

Psychoanalytic Theory, Therapy and the Self

HARRY GUNTRIP

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FOREWORD



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"To care for people," writes Guntrip, "is more important than to care for ideas." This humane attitude is evidenced throughout in Harry Guntrip's approach to his patients, to his colleagues, and to theorists both past and present. First and foremost, he feels the experience with the patient, and from the experience, he conceptualizes so that theory is very close to experience. Though Guntrip is most clearly associated with Fairbairn and Winnicott, he is not identified with any school. This independence of thought leads to a very concise exposition

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5. Cyril Burt, "Brain and Consciousness," *The Bulletin of the British Psychological Society* (1968): pp. 29-36.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*
9. Cyril Burt, "The Structure of the Mind," *British Journal of Statistical Psychology*, 14 (1961): pp. 145-170.

Chapter 2

THE STARTING POINT OF PSYCHODYNAMIC INQUIRY

F R E U D



Since, under the stimulus of day-to-day clinical work in which patients are constantly presenting fresh and unexpected sidelights on familiar problems, it is impossible for one's theoretical position to remain static, I welcome this opportunity of reviewing and bringing up to date the theoretical standpoint that I presented in 1961 in *Personality Structure and Human Interaction*¹ and further developed over the intervening years, in the manuscript prepared for *Schizoid Problems, Object-Relations and the Self*.² Since that manuscript was completed early in 1967, I realized that already, in some respects, further clarifications of basic ideas had taken place, and that I would benefit by a further attempt at a condensed statement of the essentials of present-day psychodynamic theory as I see it.

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I shall, therefore, at the outset, outline my over-all plan. Perhaps the most important thing I wish to emphasize is that I shall present the "Object-Relations Theory," not as a British School of Psychoanalysis but as a far more fundamental phenomenon. It is true that in *The American Handbook of Psychiatry*, I had the opportunity to present the views of W. R. D. Fairbairn under that heading, and in the broad context of that most comprehensive standard work, there was justification for so doing.³ Nevertheless, I wish now to place Fairbairn in *his* true context, as part of a long-standing and ongoing movement of thought in the psychodynamic exploration of human nature. I shall thus describe object-relations theory as the struggle for predominance of one of the two different types of thinking mixed and confused together in psychoanalysis from its earliest beginnings in the work of Freud. Object-relations theory, or to use the American version, "Interpersonal-Relations Theory," is the emancipation of Freud's psychodynamic personal thinking from its bondage to his natural-science, impersonal, intellectual heritage. We must, therefore, look again at the clash of neuropsychology, psychobiology, and psychodynamics in the arena of Freud's restlessly original and exploratory mind. There has never been a stage of psychoanalytic theorizing when both lines of thought have not been visible, but gradually research into the ego and personal relationships has more and more occupied the center of the stage.

While Hartmann has elaborately modernized classic psychobiology, others both in Britain and America have been developing the personal, psychodynamic implications of Freud's work. While the work of Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, Clara Thompson, and others revealed the oneness of Freud's too exclusively biological theory, and forced social factors to be taken more specifically into account, Harry Stack Sullivan's clear rejection of instinct as an adequate concept for human psychology, and his adoption of interpersonal relations ex-

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perience as his basic concept, I believe as early as 1925, was the first absolute breakthrough of object-relations theory. It must have seemed far more disconcerting to psychoanalysts in general at that time, than it could do now, and the limitations of Sullivan's theory are today more clear. Nevertheless, it was a challenging and important advance outside of the official psychoanalytic movement.

In Chapter 3 I shall seek to show how the work of Melanie Klein became, in a subtle way (closely related to depth psychology), the unwitting originator of a similar major reorientation in the direction of object-relations theory from inside the psychoanalytic movement. From that time on, this stream of thought broadened irresistibly. In distinction to the system-ego of Freud and Hartmann, a person-ego theory grew steadily in the work of W. R. D. Fairbairn and Erik Erikson, and is now coming to fruition in the work of Donald Winnicott and others in the child therapy field. The person-ego theory shows how the very beginnings of ego growth as the core of selfhood in the psyche as a whole person is entirely bound up with the first and fundamental object-relationship, that of the mother and her baby. This, then, is the ground I shall try to cover, and at the outset I must make three qualifying remarks.

1. As already stated, I do not regard object-relations theory as a new school of psychoanalysis. In thinking about human nature, it is too easy to have an emotional investment in our theory. In this field, the formation of rival schools, in-groups, too self-contained theories, is surely a betraying sign of anxiety. There is something wrong with us if our theoretical ideas remain stagnant and impervious to change for too long. Theory is simply the best we can do to date to conceptualize the experiences our patients present to us. Winnicott once wrote that it is impossible for an analyst to be original, for what he writes today, he learned (from a patient) yesterday. In fact, we have to beware of imposing our fixed ideas on our

