

The Interpersonal Perspective of the American School¹

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THE CONVOCATION OF THIS 40TH ANNIVERSARY SYMPOSIUM in general, and the theme of this panel in particular, invite us to take still another hard look at the life and work of Harry Stack Sullivan, as part of the critical review and reconstruction ongoing at the White Institute since the 1950s. But now, I believe, we may undertake a fundamental revisioning of both the man and his work afresh—the work, of course, long available since his 1940 "Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry," and the man newly available in, the 1982 Helen Swick Perry biography, "Psychiatrist of America."

Certain aspects of his life and work continue, however, to escape critical attention. Consider, his long and involved relationship with Clara M. Thompson. Perry devotes a full chapter to it, enabling us, once again, to reopen the study of the personal and interpersonal background of the "Conceptions"—only this time, I propose, with a more sharply drawn picture of the probable influences that Sullivan and Thompson exerted on each other. That sort of study could not have been proposed with the same measure of objectivity while the two were still alive, and closely working together. To see

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The major themes of this paper, which I have discussed in previous papers, gain historical and biographical support from H. S. Perry's *Psychiatrist of America*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982. Readers interested in one such previous discussion that is, in addition, more clinical and more systematic are referred to my review essay, "Psychology, metapsychology, and the evolving American School of Psychoanalysis," *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, **13**:128–154, 1977.

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how the pieces of history and systematics fall into place, there is, in the end, no substitute for the sheer passage of time.

In tribute to the White Institute on its 40th Anniversary, I shall address my formal discussion to some neglected aspects of their individual and shared histories. Had the two not met, and been so crucially important to one another's developing outlook, I doubt that either of them, alone, could have grown into the

interpersonal-psychoanalytic presence they both became in tandem—each, clearly, in his and in her own voice. What follows is a brief impressionistic sketch of these two Institute founders and a partial mapping of their crossed psychoanalytic paths.

The account of Sullivan's life may, in itself, be interesting to all as a personal history; to some, as the story of one child of the great Irish immigrations during the 19th century; and to a few, as a tabloid of spiciness about one celebrated contributor to the cumulative development of psychoanalytic inquiry in America. In the final analysis it is his work that counts; it is that which endures. For some it endures as is, for others as may be reconstructed, and for still others as a separate chapter in the 1930s history of egointerpersonal therapy. For most, however, I believe that it continues to endure in various amalgams of all three.

I

Sullivan's personal story aside, his is still one important contribution to the cumulative development of psychoanalytic inquiry, from its most empirical concreteness to its most speculative interpretation. His (and others') contributions evolved during the late 1920s, through the 1930s, and into the middle 1940s; and they coalesced as the sociological model of therapeutic inquiry. And if, in fact, his work were not so influential, it is doubtful that Perry, or anyone else, would have undertaken to depict his private life in such rich detail. Nor, in my opinion, would the story of his life have been worth recording anywhere else—except, perhaps, as part of a larger bio-statistical study of rural sociology, or as part of a study of the cultural impact of rural American life in upstate New York on Irish immigrant populations, in the latter half of the 19th century.

I come to this opinion, not because his own personal story and the story of his particular immigrant forebears pales in the telling. We do not, often, find such heroic stoicism sustained in the face of

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unpromising and unremitting bleakness. I come to it, rather, because Americans everywhere carry the indelible marks of immigrant ancestry etched deeply in the character of our collective psyche. We are all immigrants who, in one generation or another, came here from somewhere. Newly arrived, or the descendents of immigrants still faithful to their impulse to move on, we are a nation persisting in the throes of continual migration from one open frontier to another. In this light Sullivan's contribution can be seen as a special instance of the liberating impact of our common democratic heritage on the creative psychic resources held dormant by the bonds of intolerable oppression abroad—most generally social, economic, political and religious; yet individually, too, in the countless ways in which all our immigrant ancestors suffered untold dehumanizing conditions, and which they, to our good fortune, were strong enough to leave behind.

That Sullivan's work is the thing becomes clear, moreover, from how Perry

organizes her book. She does not write the first 16 chapters as straight biography—about his infancy and childhood, about his parents and extended family, about his early education and one major chumship, and so on. Instead, she presents them from the point of view of his later development of a perspective on modern psychiatry. Even more importantly she devotes the last 28 chapters (344 pages) to documenting how the professional contacts he made, which were intensive yet wide-ranging into many adjacent fields, intertwined with the therapeutic ideas at which he arrived, which, though synthetic, were sharply focused on the empirics of clinical psychoanalytic inquiry. And that is the bulk of her work. This ordering and presentation of the biography are, I believe, forced on her, as they would have been on any other biographer, by the nature of her materials. Sullivan's life and Sullivan's work become inextricably interwoven into a single pattern of life-history. She leaves untouched the personal significance of this commingling of the two, which, to me, makes his life and his work so extraordinary in the documentation. More than three-fourths of Perry's book is the history of Sullivan as student, colleague, ward psychiatrist, researcher, private practitioner, supervisor, interdisciplinary coordinator, lecturer, editor, and world peace activist. All this is about him in the public mode.

