



This paper, prepared as a Sigmund Freud birthday lecture for the Anna Freud Centre, takes the opportunity to clarify and to debate some of the misunderstandings surrounding the meaning and significance of sexuality in psychoanalysis. The author departs from twin observations he has made in the last ten years: direct discussion of sexuality seems to have declined in ordinary clinical presentations and sexuality also seems to have become marginalised and restricted to specialised papers in psychoanalytic journals. Attempting to question and understand this trend the author recalls that Freud placed sexuality at the centre of psychic development, psychoanalytic theory and clinical work. The contemporary and fashionable focus on object relations, pregenital fixations, borderline pathology and theories and techniques drawn from observations of child development have obscured, the author argues, the meaning and importance of sexuality in psychoanalytic theory and practice. A condensed review of Freud's ideas about sexuality and a re-evaluation of them is aimed at restoring the importance of genital sexuality and the Oedipus complex to their central place. For this author today's sexuality is not Freud's sexuality.

Is this title a provocative one? Even if it is, provocative has many meanings. It may allude to some sort of aggression or it could also be an incitement to think about a real problem. Having been invited to give the Sigmund Freud Birthday Lecture, I felt very honoured to address you on this occasion. I recalled a comment which was made to me, after a Franco-British meeting, in fact two remarks: 'You French are too Freudian and also you think too much of the penis'. An old objection: Freud, his opponents thought, was sexually obsessed, then so are we. I would like to take the opportunity which is kindly offered to me to try to clarify some of the misunderstandings raised by the differences between the conceptions of psychoanalytic practice and experience; about the meaning and significance of sexuality in psychoanalysis.

Where I have asked: 'Has sexuality anything to do with psychoanalysis?', it is mainly for two reasons. First, the reading of psychoanalytic journals or reviews during the last ten years shows a lack of interest in sexuality. If we exclude the ever problematic topic of feminine sexuality, which continues to feed debates in psychoanalysis because of the disagreement with Freud's views, sexuality in general ceases to be a major concept, a theoretical function of heuristic value. It is no longer considered to be a major factor in child development nor an aetiological determinant for the understanding of clinical psychopathology. It is as if sexuality were now considered a topic of specialised significance, a limited area of the internal world among other such. Very little seems to be left of the meaning and the function which Freud endowed it with in his work.

The second reason is related to my reactions when listening to the presentations of clinical material at different meetings I attended. Owing to the relative underestimation, if not neglect and sometimes absence of sexuality in

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the conceptual tools which were supposed to enlighten our ideas, I had supposed that maybe I was wrong. The fault could be mine; couldn't it be that I was overestimating the importance of sexuality in current psychoanalytic practice? But no, sexuality was not absent from the case material in the presentations of detailed sessions. It was there, but unexpectedly, it was as if the analyst would listen to this part of the patient's communication as a kind of artefact produced by the setting or a defence which should be interpreted in conjunction with other hidden aspects 'beyond' sexuality, or supposed to happen in childhood 'before' sexuality.

These two reasons made me think it was about time to open a debate in psychoanalysis on that question. Freud's birthday lecture was the opportunity.

### **Sexuality in contemporary clinical psychoanalysis**

Let us have a day dream. Let us suppose that Freud, instead of being born in 1856, arrived on earth a hundred years later and that, at approximately the same age, he discovered psychoanalysis around his forties, which is about our time. Would his theory be the same? Would sexuality still be seen as an aetiological factor? The answer would probably be no. But the assumption is absurd because the state of things that we can describe today is partly the result of the discovery of psychoanalysis. It cannot be denied that Freud's basic assumptions stood on biological ground, but it would also be shortsighted to think that it was a mere application of concepts borrowed from his training in biology. On the contrary, Freud, in fact, invented *psychosexuality*.

A combination of factors seems to have been operating on Freud's thought. On the one hand, the hypocrisy of the morals of the last years of the last century, which helped him to unearth its repressed manifestations and, on a wider scale, the hypothesis of the universal influence of sexuality as belonging to the general structure of human nature. If socially there have been considerable changes in the morality about sex and even more changes due to biological progress which has suppressed many of the old fears about sexual relationships—apart from the recently discovered aids epidemic—one cannot say that the problems related to sexuality in men and women have been solved. Our patients still complain about disturbances in their sexual lives with more or less complete impotence, frigidity, lack of satisfaction in sexual life, conflicts related to bisexuality or to the fusion and defusion of sexuality and aggression, to say the least. Changes and present social habits of people have not brought a significant improvement of sexual life in proportion to the modifications of public morals. Freud even thought, in the notes he had written in London in 1938, confirming earlier observations, that something was intrinsically lacking in sexuality to allow complete discharge and satisfaction. He even quoted an expression (in French on this occasion): 'En attendant toujours quelque chose qui ne venait point' ('Always waiting for something which never came', **Freud, 1941p. 300**). That made him think of some inner inhibition which did not allow for total pleasure, due to some antagonistic conflict basically rooted in drive functioning.

