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# Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory

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*Who could remain unmoved when Freud seemed suddenly to plunge towards the origins? Suddenly he stepped out of the conscious into the unconscious, out of everywhere into nowhere, like some supreme explorer. He walks straight through the wall of sleep, and we hear him rumbling in the cavern of dreams. The impenetrable is not impenetrable, unconsciousness is not nothingness.*

—D. H. LAWRENCE, *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*

## 2 Sigmund Freud: The Drive/Structure Model

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Psychoanalysis is, for all intents and purposes, the creation of one man. Although he began with a method borrowed from Josef Breuer and brought to his thinking a sensibility shaped by familiarity with neurology, physiology, philosophy, psychology, and evolution theory, Sigmund Freud developed psychoanalysis by working, essentially alone, for ten years before he was joined by similarly minded colleagues. This singular course of development makes psychoanalysis unique among intellectual disciplines, for by the time Freud's work was "discovered" and he acquired coworkers, he had evolved a fully articulated (though by no means final) vision of his creation. By 1900 Freud had invented not only a field of investigation but also a method of inquiry and a psychotherapeutic modality. He had arrived at a body of findings and had advanced a comprehensive set of hypotheses to explain them.

Freud's fundamental vision of the human condition is embodied in what we have called the drive/structure model. As the term implies, the core concept of the model is the idea of drive. In Freud's most widely used definition, drive is a concept on the frontier between the psychic and the somatic, an endogenous source of stimulation which impinges on the mind by virtue of the mind's connection with the body. It is a "demand made upon the mind for work," the activator of the psychic apparatus (1905a, 1915a). Freud implied at times that drive is to be understood as a quasi-physiological quantity, which exercises force mechanistically within the mind. The express intention of the *Project for*

*a Scientific Psychology* (1895a) was to establish psychology on the same materialistic basis as that which supported other natural sciences. Freud never fully abandoned this intention, although in his later works it became a wishful rather than a realistic goal. He often expressed the hope that his hypothesized psychic structures would someday be confirmed by anatomical findings, and his attempts to create a pictorial representation of the mental apparatus (1923a, 1933) indicate that he thought of the mind as existing in physical space.

Most drive theorists since Freud have pursued this aspect of the meaning of drive.\* Hartmann and Rapaport, two of his most important interpreters, make it quite clear in their writings that they consider psychoanalysis a biological science. Its goal is the understanding of mental mechanisms, the explanation of the “how” of man’s mental life. Hartmann’s comment (1948) that there is no phenomenological counterpart to the psychoanalytic concept of drive illustrates this approach; for him the drives are no closer to having any experiential referent than are brain processes. Psychoanalytic metapsychology is the attempt to take apart the psychic machine, to figure out the forces and counterforces that operate within it.

This approach to Freudian theory has in recent years engendered a great deal of criticism both from theorists trained within the drive/structure model and from those whose origins are outside it. Psychoanalysis, they believe, is not a biological science, it is essentially an interpretive discipline. Thus, its constructs must address the meaning with which people endow their daily experience. Guntrip (1971), George Klein (1976), Gill (1976), Holt (1976), and Schafer (1976) have questioned whether a psychology predicated on mechanistically defined drives, and on structures derived from transformations of drive energy, can adequately fulfill this psychoanalytic goal. Drive theory, they argue, because it cannot link a psychology built on concepts of energy and structure with a psychology of meaning, cannot fully account for human motivation.

These critics read Freud very much in the mode of Hartmann and Rapaport, but they reject the biological thinking which they find implicit in Freud’s theorizing. Schafer (1972, 1976) points both to Freud’s tendency to attribute spatial extension to the mental apparatus and to the dangers inherent in this approach. Stressing the theory’s

\* Although in the *Standard Edition* Strachey (1966) chose to translate the German *trieb* as “instinct,” in this book we generally speak of “drive.” In addition to being the more literal translation, “drive” refers to what Ornston calls “a surging and rather undifferentiated ‘need’” (1982, p. 416), in contrast to the more structured “instinct.” In agreement with most writers we use the adjectival form “instinctual drive” and occasionally refer, again conventionally, to the “dual-instinct” theory.

biological roots, Holt (1976) criticizes the energy concept on physiological grounds. Gill (1976) argues that “metapsychology is not psychology,” that Freud intended his metapsychological concepts to be taken in a biological/mechanistic sense rather than psychologically, and that these concepts lack the implication of intention and meaning that any psychology must have. In his most recent formulation, Gill (1983) states that “as presently constituted, metapsychology is in a different universe of discourse from that of meaning, namely the natural science universe of force, energy and space. As such it is incompatible with a hermeneutic science.”

Freud’s loyal followers and his critics both overlook a fundamental ambiguity in the theory of drive, an ambiguity highlighted and clarified by our framework for the understanding of theoretical models. Within any science a model is a comprehensive perspective designed to encompass the entire range of phenomena within its scope. No observer of human behavior can fail to notice that people act on the basis of the meaning which they attribute to their experience of themselves and of the world around them. Thus, if the drive/structure model is a model in the true sense of the word, it must contain a theory of meaning. There must be a link between Freud’s language of force, counterforce, and energy transmuted into structure and his vision of human experience—between the “how” and the “why.”

In constructing the drive/structure model Freud drew on biological metaphors. One would expect nothing else from a theorist trained in medicine in the intellectual climate of late-nineteenth-century Vienna. But stressing Freud’s biological metaphor can obscure the acute psychological vision, the very theory of meaning, which gave rise to it. We suggest, therefore, that the distinction between psychoanalysis as a natural science and as an interpretive discipline is spurious. The very principles Freud thought explanatory in the mechanistic sense also provide an interpretive thrust; his theory of mechanism *is* a theory of meaning. The drives in this sense embody Freud’s understanding of our elemental passions; they represent the fundamental human urges. Seen in this way, the drives are not only the *mechanisms* of the mind, they are also its *contents*. Because our focus is principally on these mental contents, throughout this book we stress Freud’s theory of meaning. This neither invalidates nor denigrates a natural science vision of his creation; the choice is not either/or.

Although Freud often referred to his goal of creating a scientific psychology, he also underscored the importance of viewing drive theory as a theory of meaning. He states that the “power of the id expresses the true purpose of the individual organism’s life,” and that the activity of

the drives “gives rise to the whole variegation of the phenomena of life” (1940a, pp. 148, 149). Elsewhere he says: “The theory of instincts is so to say our mythology. Instincts are mythical entities, magnificent in their indefiniteness” (1933, p. 95). Freud refers to the theory of mental topography as “a fiction,” and he stresses the metaphorical nature of the structural model by giving everyday names to the three mental agencies—*das Ich* (I), *das Es* (it), and *das Uber-Ich* (above-I), instead of “giving them orotund Greek names” (1926b, pp. 194-195). (This metaphorical translation is lost in the *Standard Edition*’s translation into ego, id, and superego—a point recently addressed by Bettelheim [1982] and by Ornston [1982].) He was well aware of the ambiguous status of the drive concept, writing that, “The concepts of ‘psychical energy’ and ‘discharge’ and the treatment of psychical energy as a quantity *have become habitual in my thoughts since I began to arrange the facts of psychopathology philosophically*” (1905c, p. 147; italics ours).

