In the case of the infant who experienced the outside world as untrustworthy, his only feeling of safety was that which he could create in his inner world. Because he was actually so weak and dependent on others, he had to fantasy himself as very strong. Freud used the phrase “His Majesty the Baby” in this connection. \(^{24}\) In order to find even the illusion of safety, the baby retreats into a world where he is his own love object. His narcissism is an attempt to protect himself from the fear of death which is ever present.

The deeper the alcoholic regresses in an individual binge and in the progression of his illness, the more complete the narcissistic focus of his love energy becomes. But this very regression to the infantile defense of narcissism exposes him to the terrifying giants and demons of the infant-level inner world. The overwhelming “nameless” fears of advanced alcoholism can be understood in this framework of thought. The intense fear of dying and devouring rages toward the depriving object are revived in the alcoholic. Only added alcohol-induced grandiosity can even begin to hold them in check. Spiraling waves of feelings of omnipotence are but desperate attempts to cope magically with the fear-giants and cannibalistic rages of the infantile world (which is also the world of psychosis). Thus his existential anxiety is compounded and made unmanageable by his oral-level neurotic fear of death.

**DEPENDENCY CONFLICTS AND SECONDARY TRUST**

The second reason why the alcoholic is peculiarly exposed to his existential anxiety is that his extreme dependency-antonomy conflict prevents him from forming healthy dependency relationships. McCord and McCord, on the evidence from a longitudinal study of alcoholism, based on data from the Cambridge–Somerville delinquency prevention project, conclude: “The major force which seemed to lead a person under heavy stress to express his anxiety in alcoholism was the erratic frustration of his dependency desires.” \(^{25}\) The original project, beginning in 1935, included 650 boys, both “normal” and “predelinquent.” By the time of the analysis of the data, about 25 years later, 10 percent of the subjects had become alcoholics. But a lower percentage of those who experienced overt rejection by their mothers eventually became alcoholics than of those whose mothers were alternately loving and rejecting. One-third of the latter group had become alcoholics in their 30’s. As Pavlov and others have demonstrated, the erratic, alternate frustration and satisfaction of a need enhances the strength of that need. McCord and McCord reason that the prealcoholic is involved in an endless quest to satisfy powerful dependency needs which, in our culture, are unac-

\(^{24}\) It is noteworthy that the context of Freud’s use of this phrase was a discussion of the manner in which the parents encouraged the child’s feelings of omnipotence in order to fulfill their own frustrated narcissism. *(Complete Works, Vol 14, p. 91.)*