Of course, the most striking change in Freud's work was the increasing awareness, as he became experienced, of the influence of the factors which stood against the full blooming of the erotic drives. The different steps of Freud's work seem to witness a progression of antisexual factors beyond repression. It is obvious, for instance, that the self-preservative instincts have less power in inhibiting sexuality than the destructive ones. The self-preservative instincts induce only cautiousness, their action requires only a limitation of sexual satisfaction. With the destructive drives, the result is more radical. If we remember that, according to Freud, primitive destruction is first directed inward, sexuality as such is attacked and if a fusion of instincts is not performed on a sufficient scale, a certain proportion of destructiveness is freed beyond the sado-masochistic combinations. What is in fact accomplished leads to a profound alteration of sexuality as in those symptoms that we observe in borderline

personality disorders or in the psychopathology of narcissism and also in other nonneurotic structures. It is probably because these clinical features are now so frequent in the patients we analyse that we take for granted that these symptoms have little connection with sexuality and are better explained in terms of object relationships. Their understanding seems clearer with the help of other factors independent of sexuality, such as for instance the failure to satisfy the need for quietness, emotional balance or inner security.

I have no doubt that what can be observed from a conscious point of view can lead to such conclusions, but I wonder what becomes of what we consider as having a cardinal value in our conceptions of the unconscious. We can ask ourselves what the unconscious, whether it is related to the past or activated in the actual relationship, is made of. As far as I am concerned, I am not afraid of appearing as old hat if I say that I cannot conceive of the unconscious differently from Freud's view, that is of not being rooted in sexuality and destructiveness.

Let me be as clear as I can. I can think of all sorts of categories far removed from sexuality and destructiveness playing a role in psychic activity but I consider these as phenomenological or psychological descriptions that appear to me as intermediate formations, which, when analysed in the end, bring us back to these extreme categories which are those Freud described. Here we must make an important observation. If we try to do some research according to scientific methodology, that is, most of the time, with its need of statistical evidence, it is obvious that we shall not be able either to observe, or to label or to classify all that comes under our scrutiny from the couch as parts or expressions of sexuality and destructiveness. We shall only be able to consider the visible part of the iceberg. And sometimes we will prefer the certitudes of our shortsighted vision which is forgetful of repression to the uncertainties of the obscure underground. We prefer to give up the profundity and depth of the unobserved and sometimes unobservable psychic world in order to be proud of our discoveries about the most superficial aspects of psychic life, not minding the tribute we have to pay for this choice. There is no account of so-called scientific explorations inspired by psychoanalytical psychology, or findings related to ideas borrowed from outside psychoanalysis, which can enlighten the least, the most ordinary session of a most ordinary patient with a most ordinary analyst. But let us come back to sexuality and the way it appears in clinical psychoanalysis today.

When we consider the evolution of psychoanalysis and compare it with the evolution of psychopathology, it is obvious that the symptoms and clinical features which we observe today are much less loaded with overt manifestations of sexuality or even with sexual undertones accompanying the clinical symptoms shown by the patient. This partly explains the diminishing role attributed to sexuality in the clinical descriptions and the theoretical explanations. For instance, it is now agreed that the neuroses are not the main part of our psychoanalytic work and that the patients suffering from character disorders, narcissistic disorders or borderline personality disorders are more frequently lying on the couches of psychoanalysts than the 'classical neurotics'. Even if we leave aside diagnostic considerations and pay attention to the contents of the sessions or to the aspects of the development of the transference process, we may still be tempted to come to the same conclusion. Moreover, it frequently happens that when we listen to the material presented by some colleagues during meetings, the manifest presence of sexuality—either through dream material or unconscious fantasy, or even in the reports of the patient's life and relationships with others—is interpreted in a way which bypasses the sphere of sexuality to address object relationships of a supposedly deeper nature, in a way which intentionally refuses to pay attention to the specific sexual aspects that are very often supposed to be a mere defence.

I would like to present a view which differs from the usual way of understanding the peculiarities of the material of the patients presenting non-neurotic structures. It is frequently thought that these patients suffer from regressions

far beyond the oedipal and genital fixations, going back to much earlier pregenital phases. The conclusion is then that the classical fixations through the oedipal or genital phase are not valid here. After years of analysis with borderline patients or patients suffering from narcissistic disorders, I have reached opposite conclusions. I no longer hold it to be true that oedipal and genital fixations are not at work in the process causing the psychopathological picture. On the contrary, I came to the conclusion that the whole structure of symptoms in which sexuality seemed to play a contingent role or an apparently unimportant one, acted as if the other aspects not overtly genital were meant to protect and to hide the core of the pathology. In fact, the sexual and genital fixations were like the heart of an onion covered by many layers, as the secret that the patient had to keep extremely private. In the eyes of others, patients wanted to appear as if these problems were non-existent or trivial. This of course causes technical problems.

