Chapter 3
The Interpersonal Self, Uniqueness, Will, and Intentionality

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All psychoanalytic developments are shaped by the particular clinical experiences of their originators, just as the wood, clay, plastic, or found object chosen by a sculptor has a profound and sometimes determinant impact on the final form of the work of art. In Freud's early encounters with the patients he diagnosed as hysterics, he saw his task as understanding and removing sharply defined symptoms. His experiments with hypnosis, which led the way to free association and eventually to interpretation, were intended to relieve his patients of discrete pain and restore specific physical function. Although Freud's interests soon moved away from the somatic manifestations of psychic distress and into the wide arena of psychological disturbance, his conceptual system remained focused on the individual symptom or symptom complex, which he understood as evidence of particular impulses or drives. "Neurosis" was defined as a specific pathological response, clearly delineated and discrete, erupting within an otherwise healthy personality. Even though Freud and, later, Abraham did speculate about the underlying psychological structures consolidated around stages of infantile libidinal development, the formation and structure of character remain among the least elaborated aspects of Freudian theory.

In contrast, the careers of Harry Stack Sullivan and many of the early contributors to the Interpersonal school involved treating hospitalized schizophrenics. These patients seemed to demand a different order of psychoanalytic conceptualizing. Untangling specific symptoms or the interpretation of a particular issue had little impact on the schizophrenic's difficulties. Recognizing that disturbances in the schizophrenic's personality could hardly be reduced to single, definable conflicts, regardless of how large a number of conflicts one might be willing to entertain, Sullivan conceived of psychopathology as a dynamic whole, a complex, integrated pattern. Sullivan understood the configuration of defenses as the underlying structure that gives personality its characteristic shape and form. In this regard, his views paralleled those of Wilhelm Reich (1933), who developed the concept of "character armor" to describe the defensive quality of such integrated personality styles.

Early in the development of his ideas, Sullivan attempted to define a new way of categorizing core aspects of character, focusing more on behavior and relational styles than on presumed infantile libidinal disturbances (although he did also correlate specific characterological disturbances with problems occurring at particular points in the infant's development). He soon abandoned this Herculean task in the interest of expanding his clinical and, later, his developmental theory. His belief that therapeutic gains required exquisite attention to the minute details of the patient's particular idiosyncratic experiences led him to argue against any form of classification that might prejudice the clinician's judgment or expectations (Sullivan, 1956; Chrzanowski, 1977). The interested reader will find an outline of Sullivan's early views of characterology in the chapter on "Personality and Diagnosis" by Daniel Jones.

For heuristic purposes, Sullivan and most of his followers accepted conventional categories for describing pathological patterns, albeit rather reluctantly (p. 193). While Lorna Benjamin (1993) and other academic psychologists are designing diagnostic classifications wholly based on interpersonal attributes, most Interpersonal psychoanalysts continue to use standardized codes and categories. Their understanding of the nature of the pathology underlying the clinical entities differs greatly, however, from that of other psychoanalytic theorists.

The diverse forces that led Sullivan to locate the sources of psychic distress in the interpersonal field are described elsewhere in this Handbook. For our present discussion it is sufficient to note that both health and pathology are defined, for Sullivan, by the relative adaptiveness of behaviors to their social context and by the degree of veridicality or syntactic validation of their underlying assumptions, motives, goals, and so on, in the view of others. While
particular types of behavior might be invariably labeled problematic or pathological (e.g., symptoms of sexual inadequacy, phobias, addictions, or compulsive behaviors), these should never be viewed in isolation from the patient's personality, nor can they be extricated from their meaning within the interpersonal environment in which the patient lives. Quite naturally, therefore, Sullivan and his followers turned to considerations of the whole person, the psychological integration of behaviors and interactions into what is variously known as personality or character, as the primary unit for the study of psychopathology (see Munroe, 1955; Barnett, 1980b; Greer, 1988).

The Interpersonal emphasis on environment-based experiential shaping of individual psychology has resulted in the claim that Interpersonal psychoanalysis is superficial and is unsuitable for plumbing the deepest reaches of the psyche. This argument assumes that the most animal-like instincts, drives, and passions, those aspects of being most closely linked to our biological nature, generate the most powerful and meaningful forces underlying observable behavior. In the words of Zucker (1989), "Classical theory sees culture not as molding, but rather as serving mainly to contain human biology" (p. 406).

Mitchell (1988) has also addressed this matter. He suggests that in refocusing psychoanalytic attention away from biology and assuming that the person and the social world are indivisible, Interpersonal theorists are left with the problem of how or where to locate the core of selfhood, what Wolstein (1987) has termed the psychic center of the self. Greenberg and Mitchell (1983), studying only Sullivan and his immediate collaborators, state that Interpersonal theory is limited by its lack of inclusion of areas of the self that are non-pathological.

Arguments of this sort, often put forth by critics from other theoretical orientations, reveal a lack of appreciation of the extensive interest in, and theorizing about, the self among Interpersonal theorists. It will become clear, not only that modern Interpersonalists are aware of the importance of including within their theory an acknowledgment of the deepest aspects of the human psyche but also that they have been able to accommodate this conceptual requirement within a framework that has fewer metatheoretical assumptions, is flexible with respect to inclusion of new observations, and remains true to the early Interpersonal assumptions concerning the primacy of relational experience in shaping individual psychology.

The terms "personality" and "character" are sometimes used as synonyms by Sullivan to refer to the repetitive interpersonal behaviors and patterns of interaction that characterize a person's life. Since such behaviors are determined by components brought to the situation by the individual, as well as by those with whom he interacts, personality is a social (or interpersonal) construct, defined contextually rather than in terms of idiosyncratic individualistic givens. Levenson (1993) argues that despite the terminological slippage, it is erroneous to use the concept of character in connection with Sullivan's ideas since the term in general usage implies the existence of internal, underlying structure. This, to Levenson, is entirely at odds with Sullivan's view of a dynamic integration operating within the individual and presented to the external world as personality. For the purpose of this chapter it is useful to rely on the term personality and include within it the dynamic patterns of interaction generated through social experience as they are integrated with, and expressed through, such biological givens as temperament, physiognomy, and physiology. The personality, then, is what appears to the outside world as representative of the person. This concept is in contrast to the internal representation that people have of themselves that emerges out of experiencing the personality in the process of interacting with others. The reflexive product of internal awareness is referred to as the self. It must be clear, however, that the Interpersonal self, like the personality, is never thought of as idiosyncratically derived, as a biological given, or as a product of strictly internal processes or forces. The self is the experiential aspect of the personality, and, like the personality, it is situational, interactive, dynamic, and incessantly changing.

The reader may correctly conclude that the concept of "self" is to Interpersonal theorists essentially what "ego" is to Freudians, the core of consciousness, the agent of action, and that part of the mind that is reflexive with the environment. Maintaining the equilibrium and integrity of the self is the object of all psychic structures and defenses. It is "not disruptive biological impulses that pose the greatest (psychological) threat to the individual . . . but the emergence of experiences inconsistent with the sense of the self" (Wachtel, 1982, p. 266).

There are probably as many definitions of "self" as there are psychoanalytic theorists.
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Each time the term is included in a new conceptualization of human development or psychic functioning, its definition is modified. Within the Interpersonal literature, the number of authors who have written about some aspect of selfhood is simply immense, even excluding all those psychoanalysts, psychologists, and social scientists trained in other traditions whose ideas are nonetheless compatible with the Interpersonal perspective. For example, a recent volume edited by Curtis (1991) offers examples of the convergence among the views of psychoanalysts, sociologists, cognitive theorists, anthropologists, and academic psychologists concerning the "relational self."

A chapter such as this cannot possibly offer complete coverage of the material in this area. Among the most noteworthy omissions is in the area of pathology. Given the Interpersonal emphasis on the self, all psychological affictions necessarily involve the organization or functioning of the self. Each of the chapters on the clinical entities and syndromes describes related defects in self-concept, self-esteem, self-knowledge, and so on.

The discussion that follows begins with Harry Stack Sullivan's seminal contributions to understanding the structure and development of the self. Later Interpersonalists elaborated and transformed Sullivan's rather vague and narrow definition of self to include aspects that are active rather than simply reactive, phenomenological rather than wholly consensual, and innovative and idiosyncratic rather than universal. We review those theorists who have significantly expanded Sullivan's conceptions or whose distinctive ideas represent alternative paths. The discussion centers around the nature of self-experience and ideas about the development, structure, and function of the self. Questions of the emergence of the self through childhood will be touched on only briefly since these matters are discussed in other chapters of this volume.

Among the attributes of the self that have been studied in some detail, the question of individuality and authenticity has presented a thorny problem. Sullivan posited that a scientific psychiatric study could not include the uniqueness of an individual personality. Disagreement with this tenet generated a lively controversy, briefly covered in this chapter. The resolution of this question was of critical importance for Interpersonal theorists since the mutual impact of the individual personalities in the analytic dyad has become central in current theorizing about the clinical situation.

Early Interpersonal thinkers were acutely aware of the sociopolitical and philosophical implications of psychoanalysis and were concerned that the theory include a place for moral and ethical considerations of responsibility. Certain current writers have returned to this position, now from the perspective of including concepts of consciousness and the awareness of intentionality as an aspect of motivation. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the question of volition and the experience of will as a phenomenological attribute of the self.

THE SELF IN INTERPERSONAL THEORY

The definition and use of the concept "self" have undergone parallel development in social psychology, personality studies, and psychoanalytic theorizing. Originally, it was an abstraction designed to fill the conceptual space between the external world and internal experience, but the heuristic power of the concept was rapidly recognized, and its use was expanded. In contrast to the concept "ego," which is defined as an agency or function located as a structure fixed in space and originating in the sphere of cognition and therefore limited by conceptualizations of that realm, self is a far more pliable concept. The self can be viewed as a whole or in parts. Traits, qualities, aspects, or even multiples can be separately discussed without violating ideas about the entirety. While experiential and involved with questions of knowing and doing, self is also reflexive and far more amenable to including ideas about interaction with the external social and physical world.

The plasticity of the concept is further emphasized by the Interpersonal position that self be defined as process rather than content (Sullivan, 1953; Thompson, 1957; Chrzanowski, 1977). That is, there are no universal attributes, traits, or motives that need be included in attempting to understand human nature. Even aspects and functions of the self are generally considered open to elaboration and change. The importance of this point can hardly be overemphasized. For example, Cushman (1991) has scathingly attacked the ethnocentrism he sees in modern conceptions of the self, especially as represented by Daniel Stern's work with infants. Cushman argues, "[T]o consider this self to be the single universal self is to overlook its particular nature and thus to excuse its characteristic illnesses, mystify its political and economic constituents, and
obscure its ideological functions" (p. 208). The Interpersonal self, defined as process rather than content, is far less subject to such criticism.

However useful and versatile the concept may be, there are problematic aspects as well, certain of these are explored as the chapter proceeds. For the purpose of introduction, however, let me quote Mitchell (1991):

"Self" can certainly lay claim to being the knottiest, most paradoxical, most elusive problem (of psychoanalytic theorizing) bridging, ... the subjective and the objective, conscious and unconscious, past and present, experiential and systemic. The sequential development of our ideas about different facets of self and the cross-fertilization of those different ideas lead to syntheses that, in turn, keep changing in their encounter with the theory-crunching complexities of the psychoanalytic process [p. 173].

SULLIVAN'S CONCEPTION OF SELF

Grounding his ideas in observations of human behavior and reports of patients' immediate experiences, Harry Stack Sullivan attempted to devise a theory of human psychology that would be free of metatheoretical abstractions. In reviewing Sullivan's thinking about the self, Thompson (1957) emphasizes his determination to consider only those hypotheses that could be verified by direct observation. Modern theorists would dismiss such a project and argue that no theory of mental functioning can wholly avoid reference to the mind's unseen contents and the structures or mechanisms involved in processing them (see Grey, 1988; Mitchell, 1988; Zucker, 1989). Sullivan, however, used the concept of self to discuss the interaction between the external world and the mind of the individual in terms of directly or indirectly observable behaviors and responses. Further, according to Thompson (1957), "[I]t is his thesis that the human personality is formed in just this way—that is, by interaction with others, and the implication is that the whole person can be explained in this way" (p. 1), that is, without reference to unseen inner structures or unknowable mental contents.

