*CHAPTER EIGHT*

# THE SEXUAL BODY, PSYCHOANALYSIS AND SCIENCE: BOWLBY, PETERFREUND, AND KOHUT

The last two chapters have shown that the sexual body is a perspective demanding a complexity of critical understanding. The complications probably exceed whatever concepts of sexuality existed at the time of Freud's classical period. The perspective demands consideration of research on sexuality in a way that never loses contact with the problematical flesh and blood realities of the body, yet it does not encourage the temptation to think that we can some day uncover the preexisting "reality" or "essence" of sexuality that we have just not happened to find previously. As Dewey would have warned, there is no certainty to be sought for in the perspective of the sexual body, although there is every reason to attempt to increase human security by taking hold of the research results we do have and using them intelligently, as Dewey also held (Dewey, 1929b). Psychoanalysis as the key discipline for this perspective has not absorbed or integrated the material presented in the last two chapters, but it remains the only discipline which is ultimately committed to do so. Although the theories of Melanie Klein, D.W. Winnicott, Anna Freud, Margaret Mahler, Erik Erikson, George S. Klein, and others in the psychoanalytic tradition have been shown to be seriously deficient in their understanding of the sexual body, there is also a set of recent theorists who provide genuine revision of certain key aspects of psychoanalytic thought. In these newer theories, the sexual body is not pushed out of sight, or at least the denials are of a different and probably less severe character. In fact, well before the recent simultaneous emergence of a series of critical issues for psychoana-

lytic theory, that is, before the infant research explosion, before the "trouble" in the Freud archives over Freud's virtual giving up of the "seduction" theory, and before the renewed interest in Freud as a "biologist of the mind" and not a thinker who could get along without the body, there have been highly challenging reconstructive projects under way in psychoanalytic theory. What seems to be different about the work of John Bowlby, Emanuel Peterfreund, and Heinz Kohut, in contrast to many other reformist efforts such as those of Schafer (1976, 1980), is a possibility for accommodation with the sexual body rather than an effort to dispense with it. Two of these theorists, Peterfreund and Kohut, avoid basing their work on the model of the infant sexual body; they have a real sense of adult sexual life which appears frequently in their writings, even though its position within their theoretical structures is ambiguous or even dubious. Bowlby has continued to develop theory on the basis of infant and early childhood considerations, but he has moved a long way from the object-relations school of psychoanalysis, in which he originally began developing his theory (Bowlby, 1984, p. 37). Although Bowlby and Peterfreund developed their theories without knowledge of each other's activity, they have each come to recognize an affinity between their two approaches (Bowlby, 1981; Peterfreund, 1980).

All three of these theorists have been concerned with the scientific adequacy of psychoanalysis, not in the sense of its empirical confirmation reviewed by Kline (1981), but in the sense of the validity of constructs which psychoanalysis uses. Bowlby has moved away from the highly speculative object-relations constructs and developed a theory of psychological "attachment," which he reports to be "widely regarded as probably the best supported theory of socioemotional development yet available" (1984, p. 35). It is grounded in the discipline of ethology. He accepts that psychoanalysis is both an art and a science, and believes that its scientific validity should be improved to the extent that it may be possible to do so, without denying the art of the therapist (Bowlby, 1979). Peterfreund has given psychoanalysis a reformulation in information processing terms and thus has removed it, he believes, from its reliance on scientifically worthless energy concepts such as that of the psychic libido. The late Heinz Kohut took a divergent pathway toward underscoring the scientific validity of psychoanalysis: he privileged the analytic situation itself as a form of scientific knowledge, arguing that Freud is a thinker of the caliber of Hegel, Rousseau, or Marx. Freud's psychoanalytic revolution applies to the shaping of our concepts of knowledge itself and should not simply be brought into conformity with previous notions of scientific objectivity (Kohut, 1984, pp. 39-40). Kohut still believed there is a role in psychoanalytic theory for "the experimental method and proof via statistical evidence" (1984, pp. 224-225), but these considerations cannot be allowed the primacy they once were accorded in scientific theory. All three of these theorists seem to be free of that disturbing hatred of the

sexual body which I have pointed out in the earlier work by Melanie Klein, Anna Freud, and D.W. Winnicott. Yet the sexual body does not receive adequate theoretical recognition in their work. What accommodation they make for the sexual body is largely at the practical, clinical level rather than in their theories as such. A problem for examination, therefore, is whether these revisionist theories could be further revised to take full account of the sexual body, or if the sexual body's exclusion is a function of the theories themselves, despite the personal sensitivities of the theorists to matters of sexuality.