I do not mean that the analyst must shortcircuit all these layers to go to the heart of the matter and that the arrow of the interpretation has to centre its shot on the target of sexuality and generality. One must respect the patient's defences especially when these defences imply such regressions. When the patient acts in this way, it is most of the time because he has some unconscious awareness that giving sexuality and generality their full importance would lead him to great danger for himself, such as the impossibility of accepting the slightest frustration, the torments of disappointment, the tortures of jealousy, the storms of having to admit that the object is different from the image projected on him, the disorganisation of limitless destruction either of the object or of the self in case of conflict etc. And it is in order to avoid all these threats of breakdown that the patient will disengage himself from a full and total relationship, leaving the field to other regressions which happily enough for him do not involve the existence of another object and the dissatisfactions that he, or she, may cause.

Many times, we have taken the tree to be the forest, focusing on the manifest features and the primitive fixations that they seem to reveal, our intention being driven away from the hidden latent unconscious fantasies and the violence to which they can lead when activated. Am I contradicting myself? Are not the features I have mentioned the evidence of pregenital fixations? This is not the question. The regressive nature of such behaviour or fantasies and their acting-out expressions cannot hide the fact that the core of its meaning is in the reference to the genital aims with all their conflicting connotations: the difference of the sexes and the difference of generations, the tolerance to otherness, the conflict between desire and identification to the object, the acceptance of the loss of control in sexual enjoyment etc. It seems easier to direct oneself towards what is generally taken as granted in terms of disturbances having nothing to do with sexuality. These fixations are seen as reproduction of early mother-baby relationships, usually totally sexless. Even the oral fixations invoked are seen more in the light of some sacred fount than as a source of pleasurable enjoyment.

Therefore, it is possible that we have to modify our current views and instead of following the patients in the open regressive manifestations that they show us compliantly, to keep an eye on what is going on behind the scene and to question the idea that the sexual and the genital are superficial. These ideas are consequences of the fact that we think of patients as babies. The anal, oral or, in other terminologies, the depressive position and the schizoid-paranoid positions, being older or deeper, are equated with being more important.

We should ask: what is important? What has the greatest value? The price of life is attached to what all human beings share and are longing for: the need to love, to enjoy life, to be part of a relationship in its fullest expression etc. Again, here we are confronted with our ideology of what psychoanalysis is for. What is its aim? Overcoming our primitive anxieties, to repair our objects damaged by our sinful evil? To ensure the need for security? To pursue the norms of adaptation? Or to be able to feel alive and to cathect the many possibilities offered by the diversity of life, in spite of its inevitable disappointments, sources of unhappiness and loads of pains?

## Freud's sexuality and its vicissitudes

One would wish to concentrate only on the topic of sexuality to evaluate its importance in psychoanalysis today but such wishful thinking would not spare us the confrontation of Freud's concept of sexuality with what we usually understand by this word in contemporary psychoanalysis. For Freud, the revelation of sexuality in the aetiology of the neuroses was a blatantly ignored fact. But he did not limit its influence to that period of western culture when he made his discovery. The field of sexuality extended for him to the overall experience of humanity whenever and wherever it took place. Variations could be seen through the epochs and the parts of the world considered, not the fact itself.

One remembers his reactions when an anthropologist came to him, maintaining that in some primitive tribes the anthropologists could not observe anal features. Freud asked: 'Because these people have no anus?' It was obvious that for him the first step was to make a sharp distinction between sexuality and genitality and to distinguish between fixations, reaction-formations, sublimations etc. He had extended the field of infantile sexuality to parts of the body which had no direct connection to sex. Furthermore he made a progressive advance by postulating the infiltration of sexuality into parts of the psychic world which were supposed to escape its influence or even to oppose its action.

For instance the ego was first considered as antagonistic to sexuality, being on the side of the self-preservative instincts. Then, with the concept of narcissism, the ego was filled with that same libido, which it was supposed to struggle against before. The antagonism was changed. Now the analyst had to evaluate the competing role of narcissistic libido and object libido. Other features about the attributes of sexuality were also highly significant. Firstly, its possibilities of mixing with other tendencies which seemed opposed to it previously. Such was the case with aggression fused with libido giving rise to sadism and masochism. And secondly, the ability of libido to undergo transformations such as the turning upon one's own self and the reversal to the contrary, for example. Above all, two other vicissitudes of the drives were striking: sublimation, in which the sexual aims of the initial drive were abandoned, the cathexes desexualised and, last but not least, repression which kept the sexual tonality of the ideational content as far as possible from consciousness (**Freud, 1915**).