In this regard Sullivan explicitly followed the intellectual tradition founded by George Herbert Mead, who conceived the self as that aspect of the organism that internalizes the role expectations presented by its environment and comes to have the capacity to enact such roles independent of direct stimulus. Despite the seeming simplicity of its hypothesized origins, Sullivan believed that the self evolves manifold properties and capacities, forming the core intrapsychic psychological equipment of the individual. Later Interpersonal theorists, while differing over the extent to which aspects of the self are thought to be determined by intrinsic biological givens and adding new dimensions of structure and function, all take as their point of departure the definition of self as the locus of interaction between the individual and the external world.

Sullivan started from the principle that all psychological attributes of the individual arise out of human interactions. From this perspective, clearly, there is no possibility of a self present at birth (no doubt, though, current research on prenatal impingements would persuade him to examine the possibility that the origins of the self precede the actual face-to-face encounter with another person. Interpersonal life may well begin in utero). The earliest ministrations to the neonate's biological necessities are accompanied, in the infant's experience, by some impression of the presence of the caretaker, vague and hazy as this experience may be. Sullivan assumes that in these very early interactions, there is little possibility of distinguishing self from other. As long as these encounters are relatively nurturing and satisfying, the lack of differentiation and clarity persists and is not problematic. The first disruption in this state of comfortable unity occurs when the experience of some sort of anxiety is transmitted from mother to child.

Despite his operational bent, for Sullivan this first encounter with anxiety remains mysterious. He calls the process "empathy," although his definition is very different from current usage of the term. Sullivan hypothesizes that the infant registers some sort of signal from the mother that indicates a measure of stress, tension, discomfort, negative affect, or other inhibitory condition. Whatever the meaning of the anxiety for the mother, its importance to the infant is that the automatic availability of competent caretaking is disrupted. Thompson (1957) goes to some length to consider possible sources of the infant's empathic awareness and speculates about muscular tensions, perspiration and odor, vocal timbre, and so on. The anxious mother is new and strange and, for exactly these reasons as well as her relatively decreased availability, significantly less satisfying. In response to
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The predictable patterns of self-other development through the periods of infancy and childhood are described in detail elsewhere in the Handbook. This section merely outlines certain major turning points in the emergence of the self. Although seldom credited for his contribution, Sullivan developed a sophisticated conception of the infant's tendency to organize and manage disruptive early experience through mechanisms for consolidating congruent perceptions and mentally maintaining them as separate from incongruent perceptions, a process of splitting. This, like many other of Sullivan's concepts, so closely parallels those of the British object relations theorists, particularly Fairbairn, that it is difficult to imagine there was no intellectual cross-fertilization. Nonetheless, it is apparently true that these authors were unaware of each other's parallel efforts at revision of Freudian psychoanalysis.

To protect against disturbances to the feeding process resulting from empathic responses to anxiety, the infant begins to discriminate those experiences that are safely comforting from those that are potentially disturbing. In Sullivan's view, the infant develops a primitive but clear distinction between the good nipple (belonging to the secure and peaceful mother), which is satisfying, in contrast to the bad nipple (of the anxious, disquieted mother), which brings distress. In time, the mother comes to be associated variously with the good or bad nipple, segmenting her image into separate visions of the good and bad mother.

Significantly, if the infant is exposed to other caretakers and is fortunate enough to be treated with tenderness by a number of them, all of these experiences will condense into the image or, in Sullivan's language, the "personification" of the good mother. (Zucker, 1989, offers a particularly lucid comparison of Sullivan's notion of personifications and the object relations theorists' conception of internalized objects.) In time, the personification becomes a "complex" (Sullivan 1953, p. 118). This complex of internalized experiences, which represents the parent in the child's mind, is not defined by Sullivan as a structure but rather as a process. As such, it includes images of past experience and, eventually, symbolic representations as well. In emphasizing the dynamic aspect of the complex over its attributes as a mental structure, Sullivan limits the possibility of conceiving of an independent existence with autonomous functions, that is, an internalized object (see Zucker, 1989).

In conjunction with these experiences of the mother's personality as caretaker, the infant simultaneously records the physical interaction between the mother and the infant's own body. In particular, the infant reacts to the way the mother anticipates, shapes, and responds to bodily experiences and demands. In this way, the infant's experience of self, personified as "good me" and "bad me," develops along with corresponding personifications of mother. This initial self-definition incorporates the earliest "reflected appraisals," that is, expectations and reactions of the mother to that particular infant. Such information, gleaned from the mother's responses, fuses with information emanating from the infant's own body, that is, self-sentience, or bodily awareness of physical areas of interaction and satisfaction or displeasure. "The formation of personality literally [begins] at the mother's breast. . . . and it is from this interpersonal relationship that the infant begins to form a concept of his own self" (Chatelaine, 1992, p. 37).

Thus, development proceeds on the basis of intricate interweaving of behaviors, perceptions, and reactions. Sullivan refers to this early patterning of relational involvement as the beginning of interpersonal cooperation. He names the configuration of internalized (but observable) interactions a "me-you pattern." Such patterns, accumulating over time out of individual interactions with significant people, are the elements that become utilized as familiar pathways, eventually organized into the dynamism called the self. For this self to be an integrated whole, the infant psyche must synthesize the good and bad aspects into a unified configuration. The key to the infant's ability to negotiate this operation rests on how burdened the infant is with anxiety and how well the infant is able to handle whatever anxiety arises. The residue of the "good-me" personification provides the basis for later development of self-esteem, confidence, and the so-called ideal self. The "bad-me" personification, if mastered, lays the foundation for the sense of conscience, as well as for the defensive, self-protective operations of the self-system. More problematical bad-me personifications give rise to the self-
perception that Elkind (1972) calls the malvolent child, to self-formations organized around grandiosity and shame (Bose, 1990), or other systems erected to protect against narcissistic vulnerability (Fiscalini, 1993).

THE ROLE OF ANXIETY IN FORMATION OF THE SELF

Through the patterns of early interaction, the infant comes to differentiate levels of anxiety, ranging from mild to severe. Sullivan refers to the “anxiety gradient,” which becomes the yardstick for determining whether given experiences can be tolerated. The anxiety gradient underlies a sort of learning curve, depending on the individual’s ability to manage various levels of discomfort. Mild to moderate levels of anxiety not only are tolerable, but actually motivate learning as a protective strategy.

That is the great way of learning in infancy, and later in childhood—by the grading of anxiety, so the infant learns to chart his course by mild forbidding gestures, or by mild states of worry, concern or disapproval mixed with some degree of anxiety on the part of the mothering one [Sullivan, 1953, p. 159]. Too little anxiety has no stimulating effect, and too much anxiety precludes learning since it engenders helplessness.

In addition to the relatively benign early discriminations of good and bad experience resulting from varying levels of maternal anxiety, the infant is occasionally subjected to more threatening forms of assault that cause intolerable levels of anxiety, stressing the infant’s embryonic splitting defenses. To repeat Sullivan’s famous metaphor, high levels of anxiety have the same effect as being hit on the head with a hammer. The result is stunning and stultifying.

Instances of the most severe anxiety, engendered by some especially forbidding gesture of disapproval, rejection or punishment, become associated with a different personification of the mother that Sullivan terms the “evil mother.” Personifications of good-me and bad-me are available for observation, both in the reports of the child and in the clinical presentations of adult patients. In response to forbidding gestures and the intolerable anxiety associated with the appearance of the evil mother, however, the child develops a new self-personification, termed “not-me.” This aspect of the self is not available to awareness and is not directly observable. It is discernible through dreams and schizophrenic episodes. Most important, however, it appears in everyday life in the many aspects of behavior and self-presentation that, while perhaps clearly visible to the uninvolved or objective observer, are dissociated and completely outside awareness of the individual concerned. Such behaviors, which seem to characterize an individual’s defensive style yet are completely unknown to the person, are evidence of the defensive self-system, parts of which are not included in the personification of the self.

Thompson (1957) considers the consequences of this view of how the individual self comes into being. She points out that not only is all experience of the self intrinsically shaped by relational events but the very basis of the individual’s psychological security is tied to maintaining “good-me” personifications, which, in turn, are always contingent on the positive responsiveness of the other. Thus, the social-seeking thrust of human nature emanates from the most basic constituents of the individual’s psychic need. One must involve oneself in a relational matrix of interactions with others to ensure any level of internal safety and to permit any development of self-definition. Individuality is predicated on sociability.

It should be clear that while the earliest tendencies to achieve and maintain security involve the infant’s satisfaction of biological needs, from the very start, physical security is enmeshed with issues of psychological and, therefore, interpersonal security. Even high levels of physical distress can be tolerated without severe psychological disturbance if the interpersonal environment engenders safety and comfort, that is, if the level of anxiety is relatively low. As Fiscalini (1991) has pointed out, Sullivan chose to offer a definition of anxiety that is purely interpersonal and thereby “conceptually distinguished anxiety or personal self-threat, from fear, or physical self-threat—the danger to life and limb. And Sullivan considered fear to be psychiatrically far less important than anxiety” (pp. 243-44).

SULLIVAN’S VIEW OF THE SELF-SYSTEM

The infant’s exquisite sensitivity to changes in the mother that signal anxiety gives rise to the earliest manifestations of the emergent infant self. These primitive, infant-generated behaviors, which respond to, contain, and ward off anxiety emanating from the caretaker, are
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The self originates out of anxiety-avoidant defensive (i.e., self-system) processes. Self is that aspect of personality that includes reflexive experience, that is, self-awareness, as well as recognition of those self-attributes that are reflected by others and become consolidated as "self-personifications." At this point it is relevant once again to note that for Sullivan, anxiety is the force that underlies all human activity, for good and ill. In his view, therefore, the self originates wholly out of the need to avoid anxiety. Virtually all other Interpersonal theorists, however, including Sullivan’s earliest disciples and strongest supporters, take issue with this view. For them, experiences that contribute to the consolidation of the self must, at least in part, originate in the biological organism of the individual child.

The inborn characteristics that define a particular infant—the genetic organization and constitutional equipment—all emerge and are expressed within that infant’s personal social environment. The parents’ interventions are, at least in some part, reactions to the needs and behaviors of their particular child, and the parents are conditioned by the needs and behaviors of their particular child. Conversely, that child develops unique patterns of reactions to that particular set of parents and all they bring to the caretaking. Aspects of the self are also expressed in areas of life that are relatively ignored or unchallenged (i.e., conflict-free) in early experience, and much of personality development involves issues that receive parental approval and encouragement (see Thompson, 1957).

PREVIEWING THE INFANT SELF

Researchers who study infants argue unendingly about the exact point in the lifeline at which various capacities emerge and develop. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to delineate the specific milestones in elaboration of the self; however, one Interpersonalist has contributed an observation of enormous importance in understanding the social nature of the self from the moment of birth. In a series of pioneering papers Trad (1990, 1991, 1992a, b) describes the process of “previewing,” which is a central aspect of maternal care and child rearing. Previewing consists of the mother’s enacting with the infant certain behaviors that involve her anticipating, mimicking, or practicing acts or ways of being that appear later in the infant’s development. Thus, previewing may be as far-reaching as the mother’s fantasy, upon her first glimpse of the baby, that she must prepare the way for a future president, or it may be as immediate as the repetitive urging of the pre-toddler to risk a first unassisted step. Trad (1992b) observes that from virtually the moment of birth, the mothers he studied tended to describe their infants in a characteristic way and to engage in particular kinds of interactional exchanges with their babies. Upon inquiry, the mothers revealed that they...
Parental previewing of physical and cognitive abilities plays a critical role in the eventual development and psychological integration of these attributes. So-called talents and skills are thereby interpersonally shaped. Attuned, anticipatory practice offers opportunities for the organization and processing of experience. Previewing involves many different modes of apprehension. For example, the mother may verbally describe an action while also demonstrating it, moving the child's limbs, offering encouragement and praise with high emotion. In the process she offers the chance for mimicry, imaging, and appreciative reactivity, all within a playful, imaginative context.