Approached from this perspective, the metapsychological formulations of the drive/structure model are highly determinate as to the meaning of any event—interpersonal exchange, affect, fantasy, and so on. The meaning is determined precisely by the operative drive or component drive plus the operative defenses which are derived from the conflict between the imperatives of passion and the counterpressures of civilization. In the first dual instinct theory, motivation is reducible to sexual (or sensual) meaning when governed by the libidinal drives, or to self-preservation when governed by the ego instincts. In Freud’s revised view, meaning is determined by the ebbs and flows and complex interplay of the life and death instincts.

The drive/structure model of psychoanalysis originated in and was elaborated over the course of Freud’s writings. This can obscure the fact that over time Freud made many crucial changes in the framework of his theory. We do not intend to extract from the multiplicity of his theoretical statements “a” Freudian theory, for there are many, but rather the essence of the drive/structure model. There are certain fundamental principles which, once he arrived at them, Freud never changed, which imbue his writings throughout his career with a particular view of the nature of man and of the basic constituents of human experience. Other elements of the theory (such as the concept of identification and the reality principle), although fundamental to psychoanalysis as we know it, are not an intrinsic part of the drive/structure model, but we will attempt to show how they fit with and sometimes modify its essential nature.

Freud’s psychoanalytic theorizing can be divided into three phases.

During the first, which lasted from his adoption of Breuer's cathartic method in the late 1880s until 1905, he worked with concepts of affect and of defense in a way that shares some of the sensibilities of the relational/structure model and which at times bears a striking resemblance to contemporary perspectives (see Rapaport, 1958). The second phase begins with his public abandonment of the seduction theory (Freud, 1905a, 1906). Between 1905 and 1910 he developed and articulated many of the concepts which define the drive/structure model; by 1910, with concepts which were never to change, it was firmly in place. Freud introduced the third phase with his paper on the "Two principles of mental functioning" (1911a). From this point on, much of his work was devoted to integrating relational concepts into the established structure of the drive model. These changes were often initiated in response to dissents, particularly those of Adler and Jung. If Freud invented the drive/structure model, he also invented, within psychoanalysis, the strategy of theoretical accommodation, and the third phase of his career is best understood in terms of accommodating strategies.

### The Constancy Principle, Affect Theory, and the Defense Model

The idea that Freud's model contains, simultaneously, a theory of meaning and a theory of mechanism is tested as soon as we consider one of its most fundamental postulates—the constancy principle. First articulated by Breuer (but attributed by him to Freud) in the *Studies on Hysteria* (Breuer and Freud, 1895) and restated by Freud throughout his theoretical writings, this principle states that it is the aim of the psychic apparatus to keep stimulation as close to zero as possible. Quiescence is pleasant, excitation unpleasant, and we therefore initiate whatever action (alloplastic or autoplatic) is best suited to reducing the level of stimulation.

Freud's formulation of the constancy principle reflects the influence of now outmoded neurological conceptions (the nervous system seeks to rid itself of all tension) and the influence of hydraulic metaphors (the mind is constructed like a machine driven by the flow of energetic forces). It is not one of the most palatable elements of the drive model. It is a mistake, however, to argue that because it is based on biology the constancy principle is without psychological content. It is in fact a direct although incomplete statement about human intention, one which illustrates the manner in which Freud used his model to develop a psychological interpretive framework. Simply put, the constancy principle suggests that what matters most to people is to rid ourselves of stimulation. It both depends upon and reinforces the most basic

assumption of the drive/structure model: that there is such a thing as a discrete individual who can be treated, both theoretically and clinically, as a closed energy system. Tensions build up within this system and must be discharged by it. If one channel is dammed up so that discharge through it is prevented, another must be found. The more “open” systems of the relational model neither require nor can support the constancy principle.

In the *Studies on Hysteria* (Breuer and Freud, 1895) and the *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (Freud, 1895a), despite their vastly different theoretical perspectives, human behavior is understood to be regulated by the constancy principle. Without it, none of the formulations in the *Studies on Hysteria* make sense. Events become pathogenic when the affect associated with them cannot be adequately discharged, because of external circumstances or because those affects are in conflict with other, highly valued states of mind, such as moral and ethical values. The treatment modality suggested in the *Studies*, which derives directly from the theoretical assumptions, is that recovery of the repressed memories will make abreaction possible. Without this full discharge of pent-up affect which was stifled at the time of the event and which, therefore, operated continuously to fuel the consequent neurotic symptoms, illness is inevitable.

The constancy principle has never been popular with psychoanalysts. It accords poorly with many of our observations, including the observation that people often seek out states of excitement and consider them pleasurable. Freud himself was not entirely comfortable with his formulation; throughout his life he reworked its place within his theory. However, it is clear that the tendency to quiescence remained as a central motivational force throughout the many transformations of his theoretical perspective.

The full development of the drive/structure model requires, in addition to the constancy principle, specificity as to the source or sources of the excitation which the psychic apparatus is designed to discharge. This specificity is a development that required fifteen years of clinical and theoretical work. Given the constancy principle alone, theorists are free to speculate as to the source of excitation which the individual seeks to discharge. The excitation may arise endogenously or exogenously, it may be active or reactive, it may be the product of transformations of fundamental drives or involve the full range of human emotions as primary sources of stimulation. Although only one element of the drive/structure model, the constancy principle, once in place, continued to inform Freud's theorizing for some forty years.

Prior to the full articulation of the drive model, the psychic quantity



that the constancy principle was understood to regulate, the stimuli that required discharge, were equated with the affects. An event—for all intents and purposes an interpersonal exchange—may elicit an almost endless variety of responses. We may come out of such an exchange sexually excited, or we may be angry, or we may be frightened, or we may be pleased, or we may be vengeful, and so on. The nature of the affect evoked is determined by our own personalities and by the nature of the event itself. The particular culture in which we live, its values and standards, is crucial in determining which affects we find acceptable. This in turn determines which affects are most likely to become embroiled in conflict, which cannot be adequately discharged. The memory of the event which triggered these affects thus becomes subject to repression and can exercise a pathogenic force. The theory is not specific as to the fundamental nature of the stimuli with which the psychic apparatus must deal. In other words, at this point in Freud's thinking there were no fundamental passions, no irreducible forces determining our human nature. What mattered was simply what grew out of particular interpersonal encounters.

From the beginning Freud distinguished between the “actual neuroses” and the “psychoneuroses” (1895b, 1895c). The former, including anxiety neurosis and neurasthenia, he attributed to dysfunction in the patient's current sexual life: their mechanism was understood to consist in the damming up and subsequent transformation of chemical sexual substances. This process was construed as physiological; the actual neuroses were not thought of as psychological disorders. The psychoneuroses, considered susceptible to psychoanalytic treatment and therefore central to Freud's theoretical interest, were caused by conflict brought about by the incompatibility of ideas and the consequent failure to discharge affect (1894, 1896a). There was no specificity as to the content of the conflicting ideas. The *Studies on Hysteria*, Freud's major work of this period, considered sexuality the area most likely to produce conflict, and thus psychoneurotic symptoms, but by no means the only one. Defining trauma, he says, “The incompatible idea, which, together with its concomitants, is later excluded and forms a separate psychical group, must originally have been in communication with the main stream of thought. Otherwise the conflict which led to their exclusion could not have taken place. *It is these moments, then, that are to be described as ‘traumatic’*” (Breuer and Freud, 1895, p. 167; italics ours). Incompatibility and conflict, regardless of their sources, are considered pathogenic at this phase of the theory.