### Bowlby's Defense: Ethology Overcomes Sexuality

The work of John Bowlby is probably the finest and most complete endeavor ever made to extend and revise psychoanalytic object-relations theory into a scientifically respectable discipline. Bowlby's 3-volume *Attachment and Loss*, finally completed in 1980, is the creative work of a lifetime (Bowlby, 1980a, 1980b, 1980c). The problems it deals with are much influenced by Bowlby's work for the World Health Organization on the mental health of homeless children, commissioned first in 1950 (Bowlby, 1951). His work also has the feeling of a man who loves rather than hates life. Far from endorsing the Winnicottian idea that infants must be afforded an optimal and necessarily painful experience of separation from their early maternal attachment, Bowlby has found that the "anxious over-dependency" of "spoiling" is largely an artifact: ". . . all the evidence points the other way" (Bowlby, 1980b, p. 239). There is little to be feared from an alleged "excess of parental affection" (1980b, p. 244). If we are looking for reasons why so many children are disturbed, we might look, Bowlby argues, not at purely endopsychic factors, in which he places little credence, but in such actual factors as the surprisingly high percentage of parents who die of suicide; it may be that "one father in fifteen and one mother in seventeen" dies in this way, in the U.K. (1980c, p. 381). The neglect of environmental (familial) causes for children's disturbances has "left the field clear for such traditional hypotheses as phase of development or autonomous phantasy" (1980c, p. 380), but once this neglect is overcome, as Bowlby himself has overcome it, such theories can be put aside.

> With our present knowledge . . . I believe the only safe assumption for a clinician to make is that in every case, behind the smoke of a child's anxiety, self-blame or other symptom or problem, there burns a fire lit by some frightening or guilt-inducing experience of real life. (Bowlby, 1980c, p. 380)

This bold statement forms a contrast with the careful stipulations of Winnicott (1965) that the "facilitating environment" is important.

Bowlby's major innovation has been the alignment of psychoanalytic theory of the child with evolutionary theory and especially with ethology. The

human species cannot be regarded as different in kind from all other species, if we are going to speak scientifically. Bowlby's realization of this principle has influenced his rejection of widely held psychoanalytic interpretations of the nature of infancy, such as those concerning fear of strangers and the relative state of development of the human brain at birth.

Psychoanalysts had made much of the oft-observed advent of a fear of strangers in infants at about the age of eight months and had eagerly built this into their theories. This fear seemed to show how an infant, just emerging from an alleged symbiotic union with its mother, and at last gaining the capacity to discriminate one person from another, is afflicted with the realization that it is not living in a world of fantasy in which it is omnipotent master, but in a world of people where threats may destroy and needs may not be met. But Bowlby has seen that this line of reasoning would make human fear a totally inexplicable event among the equipment for survival that humans, like other species, possess. Other species in fact show analogous fear of strangers at various well-marked points in their development as infants. The most sensible construction of this common occurrence is that the awareness of fear develops sometime later than birth (Bowlby, 1980b, pp. 77-86). To quote the authors of *Emotional Expression in Infancy*:

> Most animals do not show fear at birth, yet at some later point in their development they evidence avoidance or "flight" behavior in response to certain stimuli. For example: birds show a fear and flight response at approximately 24 hours . . . , cats show fear of strangers in novel situations at five weeks . . . , dogs show a fear of novel situations and human caretakers beginning around five to seven weeks . . . ; monkeys manifest fear in response to novel stimuli at two to five months. (Emde, Gaensbauer and Harmon, 1976, p. 126)