While, as previously described, reflexive self-personifications of self as object of the caretaker's reactions begin to coalesce in early infancy, it is thought that cognitive processes that permit consolidation of the subjective sense of "I" are not developed until about the middle of the second year. Just as mothers preview physical behaviors, however, the neonate is also the target for her hopes, dreams, and fantasies concerning psychological traits, as well as her more or less accurate empathic appraisals of his internal psychic state. Thus, long before the newborn has any conceivable capacity for cognitive awareness or direct responsiveness, mothers assume and attribute a specific, differentiated, and flexible self. Healthy self-development requires consistency between parental appreciation of the child's emergent abilities and personality and the child's self-experience. It is impossible to achieve a coherent self-definition when apperceptions of one's own behaviors conflict with reflected appraisals (Wachtel, 1982). Pathology in self-definition and other aspects of self development invariably involves discrepancy between external and internal information, whether the internal is generated from perception of others or from apperception of oneself.

Trad (1992b) points out that this model does not simply assume the child is locked into potentially narcissistic and skewed maternal perceptions. In fact, the previewing of self-attitudes fosters the discovery of cause and effect relationships, enhances awareness of internal (personal) perceptions and apprehension, delineates interactive roles and the subjectivity of the other, and finally assists in moving "firmly on the path to self-discovery and mastery" (p. 213). Previewing both consolidates the bonding process with parental figures and creates an atmosphere in which what might otherwise be the "work" of childhood turns into play. Learning becomes pleasurable. Activity, vitality, and spontaneity become prized as permitting novelty to be incorporated into the interactional field.

Trad calls our attention to two additional results of the process of previewing. First, he suggests that without anticipation and emotional underlining, the sequential events of early development would lack distinguishing qualities and tend to merge into each other. The infusion of affect, attention, and applause allows the infant to gauge the significance of milestones and to discriminate success and failure, praise and blame, and, eventually, pride and shame. In addition, through the interactions involved in previewing, as much or perhaps even more than through age-appropriate attunement as described by Stern (1985), the child eventually recognizes that the subjective experience of the mother is different from his own. While offering the child mimicry of actual physical experience, for example, movements of body parts that later become autonomous behaviors (e.g., clapping, standing, walking), previewing offers the child a lexicon, a language of nonverbal interaction that precedes any ability to communicate in words. At the same time, the mother's commentary surrounding previewed behaviors involves the child in the linguistic world. Thus, separateness from the mother's movement and vocalization is experienced simultaneously with being closely held in communicative contact, and all the while, the infant is being enticed into stretching his abilities to attain the next plateau of shared interactive involvement. In this very intricate interplay of interaction and anticipation, we see the unfolding precursor in nonlinguistic relatedness of the process Sullivan (1958) refers to as consensual validation.

While the impact of parental expectations has been taken for granted as supplying the "contextual constituents of character" (Gerson, 1993), there has been surprisingly little detailed study of familial contributions to self-development. In a series of papers that promise to rectify this omission, Gerson (1988, 1992, 1993) has studied the homologies between the interpersonal psychoanalytic view of development and the approach of family systems theorists.
She underlines the centrality of the particular personalities of the parents as formative of their child's self-image and, consequently, of the child's behavior and eventual demonstrated pathological functioning. Her argument is that pathological aspects of the self not only are derived from personally generated defenses against anxiety but may also be direct expressions or translations of parental wishes, fears, understandings, or expectations. Such traits or behaviors, then, cannot be "analyzed" or interpreted as dynamic expressions of internal conflict but must be unraveled historically as internalizations and responses to parental patterns.

ELABORATION OF THE SELF-SYSTEM

Further development of the self-system in childhood proceeds as new situations are encountered that generate new anxieties. The culture, the social system, the familial environment all impact on the growing child with rules, codes, and patterns of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Children are exposed to situations of approval and punishment. Parents transmit the mores and expectations of their social milieu as well as consciously and unconsciously influencing the child's personality in ways that are functions of their own personalities, characters, and problems in living. Through the learning mechanisms of reward and punishment and through imitation, identification, and idealization, the child becomes more and more socialized, accepted, and acknowledged as a member of the social group.

THE SELF-SYSTEM VERSUS THE SUPEREGO

To the extent that the self-system is viewed as an internalized reflection of societal expectations, the reader may see it as an analogue of the conception of superego as described in Freudian theory. The two concepts differ in crucial respects, however, and are not equivalent. The fundamental difference stems from the assumption within Freudian theory that social accommodation requires the taming of internal passions. The superego stands guard over the id, titrates its bestial influence, and prevents defiance of social convention. The Interpersonalist, on the other hand, understands threats to the self-system as originating outside the individual. First, simple anxiety and, later, all forms of rebuff, rejection, and punishment are signals from the interpersonal field, via the mother, other caretakers, family, peers, and eventually the entire sociocultural network, that certain behavior is unacceptable and must be avoided. Passion and need are not inherently troubling; they become problems only as they engender disapproval from others.

In the discussion of individuality later in this chapter, it is noted that the idea of a unique self might sometimes be equated with the existence of a soul. Such an assumption might especially occur in the mind of someone like Sullivan, intent on renouncing the impinging dogma of the Catholic church. Similarly, making the assumption of a conscience that determines feelings of guilt and innocence on the basis of internal longings and tendencies appears to reify religious ideas as psychological necessities. Instead, Interpersonalists from Sullivan onward have recognized the extreme variability among groups and societies concerning what is considered right or wrong, encouraged or prohibited, appropriate or shameful. Morality, like etiquette, is relative and conditional.

Ethnographic studies of diverse societies reached a watershed with Margaret Mead's work in Samoa. She demonstrated the extraordinary plasticity of human nature through observing that even the biologically driven turmoil of puberty has no universal psychological or behavioral manifestations. The expressions of anatomy, physiology, and genetics can be shaped to fit the needs of a particular culture.

Indeed,

the unborn potentialities which thus mature over a term of years are remarkably labile, subject to relatively durable change by experience, and ... the idea of "human instincts" in anything like the proper rigid meaning of maturing patterns of behavior which are not labile is completely preposterous [Sullivan, 1953, p. 21, quoted in part by Zucker, 1989].

It should be clear to the reader that the central role of the self-system as it develops in infancy, protecting the psyche and forming the basis for all later psychological formations, has profound implications for Interpersonal clinical strategy, quite at odds with traditional psychoanalysis. Psychological problems, in this view, result from the idiosyncratic maneuvers the person develops in attempting to negotiate the complex requirements of managing anxiety while balancing internal needs, familial relationships, and sociocultural demands. Self-system
operations are not predicated on the necessity of repressing unacceptable mental contents. Nor does the self-system begin to function only in late childhood. These processes, which protect the psyche from the ravages of anxiety, are essentially continuous from birth. Treatment, which involves describing and eventually restructuring self-system processes, does not inevitably involve uncovering unconscious memories, although it may, of course, be useful to do so in order to understand the roots and meanings of current beliefs and behaviors. In Interpersonal psychoanalysis, means and ends, techniques and goals involve the systematic detection and untangling of defenses against anxiety stemming from external sources as well as internal. These matters are described in great detail in the Handbook chapters concerning clinical theory, illustrating the enormous divergence in psychoanalytic technique as well as the potential clinical leverage engendered by the Interpersonal paradigm.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SELF-SYSTEM

Although not considered a structure, the self-system has characteristics that are analogous to physical properties. For example, Sullivan conceived of the development of the self-system in a fashion that roughly parallels the hypothetical construction of "schemas," the cognitive apparatus conceptualized by Jean Piaget, who, coincidentally, was working out his theories at about the same time. Defensive behaviors may have untoward effects on others with whom one relates, and, to the extent that anxiety is generated, new strategies emerge to cope with the now changed situation. Self and environment exert mutual influences. Through interactive processes, quite analogous to Piaget's notions of assimilation and accommodation, the self-system expands, modifies, and becomes increasingly complex and differentiated. For an extensive discussion of the work of Sullivan and Piaget, the reader is referred to the work of Tenzer (1983, 1984, 1985). Certain implications of these ideas for clinical work are found in her chapter "Working Through," in this Handbook. Wachtel (1982) has also observed the conceptual similarity between Sullivan and Piaget and drew the parallel specifically in understanding that portion of self-system functions that emerge in treatment as transference.

Eventually, aspects of the self-system become structuralized and are relatively resistant to modification by transitory, immediate experiences. The central defensive operations and patterns of personality become fixed. Other aspects become relatively autonomous, independent of, and at times even at odds with, the rest of the personality. Depending on the harshness, responsiveness, and degree of attunement of the individual's interpersonal environment, as well as the requirements of temperament and biological heredity, the self-system may become relatively flexible and adaptive or rigid and unchangeable.

The degree of resilience of the self-system obviously has profound implications for analytic treatment, and determines to what extent the individual is capable of psychological transformation. The more severe the encounters with anxiety throughout the person's life and the more harsh and restrictive the demands of his environment, the more resistance there is to change. Experiences that induce unmanageable anxiety are split off, relegated into psychic outer space through processes of dissociation. In addition, certain patterns of interaction, while remaining in the person's interpersonal repertoire, may be prevented from entering awareness by factors other than anxiety. Such factors may include mystification by the parents, intrusions of pathological aspects of the parents' own personalities, or sociocultural practices, expectations, or taboos that are obeyed without question as if they express universal necessities or truths. The results of all such processes are tightly entrenched in the personality and are exceedingly difficult to elucidate, disentangle, and overcome.

In a far-reaching overview of Interpersonal thinking concerning the self, Grey (1993a, b) discusses Sullivan's seemingly one-sided emphasis on the rigidity of the self-system and human unresponsiveness and resistance to change. Grey (1993b) argues that despite Sullivan's apparent pessimism, the theory he initiated does, indeed, provide "constructs [that] are sufficiently broad and flexible to accommodate substantial expansion" (p. 150). The chapters on adolescent and adult development in this Handbook also illustrate that Sullivan and later Interpersonalists expanded their view of the impact of life experience to accommodate recognition of how personality changes in the course of normal development. Sullivan was among the first psychoanalytic theorists to recognize that psychic wars are often corrected by beneficial experiences occurring at points of developmental transition.

Clara Thompson not only emphasized the early plasticity of the personality and the
importance of recognizing healthy, active, non-anxiety-driven aspects of the psyche but also believed in the potential for change throughout the life span. In her view, the individual retains the capacity to grow, develop, and significantly change through enriching life experiences. Just as analytic treatment may profoundly impact on pathological aspects of the personality, so, too, can the person’s real-life experience dramatically affect, shape, and change the self-concept.

MULTIPATITY OF SELF-CONCEPTS

A seminal contribution to the understanding of personality and the self that derives from Sullivan’s conception of how self-concepts are originally formed is the recognition that there is no single immutable self that transcends different situations. Starting with the definition of the person as knowable only through interaction with another person (who may be physically present or in the mind), any description of the self is necessarily contingent on the interpersonal scene. The self is always known in reference to particular others and on the basis of interaction with others, through the experience of what Sullivan terms “me-you” patterns. Theoretically, there may be as many selves as there are different situations and interactions in life. Grey (1993b) refers to this as the gallery of selves, each with its own setting. The central and enduring personifications of the self consist of distillates of the commonalities among the many self-perceptions. Obviously, there are certain similarities, typical patterns that emerge in parallel settings.

The result is a plural or manifold organization of self, patterned around different self and object images or representations, derived from different relational contexts. We are all composites of overlapping, multiple organizations and perspectives, and our experience is smoothed over by an illusory sense of continuity [Mitchell, 1991, p. 128].