Yet, because of how Sullivan lived his personal and his professional life, Perry had no alternative. For the two, obviously, flow into one another undistinguished from one another. Her book is,

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essentially, the history of his personal, his political, and his intellectual relations with such as Benedict in anthropology, Lasswell in political science, Mullahy in philosophy, Sapir in linguistics, and with a wide array of European and American psychiatrists and psychoanalysts, such as White and Meyer, Ferenczi and Thompson, Fromm and Fromm-Reichmann, Horney and Silverberg, and with many, many others in Washington and New York, some associated with the Washington School, some with what was then its New York Branch and is now the independently chartered White Institute; with his *Psychiatry*, a "journal for the operational statement of interpersonal relations"; with U.S. Army psychiatry, the American Psychiatric Association; the American Psychoanalytic Association—all, in sum, far too numerous to list here.

In the "Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry," Sullivan acknowledges that Freud, White, and Meyer are the three major predecessors to his developed thought. White had already stated the one-genus postulate in very similar terms, and that the notion of security operation derives from the political and economic milieu in which Sullivan came into his own during the 1930s. Also worth mentioning, in connection with the origins of his interpersonal-operationist synthesis, is Meyer's biosocial approach to the study of personality. Sullivan reflects Meyer's psychobiology in the two basic categories about which he chose

to organize his "Conceptions, " the satisfaction of needs reflecting the biological side of Meyer's approach, and the maintenance of securities reflecting its social side. He departs from Meyer in devoting the main body of his ideas and procedures to the study of the interpersonal security operations, and the anxieties related to them. But here, following Meyer, he does not go beyond the two categories of satisfaction and security, to include, for example, a category such as fulfillment or self-realization. Omitted—in my opinion, to the defect of his interpersonal-operationist perspective²—is any reference to that

2 Since completing this paper, I have learned about Anthony T. Moore's "Unique individuality redeemed: Sullivan's misinterpretation of Bridgman's operationalism" (1984). He reconsiders Sullivan's operationist statement of interpersonal relations in the light of primary sources that point up a neglected issue in Sullivan scholarship: Namely, that Bridgman was not at all averse to the notion of unique individuality. This point should, I am suggesting, be of interest to all students of Sullivan's life and work, raising, as it sharply does, a number of critical questions hitherto inattended. Such as: Whether it is time, now, to review what Bridgman really said? Whether that is as important for the development of ego-interpersonal psychoanalytic inquiry as what Sullivan took him to mean? For conceptual reasons that are open to systematic examination? For personal reasons more difficult to define, perhaps impossible to probe? Or whether it is, still, necessary for interpersonal psychoanalysts to view Bridgman's operationism through Sullivan's eyes? Or, in fact, whether operationism itself, powerful though it may be as a philosophy of physical science, can be invoked as a philosophy of psychoanalytic psychology, so as to account for the experiential dimensions of its direct therapeutic inquiry?

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intrapersonal dimension of the human psyche that serves as the focal self-moving leverage by which to carry out the restructuring and interpretive enlargement of the two interpersonal categories that he does include. Such a third category would serve not only to better coordinate them within his system of thought, but also to better integrate them in the actual experience of his therapeutic practice. Omitted, in short, is the domain of the first person, singular and active, and privileged with direct access to the uniquely individual psychic experience of the interpersonal relations being lived through.

Even so, as Perry's biography clearly illustrates, and spells out in great detail, there are many other important influences on his thinking that deserve to be discussed. But, for reasons difficult to make out on the surface of his work, he does not consider them worth mentioning, not even as references in the footnotes of that 1940 series of lectures. For the predecessors to his thinking are wider in origin and more varied in importance than this narrowly presented group of Freud, White, and Meyer that he selects for his reader's attention. What, on the other hand, does it suggest about all those influential coworkers that he selects for his

reader's inattention, and, most likely, for his own as well?

II

Most interesting of all, I think, is Sullivan's omission from among his acknowledged influences of his long and productive association with Clara Thompson, to which Perry devotes a full chapter, in addition to the several references to Thompson elsewhere in her book. Are we, then, to infer that his omission of her from the "Conceptions" is, simply, unwitting? Or, that her influence on him is, in fact, so deeply private and unarticulated—even, in his sense of the term, so uniquely individual—as to transcend the scope of his scientific study of the field of interpersonal relations? We know about Freud, about Meyer, about White, and about their varied

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and complementary impact on Sullivan's thinking, mainly, I suppose, because he specifically directs our attention to them. But, in that major 1940 effort he does not call our attention to Thompson's long-term influence on the evolution of his insight and outlook. Nor, in those lectures, does he refer to it, or, if only in passing, even suggest in what respects they disagreed about which major psychoanalytic issues.