Empirical evidence is also accumulating which shows that the infant fear of strangers, although it is a common phenomenon reported at about eight months of age, is not the sudden event that psychoanalytic theorists had supposed. They had proposed a sudden realization by an infant at that age, when the child is allegedly just starting to develop an ego powerful enough to distinguish strange adults from its close caretaker, that the infant's previous delusion of being able to exert omnipotent control over its environment had been shaken, thus producing terror and hatred for self and other. It now appears that infants go through a process of careful comparison of faces: they can see faces for some months before their fear of strangers comes into play. The fear does not seem closely related to the development of "object constancy" in their perception, contrary to much of current psychoanalytic belief (Emde, Gaensbauer, and Harmon, 1976, p. 196).

Nor is it true as many have supposed that the human infant is born in a condition of drastic biological unpreparedness, a virtual fetus forced to live outside of its womb. Physiologically-based claims which estimated the abilities of the infant's brain as inherently slight because of the lack of myelination

at birth are misleading. The process of myelination, "the acquisition of lipoprotein sheath by nerve fibres during development," is credited with enabling the transmission of impulses much more quickly, regularly and accurately than would be the case in non-myelinated fibres (Gibson, 1981, p. 53). As the anatomist Gibson explains,

> Myelination at birth [in humans] is less advanced than in the monkeys, but much more so than in . . . cats, dogs, or rats. (Gibson, 1981, p. 55)

Neonatal brain weight is also comparatively great; when considered in relation to other physiological maturation factors such as onset of EEG (before birth), it could only mean that "the human infant should possess behaviours of considerable complexity" (Gibson, 1981, p. 55). Moreover, many species are at least as helpless as the human infant in the days and weeks after birth. The cubs of the black bear, for example, are almost too weak to be able to move for the first three months. The cottontail rabbit is "born blind, hairless and helpless," and has a far less than even chance of making it through infancy and into maturity (Wolkomir, 1983). An ethological approach stresses a benign explanation of all such facts: "helplessness" is only relative, and the need for parental affection and for the parents to give the infant food and affection can be seen not as dire threats to the animal or to the human psyche, but as exactly the process by which the relative self-reliance of the organism comes into being. By holding to this theoretical stance, Bowlby thus reverses the implications of many of Margaret Mahler's findings while accepting them in principle (Bowlby, 1980b, pp. 322-362). "Separation anxiety," which she and others had made so much of as a specifically human experience, is common to many species (1980b, p. 74).

The changes suggested by Bowlby—although they do take into account evidence on myelination, the common helplessness among newborn of several species, and the new data on stranger fear—do not seem to enrich the perspective of the sexual body. To a great extent, the very aim of Bowlby's theory was to escape from the old Freudian concept of instincts, whether these be sexual or aggressive, and from the instinctual "drives." Instincts so conceived, Freud had acknowledged, "are our mythology. Instincts are mythical entities, magnificent in their indefiniteness" (Freud, 1933, p. 93). Ethology, in its study of survival mechanisms, offered Bowlby a surer sense of instinct.

Processes of survival, as Bowlby showed, underlie the entire development in early childhood of the relations of "attachment" and also of "loss." Survival is not simply a matter of genetic machinery, devoid of feeling; in other words, to argue from ethology is not to reduce the human mind to a biological substrate (Bowlby, 1980a, p. 377). Yet there is something missing in this new instinctual argument, however qualitative it may be, namely the

sexual. One would think that inclusion of sexuality would be guaranteed within any theory of survival, but it is of little importance in Bowlby's portrait of the human condition. Perhaps by being so very clear about what he was doing, Bowlby lost some of the valuable confusion of the early psychoanalytic theory of sexuality. In his work, says Bowlby, "I give to the concept of attachment behavior" a central place, a place "distinct from feeding behavior and sexual behavior, and of at least an equal importance" (Bowlby, 1980c, p. 2). But is the sexual actually "distinct" from attachment, or for that matter from feeding behavior? The tradition of psychoanalytic thought, with its commitment to the perspective of the sexual body, would suggest that such distinctions must prove illusory.