The idea of multiple self-personifications generates powerful implications. Despite the fact that most people identify a coherent core self, the idea of variable self-representations seems valid, intuitively and experientially. One feels different under different conditions and in different contexts. A foreign environment or one in which role expectations are novel offers some people exhilarating freedom. In the same circumstances others may be paralyzed by culture shock. The notion of multiple selves is also clinically useful in identifying areas of pathological functioning and areas of healthy freedom. For a particular patient, for example, self as breadwinner may feel far more competent than self as parent. Rage may be a useful component of competitive roles but disruptive in seeking romance (Lionells and Mann, 1978).

Paradoxically, the healthier an individual is, the more comfortable it is to experience oneself as different, even drastically different, in disparate interpersonal encounters. Similarly, the psychologically more integrated individual has less difficulty with acknowledging seemingly incompatible or antagonistic personality traits (Briggs, 1991). More disturbed patients cling tenaciously to self-definitions that lend some degree of security and coherence to their experience (Wachtel, 1982). This phenomenon is easily observed, even in role transitions that are seemingly welcome and growth enhancing such as graduation, marriage, promotion, or moving to a new home. Disruptions of self-image, self-concept, and self-definition are frequently cited as the causes for seeking treatment following situations of social upheaval, job loss, health crises, or developmental stress.

A similar point may be made with respect to the analyst's goal of helping the patient to achieve increased coherence of the self. The analyst strives to equip the patient with the healthy ability to behave “out of character,” responsive to new situations and able to engage in increasingly complex interactions (Mitchell, 1991). Patients struggle to maintain their sense of sameness and protect vulnerable aspects of their identities through behaviors that all analysts identify as “resistance.” Briggs (1991), in an interesting study of this overused term, shows that what is often thought to impede analytic progress should instead be seen as maintaining “consistency, predictability, and familiarity ... [which are] correlates of an indefinable sense of self” (p. 751).

As mentioned previously, the self-system of defenses consolidates out of the embryonic personifications of early life. If psychic assault is too threatening to be managed by the sketchy, developing security operations of the infant or young child, the many separate self-personifications cannot become integrated. Experiences associated with uncanny emotions (triggered by severely forbidding gestures on the part of the parents) become dissociated. They are split off and relegated to what Sullivan terms the “not-me.” Recent clinical studies of survivors of childhood abuse offer confirmation of this
CONCEIVING OF THE SELF

As mentioned before, Sullivan’s theoretical interest in the developing psyche centered on the techniques that defend the nascent mind from the disabling effects of anxiety. Although he was very aware of the never-ending, exquisitely intricate interactions between infant and environment that combine to shape inner experience, his speculations stopped with descriptions of how experience is processed. He did not venture into the broader realm of cognition and cognitive functioning. This challenge was taken up by Barnett (1968, 1978, 1979, 1980a, b), who devoted his career to considering how human experience is transformed into psychological structure. Barnett recognized that once Interpersonal psychoanalysis became defined as the study of relations between people rather than the untangling of an internally driven energetic system, the focus had conceptually moved from the realm of biology into the realm of cognition. This insight has profound implications for psychoanalytic theory, and these implications are discussed in detail in the chapter on cognition in this Handbook.

From this perspective, the individual is no longer viewed as a closed biological entity,
the environment in the search for satisfactions. Instead, persons are understood to be in ongoing dialectical interaction with others, processing information emanating from interpersonal encounters, required to deal with both internal and external pressures as they emerge in reaction to each other. Barnett certainly does not imply that cognitive structures and mechanisms are not grounded in the biological organism, but rather that any understanding of experience must involve elaboration of the properties of cognitive functioning. A psychoanalytic theory must answer the question, What is meaning? What is knowing? What are imagination?

Barnett conceives of character as the architechtonic organization of the various cognitive processes, that is, perception, sensation, and understanding. The character of any given individual is his unique way of processing, understanding, and reacting to his experience. The psychologically healthy person is capable of flexibly accepting and integrating whatever happens to occur within his field of experience. Such a person does not need, in Barnett's terms, to maintain "innocence" or "ignorance" about the persons to whom he is related. Psychopathology of character is a function of cognitive patterns that are rigidly maintained to protect the individual from material that cannot be psychologically tolerated.

Clearly, these views are a restatement, in terms of cognition, of what has been described concerning the relative health or pathology of the self. Barnett therefore set out to describe the self as it emerges in awareness and reciprocally structures cognitive operations. The fact that self-definition is not fixed, firm, and stable but instead is ambiguous, complex, and contradictory Barnett (1980a) attributes to the enormous amount of self-reflective data one must condense and consolidate. These data, impinging from outside as well as inside the person, are processed through the primitive infantile cognitive apparatus.

Barnett identifies two global spheres of self-definition and labels these the "representational self" and the "operational self." Self-awareness, the self-concept, what is often called identity, as well as Sullivan's notions of the good and bad self-personifications are all included in the representational aspect of self. This is how the individual records and images internal experience and reflects on the self as "me." Of course, self-awareness includes much more than identity. It is the component of the mind that reflects on identity. This is the aspect of self that Mitchell (1991) describes as multiple and fluid, yet simultaneously integral and continuous. As Maskin (1960) pointed out, persons with amnesia maintain a clear sense of self-representation while repressing knowledge of their previous definitions of identity.

Barnett's (1980a) "operational self" refers to that sense of the person as acting in the outside world. It is the center of agency, responsible for interactions with other people and activities. The operational self includes both awareness of activity and the sources of activity that lie outside awareness. It is the self as doer, as mover and shaker. Mitchell (1991) observes that this aspect of self is experientially independent. That is, conscious of the self as actor, one feels disconnected from other people. Motive, energy, and goal are felt to emanate from an internal wellspring, unrelated to interpersonal involvements.

Through this elegant partitioning of self-experience, Barnett has added conceptual dimensions to Sullivan's system. The fact is seldom acknowledged, but virtually all later interpersonal contributions to this issue mirror or parallel this aspect of Barnett's work and emphasize the functioning of cognition. The self-system, that antianxiety mechanism that, in Levenson's (1989) phrase, offers "internalized maps for the dangerous territory of living" (p. 541), can be considered to be largely incorporated as an aspect of the operational self. Most defensive mechanisms operate as patterns of relatedness, ways of achieving connection to others while protecting against anticipated threats to that relation. The whole self is far larger, including as it does both reflexive self-awareness as well as agency. Also, the personified self need no longer be seen as simply an aspect of defensive functioning (i.e., a process of the self-system). It is included in Barnett's scheme as a potentially autonomous system of received and recorded information concerning the presence of the individual in the social world.

THE ROLE OF ANXIETY IN THE FORMATION OF THE SELF

As noted previously, for Sullivan all development of the self, both the defensive self-system and the autonomous systems of self-awareness and identity, emerge out of the need to process, manage, and avoid anxiety. This has been seen as placing severe limitations upon
Interpersonal theory's capacity to include more active, non-pathological aspects of the self. John Fiscalini has addressed this question from two different directions. His work on narcissism, appearing in his recent book (Fiscalini and Grey, 1993) and summarized in chapter 15, offers a wide-ranging, innovative, and potentially powerful elaboration of the development of self-image and its pathology. This material will be briefly covered in the following section. First, however, it is useful to review Fiscalini's (1991) earlier paper concerning how anxiety may be understood as laying the basis for expansive, as well as defensive, aspects of self-development. Fiscalini takes up the task of further elaborating Barnett's (1980b) map of the manifold aspects of the self. He begins by distinguishing three levels of self-awareness within Sullivan's thinking. Each is associated with certain kinds of motive, is threatened by certain kinds of experience, and is the source of certain kinds of feeling response. The types are (1) the "physical self," which seeks satisfactions and responds to threatened discomfort with the affect of fear; (2) the "relational self," which requires intimacy and reacts to its absence with the feeling of loneliness; and (3) the "interpersonal self," which needs to maintain security, and experiences anxiety if this is threatened.

Drawing on a vast array of ideas originated by earlier Interpersonal theorists, including Fromm, Fromm-Reichmann, May, Schachtel, Singer, and Wolstein, Fiscalini (1991) culls two additional sets of motives and sources of self-threat. The first of these he describes as "the need for personal fulfillment, or freedom from dread," the frustration of which leads to "the fear of psychic unaliveness or self-constriction (i.e., psychological death)" (p. 245). Fiscalini labels the seat of this motive "the personal or authentic self" (to avoid confusion, we use the latter term in this chapter). This is that part of the self most involved in the search for actualization, identity, expansion, and self-knowledge. It is the part of the human psyche that seeks to grow and change and assert itself. It is the source of creativity, curiosity, and playfulness, as well as the locus of will and intentionality. It is active, progressive, and innovative. Disputing the contention that this positive, growth-enhancing self-function contradicts Sullivan's views, Fiscalini declares that the seeds for this conception of the authentic self germinated out of Sullivan's notions of the "power motive" and the "drive toward mental health."

In finding possibilities for self-expansion inherent in defenses against anxiety, Fiscalini's work echoes the approach taken by Rollo May (1950). May expanded Sullivan's view of the learning potential of the anxiety gradient and argued, "The freedom of the healthy individual inheres in his capacity to avail himself of new possibilities in the meeting and overcoming of potential threats to his existence" (p. 391). For May, the self requires conscious affirmation and determined elaboration through the exercise of will. While becoming more existential in orientation and somewhat polemical in tone, May's (1953) explorations of the nature of self-definition, self-experience, and self-affirmation are potent extensions of Sullivan's and Fromm's vision of human psychological growth.

May, like Fromm, is deeply committed to a humanistic philosophical position and argues that the individual is naturally endowed with potentials for creativity and strives for individuation. Both also see sociocultural forces as conspiring to restrict, constrict, and suppress natural urges and freedoms. Fromm particularly castigates those forms of social structure and economic system that require regimentation and conformity in the pursuit of material comfort at the expense of psychic enrichment. May focuses more on the existential dilemmas of alienation and responsibility that lead the individual to accept conventionality and mediocrity rather than risk the terror of acknowledging being alone in one's own experience. The authentic, real, unique, creative experience is seen, in this view, as intrinsically isolating the self and creating a consciousness of separateness.

Fiscalini's authentic self is closely related to Wolstein's (1981, 1983) conception of the "I," the "first person, uniquely individual self." It is also similar to that aspect of self that Barnett had referred to as "operational." For both Fiscalini and Barnett, this aspect of the self includes all possibilities for agency and ownership of action. In addition, Fiscalini suggests that this aspect of the self may be thought of as the mental analogue of the physical self. Just as the body needs organic satisfactions, the psyche needs personal fulfillment. The affect that emerges when this aspect of self-function is threatened is the feeling of "dread." If unchecked, the absence of possibilities for psychological fulfillment results in psychic annihilation. Dread is the emotional warning signal that survival is imperiled.

The second level of need defined by Fiscalini (1991) is "the need for personal orientation, or freedom from apprehension," which, if
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The Interpersonal group, most explicit examination of the emergence of ideals concerning the self has been offered by Schecter (1974). He suggests that the ideal is formed through transactions between (1) more or less idiosyncratic personal wishes and imagery, (2) cultural "shaping" via identification with parental attitudes and ideals, via learning by approval and disapproval, punishment, withdrawal of love, or, most succinctly—as H. S. Sullivan has described—through the "anxiety gradient" wherein the "self-system" is organized to avoid anxiety and maximize security and satisfaction [pp. 104–105].