From these brief remarks, we can see that what Freud really described through these mechanisms, of which I am only mentioning a few, is in fact a set of transformations which could be compared to a kind of grammar of processes which do not use words. One could even go so far as to think that alongside the creation of an infinite variety of 'sentences' with the help of such a grammar, an opposite action could take place, in order not only to erase its preceding content when censorship is at work, but to go so far as to destroy the communication it tried to build on, with the device of untying the links. We are here alluding to that mysterious and debatable idea of a death instinct, which we will not develop further for the time being.

Freud's descriptions of this unconscious wordless grammar—I am aware that the expression is self-contradictory but I am sure you will understand that I am alluding to psychic processes—was to be enriched with the mechanisms of defence described in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (**Freud, 1926**). In 1915 he only spoke of *vicissitudes* of drives, not of defence mechanisms. He also discovered other defence mechanisms after 1926, splitting for instance. The reason for selecting sexuality for such a purpose was beyond its clinical significance in the neuroses, or its capacity to build up a psychic set of mechanisms with the vicissitudes of the instincts. Sexuality was also chosen by Freud because of its philosophical content, as he confessed, quoting Empedocles in 'Analysis terminable and interminable' (**Freud, 1937**). Sexuality and death are known to be the two great 'inventions' of evolution. Sexuality is linked to the perpetuation and complexification of life. Its functions in the individual are of an unequalled importance compared to the somatic functions. The fact that in the human species a most natural function is subjected to such cultural influences or to variations of destiny—Freud's vicissitudes

(*Schicksal*)—and can become so much ‘unnatural’ is of considerable importance, but does not change the fundamental biological bedrock. One should not forget that if one wants to understand Freud's basic assumptions fully. Let us return to the more restricted psychological description.

Freud's theory has been considered a solipsistic one. As if it took place in an isolated organism, shut away in itself, its evolution and development being independent from any external influence. And that was one of the main reasons to criticise this conception and to adopt the opposite view of object relationships. I do not think that Freud ever thought of a closed system, denying the importance of the object. It is true that in the model drawn from perversion, the object can easily be substituted. A special kind of shoe can become the object of a passionate flame. But there is another model drawn for melancholy. The loss of the object is the loss of an irreplaceable object, which has to be healed by the identification of the ego to the lost object. I believe that Freud thought that the dependency of the baby towards the maternal object was an evident fact. He even confessed that an organism functioning according to the sovereignty of the pleasure principle compelled us to include maternal care in the description. But he assumed this more as a necessary condition for the system to survive than a factor actively taking part in the transformations he described. Moreover, as I have said previously, the object was the revealer of the instinct because it was through its lack that the activation of the instinct and the awareness of its exigencies were experienced.

After Balint and Klein the notion of primary narcissism that relates to an objectless world was rejected. The evidence that an object was existing from the start was conspicuous, but those who defended that idea seemed to have forgotten that at the beginning of life the encounters between the baby and its object take place in a very limited period of time of the day. There is no question about the richness of these experiences and the importance of that interchange through all kinds of contacts: skin, eyes, feelings etc. But is it possible to forget that the amount of these moments of encounter is very small compared to the period where the baby is by himself, sleeping, resting, or crying, shouting, in a world which one has every right to call narcissistic?

Too much importance has been given to the ideas of the observers who can only observe what happens during the moments of exchanges. As there is hardly anything to observe at the other periods when the baby is by himself, the reaction is to understate their importance and to deny the world of solitude of the baby, because it is unthinkable for us. It is much more acceptable to admit that the moments of encounter are drowned in that ocean of self-withdrawal, being integrated in that context of non-awareness of what is labelled as ‘other’, than to think that the traces of the moments of encounter persist as such out of the presence of the mother and that their memory survives from the beginning in all their aliveness after their interruption. Therefore, the existence of an object from the start does not seem to me contradictory with the idea of primary narcissism. We should also remember that this hypothesis of object relationships ruins the idea of auto-eroticism.

The rejection of primary narcissism was not only due to the thesis of the existence of the object from the beginning of life. Another event took place in psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysts decided to withdraw from the field of applied psychoanalysis, because of many misfortunes of Freud or of his followers: misconceptions, mistakes, neglect of important facts, fragile hypotheses which raised a considerable amount of criticism. It was decided to focus on clinical experience. So far, so good. This change, as a normal consequence, had the analyst always being there in the analytic session, to shift to a theory based less on the development and ramifications of some unknown hypothetical force, but more on the exchanges with the object as it was experienced in the clinical situation. That of course could have kept the theory of sexuality intact. This could not be.