One of Bowlby's major interests is the theory of childhood mourning: he studies the psychological behavior patterns of mourning in adult behavior and discovers striking similarities to childhood experiences of loss. The connections between child and adult mourning are buttressed with cross-cultural supporting evidence (Bowlby, 1980c, pp. 126-136). The theory of mourning, however, did not seem applicable to neonates at all; moreover, because of problems in the sheer scope of his research, Bowlby had to limit his observations of mourning so as to largely omit "children younger than about sixteen months" (1980c, p. 412). Unfortunately, this decision limits the integration of considerations on infantile sexuality into a theory of mourning, just as the decision to take up attachment as a distinct phenomenon apart from sexuality prevents its being related to sexuality at all.

Four particular results of Bowlby's theory which lose contact with sexuality are subject to serious criticism. These are its implications for adult sexuality, its attitude toward the sexual body, its defensive constriction within certain theories of Freud, and its largely dysfunctional capacity for social criticism.

Adult sexuality, not dealt with explicitly as such, tends to be overlooked in Bowlby's major formulations about the human life cycle. If we accept that "Not only during childhood but throughout the whole span of life" human beings tend "to react with fear" to the "presence of strangers" and to "darkness" (1980b, p. 86; cf. p. 166), it would seem we prevent ourselves from understanding the exogamous features of falling in love, and of the feelings of the "unknown" (as D.H. Lawrence called it), which at times draw responses other than fear (Alberoni, 1983). As for the fear of darkness, is it really so clear that "Every study" shows it to be "as common at every age as fear of animals . . ." (Bowlby, 1980b, p. 164)? The two fears in any case are of different orders, and among adults, fear of animals depends on which adult you are talking about. But can darkness, the setting for much behavior in adult sex, be associated so closely with fear? Even in the neonate, there is now some startling experimental evidence to show that there is no such fear: Indeed a great deal of very early visual development takes place in darkness and not in the light (Haith, 1980). D.H. Lawrence, who may have had eidetic recall of

such darkness, intermixed the imagery of darkness with his imagery of love (Lawrence, 1981). Modern social contexts of sexual involvement do not seem in accord with Bowlby's extrapolation of the early child's experience of trust. The child who grows up "in an ordinary good home with ordinarily affectionate parents" will go through life, we are told, with a deep assurance that "there are always trustworthy figures who will come to his aid" (1980b, p. 208). A great deal of experience tells against this; notably, many sexual love situations take people beyond anything they can rely on in previous experience, and no one outside of the situation can really come to their aid, not even an internalized image of the trusting parent. Surely there are genuinely perplexing experiences of modern consciousness where such assurance is unavailable.

Bowlby does know that the body is important. He argues, in fact, that what is important in the child's learning to be separated from its mother in normal development is not so much its ability to internalize a representation of its mother which it can hold on to while the mother is gone (an idea he suggests may actually contribute to neglect of the child), but the infant's experience of adequate presence of the mother when she is there, with affectionate contact. That is what makes "letting go" possible (1980c, pp. 431-433; see also Emde, Gaensbauer, and Harmon, 1976, p. 196). In other words, bodily presence for inter-action is the infant's real need; this fits well with recent research suggesting there is no obvious connection between the ability to represent an object and the ability to undergo separation (Emde, Gaensbauer, and Harmon, 1976). Representation is less a problem than presence. But the sense of contact, the physical affection stressed by Prescott (1979), is seldom indicated in Bowlby's formulations. In another section, he reveals a surprisingly shallow interest in the body. A five-year-old girl was brought to a psychiatrist because of several related behavioral problems, one of which was "a rigidly stiff neck for which no organic cause was found" (1980c, p. 359). Bowlby's discussion omits anything about the girl's neck; he concludes with a promise to take that up in "the section dealing with somatic symptoms" (p. 361). But there is no such section; the rigid neck of this girl is only brought back for a brief, cursory paragraph in a section on "Identificatory Symptoms: Accidents" (p. 376). That section does not contain any theory of the body, much less the sexual body, nor is there anything in the indexes of this psychoanalytic study of over 1,300 pages about "body" or the somatic. Once the body is left out of a theory, the omission of the sexual body necessarily follows. Bowlby exhibits an incredible amount of disinterest in the somatic, particularly for a work that is so humane and in many ways sane. Ethological considerations, even if they are bodily in their focus, are hardly a reason for avoiding thought about the human, sexual body. On the contrary, ethology unavoidably involves the somatic interaction of live creatures.