Thus, the idealized self contains elements from both internal and external sources, that is, personal wishes and fantasies fused with parental and social imperatives. Further, as the reader will recall from the earlier discussion of self-images, since each sense of self is elaborated in terms of a particular interpersonal

...the fear of uncertainty, novelty or chaos" (p. 245). This aspect of experience involves being rooted, comfortably in control of an orderly, predictable environment. It derives from Sullivan’s "theorem of escape" and his notion of the "fear of novelty." Fiscalini calls this the "personalized self" (in contrast to the previously described authentic or personal self). It corresponds to that aspect of Barnett's representational self that maintains the constancy of identity. This is the conservative counterbalance to the forward-seeking pressure toward fulfillment. The affect that emerges when identity is threatened is apprehension, concern about the self's ability to maintain stability and orientation. The experience of apprehension is both similar to, and analogous to, fear, which is described as a danger to safety and the ability to function.
context, the ideal self will always be accompanied by images of the ideal other. Schecter conjectures that idealization begins in the first year of life when personifications of "good me" condense as reciprocals of the experience of "good mother." He argues, however, that the tendency to idealize does not arise out of attempts to master anxiety, avoid neurotic conflict, or resolve interpersonal dilemmas. He views both the capacity and the motive for abstracting more perfect forms as innate, existing independent of content. In his words:

"[I]n almost every dimension of human experience—perception, aesthetics, ethics, knowledge—we develop ideal forms early in life, forms which are most ardently articulated in words and action during adolescence and youth. Our language is replete with the search for these ideal forms, e.g. in the concepts of intensity (of experience), of beauty, moral virtue, truth etc., as if man's mind has a propensity to organize his experience in a spectrum—one end of which constitutes the ideal form [p. 105]."

Given this view of constructing the ideal self as a natural, inevitable crystallization of patterns of experience, Schecter considers how this aspect of the self functions in development. The ideal provides a beacon, a goal, or target that guides behavior and focuses ambition. The propensity to formulate ideals varies among individuals according to their constitution and temperament. The ability to attain the ideal depends upon the congruence between the attributes of the ideal and the realities of the self. At this juncture, pathologies may appear.

Earlier in the chapter we discussed Trad's recognition that parental previewing provides the child with standards and expectations. Schecter anticipated Trad's conclusions concerning the role of parents in defining goals and ideals. To the extent that parental expectations match potential interests and abilities of the child, they may spur outstanding accomplishment. Even the person who lacks genius or extraordinary attributes may be capable of unusual success if bolstered by parental belief. Unrealistic hopes, however, may engender disappointments that are accompanied by irresolvable damage to self-esteem. Schecter also suggests that potentials for pathological developments throughout the life span may be seen as a function of how the person is able to deal with the discrepancy between the actual self and the ideal. Failure is always somewhat painful, but the healthy person is able to weather disappointment and reclaim self-esteem. To the extent that the self is harsh, rigid, punishing, humiliating, and unforgiving, rather than empathic, encouraging, and facilitating, the person is driven to attain the ideal and anguish over failure. Such punitive self-attitudes result from identifications with parental figures. Disapproval, rejection, and hostility from parents create an anxiety-laden interpersonal climate, resolved by the erecting of defenses that align the child with the parental posture at the expense of the child's real self. For example, in describing the mindset of a person whom Fromm would label as having a "marketing personality," Schecter writes, "I will appear exactly as you want me in order to gain your love, approval or reward but I will never be my real self who will relate or love authentically" (p. 109).

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SELF

A particular component of self-awareness is given prominence in the work of Lionells (1989), who studied the "autobiographical self," that aspect of the representational self that records and maintains the sense of historical coherence and continuity of identity. Like the sense of agency, one's autobiography tends to be experienced as if divorced from the interpersonal field. The idiosyncrasy of events throughout the life line contributes to the sense of separateness, individuality, and uniqueness. The defensive self-system, operating in the interpersonal arena as character, elaborates, condenses, and distorts information as it is processed and laid down in memory and makes this new material compatible with the existing sense of self. For example, there are characteristic ways of processing historical data that distinguish persons with hysterical personalities from obsessives (Lionells, 1989).

The concept of the autobiographical self offers a useful way of considering the consolidation of past experiences of the self into a historical record. Any current self-awareness or self-definition depends on the synthesis of autobiographical data. Any therapeutic change, therefore, requires negotiating between current and past self-images and forging some new amalgam that incorporates significant aspects of both. Grey (1993a) comments on the importance of autobiographical memory as constituting a reaffirmation of the self, especially in circumstances of trauma, social disruption, or psychological upheaval. While, in such
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instances, the sense of the past fortifies the identity against disintegration, in the case of character disorders history is inaccurately assessed and selectively remembered. The autobiography acts as an additional line of resistance to change. Analytic success depends upon reformulation of the patient’s life story to include those aspects of experience that had been excluded from awareness as they are processed through the lens of a newly developed sense of agency and responsibility.

INDIVIDUALITY AND UNIQUENESS

While it seems obvious that the particularity of each individual’s autobiography leads to the conclusion that each person is different from every other, perhaps no question has provoked so much controversy within the Interpersonal tradition as whether or not one can assess the quality of uniqueness in the human personality. Sullivan spent his professional career trying to learn the exact details of individual patients’ lives and was willing to defy Freudian doctrine by asserting that the impact of a person’s particular experience with his particular parents would be formative of both his personality and his pathology. Yet, this same Sullivan, by all accounts himself rather a rare bird, claimed that there could be no such thing as a concept of unique personality in the realm of psychiatric understanding. He scathingly decried interest in the uniqueness of the self as a sort of metaphysical narcissism (Sullivan, 1947, 1964). In the words of Levenson (1989), “[H]e was interested in individual experience, not individuality... Sullivan would have been amused by the conceit in Woody Allen’s movie, the parrot who sings, ‘I’ve gotta be me’” (p. 543).

Sullivan based his position on the work of Bridgman and others who argued in favor of strict operationalism as the strategy through which the social sciences could attain the clarity and explanatory power of the natural sciences. He called uniqueness an “illusion,” even a “delusion.” He saw it more a reflection of the desire to be special than a truth of human experience. He refused to include the possibility of uniqueness in his psychological system, and, as a result, critics both within and outside the Interpersonal school have shown Sullivan’s own theorizing as handcapped by the omission (see Wolstein, 1971; Crowley, 1973; Freidland, 1978; Klenbort, 1978; Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983; Moore, 1984). Additionally, much to the detriment of his followers, “[T]he centrality of the sense of self in Sullivan’s theorizing has at times been obscured by Sullivan’s own rhetoric and the way it has been read by subsequent clinicians concerned with the self” (Wachtel, 1982, p. 266).

From the earliest days of developing his theory, Sullivan argued with one of his otherwise staunchest allies, Patrick Mullahy, concerning the issue of uniqueness. In the course of this dialogue over more than 20 years, much of which appears in print, each accuses the other of being stubborn and misguided (Mullahy, 1947; Sullivan, 1947). Bromberg (1979) suggests that perhaps every theory or perspective becomes limited by certain key assumptions that either are not, or cannot, be questioned. While agreement with Sullivan’s idea about individuality has never served as a litmus test of loyalty to Interpersonal ideas, over the past five decades the issue has generated a long list of articles, each trying to displace the shibboleth and free Interpersonal theory from its grasp.

The problem seems finally put to rest with the arguments presented by Anthony Moore (1984), who conducted a scholarly study of Bridgman’s original papers upon which Sullivan based his allegiance to scientific empiricism. Moore concluded that Sullivan had simply misread Bridgman and that most of Sullivan’s critics seem never to have read Bridgman at all, having accepted Sullivan’s erroneous version. In a painstaking comparison of the original sources with later Interpersonal elaborations, Moore showed that all had understood Bridgman’s version of operationalism as precluding investigation of the totally private, unobservable aspects of experience. Sullivan ruled such aspects out of the realm of psychiatry because he misunderstood Bridgman’s theory to require this exclusion. Others, who were unwilling to renounce inclusion of individuality yet were unable to square it with what they thought were Bridgman’s edicts, found it necessary to opt for a psychoanalytic enterprise that was simply less than scientific (see Mullahy, May, Klenbort, Wolstein).

For example, May (1953), railing against those who would reduce the study of man to the terms of natural science, says,

[R]ejecting the concept of (unique) “self” as “unsound” is not because it cannot be reduced to mathematical equations is roughly the same as the argument two and three decades ago that Freud’s theories and the concept of “unconscious” motivation were “unsound.” It is a
defensive and dogmatic science and therefore not a true science—which uses a particular scientific method as a Procrustean bed and rejects all forms of human experience which don't fit [p. 90].

In this May does not argue that a scientifically valid enterprise may include the notion of self; he simply says we must find a new and "truer" kind of science that will include such a concept.

Another theorist who has strongly articulated disagreement with Sullivan's argument is Wolstein (1971, 1973), whose work is reviewed more extensively in the following section. He argues that the "psychic center of the self" and its unique properties define the essence of the psychoanalytic quest. Yet, according to Moore, Wolstein fails to realize that Bridgman's thinking better supports his, Wolstein's, notions of private individuality than they do Sullivan's exclusion of them.

There has been a good deal of speculation concerning possible personal reasons that may have influenced Sullivan to cling so tenaciously to a view that defied intuition, constricted theory, and was widely unpopular as well (see Wolstein, 1971; Crowley, 1978; Klenbort, 1978; Perry, 1982). Speculations have included his disenchantment with anything hinting at religiosity, that is, equating "unique self" with "soul" (Mullahy, 1947; Lionells, 1978); his concern that the idiosyncratic is reductive to the primitive, abnormal, or aberrant (Klenbort, 1978); or his reaction to the social and economic insecurities of the Great Depression (Davis, 1978). Until Moore's work, however, attempts to persuade the professional community to violate this tenet of his theory relied on the heuristic strength of alternative arguments rather than on the exposure of error in the original conception.

Detailed review of the various apologies, explications, and critiques of Sullivan's position is a worthwhile undertaking if for nothing else but to illustrate the powerfully experienced importance of the question of individuality among modern Interpersonalists. For our present purpose, however, it is useful to outline those arguments most relevant to development of the Interpersonal conception of the self. At the same time, it should be noted that many, if not most, recent Interpersonal theorists have simply ignored the controversy and apparently saw Sullivan's personal aberration as having been resolved. In addition, despite Sullivan's convictions concerning operationalism and metatheoretical speculation, his position on the uniqueness of self is in no way central to, or determinant of, other fundamental concepts of Interpersonal theory (Grey, 1993b).

As noted before, the earliest challenge to Sullivan's position was mounted by his admirer and interpreter, Patrick Mullahy (1947). While attempting to explicate and coordinate Sullivan's theory so it might receive a wider audience and achieve the impact he believed it merited, Mullahy found himself unable to accept the tenet that Interpersonal theory must exclude uniqueness. He offers the alternative that there are two distinctly different ways of conceiving individuality. The first, to which Sullivan might correctly object, refers to an inner force or agency based upon religious or spiritual concepts of the soul, that is, seeing self as an entity with an independent existence.

In contrast to such a metaphysical view, Mullahy (1947) describes a second possibility, a sense of individuality that includes "personal worth and dignity, ... creative ability, love as self-affirmation and the affirmation of others" (p. 146). The individuality of a particular person is not insulated or isolated from interpersonal experience. Instead, it is a necessary prerequisite to authentic relatedness. He states:

[T]here seems to be no need to reject individuality on the ground that it implies a self-limited unit that alternates between a state of insular detachment and varying degrees of contact with other people and cultural entities. In fact, Sullivan's neglect of the unique in the person exposes [his theory] to the superficial misunderstanding that he believes personality is a passive instrument of acculturation or the equally dubious notion of cultural relativism [p. 146].

It is not hyperbole to add that these same concerns, voiced by Mullahy at the very beginning of Sullivan's emergence on the scene of theoretical psychoanalysis, anticipated charges that have repeatedly been raised against Interpersonal theory, in quite similar terms, from that day to the present (see Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983; Mitchell, 1992).

As Wolstein (1971) points out, Mullahy (as well as Clara Thompson, 1957, another staunch and loyal disciple) actually offers Sullivan a conception of the unique that is wholly consistent with Interpersonal theory. Eschewing the felt experience of specialness as transient and idiosyncratic, Mullahy, instead, focuses on the intrinsic uniqueness of every
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Thus, transference or, in Sullivan's terms, special qualities and characteristics emerging structivism, that every situation is intrinsically different from every other and has its own specific properties brought by each of the participants at that particular time.