patients. I suppose every analyst of any amount of experience, can remember how, in the early days, he would at times interpret according to the book and fail to get any response from the patient. We could not do without theoretical guidelines, most of all in the days of inexperience, but it is not as easy as some critics think to impose on the patient ideas that don't fit or are irrelevant at that particular moment. The ideal time for interpretation has always been stated to be the moment when the patient is almost seeing something for himself and needs help to overcome some last bit of resistance. As analytical experience increases, the analyst is more likely to have the experience of a patient saying, "It is strange you should say that: I did think something like that only this morning." But there is never a stage at which patients do not make some remarks that throw subtle new light on old problems. If we are receptive, this keeps our theory moving and alive. Before I came to psychoanalysis in practice, a rigorous training in philosophy made me skeptical about all theories. Clearly human thought never reaches finality. I came to the conclusion that particularly theories about human nature always represent a modicum of fact described within the limits of the cultural outlook of some one restricted period of social history. It is easy to show how this was true of Freud, or of Victorian science as represented by Thomas H. Huxley, or of the new learning theory and behavior therapy as represented in Britain by Hans Eysenck. At least Huxley had the insight to qualify his views about scientific materialism and epiphenomenalism, or the view that mind is only like the steam whistle on a train and has no real influence, by the significantly wistful comment "Perhaps I am color-blind" about these things.

In a review of "Depth Psychology: A Critical History," by Dieter Wyss, Leon Salzman says, "Two histories of psychoanalysis are combined in this volume." One of them is that of the vicissitudes of "a theory of behavior in the then prevailing model of energy mechanics and oversimplified con-

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cepts of causality. . . . The most rigid psychoanalytic theorists, insisting on the maintenance of all of Freud's original speculations, in the long run destroy their possibilities." The other history is that of the efforts to "move personality theory closer to a valid statement about man and his psychology. . . . The physical models which have been offered to date do not adequately encompass man, who functions through a system of values as well as physiochemical changes."⁴ Salzman adds two important comments to this.

Psychoanalysis is a science, not a religion or a system of beliefs which required dedicated loyalty and ritualistic worship. The institutionalization of psychoanalytic training and the organization of associations designed to maintain the purity of theory and the status of its practitioners have been most damaging to the prospects of an ultimate personality theory based upon psychodynamic principles. It is certain that the essential contributions of Freud which relate to the dynamic concept of personality development, the influence of early experiencing the role out-of-awareness factors in human behaviour, and the technique for exploring introspective and subjective experiencing will remain.⁵

It is in exactly Salzman's spirit that I shall seek to disentangle the two coexisting strands in Freud's thought. Freud himself showed a mind that was forever on the move, one of the things we have most cause to be grateful to him for. He had the courage to change his own theories again and again. Joan Riviere once wrote "In 1924, when I was struggling with obscurities in 'The Ego and the Id' for translation, and pestered Freud to give me clearer expression of his meaning, he answered me, exasperated, 'The book will be obsolete in thirty years.'"⁶ Freud gave us a starting point—theories that contain elements of permanent value—and also a tremendous example of not becoming bogged down just there, but rather of going on gathering new experiences and experimenting with new hypotheses.

2. For this reason also, the term "object-relations theory"

should not be limited to the work of Fairbairn. He would have been horrified at the idea of founding a new school of psychoanalysis. He contributed seminal ideas to the common stock of understanding. When Parkinson's disease and cerebral thrombosis claimed him as their victim, they prevented him from completing his work. He had intended to write and had gathered material for a full-scale study of hysteria. He had outlined to me some ideas he was developing on the nature of psychoanalysis as science. I regretted not having made notes of that conversation, as I was not able to get him to go over that ground again. When he read the first draft of my paper on ego-weakness soon afterward, he said, "I'm glad you've written this. If I could write now, this is what I would be writing about." It was sad to see this man who knew that he had more to give, while increasing weakness robbed him of the power to express it. I owe much to the inspiration of his thought and have done something to develop it, but I feel bound to honor the spirit of this man and say that I am not a "Fairbairnian" and that there is no such thing. He did not think in such terms. What there is is not a school of thought but a steadily developing concentration on "the personal ego in object-relations." Fairbairn, deriving stimulus from Melanie Klein, made an outstanding contribution to this area, although he did not provide a dogma but a stimulus to research.

The term "object-relations theory" should not therefore be limited to Fairbairn's work. In the 1940s and early 1950s he did call his work object-relations theory, implying not a new theory, but a deliberate emphasis on the personal side of Freud's theory of parent-child (Oedipal) relations. Tavistock clinic sympathizers suggested the shorter form "object-relations theory." Ian Suttie, in his "Origins of Love and Hate," an early Tavistock man, was in a sense a forerunner of Fairbairn, who once said to me, "Suttie really had something important to say." The truth, however, is that important ideas grow in particular subtle atmospheres of thought. Fair-

bairn could not have written as he did at the end of the last century nor in the first two decades of this one. In those days Freud was struggling to break out of the rigid enclosure of natural science without ceasing to be scientific, so as to found psychoanalysis, or as I would prefer to call it in this context, psychodynamic science. The resulting subtle changes in the climate of thought that were begun by Freud liberated original minds to develop further changes, Harry Stack Sullivan, Melanie Klein, and Ronald Fairbairn being among them. Only in historical perspective can we think realistically about these matters; certainly not in terms of defending or attacking any schools of thought.