*Bowlby and the Traditions of the Body in Psychoanalytic Thought*

Bowlby's psychoanalytic orientation derives from the British school of object-relations; he notes that one of his supervisors was Melanie Klein, in fact (1980a, p. xvii). He recognizes that his own views diverge from the mainstream, and somewhat defensively declares that many of his innovations are supported in Freud's text (Bowlby, 1980a, pp. xv-xvi). He faults such co-theorists as Winnicott (Bowlby, 1980a, p. 312; 1980c, pp. 321-326), showing that he has no use for the latter's theory of the transitional object. He clearly disagrees with Spitz and Mahler, who make claims that the infant learns to have "object constancy"—only long after other researchers have shown that perceptual capacity on the part of the infant has been well in place (1980c, pp. 372-375). One of Bowlby's disagreements with Spitz in fact gives evidence of Bowlby's unspoken sense of the sexual body: Spitz, despite his own findings to the contrary, emphasized the infant's psychological need for a reliable food supply rather than for warm skin contact with the caretaker (Bowlby, 1980a, p. 375).

There is some confusion in Bowlby's departure from Freud, however, and it may partially defeat his purpose. The book in which Freud most clearly set out, as theory, the view that the infant experiences anxiety through endopsychic processes is *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety* (1926a). In that difficult and influential text, Freud is explicit that anxiety occurs irrespective of environmental conditions, and strongly implies that the psychoanalytic thinker or therapist may as well ignore the "real" source of anxiety; ultimately only the endopsychic sources are real. Bowlby reviews Freud's book at some length as part of his general review of the literature on separation anxiety, but gives almost no hint of the crucial issue, which is precisely that Freud's heavily endopsychic emphasis now leaves no room for the very kind of environmental influence which Bowlby wishes to highlight in his study of infantile life. Instead of raising this issue, Bowlby contents himself with offering one more rehash of Freud's erroneous energy concepts, which presumed that what the infant is seeking is freedom from stimulation (Bowlby, 1980b, pp. 381-382). To further the confusion, Bowlby takes it that Freud thereby meant to limit understanding of the infant's primary needs to "those of the body" (Bowlby, 1980b, p. 381), a term by which Bowlby intends to indicate a reductive sense of the body as merely requiring food. Not that Bowlby is mistaken in claiming that his own work is also a development of Freud's revisions of 1926. Freud did give separation anxiety a special place in the human psyche, in this revision of his theory; Bowlby can lay claim to having given that emphasis a scientific connection through ethology. Yet in the process of achieving this feat, Bowlby has lost touch with the reality of the sexual body. We find Bowlby writing a book in which social interactions in the experience of the child and infant are emphasized, and where the avoidable traumas of life are looked to for the

origins of illness. Yet Bowlby places that book within a world hypothesis that regards the infant's psyche as a source of innate aggression and fantasies of omnipotence. Bowlby was thus able to bond his theory to the world hypothesis of psychoanalytic thought—at least as that hypothesis has developed since 1926. But in trying also to change that hypothesis, he may have obscured matters further. By having it both ways, in other words, Bowlby may have neither. He is perceived as having made a break with mainstream psychoanalysis, which in crucial respects he has in fact done; but the great work of *Attachment and Loss* nowhere clarifies that break, because it does not recognize its presence.