Yet, from Perry's research, it is, in my opinion, Thompson who emerges as the far more important—for him, directly and personally, perhaps the most important—individual influence on the development of his interpersonal-operationist perspective. In no previous study, to my knowledge, has this aspect of their relationship ever been so clearly and fully documented. For this discussion alone, students of the unfolding pluralism in the metapsychologies of the American School in general, and, of course, both Sullivan's interpersonal-operationist and Thompson's interpersonal-humanist perspectives in particular, will, I think, find Perry's work a primary source of lasting historical value.

But why, then, is Thompson, whom Sullivan passes over in his lectures, so critical a figure in both his personal and his professional development? There are several factors to consider, and I mention but a few telling ones. Recall, for example, that she became his main personal link both to Meyer and Ferenczi directly, and through Ferenczi, of course, to Freud indirectly. These three, unlike White, who was a major architect of early 20th-century American psychiatry at the institutional level, were primarily clinicians. Freud, Ferenczi, and Meyer were, in addition, seminal thinkers, and all made major, deeply innovative contributions to the empirics and the systematics of direct psychotherapeutic inquiry. So they, unlike White, all discovered new patterns of clinical theory and founded new procedures of therapeutic practice. And Thompson, as Perry records it, provided Sullivan with the induplicable living bridge to the work of all three. It should, here, again be recalled that she was his personal analyst—according to Perry, the

only one. She, as such, also became his major personal avenue to the intensive psychoanalytic study of his own unconscious psychology—or, as he would later reconceive and rename it, dissociated interpersonal relations. Their therapeutic work together, of course, entailed both his and her particular complexities of transference and _____, resistance and counterresistance, and anxiety and counteranxiety, as well as their

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uniquely individual selves, converging and, most likely, interlocking in their coparticipant therapeutic experience, ostensibly over the issue of financial responsibility.

Finally, a word about Thompson, the person that Sullivan most probably found her to be. As those who personally knew her are witness, she appeared to be a simple and direct woman who worked, however, from a moving point of interpersonal detachment, always generous with the solid and affirming clarity of her Yankee horse-sense, gifted with the extraordinary resource of staying power, having a deep regard for psychological courage both in others and in herself, usually capable of bringing her independent cast of mind to whatever psychoanalytic issues she took seriously, with whomever she did it, including, no doubt, with Sullivan. All these personal qualities of character she articulated in full measure through her various psychoanalytic interests: during her clinical psychoanalytic inquiries, in her teaching and writing, and as administrator of a psychoanalytic institute. Such qualities, among other things less personal, both fostered and fractured their relationship. Above all, I think, they made it possible for him to undergo with her the kind of psychoanalytic experience that the two were capable of having together, for as long as they could continue to work at it without locking horns—as they, of course, finally did over his resistance to psychoanalyzing his unconscious attitudes toward money.

Thompson was, generally speaking, disinclined to outline the archetectonics of large-scale theory and speculative metapsychology in the classical manner. Perhaps she was emotionally too shy, intellectually too modest, therapeutically too wise. But that general disinterest is practically self-evident in her published work, as well as in her seminar teaching. She could, nevertheless, do it when she had to. For she did, as is well-known, cut a clear and unswerving path through the thicket of psychoanalytic ideas that obstructed her personal vision of the psychology of sex and her approach to the problems of women arising from social and cultural pressures. Toward these ends, she pointed the workings of psychoanalytic inquiry for interpretive metaphor far more from the vantage of cultural anthropology than from that of any other human science, biological or social. But she did not pursue the development of large-scale systematic theory for a number of reasons. Some that immediately come to mind are indicated above: partly,

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a large personal swath of earthy temperament; partly, a limited educational background in the ordering and presentation of scientific ideas; but, in my opinion, mainly her strongly held convictions about the primacy of the therapeutic service of clinical inquiry in this field. She did, of course, make some very critical contributions in the middle range to clarifying certain empirical observations and definitions of the actual psychoanalytic process. I refer mainly to those of transference, character analysis, and . Her commitment to a philosophic psychology of common sense aside, however, she may have lacked the striving, the hubris, or even the pretense required to deal with questions of psychoanalytic theory, interpersonal or other, extending beyond her gift for theory-construction, her range of training and experience, and her cultivated ability to formulate and coordinate answers.