Object-relations theory, or rather object-relational thinking, is a broad stream of thought today. Its roots may be found in the work of Freud on the Oedipus complex and the phenomena of transference and resistance in treatment. It expanded tremendously in the work of Melanie Klein on internal objects, became explicitly conscious of itself in American psychosociology and in Fairbairn's correlations of internal-object-splittings and ego-splittings, has been clinically developed in Erikson's ego-identity studies, and in the most radical way deepened by Winnicott's work on ego-origins in the earliest mother-infant relationships. These outstanding names represent a developing movement in which large numbers of people, both inside and outside the psychoanalytic organization, have taken part. As one who is not a member of any psychoanalytical society, though working by the psychoanalytic method and trained in it by Fairbairn and Winnicott, I feel it is proper to say that, with one or two exceptions, by far the major debt owed by all of us is to the psychoanalytic movement that sustains an organized mass of research. Yet today, even the psychoanalytic movement is not ideologically homogeneous, and not all of it contributes to object-relations theory. In fact, object-relational thinking is now not an organization but a broad movement of thought that belongs

to this age in a special manner, as a counterbalancing movement to the enormous growth of physical science. A main spur to its development is the necessity to provide a counterpoise to diametrically opposed theories that are nondynamic, nonobject-relational, and nonpersonal and that seek to impose natural science thought-forms on the study of the intimate and personal life of man; generally by taking note only of symptoms and ignoring the meaning and values of subjective experience. As I sought to show in Chapter 1, the existence of two different psychologies, dynamic and nondynamic, does not necessarily imply that they must be opposed. All such opposition is essentially unscientific. But when opposition does occur (and my impression is that hitherto psychoanalysts have been more ready to accept that there is a place for behavior therapy than the behaviorists have been ready to recognize that there is a place for psychoanalysis), then it is symptomatic of the cultural predicament of our time, and represents life as persons having to fight for survival in an age dominated by purely objective, mechanistic science and technology. Psychodynamic thinkers are then obliged to carry the fight into the camp of traditional science and show its incapacity for dealing with psychic reality.

3. My last qualifying remark, which I feel must be made in view of the wide sweep of psychoanalytic territory surveyed, is that I cannot claim to be in any sense a psychoanalytic polymath, or to have read everything that is important in this field. The literature is now so extensive that it would take a psychoanalytic historian, devoted solely to the scholarly study of the entire movement, to cope with it. But there is another reason. To devote too much time to scholarship would be to have too little time to treat patients, which is the important thing, and as a result would stifle one's own independent thinking. We must find guiding ideas from books and from one another, but it is from patients that we learn the facts about human nature at firsthand, taking into account our

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own personal analysis. I have chosen rather to study a few writers who seemed to me to stand out as truly creative, such as Sullivan, Melanie Klein, Fairbairn, Erikson, Hartmann, and Winnicott. There are papers by Karl Abraham, Sándor Ferenczi, and Ernest Jones that no one can afford not to read. I owe a debt to Marjorie Brierley not only for her writings and her stimulus in personal discussion but also for her bringing into the psychoanalytic arena the concept of personology, an ugly word but an indispensable idea. Both the lectures of J. C. Flügel, in my undergraduate days, and his scholarly writings have been invaluable. There are others I would fain have had time to read thoroughly, but have only been able to dip into their work, along with their contributions to *The International Journal* that arrested my attention. I take this opportunity of acknowledging my indebtedness to articles in *The International Journal* by Maxwell Gitelson, Leo Rangell, Robert Holt, and especially Bernard Apfelbaum for enabling me to see the work of Heinz Hartmann and the ego-psychology movement he stimulated, through various and differing American eyes. But it seems to me that, once grounded in the fundamentals of theory, the important thing is to be constantly testing ideas by the evidence that patients bring. To care for people is more important than to care for ideas, which can be good servants but bad masters, and my interests have always been primarily in clinical work rather than in theory as such. The survey of theory that follows no doubt omits much that is important but it is close to, and primarily reflects, what I am able to see actually going on in disturbed human beings seeking help.

Whatever one has or has not read, there is one must. We all must begin with Freud, because he is the starting point for Freudians, neo-Freudians, and even for non-Freudians and anti-Freudians alike; no one can ignore or bypass Freud. In the early days Jung, Adler, and Rank were all profoundly affected by him. Melanie Klein and Fairbairn, Hartmann and

Erikson all regarded themselves as both developing and, also in various ways, going beyond Freud. For the moment it is enough to say that Hartmann developed Freud's system-ego theory in new directions, while the object-relational views so greatly stimulated by Klein's work have led rather to the conceptualization of a person-ego theory. It is a not insignificant historical accident that Hartmann came to America while Melanie Klein came to Britain, for in spite of the apparent orthodoxy of her instinct theory, it was Melanie Klein's work that so greatly stimulated object-relational thinking in Britain. As I have explained, it is my purpose to show that this can mislead us, and that object-relational thinking must be studied as a movement of thought inherent in psychoanalysis from its inception. If it is not as prominent in Hartmann as it is in the work of some others in America, it is still there, and a stimulating cross-fertilization of ideas in psychodynamics is taking place today between those studying these matters on both sides of the Atlantic.