Since the *Studies on Hysteria*, Freud had noticed how seldom the patient referred to the sexual element. Repression and resistance were influencing the patient's communication. But now they were also shared by the analyst. In

fact the object-relations theory progressed along two lines. One was Fairbairn's, replacing the 'pleasure-seeking' orientation of psychic activity with an 'object-seeking' one involving a desexualisation of the theory. The second was Melanie Klein's trend, also invoking the importance of the object from the start, but giving precedence to destruction and shifting from Freud's opposition between pleasure and unpleasure towards another couple of opposites: the good and the bad object. This slight difference was in fact of considerable consequence, orienting the basic principles of psychic activity in a direction which diverged considerably from Freud's hypothesis. The idea of an object relationship starting at the beginning of life raised the breast to a supreme position. Its influence persisted in later phases. The breast model extended to the genital phase. From now on, the penis was seen as a giving and feeding organ, in other words a breast. Implicitly fellatio was the nearest approximation to a fully satisfying sexual relationship. Am I understating the role of metaphor? Maybe. Nevertheless the role of a sexual relationship is not to feed and nurture but to reach ecstasy in mutual enjoyment.

It is difficult for me to think that the capacity for a woman to enjoy sex is drawn from the unconscious memories of 'having loved and cherished and safely enjoyed the nipple in active sucking' (Hoffer, 1991p. 696). If this is considered to be the only condition I can foresee frigidity in the background. And if there was ever enjoyment devoid of perverse oral fixations it would be expected to be defensive against anxiety, the latter always being linked with aggression. In the end what do we find with Klein's theory of the early object relationship? The breast as a good or bad object, the oral fixation as unmanageable or at least unmatched, the destructive instincts arousing anxiety and the erotic ones being merely defences. As Hoffer states clearly in the *Freud-Klein Controversies*:

According to Freud, the neuroses are the specific diseases of the sexual function, according to Mrs Klein's theory, the neuroses might be called the specific diseases of the destructive functions (Hoffer, 1991p. 723).

Needless to say the father's importance in Freud's work is here placed in a secondary rank. When we read the *Freud-Klein Controversies*, we can see that Melanie Klein's followers were the first to invoke the results of the observation of paediatricians to support their views in their debates against their colleagues. From that moment, the kind of competition that took place between different child observers, though resulting in an even greater disagreement in the findings, all had one common one factor: the diminishing role of sexuality in child development. This is not a surprise since most of what Freud had described was supposed to take place intrapsychically and the knowledge of which was considerably limited by repression. Observers prefer to see than to listen. To perceive is to be in connection with external reality. To listen is to be in contact with psychic reality.

### **Sexuality as a potential for transformation: from sex to love**

In building up the theory of the drives, Freud emphasised more than what was repressed in our civilised human life. His discovery did not limit itself to the unearthing of that which could be found beyond the surface of consciousness. His description of the transformations of sexuality was even more important. This reminds us of his paper on 'Instincts and their vicissitudes' (1915a), and also of others that defend the same idea differently. (I am thinking here of his paper on the transformation of the drives in anal eroticism.) If we think of his definition of the instinct as 'a measure of the demand made upon the mind for work in consequence of its connections with the body' (p. 122), it is this reference to 'work' which explains the transformations that take place, changing the contents of its initial expression. In the case of what he called the vicissitudes of the instincts, we said that we could see them as a kind of preverbal language. They are more than a mere set of mechanisms or operations because we cannot understand them from a point of view excluding meaning. We can add to these mechanisms some others which do not involve the

drives directly but which take place between the ego and the object, such as identification. It is the same capacity for transformation that comes into play in identification.

Let us think of Freud's example in *The Ego and the Id* where the transformed ego addresses the id, saying: 'Look, you can love me too—I am so like the object' (1923, p. 30). Identification as a modality involving the object participates in the transformational process concerning the ego.

Analysing the conceptions of sexuality we see through cultural differences, we observe that sexuality with all its manifestations throughout an entire life is an extraordinary stimulus for thought, giving birth to all sorts of imaginative and mythical constructions. On the scale of the individual, fantasy plays a similar role. Its potential for transformation builds up, a complex thought which is the most powerful incitement to psychic work. This kind of thought, to which Freud alluded at the end of the Wolf Man case, based on intuition, nevertheless involves unconscious operations and deserves to be called primary. It is opposed to the one that is reachable only through language and secondary processes. As we can see, no other psychic quality can play a similar role. It seems reasonable to think that the place and influence of sexuality cannot be diminished, in spite of the obscurity of its manifestations, many of them being hidden. This is not only a matter of a change in manners or morals due to the *Zeitgeist*. We are in fact questioning the roots of the mind attached to the body and linked to objects, immersed in a culture. And when finally we consider its expressions as being very remote from its manifest content, we are driven to a relationship between sex and life.

In discussing the views of Freud, it has seemed to me that an important change in his work has been overlooked. In 1920, Freud's last theory of the instincts stated in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* has opened new ways of thinking which have been neglected. Most of his colleagues have focused their attention on the postulate of the existence of a death instinct, which seemed debatable to them, and spent all their energies in contradicting his views, leaving aside important changes he brought to his theory of sexuality.