To appreciate the core of Thompson's major contribution, we must, instead, look elsewhere. That is, to the impact of her direct experience and clinical psychoanalytic inquiry with her colleagues and students. She fostered, among those who closely followed her, a strong sense of fidelity to the actual clinical data, especially, in her personal view, when taking the analysis of transference and to what she considered its unanalyzable limits of involvement, with an open mind, however, to any new formulation that would recast the overly generalized aspects of the established metapsychologies built for interpreting the data. Most of all, as already suggested, she was concerned about reconstructing from a fresh point of view the instinctual-libidinal perspective of the earlier id and the later id-ego metapsychologies with respect to the psychoanalysis of women. Essentially as a clinician and teacher, she made her influence most deeply felt in the life and work of many psychoanalysts at the Washington School of Psychiatry and at its New York Branch, including, the life and work of the subject of Perry's biographical study. When, finally, the New York Branch was incorporated as an independent entity in 1946—during, coincidentally, the last years of Sullivan's life—it became reorganized and renamed as the William Alanson White Institute of Psychiatry, Psychoanalysis, and Psychology, to conform with the laws of New York State and with the regulations of its Department of Education. And so, with her as its director, the White Institute would, as its new name indicated, openly encourage the broadest

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spectrum of individual approaches to clinical psychoanalytic inquiry in whatever perspectives it members could envision, but in a spirit of free inquiry rather novel then—as it still is, in some instances, even now—for the conduct of training and research at well-organized psychoanalytic institutes in America.



What also becomes clear from Perry's research into Sullivan's life is, however,

that he was a politically active and engaged person, agile, adroit, upwardly mobile—seldom publically forthright about strictly personal matters, always sharply on target about his professional ambition and psychoanalytic daimon. An American success story, he paid his psychic dues. He turned his life into a living envelope of interpersonal relations—which, in his final theory, was to become his operationist statement of theory of personality. Yet, without suggesting the path of psychogenetic analysis, Perry's work poses to us the important question for future research on his life and thought. How does this fact—namely, that Sullivan turned his life into a living envelope of interpersonal relations—pertain to the cumulative development of his operationist synthesis of principles and procedures for the study of interpersonal relations? Ultimately, given the limited primary sources now available, this question may prove unanswerable. But it, nonetheless, remains among the most interesting questions interwoven into the larger background of his life and work. This interpretive inquiry, of course, still remains to be done.

Nor does Perry herself raise this question for further inquiry in her text. The framework of her biography is, instead, so constructed as to point up how Sullivan's clinical conceptions arose from the uniquely individual history he lived through. Given the character of the American experience of his time, his was an immigrant society still on the move—holding strong beliefs in the frontier philosophy, pursuing the values of cultural pluralism, and cultivating the ideals of liberty and justice for all. Without, for example, such psychoanalytic therapists as Sullivan, Thompson, and others sensitive to the American experience—and, of course, to the varieties of psychic difficulty these beliefs, values, and ideals engender—psychoanalysis as a whole would have remained the precious possession of the very few Austrian and German psychoanalysts who immigrated to this country during the Nazi era. And

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therefore, only a very limited segment of the American patients who became interested in psychoanalysis, would have been able to use it as a therapeutic tool. But the American interpersonalists assimilated it, transformed it, naturalized it, and took the observations and definitions of psychoanalysis which derive from universal aspects of the human psyche and fashioned their clinical psychoanalytic inquiry, operationist and/or humanist, to the consensus of beliefs, values, and ideals of their American patients, as well as to their own as therapists.

But Perry roots her outlook on Sullivan in the larger American context of his development. How else to understand her choice of so grand and overreaching a title as "Psychiatrist of America," for a biographical effort that clearly and unambiguously demonstrates that Sullivan was not alone in American psychiatry. He was only one among the many Americans in the mental health and social sciences who, during the 1920s and 1930s, encountered this new field of dynamic psychoanalytic psychology and intensive psychotherapy, and who further

developed it from a variety of individual interpretive perspectives. In a certain sense Sullivan tilled a rather narrow furrow.

All this is becoming clearer in retrospect. In the "Conceptions," he acknowledges three major predecessors to his thinking—Freud, Meyer, and White. Yet, we search those lectures in vain for a detailed, interwoven working-out of his intellectual and scientific relations to these three acknowledged figures. Nor, of course, do we find him making extensive, critical references to the contributions of those working along parallel lines in other perspectives, including the interpersonal humanism of the person with whom he most intimately worked, Thompson. While, moreover, such others as Adler and Jung, Rank and Ferenczi, Reich, A. Freud, and Hartmann, Fromm, Horney, and Schachtel, were working in still other terminologies, with still other perspectival and professional commitments, they were, nonetheless, all seeking to realize a quite similar reconstructive vision of clinical psychoanalytic inquiry. That is, in essence, a new therapeutic respect for the patient's social and cultural environment outside the field of actual psychoanalytic experience. Especially curious are all these omissions, however, in view of the piecemeal and cumulative character of his conceptual synthesis overall—which Perry amply documents. It is, I am suggesting, only after reaching the center of his own private vision

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that he proceeds to flesh it out with whatever materials he could get hold of that fit. For he was, from start to finish, the clinical empiricist par excellence.