Freud's ideas fall into two main groups, (1) the id-plus-ego-control apparatus, and (2) the Oedipus complex of family object-relationship situations with their reappearance in treatment as transference and resistance. The first group of ideas tends to picture the psyche as a mechanism, an impersonal arrangement for securing dereliction, a homeostatic organization. The second group tends toward a personal psychology of the influence people have on each other's lives, particularly parents on children. This second group of ideas led Freud beyond the study of sex, with its obvious biological basis and function, to aggression, with its obvious social concomitants of guilt and depression, and so to the concept of the superego, an aspect of psychic life not traceable to biology but based on identification with parents. The superego enshrines the fact of personal object-relations, since Freud pointed out that the overcoming of the Oedipus complex is effected by identification taking the place of Oedipal re-

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lations with parents. It is thus highly significant that in Hartmann's work the superego declines in importance with all of its object-relational connotations and falls into the background behind the autonomous system-ego and its apparatuses. In the work of Melanie Klein, the superego is actually the starting point of all of her new developments. Hartmann has developed to the full the more impersonal aspect of Freud's theory, while Melanie Klein developed the object-relational aspect. R. and K. Eissler, in their contribution to the Hartmann *Festschrift*, show him to be a mind in the true classical mold, not only a methodical and most painstaking thinker but also a man of mature and wide scholarship on the basis of a very thorough scientific education. He was ideally suited to the task of developing and completing the more impersonal ego-apparatus ideas of Freud, tracing them through all of their many changes, as he does for example with Freud's concept of the ego in Chapter 14 of *Essays on Ego Psychology*. In this he carried the work of Freud to its utmost limits of elaboration, drawing out implications that Freud himself had no time or opportunity to explore. But Hartmann remains in a fundamental way orthodox from the point of view of the classical psychoanalytical tradition, in spite of his autonomous ego concept. It is not simply that he retained the concept of the Id, for in varying degrees Melanie Klein, Erickson, and even Winnicott continue to use that term. It is rather that Hartmann's theory never really comes to life as a dynamic psychology of whole and unique persons. Rather he seeks to make contacts with general psychology, which today tends markedly to be nondynamic and nonpersonal. Just as the behavior therapist's human being is simply a repertoire of behavior patterns, a personality-pattern but not a real person or self, so in Hartmann the ego is a repertoire of apparatuses and automatisms for internal control and for external adaptation to outer reality but not a personal self. The person is taken for granted, and all the emphasis is on the system-ego,

true to the id-plus-ego-control apparatus aspect of Freud's theory. It is a structural theory, not a personal theory.

We shall do well at this point to remind ourselves of just how impersonal that side of Freud's thought could be, by turning to his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Freud, being the pioneer of an entirely new approach to the study of man, could not have foreseen how deeply he would be involved in a conflict of loyalties between the traditional natural science in which he was raised, which was shaped for the objective study of material phenomena, and the new psychodynamic science, which he was destined to create. The two parts of his theory reflect this, the impersonal apparatus for the control of id-drives (the hydraulic model as it has been called) on the one hand, and the object-relational life of meaningful and motivated relations between persons, beginning with parents and children on the other hand. The impersonal aspect of Freud's theory was developed in the interests of being scientific, and we know that Freud's first attempt at large-scale theory construction was purely neurophysiological, as in *Project for a Scientific Psychology* or *Psychology for Neurologists* in 1895. When he found that its concepts did not explain truly psychological phenomena, Freud had the courage to drop the scheme and move on to experiment with other biological ideas. The new learning theorists of today may believe that they have succeeded where Freud failed, but, in fact, they occupy in all essentials that same position that he rejected as inadequate. I am not saying that their studies of conditioning, habit-forming, and reconditioning are invalid. That would not be true, and I accept the fact that their type of study ought to be carried on. But I hold Freud to be right when he decided that it is not psychology, and it was a psychology that he was really in search of.

In the second great phase of his theory-making, Freud turned to the concept of instincts, which looked to be sufficiently psychological. Although he did once write, "Instincts

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are our mythology," Freud never really abandoned his psychobiology. Nevertheless, from about 1915 to 1920 onward, the strong wine of Freud's relentless quest began once more to burst the bottles of old theory. It drove him on to ego-analysis, but because this remained tied to his psychobiology, we must look more closely into it. It was still basically far more a natural science type of theorizing than a truly personal one. Freud was trying to ride two horses at once, that of mechanistic theory with his economic and topographical points of view, and that of personal theory in his dynamic point of view worked out on the basis of psychogenetic processes in the medium of family relationships. Although even Freud's dynamic drives oscillated between being biochemical and psychological energies, the concept of psychic energy is a difficult one to work with because the concept of energy belongs to physical science.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud speaks of his views as speculative assumptions, but somehow they come to be treated as facts.