In a series of papers published soon after the *Studies* Freud introduced the concept of early seduction into the etiological framework

which he had developed for the psychoneuroses (1896a, 1896b, 1898). Some early occurrence, which “must consist of an actual irritation of the genitals” occurring before puberty (1896a, p. 163), is the core repressed memory which is evoked by contemporary experience and which produces symptoms. However, although the advent of the seduction theory made sex an essential constituent of the neurotic process, it is not on that account a driving force in all human experience. Early seduction provides a traumatic experience precisely because the immature sexual apparatus is poorly equipped to handle the excitations that are stimulated, nor is the immature personality equipped to deal with their emotional concomitants. The place of sexuality in the early theory was arrived at purely on an empirical basis (although, as Freud was soon to discover, the inevitability of seduction in the psychoneuroses was a mistaken conclusion). Sexuality was far from its role in the drive/structure model: a force motivating all human behavior. The prehistory of the drive/structure model differs from the full development of the model precisely in its lack of specificity as to motivational contents.

### The Wish Model

The publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Freud, 1900) marked a transition point in the development of the drive/structure model. In the theoretical presentation of its chapter 7, Freud published for the first time a generalized model of the workings of the psychic apparatus. This model offers a more specific statement of the content of human motivational force, but the specificity that characterizes the fully articulated theory of drive is still missing.

Freud begins by stating the constancy principle, arguing that “at first the [psychic] apparatus’s efforts were directed towards keeping itself so far as possible free from stimuli; consequently its first structure followed the plan of a reflex apparatus, so that any sensory excitation impinging on it could be promptly discharged along a motor path” (p. 565). The “exigencies of life” interfere with this function, and Freud states that the first of these are “the major somatic needs.” This leads to an attempt to discharge the excitation through motor activity, which constitutes an expression of emotion. The discharge accompanying early motor activity does not work effectively over long periods of time; an “experience of satisfaction” is required if the constancy principle is to be satisfied. Part of this experience is a particular perception, the memory of which becomes associated with the excitation produced by the need. Thus, the next time the need arises, there will be an attempt on the part of the psychic apparatus to recathect (that is, reinvoke) the perception, to

reestablish the original experience of satisfaction. The impulse to do this Freud terms a “wish,” and the fulfillment of the wish is the reappearance of the perception. The earliest attempt to do this is through hallucinatory re-creation of the perception, the mechanism utilized later in life by the dream. In Freud’s language, the fulfillment of the wish is embodied in the creation of a “perceptual identity.” Perceptual identity means that the earlier gratifying *situation* is reestablished, either in reality or in fantasy. The content of the unconscious as Freud presented it in 1900 is exclusively made up of wishes. Dreams are formed by the press toward satisfaction of those wishes; the motive force of all dreams is to be found in the unconscious. This concept is extended so that wishes are found behind all psychic activity. As Freud expresses it, “nothing but a wish can set our mental apparatus at work” (p. 567).

From the perspective of mechanism, the wish of 1900 has the same status as the drive of later theory. Both create the internal tension which, experienced by a psychic apparatus which operates under the rule of the constancy principle, moves the mind to action. As the drive is the motive force of the later theory, so the wish is the motive force of this transitional phase. If forbidden drive derivatives (particular impulses) require repression in the later model, desires for forbidden experiences of satisfaction are repressed in the earlier theory. The difference between the two concepts lies in their content, that is, the difference is found at the center of the assumptions of the two models.

With the full articulation of the drive model, the content of any action is fully specified by the quality of the drive which underlies it (plus, of course, the defenses against the original impulse). Each of Freud’s dual instinct theories points to independently derived and irreducible motivational contents. In the model of the *Studies on Hysteria* it is the situations which are specific, not the internal stimuli. Freud’s shift in models can be conceptualized as follows: in the first view the situations are determinative, the affects contingent; in the last formulation the drives are determinative, the situations contingent.

We are now in a position to appreciate the transitional nature of the model of *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Wishes are desires to reestablish *situations*, but the situations are desirable only because they once satisfied an internally produced need. The need itself, however, is unspecific as to content: Freud is explicit in noting that only the earliest of the “exigencies of life” which require satisfaction derive from the major somatic needs. The wish model gives us great latitude of interpretive possibility; we are quite free to fill in the need which the wish is designed to satisfy. The need may be sexual, or destructive, or self-preservative, or it may be a need for security or for emotional warmth.

Unlike the later model, this formulation offers little by way of direction. It moves beyond the earlier approach, however, in hinging the importance of the wished-for situation on the fact that it *was* once satisfying relative to *some* internally arising need.

### The Advent of the Drive/Structure Model

The concept of drive was introduced in the *Three Essays* where it is defined as follows:

By an "instinct" is provisionally to be understood the psychical representative of an endosomatic, continuously flowing source of stimulation . . . . The concept of instinct is thus one of those lying on the frontier between the mental and the physical . . . [They] are to be regarded as a measure of the demand made upon the mind for work. What distinguishes the instincts from one another and endows them with specific qualities is their relation to their somatic sources and to their aims. The source of an instinct is a process of excitation occurring in an organ and the immediate aim of the instinct lies in the removal of this organic stimulus. (Freud, 1905a, p. 168)

Drive is an energy source, the activator of the psychic apparatus. With the publication of the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* Freud abandoned the indeterminacy of his early wish model. The content of what is wished for is a function of forces that impinge upon the mind by virtue of the mind's connection with the body. These forces determine man's essential nature. Throughout Freud's subsequent career he emphasized the unique status of drive as a determinant of motivation. This status is variously described in the statements that drive is "a demand made upon the mind for work" (1905a, 1915a), that it is "the ultimate cause of all activity" (1940), and that "every psychical act begins as an unconscious one" (1912a).

Each of these statements has essentially the same meaning. Each requires that every human action, from the diffuse discharge of affect in the infant, to the symptoms of the neurotic, to the creations of the artist, to the evolution of a social structure that unites men into civilized groups, be traced in its origin to ultimate, irreducible, and qualitatively specifiable instinctual sources.

An answer to the question of the specific quality of the drives would complete the specification of content which characterizes the drive structure model. Freud writes:

What instincts should we suppose there are, and how many? There is obviously a wide opportunity here for arbitrary choice. No objection can be

made to anyone's employing the concept of an instinct of play or of destruction or of gregariousness, when the subject-matter demands it and the limitations of psychological analysis allow of it. Nevertheless, we should not neglect to ask ourselves whether instinctual motives like these . . . do not admit of further dissection in accordance with the *sources* of the instinct, so that only primal instincts—those which cannot be further dissected—can lay claim to importance.

I have proposed that two groups of such primal instincts should be distinguished: the *ego*, or *self-preservative*, instincts and the *sexual* instincts. But this supposition has not the status of a necessary postulate . . . it is merely a working hypothesis, to be retained only so long as it proves useful. (1915a, p. 124; italics in original)

This statement constitutes another central postulate of the drive/structure model. On the basis of evidence derived from his clinical experience in analyzing the transference neuroses, and in accord with what he called the “popular distinction between hunger and love” (1914a, p. 78), Freud specified the content of the demands made upon the mind for work: they were held to derive from a primary, irreducible sexual drive and an equally primary, equally irreducible drive toward self-preservation. As Freud predicted later in the passage, he was to modify his dual instinct theory (in 1920) to embrace sexual and destructive drives, but from 1905 (when both the sexual and self-preservative drives first appeared) onward, the indeterminacy of the wish concept was filled with a primary, fully specified content.