Finally, to be discussed, there is also Sullivan's passing reference to the analysis of transference. Although he was aligned with Freud as a major predecessor, influenced by Ferenczi, and underwent personal analysis with Thompson, he did not directly refer to transference as an integrated part of his modern conceptions. It is somewhat curious that he would discuss it only in passing. Curious, that is, because the study of what he referred to as "transference-distortion" derived indirectly from Breuer's case of Anna O. and directly from Freud's case of Dora, whose 1895 joint "Studies on Hysteria" Sullivan does cite; and because the study of "transference-distortion," most likely, also became personally available to him with Thompson. But he, of course, refrained from thinking and working out his "Conceptions" within the organizing framework of this established psychoanalytic terminology. We look in vain, also, for even some passing reference to the notion of resistance or to that of defense mechanism. Evidently he would have nothing to do with these latter terms. He did, however, study this same sector of personality under conditions of psychoanalytic inquiry similar to those under which other psychoanalysts studied it. Reich, refreshingly, called it the character armoring. A. Freud and Hartmann, traditionally, called it the ego's mechanism of defense, and he, in accord with his own time and place, called it the interpersonal self's security operation. He, obviously, differed from them.

Neither his relationship to Breuer and Freud, nor his perspective on interpretive metapsychology, nor his philosophy of scientific method, nor his clinical psychoanalytic paradigm of therapeutic inquiry, nor his choice of terminology, among other things, is the same as theirs. But this new sector of personality that they were all opening to therapeutic inquiry, as far as the clinical procedures of direct experience could take it, is. During the 1930s, psychoanalysts here and abroad were seriously putting it under concentrated psychoanalytic study for the first time.

This forward movement into the patient's environment is, by now, rather well-known. The sectarian adherents of the various schools of psychoanalytic thought often become most ardent about the special merit of their own perspectives. Committed interpersonalists are no exception. Yet all sectarians must acknowledge the

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commonality of the effort made by the previous generation of psychoanalysts to map out the analysis of resistance, to be carried out side by side with the analysis of transference. Their common effort takes on added historical dimensions by virtue of Perry's new biography—which now helps us, in addition, to locate Sullivan more clearly, firmly, and unequivocally in the mainstream of psychoanalysis, first by way of Freud, then, with revisions, through Ferenczi, then, with further revisions, through Thompson.

Psychoanalysis as a body of knowledge, from its earliest sources in Breuer's 1880–1882 theory of the hypnoid state, has remained consistent and coherent. The reason for that is clear enough. Its theory and practice have been evolving in close contact with one another. Sullivan, too, has worked toward the extension and enhancement of this body of knowledge, essentially by contributing to the cumulative development of its perspectives and to the detailed refinement of its procedures, so that larger and increasingly complex areas of its subject matter may be coordinated within its organized structure of inquiry. That is to say, (1) observed, (2) defined, (3) transformed, (4) explained, and (5) interpreted and speculated about in a more discriminative, more focused, more empirically striving therapeutic inquiry. In terms of these five orders of inquiry, his work is strongest at (1) and (2), and at (5), but weakest at (3) and (4). He is strongest, at putting his own stamp on the empirics of direct clinical inquiry as psychoanalytic psychology, and at making his own type of interpretive pragmatism stick as a general perspective of psychoanalytic metapsychology. He is weakest at the systematics of both the transformational postulates and the explanatory theory by which to bridge the operationist empirics of his clinical inquiry with the interpersonal relations of his interpretive perspective. But that weakness is not, I should add, unique to him. He suffers it in common with all other committed operationists who, while perfecting their methodologies, somehow fail to construct

enough systematic theory in the middle range.

Compared with Reich and A. Freud, or with Hartmann and M. Klein, Sullivan derives his point of departure from a different social and cultural context, from a different philosophy of science and procedure, even from a different population of patients. But when he moves deeply into the study of security operations, and the anxieties attendant to them, he paid very little direct therapeutic

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attention to the defined observation, even less to the actual experience, of "transference-distortion." He, instead, studied the security operations at great length under conditions of clinical psychoanalytic inquiry generally similar to those under which the character analysts, the ego psychologists, and the object relationists were also converging on the study of similar clinical issues.

