

# The Metaphysical Foundations of Object Cathexes

But at the bottom of our souls, quite "down below," there is certainly something unteachable, a granite of spiritual fate, of predetermined decision and answer to predetermined, chosen questions.



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In this analysis of object cathexes, I am finally able to ascribe metaphysical origins to the *mistaking of our desire for isolated qualities of objects used in their representation with our desire for the objects as sensuous appearances themselves*.

## Objects and Representation

Given an object, it is by means of abstracting it into isolated qualities and representing it as such that we can cogitate anything about it at all. An object cathexis, despite being made at the level of representation, makes itself known as an impulse in the sphere of raw sensation. In this phenomenon frequent confusion arises, due to misconstruing the desire for isolated qualities with the desire for the object itself.

## Object Cathexes Originate in Representations

An object cathexis necessarily originates on the plane of representation, because it is only in the absence of an object that we can have any desire for it, and the only means of cogitating an object in the absence of its raw sensation is by means of its representation.

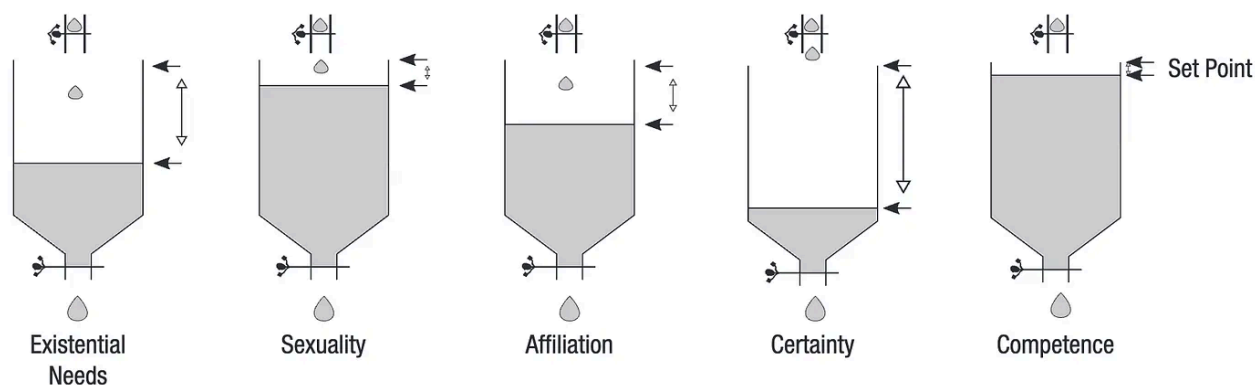
The term “object” is used loosely to denote any empirical phenomenon which interacts directly with the olfactory, auditory, tactile, visual, kinesthetic, or gustatory sensations or any combination thereof.

## Object Cathexes Express Towards Appearances

Although cathexes occur at the level of representation, it is only towards sensuous phenomena that we experience the cathexis, as it is only in phenomena that cathexes can ever be satisfied. However, the cathexis expresses only towards those phenomena which have hitherto conceived or satisfied the desire.

## The Object Cathexis as a Mere Instrument for Ego Equilibration

In their formation, object cathexes are used as mere instruments by homeostatic ego drives that seek to equilibrate one's internal apperceptions at biological set point levels.<sup>1</sup>



**Fig. 4.** Tanks showing the five needs.

Figure 1. Biological set point levels of human needs.

The baby's cathexis towards the mother is originally by virtue of her satisfying his physiological and safety needs. The isolated qualities the baby represents of the mother are precisely those that relate to his survival. The cathexis forms

around those properties that would equilibrate his physiological and safety needs if satisfied.

The earliest cathexes form at the level of existential needs. Cathexes subsequently form to equilibrate hierarchically superordinate needs.

## **On the Confusion Arising from Cathexes Towards Higher Needs**

It is precisely this confusion we have sought to expose. When cathexes are formed towards such higher needs as love and understanding, community and acceptance, and competence and esteem, they too originate always in the raw sensuous phenomena which have hitherto conceived or satisfied the desire.

However, in these cathexes for which no physical origin or satisfaction can be ascribed, such as those relating to emotions (in contrast to those relating to such physical needs as food, water, or shelter), we are especially susceptible to confusion, for it is never an object itself we desire, but instead our internal state which accompanied the object.

One may, for example, grow bedeviled over an amorous flame, not because one desires the object of their seduction, but because one wants to believe they can seduce.

When deprived of sodium, one may direct their attention towards those foods which they have verified through experience are salty. But it is never salt in its raw form that one cogitates.

More empirical examples to illustrate the validity of this theory are in order, and may be the subject of future work.

In short, despite the superordinate denomination of higher needs, the mechanism that advocates their satisfaction is the same from which earlier,

more primitive needs have originated when the faculty of cognition was still in its infancy.

## On the Satisfaction and Transference of Object Cathexes

*Can one circumvent the instantaneous impulse towards an object by recognizing the need one wishes to equilibrate and instead pursue such satisfaction of the need in its own right, independent of the particular choice of object?*

The answer to this is affirmative: by recognizing the isolated qualities around which the cathexis originally forms in the representation of one particular object, the isolated qualities, forming the basis of the cathexis, can be transferred to any representation of an object (for it is only a representation we can cogitate in the absence of direct sensory experience) that also shares such an isolated quality. The object of transference need not be any object that has hitherto conceived or satisfied the desire; as long as it is represented, or may be represented, using the same isolated quality as originated the cathexis, the cathexis can, in principle, be transferred.

Similar mechanisms of transference are observed broadly among ego self-regulations, albeit in other capacities and situations.

## Distinctions in Ego Equilibration

Ego equilibrating behavior can be divided into 1) *positive* and 2) *negative* acts: the former are 1) *object cathexes*, which seek to equilibrate needs by means of the addition of something external, and the latter are 2) *cathartic drives*, which seek to equilibrate needs by means of releasing repressed thoughts that stand as an obstacle to homeostatic drives by obfuscating the truth that one has ever strayed from their set points at all.

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## Acknowledgement

The above analysis has been made possible by Kant's metaphysics <sup>2</sup>, Nietzsche's critical philosophy <sup>3</sup>, Freud's psychoanalytic model <sup>4 5</sup>, Jung's study of libidinal transference <sup>6</sup>, and Maslow's exposition on human needs <sup>7</sup>.

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- 1 Figure taken from Güss, C. Dominik, Sarah Ahmed, and Dietrich Dörner. "From da Vinci's flying machines to a theory of the creative process." *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 16, no. 6 (2021): 1184-1197.
  - 2 The Critique of Pure Reason, Immanuel Kant
  - 3 Beyond Good and Evil, Friedrich Nietzsche
  - 4 The Ego and the Id, Sigmund Freud
  - 5 Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego, Sigmund Freud
  - 6 Psychology of the Unconscious, Carl Jung
  - 7 A Theory of Human Motivation, Abraham Maslow



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Great synthesis. Most would agree we are all driven by innate drives and instincts towards characteristics and needs like sodium. Is the human or animal thing to let those instincts win? Is it more animal or human to deny yourself the cupcake?

As soon as you start seeing people as simply innate objects of utility representing some sort of character trait you are letting yourself be driven by pure animal instincts. Is that how someone should see their mother? Their grandfather? Long-term relationships are deepened and made more fulfilling by the ABSENCE of transaction. I always see my friends as an end in themselves, as Kant would prescribe himself. I give even when not expecting anything in return, which has led to extremely fulfilling long-term relationships.

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