In discussing the early development of sexuality in young children, Freud states that “a sexual aim . . . consists in replacing the projected sensation of stimulation in the erotogenic zone by an external stimulus which removes that sensation by producing a feeling of satisfaction” (1905a, p. 184). But what is the mechanism by which the infant can become aware of the existence of such external stimuli? Freud replies: “This satisfaction must have been previously experienced in order to have left behind a need for its repetition; and we may expect that Nature will have made safe provisions so that this experience of satisfaction shall not be left to chance” (1905a, p. 184). We recognize in this formulation a restatement of the earlier concept of the wish, with its push toward the establishment of “perceptual identity” that allows a reexperiencing of the earlier satisfaction. Here, however, the nature of what is pleasurable is strictly defined: it consists precisely in a satisfaction of the *sexual* aim achieved through stimulation of the appropriate erotogenic zone. This permits a discharge of a quantity of excitation, just as in the early model. But the nature of that quantity is now specified: it is a *libidinal* quantity, the energy of the sexual drive. From this point forward in Freud's theoriz-

ing, specificity of content is never absent from his account of the forces which lead to activation of the mental apparatus.

Freud's development of the drive/structure model both depended upon and reinforced his abandonment of the old seduction theory. He had arrived at this conclusion on empirical grounds as early as 1897 and announced it in a letter to Fliess (Freud, 1950, Letter 69). In the *Three Essays* he says that "Obviously seduction is not required in order to arouse a child's sexual life; that can also come about spontaneously and from internal causes" (1905a, pp. 190-191). Once sexuality is posited as an internally arising force underlying human activity, seduction becomes theoretically vestigial, and the importance of childhood *events* correspondingly declines. This change is of the greatest importance in understanding the drive/structure model approach to problems of object relations.

From its origins, the drive/structure model was a dual drive theory. The sexual (libidinal) drive always operated alongside of or in conflict with another, independently derived drive. However, throughout his life Freud thought of the libidinal drives as fundamentally more important than the opposing drive, particularly insofar as the unconscious and the genesis of neurosis (for the most part, the center of his theoretical interest) were concerned. Even after the introduction of the second dual instinct theory, Freud's focus remained directed toward the manifestations of the sexual drive. The aggressive drive, like the drive toward self-preservation that preceded it, is given no developmental phases comparable to those of the libido. And, parallel to the lack of vicissitudes of the ego instincts, Freud states, "we have always believed that in a neurosis it is against the demands of the libido and not against those of any other instinct that the ego is defending itself" (1926a, p. 124).

The neglected areas of drive theory, the developmental history of the self-preservative instincts (somewhat rectified by Freud later when their function was transferred to the structure ego), and the developmental history of aggression are major aspects of contemporary psychoanalytic theorizing; they play a major role in the thought of some relational/structure model theorists. Their absence from Freud's thinking, however, underscores the determinacy of the drive/structure model. The empty areas of the early model have been filled with forces derived primarily from the sexual instincts, although of course this represents only one-half of the picture of Freud's conflict theory.

### *Resistance and Repression*

During the 1890s Freud focused on the delineation of states of conflict between sets of incompatible ideas. The conflicts gave rise to what he

termed “defense” (or, its equivalent at the time, “repression”), by which he meant the intentional, although not on that account conscious, exclusion of certain ideas from awareness. The incompatible ideas were those that carried with them unpleasant affect; there was no specificity as to the nature of the ideas themselves and the unpleasure connected with them was typically situationally determined. The general thrust of Freud’s early papers is on the dynamic process of defense, and on the ways in which different defense mechanisms give rise to different psychoneurotic syndromes (Freud, 1894, 1895a, 1896a, 1896b, 1896c; Breuer and Freud, 1895).

The question that arises is what might render an idea “incompatible” and what it would have to be incompatible *with* in order to give rise to defensive processes. Throughout this period Freud is somewhat vague on this point. His clearest statement comes in a discussion of the case of Miss Lucy R. in the *Studies on Hysteria*: “The basis for repression itself can only be a feeling of unpleasure, the incompatibility between the single idea that is to be repressed and the dominant mass of ideas constituting the ego” (Breuer and Freud, 1895, p. 116).

The power of the repressive force thus derives from the fact that the dominant mass of ideas is dominant, that it is a coherent and organized “structure” (in the nontechnical sense of the term) which, by virtue of its coherence and organization, has achieved a great deal of power within the psychic economy. The dominant mass of ideas is strong enough to keep any single, opposing idea from joining it and thereby from sharing access to consciousness. Banishment of the incompatible idea to the unconscious and the consequent blockage of its affective charge from the most expeditious release enables the idea to exercise its pathogenic effect.

How does the dominant mass of ideas become dominant? Freud is almost totally silent on this point during the early phase of his theorizing, yet his argument has some clear implications. What become dominant are what we might today think of as “proper” ideas, those which fit well with our view of ourselves as we would prefer to be. They are socially sanctioned ideas which fit well with our own values, standards, and morality. In a later work Freud suggests that repression “proceeds from the self-respect of the ego” (1914a, p. 93). Beyond this he has little to say on the developmental history of those standards: this was not at the center of his interest early in his career.

Although values and morality are not the only forces opposing ideas which become incompatible, most of Freud’s examples are drawn from this prototype. The incompatible idea is incompatible *within a given context*, a particular social situation. A vengeful fantasy, to use an exam-

ple from the *Studies*, may be incompatible if it is directed toward one's boss, and would on that account be repressed. In another context (this is contingent on the individual personality as well) the vengeful affect might be discharged immediately with a sharp verbal assault or even with a physical attack. The importance of sexuality in the etiology of the neuroses (before the articulation of seduction theory and even to some extent carrying into that theory) is stressed because of the tendency of sexual feelings to arise in socially inappropriate situations or to be directed toward people unsuited for romantic involvement. The tension between one's impulses and the social structure into which one must fit is what determines repression. Freud returned to this approach later in his career, particularly with respect to superego development, but not before he attempted an approach which is very different indeed.

The advent of the drive/structure model put Freud in an uncomfortable position vis-à-vis his early theory of repression. He was attempting to formulate a theory in which human activities were understood as deriving from man's biological nature. Unconscious impulses ruled by sexuality were seen as setting the mind at work. Freud wanted an equally innate, equally phylogenetically determined counterforce to oppose those impulses. With such parallelism he would have created a truly individual psychology drawn from the principles of evolution theory. (See Sulloway, 1979, for a discussion of this aspect of Freud's thinking.)

Describing the modification of his early views (including the abandonment of trauma theory and the altered notion of repressive processes), Freud states that "accidental influences have been replaced by constitutional factors and '*defence*' in the purely psychological sense has been replaced by organic 'sexual repression'" (1906, p. 278; italics ours). The concept of something organic playing a role in repression first appears in a letter to Fliess written in 1897 (Freud, 1950, Letter 75). Here, long before he chose to publish the concept, he linked the appearance of repressive forces — disgust, shame, repugnance, and so on — to the abandonment of infantile sexual zones. This development is particularly clear in the sequence in which pleasure in anal functioning is replaced by repulsion. Freud saw organic repression as an example of ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny: each individual repeats the process by which man, as a result of his adoption of an upright posture, repudiated old pleasurable sensations, particularly those connected with the sense of smell (1950, pp. 268–271).