*Social Implications of Bowlby's Revised Psychoanalytic Theory*

An issue of greater importance than the correspondence between Bowlby's theory of attachment and the theories of anxiety of the later Freud, is the social implication of *Attachment and Loss*. As I have suggested at the outset of the present study, in matters of the sexual body, the works of psychologists as well as of other scientists do have social implications, whether intended or not, and they also have social consequences. Merely having impact on the direction of research in the future is one social effect. Giving support for emotionally adequate mothering through one's research, as Bowlby has done, has a potentially huge social effect. In itself, no objections to it need be made. As the Bioenergetic therapist and theorist Liss has shown, much of Bowlby's case concerning the needs of infants can be incorporated into a therapeutic project which values the human, sexual body (Liss, 1976). However, if it is true that there is a massive social disturbance in the area of childrearing, one that did not exist until "civilized" times, as I think there is good reason to suppose (Rossi, 1977), then we must recognize that the disturbance has been both cause and effect of further disturbances all through the spectrum of human relationships. From the perspective of the sexual body, such disturbances must be assumed to be sexual in a non-trivial but as yet unspecifiable way. Even without appealing to that perspective, it is evident that in the past few decades, the human race has become a species which threatens its own survival. Nuclear proliferation, toxification of the environment, and the spread of systematic "administrative torture" to some 60 countries around the globe (Chomsky and Herman, 1979) are historically new developments which tell us all too eloquently that something is radically out of control in human existence. To suggest that repairs be made at the level of the mother-infant dyad, without considering the necessary changes that would also have to be made in the self-regulation of adults, both within the family and in other social and institutional relationships, is to point psychoanalysis toward a narrowly familial, ostensibly non-political area of social change. Although Bowlby cannot have been expected to argue a more comprehensive social

theory in his warranted special inquiry, his central focus on the mother-infant dyad and the processes of separation is immeasurably more narrow than the radical social changes implied by Prescott or Reich, or for that matter by Freud in his classic period.

Because Bowlby's vast study is done with thoughtful and loving attention to the subject at hand, and with plentiful concern for objections that might be offered against his theory, it must stand as one of the great works in the field of early childhood study. True, Bowlby has finally evaded the sexual body, but if his work is taken in a scientific spirit, the sexuality that is missing from *Attachment and Loss* will be reintroduced by later investigators. In principle there is no reason why an ethological approach must evade the sexual body. Bowlby himself believes that there is only scientific gain rather than loss in his adoption of "concepts such as control system (instead of psychic energy) and developmental pathway (instead of libidinal phase)"; such concepts are "now firmly established as key concepts in all the biological sciences . . ." (Bowlby, 1984, p. 34). The concept of the "developmental pathway" comes from the work of the biologist Waddington (Waddington, 1957); it postulates a strong "self-regulative" component in the biological organism (Bowlby, 1980b, pp. 366-369). In these terminological decisions, Bowlby touches upon the sexual energy issues which Peterfreund's information processing model of psychoanalysis brings up even more sharply. But it could be observed here that a "control system" may still be significantly sexual, essentially a function of the sexual body, or seriously disrupted in that very function as Reich supposed it to be in modern life. Moreover, a "developmental pathway" is not necessarily any the less libidinous for all its being a pathway. The term seems to suggest a desexualized process, but future users of Bowlby's theory need not accept that suggestion.

My strictures should not be taken to mean that it is useless, from the point of view of social criticism, to focus on the maternal-infant relation, or rather on the infant relation to the mother (or "caregiver") in its early, post-neonatal life. There are severe limitations in doing no more than that, but there is also the assumption that at least something significant can be done to change the quality of social life through the actions of individuals, providing such actions attain critical mass, sufficient to change, eventually, the most deeply held root metaphors of the society as a whole. In other words, changes that are not total changes nor recognizably political changes do count in the quality of life. To this extent, I cannot agree with the arguments of Joel Kovel, a radical psychoanalyst. Kovel effectively exposes the bourgeois, business mentality of the psychoanalytic profession, but he is not convincing in his insistence that his clients are really suffering, at base, from capitalism, rather than from illnesses that can be alleviated in psychoanalytic therapy (Kovel, 1981). What Kovel proves is that he believes capitalism is the real problem, but not that worthwhile change is impossible through therapy and the numerous other routes