Mullahy (1947) goes on to declare:

[The problem for psychiatry would seem to be not the supposed scientific inaccessibility of the individual, but, in dealing with people who are mentally ill, their lack of ability to experience the uniqueness of new situations..... For them the situation is, erroneously of course, felt to be not unique but modeled on, or paradigmatic of old situations [pp. 146-47].

Thus, transference or, in Sullivan's terms, parataxic distortions, which limit the individual's ability to achieve mature processing and integration of ongoing events, foster a lack of awareness of what is truly new and different. This is one way of describing how pathology functions to constrict awareness and maintain itself in self-fulfilling fashion. To the extent that individuals are free of the need to distort and constrict present experience due to past disturbance, they are capable of recognizing the new, the special, the unique properties brought to each encounter by the other participant in the interaction.

In contrast to Mullahy's clear and vocal disagreement, Clara Thompson appeared, at times, rather an apologist for Sullivan's position. Nevertheless, like Mullahy, she also describes a view of individuality based on the particularity of life's experiences. Thompson believed that the requirements for scientific rigor did preclude inclusion of the uniquely individual as a theoretic construct, and she was concerned to protect the scientific standing of the psychoanalytic enterprise. With respect to uniqueness and individuality, however, she went on to say (Thompson, 1957): "I do not see that interpersonal theory either affirms or denies its existence. Those who wish to believe in it are just as free to do so as those who wish to deny it" (p. 8). Crowley (1973) makes a similar point and suggests that Sullivan was explicitly denying only the idea that pathology is uniquely characteristic, while true individuality does exist and is, in some sense, the goal of human relatedness, although outside the realm of scientifically validated theory.

Thompson (1957) puts forth her own belief, quite in line with the conclusions reached by Mullahy, that regardless of the impact of society and social interaction as formative of personality, the experience of each person with other people is inherently unique, and "the potentialities of his protoplasm are unique. The culture molds our broad outline, but each one has his own interpersonal experience, which makes him different from everyone else, just as no two leaves on a tree are exactly alike, although they are more alike than different" (p. 8).

While uncritical in tone, in this passage Thompson recognizes a limitation in Sullivan's theory that has been sharply attacked by later theorists. The omission of aspects of the psyche that are entirely internal or integral to the individual also seems necessarily to preclude any potentials or possibilities for new expressions that remain dormant or undeveloped but that may become manifest at a later point in life. A psychology totally based on input from the outside world cannot accommodate the unfolding of latent capacities or emergent creativity and innovation. Thompson's observations open the way for all later Interpersonalists (and Relationalists) who recognize the importance of the biological organism with its genetic inheritance, which governs temperament, intelligence, drive, impulse, and all other constitutional givens.

The most thorough and well-reasoned challenge to Sullivan's perspective was mounted by Klenbort in 1978. She clearly identified the contradictory implications embedded in the interpersonal viewpoint that emphasizes the deterministic impact of ongoing interpersonal experiences while denying what is obviously unique in each meeting of two particular persons at any particular time. She traces the seeming inconsistencies and theoretical ambivalences in Sullivan's writing and goes on to show how this omission from the theory has been severely limiting. To claim that consensual validation epitomizes mature human interaction is to run the danger of leaving no possibility for spontaneous, innovative new experience. Looking only at those aspects of the self that are products of interaction, that is, reflected appraisals and the like, ignores the possibility of true individuation (Davis, 1978). What is consensual is, in some sense, the lowest common denominator. There is room neither for the individual's creative potentials nor for the deepest levels of intimacy. Shared experiences involving the meeting of two individualities
cannot be adequately described by consensual validation.

In summary, although all Interpersonalists agree with Sullivan's dictum that psychiatry (or psychoanalysis) is the study of interpersonal relations, they have tended to disagree with his insistence on excluding study of what characterizes the individual in his own right. Modern Interpersonalists do not find it necessary to segregate the study of the uniquely personal from the study of interactions between people or the intrapsychic from the interpersonal. The individual and the social field are inextricably intertwined, not reducible one into the other. Each bears the stamp of the other, even when considered as a separate entity.

Langan (1993) is a contemporary Interpersonalist whose work may be thought of as completing the circle initiated by Sullivan's exclusion of core individuality. He reopens the question in terms of deconstructivist theory, from a perspective informed by phenomenological insights as well as existential philosophical concerns. Langan suggests that the self is ineffable, a construct that, in Heisenbergian fashion, fragments under scrutiny. It is known only indirectly and in memory and imagination, never amenable to immediate systematic elaboration in the present. In a richly evocative essay, Langan reminds us that self and other, subject and object, inner and outer, are all psychic constructs, variously emerging as figures seen against a particular ground, the elements trading places as one shifts focus or emphasis. Thus, with such a view, we have spiraled back to Sullivan's conviction that uniqueness may best be seen as only an illusion after all.

Yet, the evidence of experience is so powerful that it creates conviction about this so-called illusion in every living being. Remarkably, there is experimental evidence as well. In this regard, it is appropriate to acknowledge Levenson's excursion into the so-called hard sciences to support the idea of selfhood as having a biological base as well as a firm philosophical one. He refers to the work of the poetic neurologist Oliver Sachs, who describes patients with damage in the right cerebral hemisphere as becoming "desouled." That is, according to Sachs, the biological impairment leaves the individual lacking a sense of distinct selfhood. Levenson also mentions the work of Rosenfeld, who argues that current research suggests idiosyncratic personal wiring patterns within the neuronal networks of the brain. Levenson (1989) concludes, "So, uniqueness may be real, not illusory, a possibility I must say I find heartening" (p. 543). Most contemporary Interpersonalists would agree.

THE PSYCHIC CENTER OF THE SELF

Perhaps the most thoroughgoing elaboration of self-experience in Interpersonal terms has been offered in a series of papers by Benjamin Wolstein (1971, 1973, 1974a, b, 1975, 1981, 1983, 1987, 1993). Unlike many of the authors discussed to this point in the chapter, Wolstein grounds his work wholly in clinical experience. He is concerned about theoretical elaboration only insofar as necessary to make sense of his clinical discoveries. Starting from observations concerning the inner experience of both members in any analytic exploration, Wolstein studies the mutuality of interaction and the profound influences passing back and forth between the participants. This central interest of his professional career has resulted in a rich literature concerning the nature of interpersonal engagement and relatedness. Wolstein sought to underscore that there has been a uniquely American interest in the holistic self and in those interactions, environmental and interpersonal, that influence the self. He sees this in contrast to the European emphasis on drives and impulses and invented the term "the American school" to refer to Sullivan, Fromm, Horney, and their cotheorists.

Taking sharp issue with Sullivan, however, concerning the property of unique individuality, Wolstein came to believe that the irreducible uniqueness of the individual selves of the participants is what gives the analytic relationship its specific stamp and makes each analytic dyad unlike any other. Further, he came to realize that the quest of an analysis is toward greater definition and elaboration of the experience of exactly that uniqueness of the individual that Sullivan had denied as accessible to analytic scrutiny. This primary focus and goal of the analytic enterprise he labeled the "psychic center of the interpersonal self."

Wolstein points out that self-knowledge proceeds through self-experience. Increasing opportunities for direct and authentic relatedness and exchange are the route toward both greater self-definition and the potential unfolding of new possibilities. Paradoxically, the psychic center of the self, which defines the irreducible personal, private uniqueness of the individual, becomes known through relationship. One's self can be truly and deeply experienced only in the context of interaction with
the self of another. Intimacy renders selfexperience more vivid and more palpable.

Barnett (1980b) offers some ideas as to why this is so. In everyday experience, the person behaves in what Barnett terms the "presentational mode." The security operations, self-system defenses (what Levenson calls the map for navigating the sea of anxiety), define the self so as to meet the expectations of others, avoid criticism, and protect vulnerabilities. At the same time, there exists a private mode, withhold from public scrutiny lest one risk reducing one's interpersonal significance. To the extent that one is involved in maintaining the presentational systems there is little potential for introspective exploration of the private mode. The analytic situation is specifically focused on dismantling presentational operations and releasing possibilities for greater experience of authenticity.

It is perhaps Wolstein's genius to have recognized that the most profound experience of one's unique self requires the meeting of self and other. Langan (1993) refers to this issue in terms of the impossibility of distinguishing a figure without the context of ground. Whether the interpersonal matrix is immediately present or is represented in consciousness through internalized personifications, the self cannot be known in isolation.

COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE SELF

While Sullivan's view of a self that emerges from, and is completely shaped and defined through, its involvements in the relational context has been persuasive to most Interpersonalists, an alternative position has coexisted from the very beginnings of the Interpersonal school. This position essentially holds that what is inside the person and what is outside are entirely different, structurally, conceptually, and experientially. These two realms of psychological operation, while interactive and even interdependent, cannot be reduced into each other. In this view, the intrapsychic has its own origins, qualities, and operations, and these need to be studied and understood in their own right, quite separate and distinct from the interpersonal.

The earliest vocal proponent of this stance within the Interpersonal school was Silvano Arieti. Deliberately positioning himself in opposition to Sullivan, he titles his major treatise on the evolution of psychological mechanisms "The Intrapsychic Self" (Arieti, 1967). In this work, he describes the infant's emergent awareness of self-states in terms of sensorimotor experience, by which he means the experience of bodily functions integrated into patterns that constitute a kind of primitive motor identity. Arieti does not deny that the neonate may be aware of interactions with other people; he simply ignores the possible importance of such experiences in what he calls "primordial self"-development.

The source of his major disagreement with Sullivan concerns the origin of the self. Arieti could not agree that anxiety is the sole motivating energy of psychic life, nor could he accept the idea that all properties of the self derive from the processes involved in avoiding, managing, or structuring anxiety. While Arieti explicitly saw his work as a necessary foundation for any study of interpersonal process and hoped to offer a balanced view through which the two realms could be seen as interdependent and eventually integrated, his interest in cognitive structures and intrapsychic mechanisms seems to have held sway. This eventually led him ever more deeply into study of the mind and its functions and away from consideration of how the self is shaped by relational experience.

The next section reviews the work of Levenson and de Gramont, two Interpersonalists who also were moved to explore the terrain of cognition as offering the best route toward understanding how the individual incorporates his world (although neither finds it necessary to declare opposition to Sullivan in order to pursue this interest). Following this, we examine theorists who share the other aspect of Arieti's focus, that is, attempting to integrate the intrapsychic with the interpersonal.

Interest in the cognitive roots of interpersonal experience does not reduce the necessity for a thorough conceptualization of the self. Coming from quite a different perspective and certainly not sharing Arieti's interest in Freud's drive model of intrapsychic motive and meaning, Edgar Levenson (1972, 1983, 1989, 1991, 1993) finds himself equally critical of Sullivan's reliance on the universal influence of anxiety. In quite parallel fashion, Levenson studied the cognitive apparatus in order to understand how humans process their experience. If the self originates out of interactions with others, including reflected appraisals, personifications, and interpretations of how others act toward oneself, then the medium through which such data are conveyed is communication. Levenson (1972) writes: "Language
obviates the hoary battle between inside and outside since language is, of course, both. There can be no communication without an intrapsychic process and there can be no language without a recipient, even an imaginary recipient” (p. 6). Psychoanalysis therefore becomes for Levenson a study of what is communicated and how it is received and processed. Symbolism, linguistic encoding and decoding, and the attribution of meanings are the stuff of experience. Pathology may be seen as inaccurate, nonveridical narration, that is, confusion and lack of ability to find relational communicative matching. Health is defined by Levenson as “semiotic competence.”

Fully wedded to the view that the psyche is known only through its interactive expression, Levenson has as little interest in the intrapsychic structures of mind as any Watsonian behaviorist. Nonetheless, the explosion of psychoanalytic interest in narcissism and the expansion of relational theorists who threaten the copartition of the Interpersonal premises have combined to engage Levenson’s attention in the organization of the self. His 1989 essay represents his thinking about how to fit himself into this contemporary debate. While preferring to emphasize the more interpersonal concept of personality over the introspectively determined self, he concludes by concurring with Sullivan on the centrality of self in the ongoing processing of so-called reality. Self is socially constructed, but it also plays a pivotal role in constructing the social milieu in which it exists. Levenson’s focus remains centered on the nexus between inner and outer. He points to the difference between himself and other psychoanalytic theorists in that he wants to know as much about what is going on around the person as what is going on inside. Thus, analytic success is less a matter of self-awareness or self-expansion and more about increasing awareness or understanding in general. Freedom means more options for knowing and acting, not necessarily less internal constriction or rigidity.