In this work, Freud introduces the idea of Eros. Instead of speaking of sexual instincts, he now speaks of life instincts, a change which becomes evident and justified by its antithesis, the death instinct. Sexuality seems here to be equated with life as the non-sexual instincts are supposed to rush forward to the final aim of life, death. But he will also add another remark later on. He will speak equally of *life or love instincts*. Here, life is less equated with sexuality than with love.

At this point, we must remember an earlier remark of Freud in his paper on 'Instincts and their vicissitudes'. In this paper he observes that it is impossible to speak of an instinct as 'loving' its object. Love can only be thought as the result of a unification of partial instincts:

It is impossible to doubt that there is the most intimate relation between these two opposite feelings [love and hate] and sexual life, but we are naturally unwilling to think of love as being some kind of special component instinct of sexuality in the same way as the others we have been discussing. We should prefer to regard loving as the expression of the whole sexual current of feeling; but this idea does not clear up our difficulties, and we cannot see what meaning to attach to an opposite content of this current (**Freud, 1915ap. 133**).

What Freud is in fact saying, even if he is not fully aware of the implications of his remark, is that, as far as a love relationship is at play, the object cannot be a part object. So if love exists from the beginning as the expression of the drives of Eros it will correspondingly imply a whole object in the erotic relationship which takes place. We can conclude that, paradoxically, the theory of object relationship was in germ in Freud's last conception of the drives. What we can add to this remark is that it is impossible to consider separately the drives alone or the object. The true relationship connects an id made of drives and an object. The relationship is probably an oscillating one, according to different aspects and moments of the couple it unites, sometimes a part instinct and a part object relationship, mainly sexual (and destructive) and, at other moments, an id with a total object united in a transient love and hate relationship.

One could think of an alternate relationship between sexual and destructive drives on one hand, and part objects on the other hand at times and, at other moments, probably after drives have received their due satisfaction, a relationship between an id which is on the way to becoming an ego and a part object on the way to becoming a total one. Regressions will not only lead to hatred and destruction, but also to the predominance of part objects. I have already expressed my disagreement with Melanie Klein's views. Neither can I agree, and this goes without saying, with Fairbairn's idea of object-seeking instead of pleasure-seeking libido. How surprised I have been in reading Guntrip's account of his analysis, which states that Fairbairn used to analyse his patients behind his desk and that he had conversations with them after the sessions. The desk protected him from a close, intimate, metaphorically sexual relationship with the patient, and the conversations helped the session to be considered as a kind of mundane exchange.

There is in every analyst a trend to act out splitting in clinical and theoretical work. I am here using the concept of splitting in the Freudian sense not the Kleinian one. This is illustrated by an expression used by Octave Mannoni quoting one of his patients. It happened that a patient of his had to phone him to fix an irregular appointment and that Mannoni's secretary, after having checked with our colleague, told the patient on the phone: 'M. Mannoni expects you to come to his home tomorrow at noon for drinks'. What in fact had happened was that the secretary had probably mixed up the name of the patient with another one who was a friend of Mannoni coming from abroad, whom he wished to see as soon as possible.

The next day when Mannoni went to greet the person he expected at noon, he was confronted with the mistake, finding the patient in the waiting room. He did not ask any question, went to the consulting room as usual, and when the patient lay on the couch he listened to what he had to say. The patient said: 'You seem to be surprised to see me. Of course, I was also surprised that you asked me to come today for drinks. But still ...'

We are inclined to do the same. Of course, we know that this is an analytic session, but still ... Which means that we go out of the world of the session and mix it with considerations which belong to the outside world. So we say: of course, we know that we are dealing with psychic reality, but still ... child observation can give us clues which can be useful. Of course, we know we are dealing with matters which are supposed to be as close as possible to the pleasure-unpleasure principle or to the world of the unconscious, but still ... We turn to other parameters not belonging at all to the same context to enlighten what goes on in the analytic relationship. Of course, we know we relate to psychoanalytic theory as it was primarily built by Freud, but still ... We do not only improve it on the same lines but in fact totally distort the spirit in which it was originally built up. I disagree about the excessive importance given to findings based on facts outside the analytic situation whether observational or from experimental psychology or the fashionable cognitive sciences.

We confuse the fashionable with real progress in the understanding of psychic activity along psychoanalytic guidelines, lacking a critical examination of the body of knowledge to which the fashionable refers. We have to scrutinise the so-called discoveries in order to see if these supposed new ideas are not contradictory to the specificity of the psychoanalytic view point. The important thing is to decide if psychoanalysis is entirely compatible with psychology. The question of psychoanalytical *psychology* still awaits a proper and satisfactory answer as to its legitimacy. If we are not aware of what is going on, we will all follow the corpse of psychoanalysis for a funeral service celebrating its defunct existence. Depth psychologists will have to become, because of unemployment, gravediggers.