The course taken by mental events is automatically regulated by the pleasure principle. . . . The course of those events is invariably set in motion by an unpleasurable tension, and . . . it takes a direction such that its final outcome coincides with a lowering of that tension—that is with an avoidance of unpleasure or a production of pleasure.⁷

Note the term "automatically," which is mechanistic, not psychologically meaningful. The mental or what should be the psychologically significant terms, "pleasure and unpleasure," turn out to be not really relevant, for Freud goes on to say:

We have decided to relate pleasure and unpleasure to the quantity of excitation that is present in the mind . . . and to relate them in such a manner that unpleasure corresponds to an *increase* in the quantity of excitation, and pleasure to a *diminution*.⁸

It is clear that these views, to use Freud's words, come from "all that we have been taught by psychophysiology."

The facts which have caused us to believe in the dominance of the pleasure principle in mental life, also find expression in the hypothesis that the mental apparatus endeavours to keep the quantity of mental excitation in it as low as possible or at least to keep it constant. This latter hypothesis is only another way of stating the pleasure principle. . . . The pleasure principle flows from the constancy principle.⁹

This constancy principle was defined by Breuer and Freud in their *Studies in Hysteria*, as the "tendency to maintain intracerebral excitation at a constant level." That there is a subtle confusion of two different types of thought here, is shown in Freud's expression "the mental apparatus endeavours." If there is "endeavour," that is, purposive striving, then we are on psychological ground and are not dealing with an apparatus but with a motivated psychic self. If, however, there is an apparatus, that is a mechanistic concept and the use of the term "endeavor" is out of place.

This pleasure or constancy principle, which became known to physiologists later as "homeostasis," valuable as it is for the functioning of the organism, becomes misleading when used to explain our lives as persons. A psychic self devoted to keeping the quantity of excitation at as low a level as possible and constant, that is, unvarying, would in our everyday lives be a recipe for boredom. It is too like the mother who is always saying "Now then, don't get too excited. If you laugh like that, you'll be crying in a minute." Victorian young ladies, brought up on the "constancy principle," or as it was then termed the "modesty principle," found a blind escape into what were called "the vapours." Increased excitation, far from being always experienced as unpleasure, is more usually experienced as relief from dullness, when our personal experience rather than just physiology is considered. When people are

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incapable of genuine enjoyment, they usually fly to excitation as a substitute for it. This physiological quantity theory in fact reduced any psychological consciousness of experiences to the level of a mere accompaniment of bodily processes, exactly what Huxley meant when he called "mind" an epiphenomenon. This is not psychology at all, but brain physiology. When it strays out of its proper place, it becomes brain-philosophy, or scientific materialism. We do not encounter much writing of this kind in psychoanalysis today, though Holt seems to want to recall us to it, and psychologists are still pursuing inquiries on that level. It is a valid inquiry as long as it does not claim to be more than it is, that is, psychophysiology, a study of the physical basis of mental or psychic life. It is not psychology, a study of mental or psychic life in its own right. We should not forget how really non-psychological and impersonal was *one side* of Freud's basic theorizing, representing all that he was being driven to transcend. But the greatness of Freud was just that his emotional intuition and his intellectual urge to exploration could not be bound by his professional scientific education.

We may turn with relief from this obstructive loyalty to physical science in a field where it fails to explain what we want to understand, and then come upon the object-relations side of Freud's thought. This was the source of all that was most creative in his work. Ernest Jones thought that the first half of Freud's theorizing represented a closed and completed whole, and that Freud made a completely new start when he turned to structural theory and ego analysis. I think it is more truthful to say that the change represents the partially successful struggle of the object-relational element in Freud's insight to break through the straightjacket of traditional scientific physical thought-forms. Object-relational thinking is the emancipation of the core of psychodynamic insight. This was the inner driving-force in psychoanalytic thinking from the earliest moment when Freud became dissatisfied with the

understanding of neurosis implied in the hydropathic and other empirical and useless treatments of his day, and began to probe and question with one of the most fearless minds ever brought to bear on human problems. It is true that his object-relational insight had to become disentangled from his inherited theory of instinct-physiology. This really began, although it was not realized for a long time, when Freud moved beyond the sex instinct to add a second major instinct of aggression; for whatever aggression is, it is certainly not an instinct in the same sense as sex. This vague and variably defined term "instinct" is akin to the term "faculty." As early as 1931 Fairbairn wrote:

The general tendency of modern science is to throw suspicion upon entities: and it was under the influence of that tendency that the old "faculty-psychology" perished. *Perhaps the arrangement of mental phenomena into functioning structure groups is the most that can be attempted by psychological science.* [Present writer's italics]. At any rate it would appear contrary to the spirit of modern science to confer the status of entity upon "instincts," and in the light of modern knowledge an instinct seems best regarded as a characteristic dynamic pattern of behaviour.¹⁰