With the publication of the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* the concept of organic repression was integrated into a more clinically oriented developmental framework. Speaking of sublimation and reac-



tion formation, Freud says that abandoned impulses “would seem in themselves to be perverse — that is, to arise from erotogenic zones and to derive their activity from instincts which, in view of the direction of the subject’s development, can only arouse unpleasurable feelings. They consequently evoke opposing mental forces (reacting impulses) which, in order to suppress this unpleasure effectively, build up the mental dams [of] . . . disgust, shame and morality” (1905a, p. 178).

This is a morality without society. It is, like the sexual drive itself, an endogenously arising force. In the same way that seduction has been replaced by impulse, so has social restraint been replaced by innate aversion. In another passage from the *Three Essays*, Freud writes:

One gets an impression from civilized children that the construction of these dams is a product of education, and no doubt education has much to do with it. But in reality this development is *organically determined and fixed by heredity, and it can occasionally occur without any help at all from education*. Education will not be trespassing beyond its appropriate domain if it limits itself to following the lines which have already been laid down organically and to impressing them somewhat more clearly and deeply. (Freud, 1905a, pp. 177–178; italics ours)

With this formulation we are at the height of the purest form of the drive/structure model. There is no superego to mediate social demands, no ego to decide among competing pressures, no reality principle in whose service the psychic apparatus must function. Even the “ego instincts” which, in a later formulation (Freud, 1910a) will oppose the demands of sexuality, have not yet been introduced. The second group of instincts in the *Three Essays* does not oppose sexuality but helps it, by channeling libidinal impulses toward an external object. Conflict in this period is simply a function of sexuality and organically determined reactions to it.

Although the theory of organic repression was not important for long in Freud’s thinking, along with its introduction he undertook further modification of the theory of repression which was to inform his subsequent theorizing throughout his life and which also represents a movement toward the consolidation of the drive model. He proposed a framework in which sexuality was more directly involved in the repressive process; this Freud labeled the “push-pull” theory of repression. This revised approach looks not only to current factors but to infantile amnesia as the explanation for a particular act of repression.

The push-pull theory is elaborated in a major codification of the principles of the drive model, presented in the five papers on metapsychology. Freud writes that:

We have reason to assume that there is a *primal repression*, a first phase of repression, which consists in the psychical (ideational) representative of the instinct being denied entrance into the conscious. With this a *fixation* is established; the representative in question persists unaltered from then onwards and the instinct remains attached to it . . .

The second stage of repression, *repression proper*, affects mental derivatives of the repressed representative, or such trains of thought as, originating elsewhere, have come into associative connection with it. On account of this association, these ideas experience the same fate as what was primally repressed. Repression proper, therefore, is actually an after-pressure . . . Probably the trend towards repression would fail in its purpose if these two forces did not cooperate, if there were not something previously repressed ready to receive what is repelled by the conscious. (1915b, p. 148; italics in original)

In what sense does the push-pull theory of repression represent a step in the establishment of the drive model? In the defense model, repression was wholly determined by the incompatibility of an idea which emerged within a particular context. The hypothesis of a group of repressed ideas exercising an attraction on new ones generated in contemporary situations deemphasizes the importance of the new situation; simple incompatibility in the face of circumstances no longer is sufficient to explain the phenomenon. The specific affects generated by the situation are less important than they had been in the earlier model. Rather, the particular fixations which characterize an individual's personality structure have been thrust into the foreground of the explanatory system.

The ideas which undergo "primal repression" are not random; they are precisely those which constitute the individual's infantile sexuality. The amnesia for childhood is an amnesia for sexual development, and the events of this development form the "fixations" of which Freud speaks. The push-pull theory requires that behind every act of repression there must be an associative link to early sexuality, and the repressive forces are characterized by their opposition to specifically sexual impulses. This includes distant derivatives of these impulses, and it is the function of analysis to discover the forbidden sexuality behind each act of repression. In the same way that the evolution of the early affect theory into the intermediate wish model and finally into the theory of instinctual drive can be explained as a movement toward specifying the content of our motivating impulses, so the modification of the theory of repression represents increased specificity with respect to the anti-instinctual forces. The later theory of anti-cathexis (1915b, 1926a), in which the energy for defense is specifically defined as energy withdrawn from the threatening impulse itself, developed this approach.

With these considerations, we do not yet have a concept which fully replaces the “dominant mass of ideas” of the defense model, a force capable of carrying out repression. This is a point on which Freud changed his views rapidly and often. Between his introduction of the drive/structure model and the beginnings of his moves toward accommodation, little formal discussion of the nature of any counterforce is attempted, a fact to which Freud himself alludes (1913a, p. 325). However, in a rather offhand remark he does suggest that what he had earlier termed the self-preservative instincts might be thought of as “ego instincts,” thus replacing the identification of the ego with the “dominant mass of ideas” with an instinctual definition. In this passage Freud spells out the idea that “every instinct tries to make itself effective by activating ideas that are in keeping with its aims” (1910a, p. 213) and suggests that the aim of the ego instincts is self-preservation, which specifically opposes the aim of the sexual instincts. With this concept Freud defined the field of conflict (impulse versus repression) totally in instinctual terms. This perspective is carried through to the metapsychological papers, with Freud arguing in “The Unconscious” that not only derivatives of the sexual drive are operative in the unconscious, “but also some of the impulses which dominate our ego—something, therefore, that forms the strongest functional antithesis to the repressed” (1915c, pp. 192–193).

Unlike the other fundamental premises of the drive/structure model—the constancy principle, and the motivational centrality of drive—Freud’s view of repression underwent a decisive final change with the advent of the structural model, a change which in some ways reverts to the sensibilities which led him to postulate his earliest views. We must postpone discussion of this until we have laid the groundwork for it through consideration of Freud’s late theory. For the moment, let us note that the structural model, with its emphasis on reality relations and on identifications with the caretaking figures who are also the carriers of social values, brings back into the dynamic picture a concept of repression motivated by the individual’s need to renounce instinct in order to fit into society, particularly on account of the tendency of the impulses to arouse guilt. Social demands regain the role assigned in the defense model: they represent the principle force opposing the discharge of an impulse.

### The Nature and Formation of the Object

In considering Freud’s approach to object relations, we must distinguish between the role the object plays in people’s psychological functioning

and the nature of the object, including views as to how it comes into being. Much confusion, including a blurring of central theoretical differences, has been caused by the failure to make or adhere to this distinction.

With the introduction of drive theory, the role of social influence in shaping personal attitudes toward one's impulses was greatly decreased vis-à-vis the earlier defense model. This implies a deemphasis on the importance of object relations. The theoretical status of relationships with others was at a low ebb from the introduction of the drive model until the advent of the structural model.

The structural model brought with it a new emphasis on the psychological derivatives of object relations. Freud's introduction of identification (1917a, 1923a), the evolution of the structures ego and superego out of early relationships with caretakers (1923a), the developmental unfolding of modes of relating to others (1926a), and preoedipal object ties (1920b, 1925a, 1931, 1933) each endow the object, seen as a figure in reality, with an important role in the psychic economy. It is often argued that, given this framework, the radical revisionism of the relational/structure model is rendered gratuitous. Certainly from the perspective of the object's role Freudian theory changed dramatically over the years.

What *is* the object in Freud's theory? Is it simply an internal representation of the parent or of a series of interactions with him or her? Or, is the object an externalization of endogenous sensations which have found a convenient "container" in the persons of the caretaking figures? If the latter is the case, then, regardless of the role assigned to the "object," the theory remains outside of the relational model because the evolution of the object itself is reducible to the vicissitudes of an underlying drive.