that bring change. Kovel has strongly defended the theory of infantile sexuality, but his Marxist commitments lead him to postpone consideration of the sexual body until such time as Marxist theory revises its own outmoded notion of the human body (Kovel, 1978). The net result of Kovel's revision is a therapeutic project practiced in bad faith: trying to help people within a system that will not allow their improvement. The Reichian priority of improvements in the social areas of childbirth, child-rearing, adult sexuality, creative work and science, with only very selective participation in formal political action of the "party" type, makes better sense as a recommendation for intelligent social participation in a world still undergoing the sexual revolution than does Kovel's revolutionary waiting. And although Bowlby's beautifully articulated contribution toward social change is not an adequate response to the challenges posed by the continuing revision of the sexual body in social life and in specialized research, it is at least a strongly compatible ally of such change.

## Information Processing and the Sexual Body

Emanuel Peterfreund's recasting of psychoanalytic theory in the terms of information processing (Peterfreund, 1971) may be one of the most serious pieces of thinking ever done in the tradition of Freud. It is important in the present study because it combines the key elements of (a) a very thorough attempt to remove psychoanalytic thought from its base in sexual "drive" theory and from its dependence on a theory of sexual energy, the libido; (b) a matrix of information processing sufficiently elaborate for the necessary assumptions of psychoanalytic therapy and theory; (c) a commitment to keep within the bounds of scientific theories which are generally accepted by modern biology; (d) a commitment to theoretical inseparability of mind and body; (e) a detailed awareness of sexuality (especially in the adult lives of analysands) in all its complexity, including, (f) the recognition that sexual orgasm is an important, complicated experience. The last two items, (e) and (f) are not made into explicit topical or theoretical headings by Peterfreund, an omission which distorts the emphasis of his argument. Nonetheless, in a theory of the dimensions just outlined, we may expect that the sexual body is not a lost cause. The topic of the sexual body becomes in this theory part of a theory of a mind-body unity marked by conceptual complexity and involving unanswered questions of empirical fact. One problem, however, is the appropriateness of such a unity. Despite a great deal of philosophical effort to resolve the mind-body problem, it still can hardly be considered to be "solved," nor is it easy to dismiss as a pseudo-problem (Efron, 1980; Feigl, 1961). Peterfreund's information processing approach, however, leads to revealing difficulties in relating mind and body; these problems once more

show how the challenge posed by psychoanalysis to the human awareness of sexuality is still difficult to accommodate in an overall psychological theory.

Problems arise with the first of the elements listed above—the firm denial that there is any such thing in modern biological knowledge as "sexual psychic energy" (Peterfreund, 1971, p. 55). What psychoanalytic theory had to offer on the basis of its own tradition was a kind of "hydraulic" model for drive-discharge of energy, and a speculative assumption of "fluid" energy mobility within the organism. These, Peterfreund, finds,

> are completely inadequate. The highly specific nature of drives, motility, development, and differentiation are now being dealt with in modern biology with control systems concepts, theories concerning the genetic code, information, information processing, feedback, and so on. (1971, p. 80)

Peterfreund's book demonstrates how the new concepts incorporate and make better sense of the traditional theories. A vigorous criticism is mounted against such older theorists as Phyllis Greenacre (1960), who argued within the assumptions of a generalized psychic energy which could be hypothetically coordinated with developmental processes in the infant (Peterfreund, 1971, pp. 78-81). An even sharper polemic is raised against Edith Jacobson (1964), whose concept of "psychophysiological energy" is derided as having about as much value as a "primitive" and "composite" image, such as would be normal in a dream (Peterfreund, 1971, p. 261). In each of these arguments, however, Peterfreund overlooks rather than confronts some of the real difficulties. Though it is true that "modern biology" is deeply involved with information processing theory, especially since the discovery in 1953 of the DNA processes, that is not the *only* "modern biology" available. The "bio-energetics" of Albert Szent-Györgi (1957) is not mentioned in Peterfreund's extensive bibliography, on energy theories (p. 103). Greenacre's discussion of a labile developmental energy process is part of her discussion of the key topic in psychoanalytic theory, of innate destructive aggression; Peterfreund discards her terminology but also fails to take up the theory of aggression at all, despite his commitment to restate the psychoanalytic findings in information processing terms. Modern biological theory, at least as Peterfreund expounded it in 1971, regarded energy as a value-neutral and purely *quantitative* concept, a point of view that makes most ascriptions of *quality* to energy seem grossly anthropomorhic. But later on in his book, Peterfreund himself is obliged to inject a significant qualitative dimension into his own theory, when he credits (quite properly) the core quality of "empathy" within the psychoanalytic session itself (p. 331).