Another perspective on the relation between self-development and cognitive structuring of experience through language has been developed by de Gramont (1986, 1987). While Levenson sees all experience as mediated and totally shaped by the availability of linguistic encoding, de Gramont assumes there are contents of the mind that exist independent of language. Encoding, translating, and describing experience are the work language performs in permitting that internal experience to become interpersonally evidenced. Yet, seemingly paradoxically, internal realities become viable only when affirmed through communication. Thus, self is an intrapsychic construct, a personal, idiosyncratic given. De Gramont is particularly concerned with the interplay between language and psychological growth and the expansion of mind. He seizes on the concept of self as the consolidation of intrapsychic contents and personal realities, much as did Sullivan. He is interested in the awareness of self as both subject and object, monitoring ongoing activity and impression while simultaneously questioning motive, meaning, reaction, and consequences. The experience of self, however, is radically, even violently transformed by the impact of experience and the translation of this experience into words. “The child’s shifting contexts are particularly vulnerable to being captured by events which evoke a strong [physical] reaction... In being anchored to words, the intensity of the felt component of meaning may be intensified” (de Gramont, 1987, p. 97).

In this view, the self essentially creates and continuously re-creates itself as information and experience are processed through language. Language and experiential data are equal partners in the synthesis, which becomes self-structure. Meanings are privately constructed as a function of preexisting mental contexts. But the ability to question meanings is a facility that occurs only with the acquisition of language, and this ability allows the self to become reflective and dynamic.

Interestingly, through this route of linguistic analysis, grounded in philosophy as much as in psychology, de Gramont arrives at a conclusion that is virtually identical to that of Sullivan (and also Levenson) concerning the deviations in syntactic fit between the person and his world. If meanings are private and idiosyncratically constructed, there are many opportunities for distortion. Discrepancies occur between words and the events or things that words are intended to denote. Distortions come to have private meanings, and communication is therefore limited. This is essentially the definition of parataxis. De Gramont suggests the self is understood psychoanalytically through study of its impact on the shaping of meanings. Affirmation of self involves recognition of the power of linguistic determination: I am what I say. For self-expansion to occur, one must become aware of what is disowned and what is dissociated as well as what is distorted and what has become linguistically reified.
OTHER INTEGRATIONS OF THE INTERPERSONAL AND THE INTRAPSYCHIC

Several modern Interpersonalists have been far more successful at negotiating the integration of ideas about the interpersonal and the intrapsychic spheres than was Arieti. One major thrust in this direction has been undertaken by Bromberg (1979, 1980, 1984, 1991, 1992). His interest originated in his clinical observations of patient behaviors that would commonly be called regression. Bromberg recognized that, while the Interpersonal approach has always emphasized the mutative value of interaction, Interpersonal theory has certain conceptual difficulties dealing with how and why regression occurs. Psychological change requires integral transformations in existing self-personifications. Pondering the internal balancing act between the stabilizing ballast of self-system defenses countered by the person's tendencies toward health and innovation, Bromberg concludes that fostering regression is a powerful therapeutic technique that loosens the hold of defenses. Enacting a regressed state puts the patient in touch with feelings that are vividly projected onto the analyst. The immediacy of such an experience is otherwise impossible to achieve. "The deeper the regression that can be safely allowed by the patient, the richer the experience and the greater its reverberation on the total organization of the self" (Bromberg, 1979, pp. 653-654).

Note that in arguing for the potency of a particular kind of therapeutic interactive experience, Bromberg seems to be assuming that the self-system and its personifications are more like structures than like processes. Where Sullivan would speak of dynamisms and operations, and Barnett would allude to patterns, Bromberg has moved to describing fixed features of mind and experience. This shift is made more explicit in the writings of Stephen Mitchell.

Deeply influenced by, and indebted to, Sullivan, Mitchell deliberately attempts to maintain a view of mental operations that is dynamic, process oriented, and defined operationally rather than structurally. Nonetheless, he describes the mind as a "relational matrix" (a metaphor that implies more solidity of substance than does the concept of the "interpersonal field"), that includes self-organization, object ties, and transactional patterns, that is, both structures and processes. But perhaps it is exactly this deviation from Sullivan's model that allows Mitchell to achieve the integration of the intrapsychic and the interpersonal that eluded previous theorists.

Mitchell (1988) considers the central problem of selfhood as establishing continuity in the patterning of awareness and stability of self-experience. While agreeing with Sullivan that there can be no self-knowledge without interaction with others, Mitchell finds it unnecessary to deny the contribution of the purely internal. Mitchell recognizes that the intrapsychic, like all other experience, invariably is processed within the relational matrix. There is self, and there is other, but they cannot be untangled because they are in constant interaction, and neither can be known in isolation. Further, Mitchell is comfortable with the uniquely personal, with the idea that the individual consists of an idiosyncratic sequence of life experience, and with inclusion of components derived from biology based on genetic givens, temperament, constitution, and universal bodily needs. Given that absolutely all human experience is shaped, defined, and understandable only through the medium of the interpersonal, needs, fantasies, wishes, and all other intrapsychic phenomena are all grist for the relational mill.

Mitchell recognizes that setting the locus of experience in the shifting realities of relational space saddles his theory with conceptual difficulties similar to those encountered by Sullivan when it comes to delineating fixed properties of the self. He therefore found it necessary to consider how to anchor self-experience in time and space (Mitchell, 1991). Rather than borrow Wolstein's quite parallel and congruent ideas concerning the "psychic center of the self," Mitchell chooses to adopt the notion of the "true-self" as outlined in object relations theory. Just as Sullivan spoke of process rather than entity, Mitchell neatly redefines the problem of locating the core or center of the self by moving toward description in terms of experience. "Selfness" feels true. Authenticity, "realness," the sense of being true to oneself are all introspectively powerful experiences. Recognizing (in terms quite identical to those of Wolstein) that self-knowledge expands through the impact of self-experience, including bodily tensions, passionate affects, and illuminating visions, as well as interpersonal encounters, Mitchell shows that the self is not the product of such "raw" experience but might be better understood as its source. We do not come to be ourselves from what we experience; rather, we have certain experiences because of who we are. For example, he illustrates how certain people
experience lust or instinctual physical pressures as invigorating evidence of healthy aliveness while others feel them as disruptive and possibly dangerous. Self-awareness is mediated by attitudes that reflect a preexisting core self-image.

Finally, the core of the self need not be seen as spatially fixed in some mental landscape. Mitchell joins Levenson, Langan, and others critical of the structural metaphor to argue that self should be considered in terms of time rather than space. What is experienced as a truer or more authentic representation of the self in any moment is contextual. It is a function of the relational surround and is subject to drastic revision in other situations and at other times. This solution to the question of the “real self” was, in fact, anticipated by Barnett. He writes, “It is probably [most] valid . . . to speak of authenticity of our moment-to-moment responses to living than to speak of a real self. The concept of a real self is problematic because it is idealistic, nonexistent, and tends to be ideological” (p. 404). The same position has been restated in modern form by Langan (submitted), who writes:

Might “I” be only a passing thought? If so, the naive realist must ask, whose thought? Surely I am here to observe myself asking. Then who observes the observer? An inner “I,” an observant homunculus within, and another within, and within . . . . The regress arises from the insidious difficulty inherent in the nature of the question, in that the question presupposes subject and object, thinker and thought. Can one dispense with the presupposition?

Might “I” be a passing thought? [pp. 4–5].

WILL, VOLITION, AND RESPONSIBILITY

The following section will complete our discussion of the self and its attributes by outlining the various approaches Interpersonal authors have taken to deal with the matter of how motivation is experienced (volition), the role of desire, fantasy, and wish (will), and the problem of determinism (responsibility).

Interpersonal psychoanalysis, from its origins, has been oriented toward solution of social and political problems as well as those of individual psychology (Fromm, 1941, 1947; Sullivan, 1956). While social forces shape human behavior, it is equally true that society and culture are the products of human minds. People must take responsibility for the social world in which they live. Any psychological system that purports to explain the human psyche must speak to this necessity. If the individual is thought to be caught in an inextricable struggle between biological forces subject to domination by social requirements and interpersonal expectations, as in the Freudian model, it is exceedingly difficult to find a place for the action of individual initiative, the sense of volition, or the attribution of personal responsibility.

Despite the example set by Sullivan, who opposed inclusion of any psychological conception involving the possible influence of spiritual or other forces beyond the individual’s immediate experience, Interpersonal analysts have considered the question of volition and agency in numbers greater than their relative strength in the profession. This was, in part, due to the influence of Erich Fromm and his legacy of concern with humanistic social concerns and the question of morality. It may also, ironically, be, in part, a consequence of Sullivan’s own lead. Interpersonal theory’s emphasis on language and cognition led directly to concerns about the origins of self-consciousness (Arieti), and the translation of thought into action (Barnett). Similarly, the centrality of maintaining relational ties may be seen as evidence of a form of will that opposes environmental influence and resists change (Mitchell). The Interpersonal emphasis on mutual interaction in the analytic encounter, involving questions of authenticity and intimacy, led to consideration of the uniqueness of the individual interacting personalities of analyst and patient (Wolstein, Ehrenberg).

VOLITION AND CAUSALITY

Arieti, writing in 1967, traced the historical evolution of notions of causality as they parallel the child’s development of self-concepts. Teleological causality attributes the cause of an event to its effect. It is a simple connection between perceptions and involves the assumption that there is a link between a given result and the factors (or motives) leading up to it. Arieti gives the seemingly trivial example: “A man drinks because he wants to quench his thirst” (p. 113). Even when such statements lack any consideration of operative mechanism or causal connection, such as this one, teleological explanations may often be correct. Arieti points out that it is on the basis of
such assertions that the psychological (as well as philosophical) assumption of will comes to be understood as that category of experience that intervenes between drive and resolution. It is this arena, where psychological motivations (generally presumed to be unconscious and determined by earlier experience) are joined with consciously experienced behavior, that all theorists locate as the realm of the will. In this sense, will has to do with the accomplishment of a given (known or unknown) purpose.

In primitive conceptions of causality, just as is the case for small children, the operative will may not be assumed to be possessed by a particular individual but may be thought to reside in divine spirits, in other people, in animate or even inanimate objects (which may be described as having "a will of their own"). Matters become complicated when this sort of teleological reasoning is applied to issues of responsibility. For example: "You're sick because your enemy wants you to be sick" or "If a child bumps into a chair and hurts himself, he wants to hit the chair because it has inflicted pain on him" (p. 113). Arieti argues that the notion of teleological causation, while faulty, nonetheless constitutes a profound human achievement in dealing with the universe. This kind of thinking becomes possible only after the acquisition of language, because prior to this, the only way of making causal linkages is through behavioral conditioning of learned sequences (or presumably through genetically programmed instincts that have survived through evolution). Language brings the potential for symbols, and symbols are required to consider issues of causality.

At a higher level of conceptualization is what Arieti terms "deterministic causality," a way of understanding the cause of an event in terms of antecedents rather than consequences, what has gone before rather than what follows. In this realm of understanding, causal factors and mechanisms are depersonalized. Will and volition become more abstract categories experientially superimposed on external reality through the use of concepts. Arieti argues that the internal world and the external world exist in dialogic interaction. Each can be understood only through reference to the other. The organizing capacity that mediates between inner and outer realities is human cognition. Just as language brings with it the ability to develop notions of causality and the beginnings of self-consciousness, awareness of motivation and intent, primitive possibilities of foresight, and higher orders of conceptualizing bring with them the potential for creativity, as well as more sophisticated experiences of insight, self-awareness, and responsibility. It is out of this ability for cognitive abstraction and conceptualization that, for Arieti, the concept of psychological self becomes meaningful.