Freud's use of the object concept is inherently connected to the concept of drive. Thus, we would not expect that this idea had a prehistory in the early defense model in the sense that the idea of drive is preceded by that of unspecified affect (or psychic quantity). This is in fact the case; the early theory speaks of relationships with people in specific socially determined situations, a framework within which the idea of the object as it was later defined has no place. There is a critical conceptual difference between "objects" and "people," one manifestation of which is that there is no theoretical requirement in the drive/structure model that the object be a person at all.

In the evolution of Freud's thinking there is a reciprocal relationship between the specificity of the postulated motivational force and that of the object. The wish model of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, true to its

transitional role, prefigures the new approach to the problem of the object. When Freud speaks of the aim of the wish being the establishment of “perceptual identity” (1900, p. 566), he is referring to the aim of reestablishing the conditions in which disturbing needs were formerly met. “Perceptual identity” points to a set of conditions in the world which the infant associates with earlier experiences of satisfaction. However, the nature of these conditions is entirely contingent upon the nature of the wish. Moreover, the original need which genetically gave rise to the wish is endogenously determined and has no necessary connection to an object at all.

The object in its full technical sense first appears in Freud’s writings in the *Three Essays*. His first definition of the term is deceptively simple: “Let us call the person from whom sexual attraction proceeds the *sexual object*” (1905a, pp. 135–136; italics in original). But complexities soon develop. In the course of his discussion of homosexuality, Freud argues that we must reject “the crude explanation that everyone is born with his sexual instinct attached to a particular sexual object” and concludes that “we have been in the habit of regarding the connection between the sexual instinct and the sexual object as more intimate than it in fact is” (1905a, pp. 140–141, 147–148).

He returns to this issue in “Instincts and Their Vicissitudes,” in which he states that the object “is what is most variable about an instinct and *is not originally connected with it, but becomes assigned to it only in consequence of being peculiarly fitted to make satisfaction possible . . .* It may be changed any number of times in the course of the vicissitudes which the instinct undergoes during its existence; and highly important parts are played by . . . displacement of instinct” (1915a, pp. 122–123; italics ours). This formulation echoes the earlier wish concept, with its idea that the object is determined by the conditions set down by the wish for its satisfaction. In the revised theory, however, the more highly specified nature of drive requires that *the drive itself determine the nature of the object*. The fact that drive is defined as capable of undergoing displacement (and other vicissitudes that characterize the primary process; see Freud, 1909a) indicates that the object may easily be changed at any point.

The suggestion that the object is not initially attached to the drive would indicate that objectlessness is the original developmental state of affairs. Freud, however, seems uncomfortable with any firm position on the question of whether a truly objectless state is possible. His hypothesis of an original state of autoerotism suggests that it is. In his discussion of early thumb-sucking, he says that the drive “At its origin . . . has as yet no sexual object, and is thus auto-erotic” (1905a,

p. 182). An objectless state of autoerotism appears to characterize the earliest distribution of libido, a viewpoint to which Freud returns (see 1911b).

A famous passage in the *Three Essays*, however, suggests a different point of view:

At a time at which the first beginnings of sexual satisfaction are still linked with the taking of nourishment, the sexual instinct has a sexual object outside the infant's own body in the shape of his mother's breast. It is only later that the instinct loses that object, just at the time, perhaps, when the child is able to form a total idea of the person to whom the organ that is giving him satisfaction belongs. As a rule the sexual instinct *then becomes auto-erotic*, and not until the period of latency has been passed through is the original relation restored. There are thus good reasons why a child sucking at his mother's breast has become the prototype of every relation of love. The finding of an object is in fact a refinding of it. (1905a, p. 222; italics ours)

This passage has been used by some theoreticians in an attempt to bridge the gap between Freud's formulations and those of some relational/structure model theorists. This is not a fair interpretation. The passage contradicts Freud's other formulations about the earliest state of relatedness to the object, in the *Three Essays* and elsewhere, and stands essentially alone. In his paper on the two principles of mental functioning (1911a) Freud embraces Bleuler's (1912) concept of autism as representing the infant's original condition, and in the Schreber case (1911b) autoerotism is specifically postulated as a developmental phase preceding the choice of an external object. In "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes" autoerotism is presented as the state of affairs existing "at the very beginning of mental life" (1915a, p. 134). The thrust throughout Freud's writings indicates that a relationship to an external object is achieved developmentally.

If the object is not present from the beginning it must be either discovered or created, and Freud's thinking leads us to emphasize the latter. In his discussion of the case of Little Hans, Freud says that Hans "had obtained . . . pleasure from his erotogenic zones with the help of the person who had looked after him—his mother, in fact; and thus *the pleasure already pointed the way to object-choice*" (1909a, p. 108; italics ours). This point is reiterated in the paper on narcissism, with the comment that young children "derived their sexual objects from their experiences of satisfaction" (1914a, p. 87). It is stated in its clearest and strongest fashion much later, when Freud writes: "repeated situations of

satisfaction have *created an object* out of the mother" (1926a, p. 170; italics ours).

These formulations exhibit considerable continuity with the views expressed in the wish model, in which the particular content of the wish was prescribed by the earlier experiences of satisfaction. With the postulate of a specifically sexual drive, however, those early experiences are now themselves determined by the nature of the operative drive or component drive. Object formation must always be understood in terms of this drive, and its existence is contingent on its ability to satisfy the particular active instinctual aim.

From this we can develop a good picture of Freud's view of the evolution of object relations. At the beginnings of life the sexual drive as a unified, organized motivational force has not yet come into existence; the infant is a creature of independently operating component drives. As these partial sexual drives, through their anaclitic relationship with the self-preservative drives, are carried outside of the infant's own body (as autoerotism is gradually replaced), the infant accrues a set of satisfying and frustrating experiences. These experiences, particularly the satisfying ones, lead him to form an image of what satisfaction is like. The association of these satisfactions with the conditions under which they were experienced leads to object formation.

The fact that the first object is that of component instincts (partial drives) means that it will be a part object. To the extent that the object is created out of experiences of satisfaction of the oral drive, it will be the orally satisfying part of the relevant person, for example, the mother's breast. If the operative component instinct is the exhibitionistic trend, the object will be the mother-as-looker, not the "whole" mother as she would be defined by the objective observer. Throughout his writings Freud makes it clear that the nature of the object relationship that a person is reporting is contingent upon the active drive. Visions of the mother as poisoner reflect aspects of the relationship which are colored by orality, while reports of the father as seducer are, correspondingly, a function less of his behavior in reality than of the oedipal impulses which governed the patient's relationship with him (see Freud, 1933, p. 120). The libidinal phases provide precisely the *content* of which we have spoken, which, in this case, is the content of the object relationship.

For Freud, as for most psychoanalytic theorists, the benchmark of successful development is the ability to establish consistent relationships with a whole object. Within the terms of the drive/structure model, formation of the whole object depends upon the integration of the discrete

currents of childhood sexual impulses (each of which has generated its own part object) into a single current of genital sexuality which can, by its nature, cathect a whole object. Freud states in *Group Psychology* that love “is nothing more than object-cathexis on the part of the sexual instincts with a view to directly sexual satisfaction.” Enduring love develops out of the initial sexual interest because “It was possible to calculate with certainty upon the revival of the need which had just expired; and this must no doubt have been the first motive for directing a lasting cathexis upon the sexual object and for ‘loving it’ in the passionless intervals as well” (1921, p. 111). The capacity for enduring love relates also to development of the capacity for sublimation, which allows friendly, affectionate relations to be established with the family members who were the objects of the childish drives.