But it is not enough to criticise the import of ideas from disciplines challenging psychoanalysis. We also have to examine the changes which appear from the inner evolution of our discipline. My main objection to the Kleinian body of knowledge—which does not go against my admiration for Bion's work—is related to the progressive disappearance of sexuality in her work. Even if I take the risk of confirming the criticism of my British colleague I quoted

at the beginning of this lecture, I will question the idea that my whole sexual experience aims at finding a fully satisfying breast. To me this is not only interpretable as a reference to earlier fixations but as a denial of the difference of the sexes. Here is what Meltzer writes about the sexual relationship between man and woman in the three-fold structure of the relationship.

In its deepest, most basic, primal meaning the woman is in distress and in need and in danger; the man is her servant, her benefactor, her rescuer. She is in distress at the plight of her internal babies, in need of supplies to make the milk for her external babies and in danger from the persecutors her children have projected into her. She needs good penises, and good semen, and must be relieved of all the bad excreta. She will be content, satisfied, safe, while he will be admired, exhausted, exhilarated —triumphant (**Meltzer, 1973p. 84**).

I do not think that Donald Meltzer's separation from the Kleinian group invalidates his writings because it is not his ideas that have been the source of his conflicts with his colleagues, as far as I know. In Kleinian writings there is less and less reference to infantile sexuality, the whole field being occupied with concerns about destruction. Anyhow we can see here how the fact of having substituted the good and the bad objects for pleasurable and unpleasurable experiences has an ideological effect. If my work has not spoiled the analysis too much, and if the patient is not too psychotic, my hope at the end of the analysis will be, according to Freud's guidelines, that my analysand will be able to enjoy life a little more than he used to do before coming into treatment or, as Winnicott says, that he will be more alive, even if his symptoms do not all disappear. Is our psychoanalytic puritanism responsible for the fact that we would consider sexuality as negligible in such an enjoyment?

Geza Roheim, who worked as an anthropologist, noticed the antisexual attitude of all human groups (**Roheim, 1950**). There is no time to explain my thinking on the variations of sex according to different cultures or different stages of history, as I did in other writings. I have chosen in this lecture to remain in the field of clinical psychoanalysis. I can also see that inside psychoanalysis the antisexual attitude reveals itself in different ways. I have already expressed my objections about Melanie Klein's views and those of Fairbairn, but there are others, for instance the ideas of Hartmann on the defence of an autonomous ego and a conflict-free sphere. The ideological value of such a thesis was in some way to save the ego from its contamination with the drives.

Needless to say, that brought us back to a psychological conception of the ego closer to the pre-Freudian concepts of the ego. Hartmann had paved the way to Kohut's self, which was supposed to be a better concept than the ego. Kohut not only promoted the self to a more dignified status but defended the idea that the reference to the drives was misleading theoretically and clinically. From then on, the contributions on self psychology of Kohut's followers look more and more like phenomenological literature. The notion of 'analysis of the self' seems less and less accountable in terms of repression related to unconscious derivatives of the drives. This was the result of the rediscovery of narcissism by Kohut. To rediscover narcissism implies that it has been forgotten or lost by everybody, and I am not sure that narcissism has been forgotten or lost, by all of us. Anyhow that rediscovery increased a misunderstanding because narcissism was opposed to the drives, which is not at all Freud's idea. Again the consequence of such a rediscovery resulted in an increase of lack of interest in sexuality. So, in the end, you can see that the title of my lecture was not a provocative one at all but that it accounted for reality in the evolution of the spirit of psychoanalysis.

And for those who like to go back in their theories as early as possible to the first periods of life, do I have to remind them, just as I have to remind you and to remind myself in case we forget, of a very simple fact? If any one of us breathes the air and is alive, it is as a consequence, happily or unhappily, of a primal scene, in other words, to be fully explicit, of a sexual relationship, happy or unhappy, between two sexually different parents, whether we like it or not.

## The meaning of sexuality

Has sexuality anything to do with psychoanalysis? You may think from my ideas that for me the answer is obviously yes, and you will not be entirely wrong. But this implies a list of reservations which must be included in the full answer. It appears to us that sexuality needs a re-evaluation. Today's sexuality is not Freud's sexuality. I am not thinking here of the evolution of moral standards, a chapter which of course has to be considered and analysed in a detailed way to understand its consequences. I am mainly alluding to a deeper knowledge of the findings of biology and the varieties which we can witness in civilisations different from our own, primitive societies and so on. Also to the way its manifestations have been regulated in other periods of history. This examination will not lead us to an absolutely relativistic point of view but will compel us to think about the nature of sexuality as a very powerful agent stimulating the imagination and creating ways of coping with this so-called natural function in the most unnatural way. It will compel us to link the study of sexuality more closely with our conceptions of time.