For our current purpose, however, we focus on his notion of how the person’s ability to use concepts is related to issues of conscience, guilt, and responsibility. In his own words:

"Concepts enter into and to a large extent constitute the image of the self. Man at the conceptual level no longer sees himself as a physical entity or as a name, but as a repository of concepts which refer to his own person. Concepts like inner worth, personal significance, mental outlook, knowledge, ideals, aspirations, ability, and the capacity to give and receive love—all are integral parts of the self and the self image, together with the emotions which accompany these concepts. The discrepancy between the way we think we are and the way we feel we should be (or the way we feel parents, society, or God expects us to be) may create a sense of guilt which is based on purely conceptual ground (pp. 149–150).

Somewhat paradoxically, in the course of childhood the experiences of will and of making choices among possible actions actually emerge out of the child's concern to obey his parents. Arieti observes the apparent contradiction in the idea that self-determination arises out of dependency and coercion. He argues, however, that the child desires to attain not only approval but a sense of self that is in concert with the goals and ideals of others, the parents, family, and, eventually, community and existential ideal. It is exactly this sense of self that is the basis for self-definition, conceptualizing one's own behavior and the consequences of that behavior, and making choices. The experience of willing has to do with how people understand the governance of their behavior. Habits, negativism, the wishes and suggestions of others, unconscious influences, even chance all play important roles in determining any particular action. As the personality becomes integrated, however, the individual becomes more and more unclear as to the sources of his choices and eventually comes to have the felt experience of willing (or, more pathologically, not willing) ongoing behavior. Thus, the mature, psychologically integrated person experiences decisions as the independent
exertion of willing, an expression of core wishes, beliefs, and values, that is, "self." Will is the medium through which the self is made manifest.

VOLITION, RESPONSIBILITY, AND FREE WILL

Several Interpersonalists connect the issue of volition and its sources in individual psychology to broader social questions of ethics and morality. The idea of "free will" and its legal protection is, of course, a political, as well as a psychological and philosophical, question. The experience of the individual as making choices and having personal responsibility for behavior is integral to social and cultural standards for determining how such decisions should be made and whether particular choices are considered right or wrong. So, for Fromm (1941), a society must foster the potential for individuals to be true to their own natures in order for those individuals to be able to make ethically informed, humanistically harmonious decisions.

Psychological well-being is reflexively interwoven with social and interpersonal productivity. May (1953), being somewhat less focused on the wider social issues but more concerned with the existential situation of the individual and his capacity for ethical behavior as an affirmation of self, tells us that "to the extent that the person is able to fulfill his human capacities in any action—that is, to choose in self awareness—he makes his decision as a relative unity" (p. 219). The whole self is involved in the decision, and the fact and act of making the decision then have reverberating consequences for the ongoing integration of the self.

Farber (1966, 1976) helped clarify the relation between the concept of will and the effects of both biology and prior experience by designating two different categories that he labels the first and second realms of the will. These correspond roughly (but are not identical) to the Freudian delineation of the realms of the unconscious and the conscious. All those elements of prior experience that become automatic, habitual, and characteristic, as well as those motivations, drives, impulses, and so on that assume characteristic ways of seeking satisfactions, form the domain of will in the first realm. Although known only by its effects, this aspect of will that best describes the identity or essence of who a given person is. It is inferred through observation of the course of a person's actions over time. It is the "bottom-line" assessment of who a person is on the basis of what they have done.

In contrast, will in the second realm is experienced more directly. It is capable of definition and direction, choice and change. Farber warns that we are apt to confuse this second form of will with the totality of our ability to determine our behavior, as if only the conscious motivations are relevant to the sense of agency or responsibility. Such confusion (and denial of the impact of all that exists outside awareness) leads to attempts to will behaviors or events that cannot actually be controlled by conscious will. This, for Farber (1966), is the source of the experience of anxiety (p. 42). That is, anxiety is generated out of trying to will something such as an attitude, action, or quality of personality that cannot be accomplished by will alone. Neglect of the contents of the unconscious in the assertion of will is tantamount to psychosis.

Attempting to use the will to determine identity or character is always evidence of pathology. Willfulness, which is the attempt to will aspects of being that are outside the influence of direct effort, such as the anorexic's control over hunger or the obsessional's wish to achieve perfection, is evidence of the two realms of will being dysfunctionally correlated. Conversely, the search for authentic experience, involving either the merging of volition into the existential experience of being or the active, attentive openness to emergent tendency or desire, is evidence of harmony between the realms (D. B. Stern, 1983).

For Arieti (1967), the desire to carry out an action is but one part of the complex sequence that defines mature volition. He separates six steps:

1. the ability to evaluate several alternatives,
2. the choice of one alternative,
3. the planning of the chosen alternative,
4. the will (or determination) to carry out the chosen and planned alternative,
5. the motor execution of the chosen alternative...
6. (inhibition, since in order to will, the individual must be able to inhibit the not-willed forms of behavior [p. 209].

Naive notions of psychological determinism would force us to reject all possibility of choice. Certainly every action can be understood as having motivations both conscious and unconscious, biological and environmental, which emanate from prior experience. Mitchell (1988) has summarized various arguments
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The unconscious can be made conscious. For deliberation, conceptualization, choice, judgment, and awareness of consequences permit humans to rise above the influences of both biology and past experience. One becomes capable of choosing among motivations, balancing need and desire, and curbing impulses. Conflicts can be examined and resolved. The unconscious can be made conscious. Further, the individual becomes able to obey standards, pursue ideals, and aspire to altruism.

Beyond these potentials for personal fulfillment, it is only when individuals are capable of mature volition that they become responsible for their own behavior and its effects. Social theorists and politicians, as well as philosophers and psychoanalysts, struggle to determine and assess the capacity for volition. Our criminal justice system (at least in Western societies) sets aside the misdeeds of minors and those considered psychologically handicapped, even if the presumed “insanity” is only temporary. We recognize that individuals must be capable of reasoned judgment and voluntary behavior if we are to hold them responsible for the consequences of their acts.

INTENTIONALITY

The question of agency has been considered earlier in this chapter as an aspect of conscious self-experience and self-definition, that is, mental representation of one’s self. In the present discussion it is considered in terms of its importance to the experience of intentionality. The preceding has introduced the basis for focusing on the experience of will in psychoanalytic treatment, a focus that traditionally has been of major importance for Interpersonalists. Mitchell (1988), in an unusually critical tone, goes so far as to charge the psychoanalytic establishment with “bad faith.” He argues that if psychoanalysis relies solely on traditional theories of motivation while ignoring the personal dimension of intention and self-determination, it suffers from the same pathology it presumes to understand (p. 242). Mitchell (1988) illustrates his conviction with an analogy:

The psychoanalytic determinist position is comparable to arguing that a work of art is predictable from a thorough analysis of its circumstances and the quality of its materials—that if one takes into account the features of the piano, the history of music at the end of the classical era, an appreciation of the romantic movement, and the characteristics of the sonata form, one could foresee Beethoven’s piano sonatas (p. 257).

In an example such as this, one sees the necessity of positing some sort of intervening variable, some agency of the person that integrates the various sources of information and experience and synthesizes them into new forms that had not even been previously conceivable. Beyond the cognizing, reflective self, humans refashion their worlds through directed activity, experienced as, and evidence of, the sense of will. Here again, Mitchell emphasizes the connection between creativity and innovation and such cognitive properties as awareness, self-consciousness, purpose, and intention, reiterating the concern of such writers as Arieti, Fromm, May, and Farber.

While interested in how individuals generate new ideas, Mitchell frames his discussion by turning our attention in the opposite direction. The question he raises concerns how people remain fixated on ways of perceiving, reacting, and experiencing themselves that appear wholly conditioned by their pasts, if, indeed, they have the capacity to will to change and be different. In describing willfulness, Farber (1966) pointed out that the analyst’s interpretations of libidinal motives are somehow satisfying to the hysteric because they involve patient and analyst in the very arena of sexuality and romance that they purport to remedy. In the same vein, Mitchell argues that traditional psychoanalytic interpretations of drive and impulse as conflicting, unknowable forces that seek gratification without correspondence to the patients’ conscious attitudes, values, and self-definition reinforce patients’ (unconscious) metaphors of themselves as damaged and helpless. To help a patient progress into realms of new possibility,
the analyst must expose the passivity and fixedness of maintaining the view that one has no capacity for choice and self-determination. The patient must come to see how permitting oneself to continue pathological behaviors maintains the psychic status quo. Mitchell suggests that these problems are particularly relevant to the ways in which patients perpetuate characteristic patterns of relatedness throughout life.

When one conceives of a rigid, impermeable boundary between consciousness and the unconscious and supposes that pathology is a function of the pressures that cause herniation, fissure, and explosion along that boundary, there is little role for will or intention. Interpersonalists, however, assume that the various levels or forms of consciousness are continuous. There are no sharp boundaries or clear demarcation of spheres. There is no discrete, distinctly separate unconscious. The contents of awareness are more a function of the focus of attention (Sullivan, 1956) and the ability to articulate experience (Taub and Green, 1959; D. B. Stern, 1983), than related to forces of repression. Memory, attention, and the possibility of attaining new understandings of oneself are the products of a desire to know, and a willingness to notice and address uncomfortable perceptions and the emotions they arouse. In Mitchell's (1988) terms,

What keeps the repressed unknown is the combination of the obstacles produced by the residues of past choices and the will that does not want to begin the search. Traditional deterministic psychoanalytic theories, by omitting the role of the will, overlook the analysand's powerful conscious and unconscious commitment to the way in which his mind is arranged [p. 265, italics added].

Thus, the unwitting and unwilling patient remains embedded in the familiar, repeating patterns that avoid anxiety and ensure safety. Becoming free of such patterns requires more than accurate interpretations, although, of course, understanding is important. First, as pointed out by Mitchell, a new perspective must be actively sought out and studied. One must want to change. Then, one must be open to new possibilities. Curiosity, according to Stern (1990), involves a willingness to reexamine what is already within the field of awareness in order to see it anew. He admonishes analyst and patient to "court surprise" to illuminate unwitting defensive protection of pathologies in interaction. Such a posture is midway between the determined, directed sense of agency and the free-floating state of free association that is classically assumed to be a suspension of will. In truth, however, as Mitchell and Stern have shown, the discovery of new ideas, the permission for associative memories, fantasies, and so on, to enter consciousness, requires that the patient be "willing" to see something new.

The only modern writer schooled in the Interpersonal tradition who has attempted to bridge classical drive theory with these concerns about the centrality of will and agency is Jay Greenberg (1991). While most Interpersonalists (except Arieti, as described earlier) would agree with Mitchell that considering drive as the primary motivational force in human life leads inevitably to seeing the person as a passive victim of bestial pressures, Greenberg conceives of drive as integral to the experience of volition. In his view, volition becomes the subject of consciousness only in the process of decision making. There is no abstract, independent sense of self as having a will except when one is on the very edge of action. Easy choices do not call for the assertion of will. Choices are difficult to the extent that one is gripped by conflict. Psychic conflict, according to Greenberg, rests on the necessity of including biologically derived needs (i.e., drives) within the constellation of conflicting intrapsychic pressures. Thus, the very experience of willing arises from awareness of one's own internal state, a situation that invariably includes urges, impulses, and appetites, as well as manifold higher-level intellectual, social, moral, spiritual, or other interests and concerns.

In this way, Greenberg recasts in contemporary terms the arguments initiated by Arieti (outlined earlier in this chapter). While Arieti emphasized that internal experience of biological reality becomes manifest through cognitive capacities and therefore studied the development of cognition as the source of the experience of self, Greenberg uses a similar observation to describe the experience of volition. His work reiterates, however, that those who dichotomize drive and will, needs and values, biology and psychology, or, for that matter, intrapsychic and interpersonal are creating unnecessary and misleading dualities.

CONCLUSION

The study of the self has been so integral to the development of Interpersonal psychoanalysis that no single chapter can fully do justice to the
The Interpersonal Self

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