For relational model theorists, the achievement of whole object relationships is generally construed in perceptual terms; the task is to overcome the forces that have led to the separation of early experiences and thus to the splitting of both object and self-representations. This allows the individual to forge a unity that is a more or less accurate image of the real person. Once this unity is formed, the direction of a variety of feelings and impulses toward the same person becomes possible, indeed, almost automatic. Genital sexuality, viewed in these terms, is a natural expression of the relationship achieved.

In the drive model this explanation is reversed. The crucial developmental achievement is the integration of the early component instincts and erotogenic zones under the primacy of the genitals. If, and only if, this is achieved will the constant object be formed, and the object itself is simply a natural consequence of the organization of the components into a unified sexual instinct.

Because within the drive model the object is the *creation* of drive, object relations remain a *function* of drive. For example, in the *Three Essays* Freud states that “If an erotogenic zone in a person who is not sexually excited (e.g. the skin of a woman’s breast) is stimulated by touch, the contact produces a pleasurable feeling; [and] it is at the same time better calculated than anything to arouse a sexual excitation that demands an increase of pleasure” (1905a, p. 210).

Reading this statement today, we may be puzzled or even shocked that Freud could fail to appreciate the role of the interpersonal context in which the “stimulation” occurs. But the perspective represented in it is not a mere oversight. Compare Freud’s approach to his patient Dora. Freud describes a meeting which the young girl had with her father’s friend Herr K:



He then came back, and, instead of going out by the open door, suddenly clasped the girl to him and pressed a kiss upon her lips. This was surely just the situation to call up a distinct feeling of sexual excitement in a girl of fourteen who had never before been approached. But Dora had at that moment a violent feeling of disgust, tore herself free from the man, and hurried past him to the staircase and from there to the street door . . .

. . . *the behavior of this child of fourteen was already entirely and completely hysterical.* I should without question consider a person hysterical in whom an occasion for sexual excitement elicited feelings that were preponderantly or exclusively unpleasurable. (Freud, 1905b, p. 28; italics ours)

Here, in a clinical situation, we see Freud applying the principles articulated in the *Three Essays*. He believes that Dora's reaction must have been determined by the erotogenic stimulation, and that this stimulation is in itself sufficient to account for the nature of her relationship with Herr K!

Freud has frequently been criticized for mishandling the Dora case (Erikson, 1962; Muslin and Gill, 1978; Muslin, 1979). This line of criticism is important, and it is compelling on clinical grounds. However, it overlooks the extent to which Freud's understanding of Dora's reaction to Herr K is consistent with, and in fact demanded by, the premises of the drive/structure model. Although this particular example is drawn from Freud's early writings, and although it was published at what we have referred to as the height of the drive model, it is not on that account atypical, because it illustrates the way in which drives are construed as the sole determinants of an object relationship. (Compare Freud's account of rescue fantasies in 1910b.)

The drive/structure model, like other models, by positing a clearly defined hermeneutic system, directs our attention to certain aspects of a situation and away from others. Although in this respect the examples we have just cited are particularly glaring, the focus Freud maintains on the instinctual roots of object relations can often lead to valuable theoretical and therapeutic insights about the way in which relationships with others are shaped by endogenously arising needs. This approach to the nature and formation of the object is another major aspect of Freud's theory that never changed.

### The Fundamental Premises of the Drive/Structure Model and Their Application

The fundamental premises of the drive/structure model never ceased to inform Freud's theoretical perspective. They enable us to understand the

issues with which he was dealing at the time he formulated them and to apply the drive model approach to contemporary problems in psychoanalytic theory. Let us review the basic assumptions:

1. The unit of study of psychoanalysis is the individual, viewed as a discrete entity. Man is not, in Aristotle's terms, a "political animal"; he does not require a social organization to allow him to realize his true human potential. Society is imposed on an already complete individual for his protection, but at the cost of renunciation of many of his most important personal goals (1912–13, 1930). It is thus possible and even necessary to speak of a person divorced from his interpersonal context in a way that is not possible given the fundamental assumptions of Aristotle, Rousseau, Sullivan, or Fairbairn.

2. Because it is possible to speak of the individual in a meaningful psychological way, it is possible to speak of a "constancy principle" which regulates the distribution of energy within an organism. The constancy principle holds that it is the purpose of the psychic apparatus to keep the level of stimulation within the individual as close to zero as possible. It thus provides the earliest motivational postulate of the drive/structure model, that the essential aim of the individual is to achieve a state of quiescence, of freedom from the press of endogenously arising stimulation.

3. With the full evolution of the drive model the nature of the stimulation which presses to be discharged under the influence of the constancy principle was conceptualized in the theory of instinctual drive. The origin of every human activity can be traced ultimately to the demands of drive, although a full explanation of behavior requires that we include an analysis of the forces which oppose its pressures. From the perspective of content the drives are reducible to two independent sets of needs which arise on the basis of man's biological inheritance. Their origin is in no way influenced by the social context, and they stand in relation to society exactly as do Locke's "natural rights" of life, liberty, and property (Locke, 1690). Of the two postulated drives Freud leans on the sexual currents for the bulk of his explanatory hypotheses, and the major thrust of early drive model thinking is on the elucidation of their operations.

4. There is no inherent object, no preordained tie to the human environment. The object is "created" by the individual out of the experience of drive satisfaction and frustration. For Freud the object must suit the impulse, while for theorists of the relational model the impulse is simply one way of relating to the object.

Psychoanalytic models are broad theories that attempt to interpret a wide range of existing data. The strength of a model, however, lies in its

flexibility, its expandability. The existence of a strong model leads to the generation of new information, and the success of the model depends on its ability to encompass within its fundamental premises explanations of the new phenomena. The relationship between a model and the data of a science is reciprocal, and no model can be viable if it cannot account for phenomena beyond those which led to its initial formulation.

Freud began his psychological theorizing with an investigation of phenomena derived from his study of a relatively circumscribed group of disorders: the “transference neuroses” of hysteria and the obsessive-compulsive disorders. Even within the area of psychopathology, many syndromes were considered beyond the scope of psychoanalytic inquiry; these included the “actual neuroses” (anxiety neurosis and neurasthenia), the psychoses, and melancholia. Problems which today seem at the core of psychoanalytic thinking—character formation and its relation to difficulties in living is probably the clearest example—were not central to Freud’s thinking during the period in which he evolved the drive/structure model.

Despite the limited field of investigation, from the outset Freud intended to use what he saw to create a general psychology. Not long after he devised a theory based on the transference neuroses he moved to extend it to encompass a broad range of issues in both personal and social development. Freud’s scope as a thinker is infinitely greater than that of any other psychoanalyst. Eventually he wrote on virtually all areas of psychopathology, about many aspects of the normal development of the individual, and about the evolution and meaning of many important aspects of civilization. Yet in each area he remained based in the fundamental premises of the drive/structure model. This is an index of the strength of the model and of Freud’s skill as a theoretician.