I prefer, with Fairbairn and Sullivan to abandon the use of the term "instinct" (though Fairbairn would use the adjective "instinctive," but not the noun "instinct," to safeguard against reification and entity-making). Perhaps today he would have felt that the term "pattern of behavior" was too impersonal and static in its behavioristic implications, even when prefixed by the adjective "dynamic." He later gave up the use of the term "libido" for the same reason and spoke always of the libidinal ego. He held that so-called instincts are not entities, and certainly "not forces invading the ego from outside itself, giving it a kick in the pants," but dynamic reactions of a "person-ego," sexually or aggressively, in and to an object-relational situation. Even so, there is a fundamental difference

between sexual and aggressive ego-reactions to objects. With sex, the quality of mental experience and the ensuing behavior arise initially from a physical, biochemical state of the organism. With aggression, it is the other way round. The biochemical state accompanying aggressive reactions results from a mental emotional experience. To put this in a wider context, sex belongs to the phenomena we group together as "appetites," with hunger, thirst, excretion, breathing (need for air), and probably sleep and the need for physical exercise. The appetites are all concerned primarily with the survival and reproduction of the bodily organism and are not concerned primarily with the needs of the personal psyche. The appetites *can* all be endowed with personal-relationship significance, and this is most easily done with sex, hunger, thirst, and exercise. Obsessional mothers manage to endow excretion with a great deal of unnecessary guilt-burdened personal-relations meaning. The same may happen to breathing when a smothering mother drives her daughter into asthma, as happened to one of my patients. This patient was also held to be allergic to feather cushions, but it turned out that it was only her mother's cushions that upset her. Sleep acquires a profound personal-relations significance when the ability to go to sleep in the presence of another person expresses a feeling of security in relation to that person. Thus toward the end of a successful analysis it can be a good sign if the patient can relax and go to sleep in a session. On one such occasion the patient said "Something has healed in me deep down." On the other hand, a male patient said that the only time he had ever been to bed with a woman—he did not mind trying it, to see what it was like—he was terrified to go to sleep. Later he broke his only engagement when he found that his fiancée took it for granted that they would sleep in a double bed. He had a really dominating mother who had overlaid his personality. Similarly, the need for physical exercise can be endowed with a personal-relations significance, as when it is turned into competitive athletic sports where

physical prowess is a tremendous ego-booster in relation to other people. There is no need to stress the tremendous extent to which eating and drinking are endowed with a personal-relations significance as being symbolic of friendship and sharing. Thus the bodily appetites or needs can be and practically always are endowed with highly personal values as forms of relating to other people, but they can in fact be satisfied simply as bodily needs with no further meaning. The more excretory functions are disentangled from personal relationships and freed to function simply as a private biological elimination of waste matter, accompanied by a mild, private sensuous pleasure, the healthier it is. It is possible to eat and drink alone for no other reason than that one is hungry or thirsty, and it is optional to make eating and drinking a social matter.

Of all the appetites, sex is the only one that cannot be wholly divorced from object-relations, which is why it is so much caught up and involved in psychoneuroses; though even then it is possible for sexual relations to be more physical than personal. Those who cannot make genuinely personal relations often fall back on bodily sexual relations as a substitute, only to find that sex does not fill the aching mental void. One male patient of a very schizoid aloof type said that he had no real sex life, but only what he called "an intermittent biological urge which has nothing to do with me," which he simply satisfied with a prostitute. Another male patient who superficially was the very opposite of this, having lived quite promiscuously for a number of years, came for treatment for depression, which was really apathy. He said "I think this sex business is a much over-rated pleasure. I'm bored with it." He seemed really surprised when I suggested that that was bound to be the case, since none of the women he had been with had meant anything to him at all. Neither of these two patients had any real personal relationships. Thus we must regard Freud's sex instinct as basically an appetite, primarily

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subserving an organic need for reproduction, but, because of its essentially cooperative nature, it is an appetite that is especially capable of being taken up into the life of the person in relation to another person. The brain and the genitals are the two points at which most clearly biological needs for organs that facilitate survival and psychological needs for effecting relationships as persons meet together, but there is no more reason for calling sex an instinct than there would be for calling perceiving and thinking instincts. This particular appetite of sex, however, though it is basically a matter of physiology, can only function satisfactorily when it is satisfied in the service of a mature and responsible person in genuine personal relationship. Otherwise sex ends up as a source of disillusionment.

For the moment I am most interested in making the point that in sex we start with a biochemical state of the body, an organic appetite, which is then either taken up into or else excluded from the life of personal relationship. In sharp contrast, aggression is not primarily a dynamic organic pattern of behavior; it is rather a dynamic personal pattern of behavior, taking its origin in an emotional reaction of anger, itself a result of fear of some danger, both of which are emotional experiences that stimulate biochemical changes in the body. Aggression is a personal meaningful reaction to bad-object relations, to a threat to the ego, aroused initially by fear. If there is nothing to fear, there is nothing to fight. Aggression is a defensive anger in a situation in which the menace is not too great for us to cope with. Otherwise aggression changes into frustrated rage, hate, fear, and flight. The accompanying biochemical changes are the result, not the cause, of the mental state. Sex is primarily biological and then becomes personal, aggression is primarily personal and then becomes biological. Thus, another important contrast between sex and aggression is that the appetites have a regular organic periodicity. Aggression has no regular periodicity, but is related simply to the

