play disappeared in Leonardo's maturer years, that it became discharged in the investigating activity which signified the highest development of his personality. But the fact that it continued so long may teach us how slowly one tears himself away from his infantilism after having enjoyed in his childhood supreme erotic happiness which is later unattainable.

VI