Freud's diphasic onset of sexuality has been forgotten; it is of the utmost importance to understand some basic ideas of Freudian theory such as deferred action. Freud describes it for the first time in the 'Draft' (**Freud, 1895 in 1950**) under the title *The Proton Pseudos* (The First Lie). It is also linked to the variations of time as experienced in pleasure, enjoyment, unpleasure, pain etc. Complementarily, the considerations of sexuality are also tightly linked with space. We can here recall Maurice Bouvet's concept of object relationship, viewed from the angle of 'distance to the object' as this appears in the transference situation. We see that there are many explored areas which have been left aside when adopting other mainstreams of thought.

I would like to add another view to the usual reappraisal of sexuality. I do not wish to give the impression that I am acting here as a mere herald of Freud's findings, thinking that there is nothing to add to what he described. Not only do I think that there are still many things to discover, but in many instances, I think that his ideas deserve to be criticised. One field in which his ideas need a re-evaluation is, as everybody knows, feminine sexuality. On the other hand there are many other points which need to be reconsidered—one thinks, for instance, of the work of Robert Stoller (**1975, 1979**). Because of time limits, we cannot give a detailed examination of his opinions. Nevertheless it seems to me that Stoller's investigations confirm a point which I too have emphasised, based on my psychoanalytic experience: the relationship of sexuality to what I called madness, differentiating it from psychosis.

Let us notice, though Freud was not ignorant of it, through the work of Havelock Ellis, for example, the wide range of disturbances of sexuality. He never considered the bizarreness of transvestism or transsexualism which have become relatively frequent in our time and in our society. Again we shall not have the possibility here and now to analyse the implications of this omission. It is obvious anyhow that it is impossible to consider these psychopathological states solely from the point of view of behaviour or as perversions, at least as far as transsexualism is concerned. Many psychoanalysts consider that transsexualism ought to be considered as a psychosis, therefore beyond what I called madness. Even if there are debates about this controversial question, it is clear that there are, in the nature of sexuality, some elements belonging to passion which can express themselves even in perversions. They are not only linked with the object of the perversion as a person, which most of the time disappears and is replaced by a part object. In the cases we are speaking of, the perverse gratifications come to the forefront with accents of passion which go with the attachment to the part object in a way which evokes some loss of the mind. Of this Freud did not speak enough. What I am trying to say is that the regressions of transvestism or transsexualism do not create these symptoms, so there must be something in normal sexuality which accounts for the possibility of their coming up and taking the full place in the patient's mind.

## Conclusion

I would like now to make some concluding remarks. To answer my question implies also to take Freud's last statements on the topic into consideration. In the closing lines of his chapter 'The theory of the instincts' in the *Outline*, his legacy in a way, he writes:

The greater part of what we know about Eros—that is to say, about its exponent, the libido—has been gained from a study of the sexual function, which, indeed, on the prevailing view, even if not according to our theory, coincides with Eros (**Freud, 1940p. 151**).

From this quotation we see that Freud makes a distinction between Eros (the love and life instincts) and sexuality which is only a function (just as the unconscious has become only a quality by then), and that the libido is the exponent of Eros. So we have a chain, the concept: Eros (love and life instincts)—its exponent (libido)—its function (sexuality). Freud underlines that sexuality must not be confused with Eros, but if we now go to the relationship between life and love, we come to the conclusion that Eros, expressing itself as a life instinct, acts as psychically binding. As a qualification of a love instinct, binding means uniting to an object. The reference to sexuality underlines that the love object is mainly a pleasurable one. We therefore imply that the object ensures security, peace, quietness, easiness and so on, which are preconditions of pleasure; but they only pave the way to its experience and as an experience which tightens the young ego to its nurturing object.

The link between love, life and pleasure is very powerful. This connection implies the existence, sooner or later, of the awareness of the other, as separate from the young ego with all its consequences for the anxieties that can appear at that moment. Moreover, the inexorable passage of time will lead to an even more dramatic consequence: the finding that the young baby and its mother are not alone in the world, that the object has its own object, which is not the baby and which I call *the other of the object*, in other words the third element which the father symbolises. From now on, the baby will not only have to bother about his own sexual impulses, but also to wonder and to fantasise about the secret relationships of the two partners, which do exclude him in order to enjoy mutually their intimate pleasurable relationship. And finally this awareness of the discontinuous existence of the object, of its periodic disappearance, of its unavailability from time to time and then of the existence of other pleasurable objects, explains the importance of desire. Because of the tragic, but very ordinary, circumstances I have described, the unavoidable necessity of the displacement of desire that we call sublimation has to be accomplished. Sublimation, whose field goes far beyond the one to which we usually restrict it, is what explains our presence here, yours and mine, in this lecture to celebrate the sublimation of Sigmund Freud which enabled him to create psychoanalysis one century ago.

Many happy returns of this day, dear Sigmund.

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