personal object-relations situation. To sum up, the clear difference between sex and aggression, showing that they cannot both be regarded as instincts in Freud's sense, may be put thus: sex, as a bodily appetite, is concerned primarily with bodily aims, however much it can be and is taken up into the service of personal aims, while aggression, as a defensive reaction to a threat to the ego, is concerned primarily with personal aims, however much it may be secondarily used in the service of organic self-preservation as the basis of the personal life. Sex serves the organism first and the personal self second, while aggression reverses this and serves the personal self first and the organism second. It is because of this that when Freud's interest moved beyond sex to aggression, (and beyond hysteria to guilt, obsessional neurosis and depression), the personal, object-relational side of his thinking, always clearly present in the Oedipal theory, came to the forefront, and impersonal psychophysiology and psychobiology began to fall into the background without this being explicitly recognized. His third phase of thinking concentrated on ego-analysis, group psychology, the superego, and all object-relational phenomena. He now ceased to regard anxiety as dammed up sexual libido converted into tension, and saw it realistically as an ego-reaction to danger, to bad-objects.

The original instinct theory remained, however, to slow down progress, still being regarded as the foundation of ego-psychology. Yet the difference between sex and aggression was now tacitly admitted in Freud's structural theory in which sex-drives were regarded as emerging from the hypothetical id to plague the ego, but aggression was taken up into the superego to strengthen ego-control in view of social demands. There is a striking difference here between Freud and Plato, and it is Plato who is the more consistent thinker. In distinguishing between sex and aggression, Plato gives aggression the more personal role as the admired courageous soldier defending the citadel of reason in the ego, against the

dangerous many-headed beast of the lusts and passions of the flesh. Freud, believing it essential to maintain the view that aggression is an instinct, a so-called id-drive, could only do this by degrading it into innate destructiveness, and inventing one of his most unfortunate concepts, that of the death instinct, which Fenichel, Jones, and almost all analysts except Kleinians rejected. Hartmann tried to save this situation by drawing a distinction between (1) aggression as a primary drive on the same level as sexuality, and (2) Freud's speculation about Eros and Thanatos, which he holds to be biological mysticism, a biological hypothesis as distinct from the first, which he regards as a clinical hypothesis.¹¹ Within the terms of Freud's own theorizing, that distinction is correct (a fact that we shall see is important in interpreting Melanie Klein's work), but it does not help us with our present problem, not only because sex and Eros, aggression and Thanatos came to be treated as identical by those analysts who accepted the death instinct but also because clinically, aggression simply is not "a primary drive on the same level as sexuality"; it is a personal defensive reaction against a threat to the ego. I believe that Freud's failure to differentiate properly between sex and aggression is the main reason why psychoanalytic theory has taken so long to disentangle biology and psychodynamics; and to realize that its real business is to create a consistently psychodynamic ego-theory of man as a whole person, developing our true nature in the medium of those personal object-relations that alone give meaning to our lives. The most striking clinical proof of this is the full-scale schizoid person for whom object-loss involves ego-loss, and whose only "affect" if it can be called such is that feeling of "futility" that Fairbairn pinpointed as characteristic of this state. When the ego is lost, the so-called id-drives cease to drive, and this leads to schizoid suicide because there is no longer any point in going on living.

The practical consequences of Freud's instinct theory are

serious for psychotherapy. The analyst can blame failure on the supposedly too great constitutional strength of the patient's sex or more likely aggression. While we certainly cannot "cure" everyone, I believe that such failures are more likely to result from the therapist's failure to give a relationship in which the patient feels secure enough to go beyond his aggression and bring his isolation to the therapist. I have never yet met any patient whose overintense sexuality and/or aggression could not be understood in object-relational terms, as resulting from too great and too early deprivations of mothering and general frustration of healthy development in his childhood. Pathological sex and aggression can then be seen as actually the persistence of the infant's struggle to become a viable ego, a personal self, by means of both good and bad object-relating. This implies a person-ego theory as distinct from Hartmann's system-ego theory. His structural psychology is of a particular kind, which treats psychic structures as almost being entities in themselves. Since Freud does not stress the superego, we are almost left with a dualistic theory of human nature, an id and an ego, id-drives and an ego over against them that is partly a control apparatus, and partly over and above that an autonomous ego developing in a conflict-free area of the psyche, its own techniques of *adaptation* to outer reality. Edward Glover in a work written in 1961 regarded this as static and mechanistic.