It is, however, not difficult to see the reason for his comparative indifference to the psychoanalysis of transference, along, of course, with theirs. I shall indicate it briefly. To understand that indifference, we must first look more objectively at the presuppositions of these environmentalist approaches taken from various perspectives on clinical psychoanalytic inquiry during that extraordinary decade. From a psychological point of view, what, after all, is character armor, or defense mechanism, or security operation? These are all different names for the same thing: resistance. The point of constructing the character armor is, for example, to attack and defeat the enemy, or hold the enemy at bay; of elaborating a defense mechanism, to stave off the possible attacks of the hostile other; of maintaining a security operation, to ensure the continuity of stable conditions with the significant other. Reich, A. Freud, Hartmann, and M. Klein carried on the tradition that Freud, of course, found personally congenial; so they uncritically embraced the military metaphor which was, perhaps, most appropriate to the social and psychological climate of Viennese life at the turn of the century. Sullivan, on the other hand, drew his metaphor from the American experience, especially from the social and economic programs of the American response in the 1930s to the great depression, and from the innovative social support-systems of the first Roosevelt administration. But, whether the metaphor is military or social and economic, the focus of their psychological inquiry remains the same. The notions of character armor, defense mechanism, and security operation all point the focus of psychological inquiry outward to the environment of persons and events, so as to conduct a surveillance of the incoming signs of attack requiring further defense mechanisms, or the incoming signs of tension requiring further security operations.

In all these 1930s perspectives on metapsychology, the environment of significant others acquires the edge of symbolic power to define the psychological activities of the individual self. For example: If I become involved in defending or securing myself

against you, I must, inevitably, guide myself by the activities you undertake toward me. For you now have the power, which I, in response, have given to you, to set the conditions of my response. Now, what the environmentalist psychoanalysts emphasize, is that you have the power to determine my response; but what they forget, to the detriment of their perspectives, is that I have simply given it to you of my own choice so as to armor, defend, or secure myself. So, with the other's activities dominating the focus of one's attention quite completely, the psychoanalysis of resistance inevitably comes to dominate the focus of the therapeutic inquiry. Consider, here, the fate of transference. As the dynamic counterpoint of resistance, it tends, imperceptibly, to fade into oblivion as Sullivan treated it, or, when seriously noticed, is redefined in terms of defense mechanisms as A. Freud treated it, or in terms of character structure as Thompson treated it. Why, one may ask, were they unaware of this? For the same reason, I think, that fish are unaware of being in water until they leave it. Demarcate your field to study only ego-interpersonal relations, and that alone is what you can adequately study. They all—among them, Sullivan and Thompson—took part in tilting toward the self in resistance against the other, and toward the interpretive primacy of the environment.

But their similarities do not stop here. Sullivan's procedure of therapeutic inquiry is, after all, patterned on the psychoanalytic procedure of direct clinical interviewing, to which he added a number of modifications which are, more personal than systematic. That is to say he, unlike the classical and post-Freudian psychoanalysts, did not mind his patients looking at him session after session, week in and week out, as long as he himself could look at them as he chose to be seated, not face to face but at a 90-degree angle. Yet he, like them, also worked with his patients's experience in the round, including, of course, the study of unconscious psychic experience, which he reconceived and renamed dissociated interpersonal relations, so as to bring forward his primary concern with the social and cultural environment of significant others in the makeup of the self. His procedure was, however, generally rooted in the evolving psychoanalytic procedure, which, by the 1930s, had already undergone very radical changes from (1) the 1880s cluster of hypnotic psychotherapies, especially from the autohypnotic "talking cure" that Breuer worked out with Anna O.,

through (2) Freud's 1915–1917 id model of psychoanalytic therapy, to (3) the newly emerging inquiry into the character armour by Reich, or the defense mechanism by A. Freud, Hartmann and M. Klein—or, as reconceived and renamed by Sullivan, the security operation. These 1930s innovations in clinical psychoanalytic inquiry, pushed forward by these various workers in their various

metapsychologies, were nothing more nor less, than a new therapeutic regard for their patients' actual social and cultural and ego-interpersonal environment, as set outside the direct experience of psychoanalyst and patient in their therapeutic inquiry. That was, in fact, also the import of the experiments in milieu therapy which Sullivan, while at Sheppard Pratt in the late 1920s, carried out with remarkable success in the treatment of young schizophrenic men, and which Thompson, during this same period, was carrying out in individual psychoanalytic treatment with young schizoid women.

The interpersonal perspective was very much attuned to the environmentalist temper of the times. Consider, briefly, some similarities between the two perspectives of ego psychology and interpersonal relations, which were, of course, independently being developed during that same period at a great distance from one another. Distant, that is, in various senses: obviously, in actual mileage from Vienna to Washington-New York; also, in cultures holding quite different beliefs and values, if only, during actual clinical inquiry, about the relations of doctor and patient; especially, in philosophies of human nature and scientific method not easily translatable into one another. A number of constructional similarities is immediately apparent: they are both biological, whether in terms of the province of the id or in terms of the category of need; they are both sociological, emphasizing either the egoic mechanism of defense or the interpersonal operation for security as their main approach to the study of personality; both appeal to the environment for interpretive guidance, with the principle of adaptation or with the principle of consensual validation; both deal with the psyche distinct from the soma, through the autonomous functions of the ego underived from the id, or through the interpersonal self's processes and patterns of reflected appraisals underived from need; or, in therapeutic inquiry, the psychoanalyst as a participant interpreter of ego psychology or as a participant observer of interpersonal relations; the ego as passive

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to the id, the superego, and the external environment, or the interpersonal self as passive in relation to the reflected appraisals of significant others; the internalizations of the ego or the personifications of the interpersonal self; and, of course, the new 1930s analysis of resistance, whether through the defense mechanism or through the security operation. So much, for some illustrations of the parallel concerns being set forth by both perspectives in divergent terminologies. Their concerns run, generally speaking, along parallel lines which did not meet and intertwine during the 1930s, or 1940s, or 1950s—to, in my opinion, the detriment of both perspectives.