One of the most controversial issues in contemporary psychoanalytic thinking, bearing decisively on the problems of object relations, concerns the nature of the fundamental ties which bind people together. The work of Bowlby (1958, 1969) has engaged this question directly, and it is an implicit but pervasive leitmotif in the writings of Margaret Mahler. A particular approach to the problem is a major aspect of Hartmann’s (1939a) concept of the “average expectable environment,” and it deeply informs Kernberg’s (1976) position on the role of object relations in early development. Perhaps the clearest expression of the relational model view of these ties is expressed in Sullivan’s (1953) concept of “communal existence,” which suggests that a reciprocal relationship with other people is a fundamental part of being human.

In the terms of the drive model, social ties are secondary; they are contingent upon the ability of other people to facilitate the discharge of

drive-derived needs. Although people may in some way be unusually well suited to serve this function, the concept of the object within the drive model grants them no unique status in this regard. And yet no observer, certainly not Freud, can overlook the importance of the social ties which people form with each other. This issue, which transcends the domain of psychopathology, is one in which the flexibility of the model would be put to a critical test.

Freud addresses the question of social ties in a number of publications. In *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13) he applied the principles of his individual psychology to the organization of primitive societies, tracing many of their practices to efforts to control unconscious hostility, incestuous strivings, and ambivalence. In this work and in the much later *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930) Freud argues that society itself is founded on man's need to renounce his innate instinctual tendencies. Thus, society, like the structure ego, is a secondary derivative of drive: it comes into being as a way to allow a certain amount of drive gratification and an even greater amount of control.

Freud's most comprehensive discussion of man's social relationships comes in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921). Because he addresses the nature of the ties which bind people together, the views respond to those of later relational model theorists. He begins by noting that "In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so from the very first individual psychology, in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the words, is at the same time social psychology as well." The inevitable involvement of others does not, however, mean that individual psychology *is* group psychology; quite the reverse. Freud holds that "the social instinct may not be a primitive one and unsusceptible of dissection," and that in fact social phenomena are explicable entirely within the terms of an individual psychology which "explores the paths by which [man] seeks to find satisfaction for his instinctual impulses" (pp. 69, 70). The drive model is capable of telling us all that we need to know about people's lives as members of groups.

This leads us to the question of how group members influence one another, an issue crucial to the psychological question of how people grow up to be what they are. One central aspect of the problem is the communication of affective states. Sullivan, for example, attributes the appearance of anxiety to a process of "contagion" by the anxiety of a significant other person (1953). Kohut (1977) broadens this view to include the empathic communication of a wide variety of affective states.

But, like social psychology itself, contagion is not irreducible within the framework of the drive model. Freud argues that "There is no doubt

that something exists in us which, when we become aware of signs of an emotion in someone else, tends to make us fall into the same emotion; but how often do we not successfully oppose it, resist the emotion, and react in quite the opposite way? . . . [W]e should have to say that what compels us to obey this tendency is imitation, and what induces the emotion in us is . . . suggestive influence" (1921, p. 89).

Once emotional influence has been reduced to suggestion, Freud is on familiar grounds in terms of the drive model. Suggestion is a concept which had occupied his attention since the early days of his work with hypnosis, and he had long established that it is itself not an irreducible phenomenon. Rather, suggestion is completely determined and explained by the nature of the libidinal relationship between the individuals involved. Group behavior (and, therefore, many aspects of family dynamics) are thus encompassed within the explanatory framework of the drive/structure model.

At the time of the articulation of the drive/structure model the problems of group psychology and the nature of man's social ties had been addressed in philosophical and psychological investigations. Another issue of concern to psychoanalysts in recent years, but which had not been explicitly raised during the time Freud was creating his theoretical structure, has been variously conceptualized as the development from absolute dependence to mature dependence (Fairbairn, 1952), the achievement of separation and individuation (Mahler, 1968), and the evolution of a cohesive self (Kohut, 1977). Each of these developmental achievements, rooted in the movement from the earliest period of childhood dependency to more advanced stages of object relations, appears to add to psychoanalysis a dimension absent in the earlier model, a "developmental line" in Anna Freud's (1965) phrase independent of those sketched out within the drive model. Our question is whether Freud's theory addresses these issues or whether they constitute approaches to novel data which cannot be encompassed within the earlier model.

Our answer, although not entirely unambiguous, casts light on the model concept in general and on Freud's use of the drive model in particular. Fairbairn, Mahler, and Kohut emerge from their investigations with particular sensibilities about the earliest years of life, the preoedipal period, with insights about the transactions between parents and children not found in Freud.

But if the *process* of separation is depicted differently by Freud than by more recent theorists, it does not follow that the *theme* is given less weight. We are confronted by a situation similar to that dealt with in considering the existence of a social instinct. The drive model contains

within it an approach to the problem, but sees it not as irreducible (that is, not as a fundamental motivational force in its own right) but as yet another manifestation of the impact of drive.

In several places Freud stresses the developmental importance of the movement from dependence to autonomy. He states that the “course of childhood development leads to an ever-increasing detachment from parents” (1924a, p. 168) and that detachment is a task facing every individual, leading to “difficulties which are inherent in all psychical . . . development” (1930, p. 103). But what are the forces that underly this developmental process? There is a clue here in Freud’s account in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* of the “*da-fori*” game played by his toddler grandson. In this game, the child, by throwing away and retrieving a small toy attached to a string, re-created, under his own control, the experience of his mother’s coming and going. Freud rejects the possibility that there might be an independent drive for mastery. He interprets the game as representing “the child’s great cultural achievement, *instinctual renunciation*” (1920a, p. 15). The child has renounced in part his drive-derived demand on his mother by affecting a reversal from passivity to activity; he rather than she is now in command of the leaving process. But, the activity is not an end in itself, it is merely a mechanism for dealing with the pressure of his libidinal attachment.

The concepts of activity and passivity, although they refer in Freud’s writings to instinctual aims, provide alternative explanations for the same phenomena covered in later theories by the concepts of autonomy and dependence. With the advent of the drive model Freud saw this distinction as one of the most critical in determining the ebbs and flows of human experience. He writes that “the contrast between activity and passivity . . . is among the universal characteristics of sexual life” (1905a, p. 159). The meaning of this in terms of early object relations is made clear in a late formulation:

The first sexual and sexually coloured experiences which a child has in relation to its mother are naturally of a passive character . . . A part of its libido goes on clinging to those experiences and enjoys the satisfactions bound up with them; but another part strives to turn them into activity . . . the child contents itself either with *becoming self-sufficient* . . . or with *repeating its passive experiences in an active form of play*; or else it actually makes its mother into the object and behaves as the active subject towards her. (1931, p. 236; italics ours)

In the same way that Mahler (1968, 1972a) or Jacobson (1964) depicts an ongoing tension between stable individuation and the pull to narcissistic re-merger with the early caretaker, Freud (1915a) talks of the polarity between active and passive sexual aims.

The early tension between active and passive aims paves the way to the ultimate disentanglement of the child from his early dependency. The crux of the detachment issue arises with the most critical developmental period of childhood, the establishment and dissolution of the Oedipus complex. For Freud, the surmounting of oedipal ties, the overcoming of incestuous fixations, is necessary for later independent functioning. Only by abandoning these fixations can the child find in the outside world (the world outside his family) appropriate and available sexual objects (1910b, 1912a, 1918a). We might argue that the formulation of the Oedipus complex relates only to the tension between early dependency and later autonomy with respect to libidinal needs, but this very perspective is characteristic of the drive/structure model. The movement from passivity to activity and the movement from embeddedness with the oedipal objects *is* the movement from dependence to autonomy, accounted for with the explanatory principles on which the model is based.