Hartmann's theory is really determined by the fact that he accepted, as its basis, Freud's id-drives as primary energies apart from and outside the ego. Being eminently a logical and consistent thinker, he could then only develop an ego-concept that would be complementary to the impersonal id-drives on the one hand, a system-ego or control apparatus, and on the other hand an organ of adaptation to the environment. In either case this ego is not a person and cannot be a whole self. Bernard Apfelbaum, in a searching critique of this kind of structural theory, saw how difficult it is to keep frank dualism

out of it. He wrote of "the isolating tendency inherent in structural thinking. Perhaps any ego psychology assumes or implies a congruent id psychology." ¹² It does, unless it is a person-ego theory. The only escape from a dualism of radically opposed structures is to banish the term "id," and reserve "ego" to denote the whole basically unitary psyche with its innate potential for developing into a true self, a whole person, using his psychosomatic energies for self-expression and self-realization in interpersonal relationships. Structural theory can then be used less objectionally in Fairbairn's sense of "the arrangement of mental phenomena into functioning structure groups," to describe "ego-splitting," the internal disharmonies and conflicts and inconsistencies into which the psyche as a whole self is plunged by disturbing and disintegrating bad-object relations in infancy.

This is really the problem of how, realistically, to relate biology and psychodynamics. Hartmann and Fairbairn were both severely logical thinkers though in opposite ways, and in a way Hartmann was as opposed as Fairbairn to a confused mixing of two separate disciplines. Fairbairn accepted the biological inheritance as the basic given, dropped the nonpsychological term "id," and used the term "instinct" only adjec-tively to characterize some ego-processes. He was then free to concentrate on the psychology of the ego as a whole person. Hartmann took the opposite line by retaining the id and thus never developed a truly personal psychology, and always sought to discover the basis of his ego-apparatuses in brain-physiology. Had he found them, they would have had nothing to do with the reasons for the motivated actions of persons in real life. Erikson and Winnicott, being less severely logical thinkers, could still use the term "id," though I think inconsistently, but without bothering to subject it to much scrutiny, and left their clinical intuition free to wander in search of the subjective realities of human living. We shall consider the results in Chapters 4 and 5.

I regard Sullivan as giving us the correct way to relate biology and psychodynamics, by progressing beyond instinct theory to personal theory. His term, "the biological substrate of personality," is fully adequate to take care of the appetites as organic needs, and the brain and nervous system as the machinery of perception, thinking, control and motility, and of the whole autonomic functioning of the organism, while leaving us free to recognize how they are taken up into the developing psychic self or personal ego. We can thus think of a whole person whose organic appetites and other endowments are owned by and operated within his psychic self or ego. Their mode of operation will be determined by the over-all state of the ego or personal self. An angry, aggressive, hating ego will be sexually sadistic, hungrily devouring (oral sadism), deliberately dirtying and befouling in excretion (anal hate). A frightened ego will be sexually impotent, may be unable to swallow food or develop anorexia nervosa, and will be likely to suffer constipation or retention. A mature, friendly, stable ego will be sexually loving, will find simple pleasure in eating and drinking according to his actual needs and pleasant company, and will leave excretion to function without interference as biological disposal of waste. Clara Thompson wrote of Sullivan's theory of interpersonal relations: "He holds that, given a biological substrate, the human is the product of the interaction with other human beings, that it is out of the personal and social forces acting upon one from the day of birth that the personality emerges."¹³ Sullivan himself wrote: "The idea of 'human' instincts in anything like the proper rigid meaning . . . is completely preposterous. All discussion of 'human instincts' is apt to be very misleading and a block to correct thinking, unless the term 'instinct' . . . is so broadened in its meaning that there is no particular sense in using the term at all."¹⁴ One other quotation from Sullivan must be given. "Biological and neurophysiological terms are utterly inadequate for studying every-

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thing in life . . . I hope you will not try to build up in your thinking, correlations (that is, 'of "somatic" organization with psychiatrically important phenomena') that are purely imaginary . . . an illusion born out of the failure to recognize that what we know comes to us through our *experiencing* of events."¹⁵ Sullivan's recognition of the *subjectivity* of *experiencing* as the true concern of psychodynamic studies and his definition of this as interpersonal relations, marks the emergence in the clearest possible way of object-relational thinking disentangled from biology. I remember discussing Sullivan with Fairbairn around the early 1950s, and he stated how close he felt that he and Sullivan were on this basic matter, of moving beyond the impersonal to the personal levels of abstraction, from mechanistic to motivational concepts. It is a great pity that Sullivan and Fairbairn never met. Fairbairn owed far more to Freud than Sullivan did, but they both moved beyond classical psychoanalysis at the same point. Traditional science deals with "events" that have no meaning; they are merely happenings. Psychodynamic science deals with "experiences," meaningful states, and significant relationships. In one single observation, that "the infant empathizes the mother's anxiety," Sullivan anticipated Winnicott's work on the origins of the ego in the mother-infant relationship. We shall look closer at Erikson's views in Chapter 4, but we may say now that Sullivan and Erikson have explored the growth of the individual ego in its ever-widening social milieu, while Melanie Klein, Fairbairn, and Winnicott have delved ever deeper into the internal psychic drama of the growing ego, back to its earliest beginnings. In each case it was the "object-relational" aspect of Freud's thought that was being followed up, not his psychophysiology and psychology. What I have tried to show here is that, of the two strands in Freud's thought, the natural science and the *psychodynamic*, the physiological and the *personal*, the mechanistic and the *object-relational*, it was the latter that was struggling