IV

But there is, in addition, one major difference about Sullivan's perspective of

interpersonal relations which kept it apart from Hartmann's perspective of ego psychology, finally and irrevocably. While that difference could not be bridged or covered up, it, none-the-less, augured well for the Americanization of psychoanalysis—which, as is well-known, fell short of Freud's primary interests. Sullivan's interpersonal-operationist formulation, a typically American intellectual enterprise, marked the beginning of pluralism in perspectives on psychoanalytic metapsychology, an approach unexplored in post-Freudian psychoanalysis. Pluralism arose de facto, of course, from Sullivan's willingness to follow the empirical lead of the clinical psychoanalytic data and, with that as his guide, to work at an approach to psychoanalysis without invoking the libido metaphor. Along with Thompson, among others in this country, he abandoned it. He did not, in fact, even take the trouble explicitly to reject it, and outline his reasons for so doing. Perhaps he did not find the effort necessary because that new opening to pluralism in perspectives on metapsychology during the 1930s, though distinctly of American origin, was not being made in a self-conscious and systematic way—not by him, nor by Thompson, nor by anyone else in that exciting decade. They, no doubt, had too much else to do. But unlike Thompson, who brought her criticisms of the libido metaphor into public discussion, he, instead, chose to remain silent about his. He did not comment on it in his "Conceptions"—as, in so many other instances, to reconceive and rename the libido metaphor as well. It is practically self-evident from his omission that he had no use for

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it. Yet some psychoanalysts, today, would have liked to know his reasons why, set forth in some detail in his own inimitable way; they most certainly must have been original and empirically convincing, even, we may say, uniquely individual. So we still wonder, also, about his reasons for not speaking out, the way, for example, Thompson did in her theory and practice of psychoanalytic inquiry.

That new opening to the pluralism of psychoanalytic metapsychologies is, in my view, the radical meaning of his notion of parataxic distortion. He was, in short, formulating a developmental psychology of transference—reconceived and renamed the parataxic distortion—in terms of linguistics and communication, and, of course, interpersonal relations, but without, however, appealing to the libido metaphor. And Thompson, as mentioned earlier, also did without it. Commitment to the libido was no longer a cardinal principle of the psychoanalytic faith; it became, instead, a matter of individual preference. The new clinical capability to psychoanalyze the distortions of transference without the libido metaphor marked the beginning of the American chapter of the history of psychoanalytic metapsychology. With respect to the post-Freudian perspective of ego psychology, moreover, Sullivan and Thompson were both ahead of their time. For while they had, by 1940, already shown how it is possible to develop a structure of psychoanalytic inquiry without relying on the libido metaphor, 20 years elapsed

before, for example, Rapaport, a leader of the id-ego wing of the sociological model of psychoanalysis, would indicate his willingness to surrender any future expectations about its conceptual or therapeutic utility. By 1960, even he, too, was anticipating the disappearance of the libido into psychoanalytic oblivion.

The critical examination of the libido metaphor by Sullivan and Thompson, among others during the 1930s, became the focal point of interest around which this new sociological, environmentalizing movement in American psychoanalysis revolved. But that examination was not, however, an isolated phenomenon; it was only being done more openly, and more widely spread, in this country. In Vienna, both A. Freud and Hartmann, for example, though they did not do it as cleanly as Sullivan, nor as outspokenly as Thompson, also broke with Freud on the universality of the id as the ground for both the ego and the superego. The fact that they were already doing this over there during the 1930s, however,

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has still not received the recognition it deserves, for they, too, obviously marked a critical turning in psychoanalysis away from acceptance of the instinctual libido metaphor in full, toward supplementing it with certain autonomous ego functions in the social, cultural, and egoic environment. When, for example, A. Freud made a fresh proposal in 1936 to distinguish for clinical psychoanalytic inquiry the transference of the ego defenses from the transference of the id derivatives, she was, I am suggesting, already working along lines parallel with those of the Americans, Sullivan and Thompson. Within the context of classical terminology, A. Freud offered a distinction between the two sorts of transference in ego psychology along the lines distinguishing the two categories of satisfaction and security in interpersonal relations. Or when Hartmann in 1938 set forth the principle of adaptation by which to interpret why autonomous functions may be ascribed to the psychoanalyzable ego, he, too, was already working along the same parallel lines with the interpersonalists. For, unlike Freud's, Hartmann's ego no longer derives from the id. More like Sullivan's interpersonal self, it is capable of autonomously adapting to the consensual environment with significant others; more like Thompson's psychology of women, it too, may constructively respond to the social and cultural pressures at that order of autonomous psychoanalytic inquiry, without, however, going immediately to another—presumably more real, actually more mythic—order of inquiry for its interpretive metaphor, such as the libido.

A curious dialectic may, in this light, be seen to hold between these two lines of development. While A. Freud and Hartmann would not exactly express their clear difference with Freud on the notion of the id, and while Sullivan and Thompson would not openly express their similarity with A. Freud and Hartmann on the psychoanalysis of resistance—called the interpersonal security operation, of course, instead of the egoic defense mechanism—they were, in both Vienna and

New York, all responding to the same new clinical requirements of empirical and systematic, psychoanalytic inquiry emerging at that time. The important point is, however, that the analysis of transference, resistance, and anxiety no longer remains embedded in the instinctual-libidinal perspective on metapsychology exclusively. It is possible to have either one without the other: analyze transference, resistance, or anxiety without believing the libido metaphor; or, of course, believe the

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libido metaphor without analyzing transference, resistance, or anxiety.

V

A word, finally, about the relation of the American break with the libido metaphor to the classically diagnosed, narcissistic neuroses. Both Sullivan and Thompson could do without it. He did his well-publicized, innovative research with young schizophrenic men, and she did her less well-publicized but no less innovative, clinical research with the development of awareness in deeply detached young women. They were not alone in doing this work, and the issue of priorities is, of course, beside the point. But their innovative therapeutic efforts greatly contributed to bringing the libido metaphor into serious question—not on the basis of some derivative suppositions about male or female sexuality (such as penis envy in women, or castration anxiety in men), though they certainly did question them too, but on the basis, rather, of actual psychoanalytic inquiry made possible by variations in the procedure first recommended by the classical psychoanalysts for the id model. And the question about the libido metaphor proved unanswerable. The classically diagnosed, narcissistic neurotics who, because they do not, according to the classical psychoanalytic metaphor, extend their libido outward, are incapable of making the transference of experience necessary for clinical psychoanalytic inquiry, and are, therefore, treated as being incapable of undergoing psychoanalysis. Accordingly, the classical narcissist could not do the transference of experience that the classical psychoanalyst required, so that this patient was not considered psychoanalyzable. However, the interpretive reach of the libido metaphor was already limited in advance by its empirical rooting in the psychology of hypnotic and hypnoid states, and the classical psychoanalyst never went beyond it.

Leaving behind the burden of metaphor, but following the lead of clinical inquiry instead, it turns out that the limitation was more true of the metaphor than of the so-called narcissist. Both Sullivan and Thompson were, in the 1930s, already demonstrating how to treat this patient from the perspective of interpersonal relations, operationist and humanist, without the libido metaphor. That such is, of course, the empirical case a number of post-ego psychological psychoanalysts, among them Kohut and Kernberg, later discovered,

and they were, by the 1970s, also bringing the perspective of ego psychology to a standpoint large enough to include the psychoanalytic study of the narcissistic neuroses, one that Sullivan and Thompson had already achieved some 40 years earlier. The interpersonal psychoanalysts could do that so much earlier, I think, because they went directly to the clinical materials, and, unlike their 1930s counterparts in ego psychology, did that without the encumbrances of a conceptual scheme and interpretive metaphor that skew their inquiries away from the direct observation of those materials.

What Sullivan and Thompson discovered in the 1930s, however, cannot be studied in isolation from id-ego psychology, and still be understood. Their contributions are, I am suggesting, part of the cumulative development of the structure of psychoanalytic inquiry overall. Today, no more than did Reich and A Freud, nor than Hartmann and M. Klein, nor, of course, than Sullivan and Thompson, do contemporary psychoanalysts attempt to create the structure of psychoanalytic inquiry whole from scratch-as though, indeed, because of a totally unconditioned shift in paradigm; for there is no creatio ex nihilo in this or any other science. As in all other disciplines of organized inquiry, the development of theory and practice in psychoanalysis has a continuous, cumulative and self-correcting history. So psychoanalysts, at present, continue to build on Breuer's work with Anna O., on Freud's, with Dora, and on Sullivan's with young schizophrenic men and Thompson's with young detached women, and so on. And since, coincidentally, the current psychoanalytic theory of unconscious psychic experience derives directly from Breuer's theory of the hypnoid state, it is, in 1983, safe to say that the structure of psychoanalytic inquiry is now more than 100 years old.

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