His own explanations of empathy, as well as his explanation of what Jacobson must really have meant by "psychophysiological energy," are given within the framework of information theory. This kind of explanation often leads him to say that certain information "programs" are able to "activate" feelings.

Yet feelings, if genuinely active—as they must be under a theory of mind-body unity as distinct from a theory of mind control over body—are not simply turned on like so many mechanisms. That would render them one-way recipients of messages which they must obey, despite the terminology of activations and feedback loops. A feeling (as James and Dewey would have argued) not only occurs; it is in turn felt and responded to by the human organism.

We may refer briefly at this point to Sylvan Tomkins' theory of "affect as amplification." After decades of experimentation and theoretical refinement of this theory, Tomkins has now concluded that there is a "powerful connection between stimulus, affect, and response" (Tomkins, 1980, p. 153). As Tomkins goes on to say, this indicates a deep rift between the Kantian notion of the human mind, essentially cognitive, and the mind considered in relation to the "innate affects" which color every experience (pp. 153-154). Information systems language seems unable to credit such a rift; instead it attempts to translate affect into program. Peterfreund shows how well this can be done, but there remains a gap between his enlarged sense of "information" to include affect, and the root metaphor of information as a purely cognitive, affectless signal system.

*Is Information Processing an Adequate Root Metaphor for Sexuality?*

Beyond the terminological problems are the substantive issues that give rise to the difficulties. These issues have to do with information processing theory itself. I suggest that these issues became unmanageable once information processing theory disposed of the energy concepts such as libido that were scientifically embarrassing to psychoanalysis, according to Peterfreund and many others. But the energy concepts point to a broader problem in psychology and, inevitably, in thinking about human biology. Lewis Wolpert perhaps reveals the general problem in this statement:

> It is not easy now to realize that as late as 1947, the great geneticist Muller thought that the chemical role of DNA was to channel energy changes in the cell. Only when the genes and DNA were thought of in terms of information transfer did the revolution in molecular biology begin. (Wolpert, 1983, p. 216)

The great shift in biological paradigm, unless further elucidated, leaves out the question of *how* information is transferred. What makes it move? What energizes a "process"? Our studies of brain physiology, replete with references to "neural firing," hardly suggest that there is anything that goes on without energy. A fire may give us information, but it still has to burn.

Such terminology is admittedly metaphorical, but it is at the root metaphor level that the issues finally reveal the differences at stake between a theory informed by the perspective of the sexual body and one that attempts to stay

clear of that perspective. It is interesting that Peterfreund is aware how loaded with metaphorical language information processing theory is (Peterfreund, 1971, p. 73). However, he maintains that there is no problem because these "anthropomorphizations" in theory are sufficiently redeemed by a high level of explanatory power, which the metaphors of energy lack. A fundamental feature of theory itself, however, is the manner in which explanatory power is always given in terms of one or another root metaphor, according to Pepper. As Hoffman and Nead (1983, p. 517) have shown, information processing theory is replete with *unrecognized* metaphorical terminology, grounded in an eclectic combination of Pepper's Mechanist and Formist world hypotheses. Because of the deep involvement that information processing theorists have with a root metaphor for the mind, the mere fact that Peterfreund probably was not thinking of DNA when he wrote his theory is no objection to the present discussion.

By now, the deep hold on the scientific imagination that information processing has as a root metaphor for life processes has undoubtedly been affected by the profound impact in the sciences of DNA and RNA coding discoveries. In fact the psychoanalyst Stanley Palombo, who followed in Peterfreund's footsteps, ended a book which displayed an information-processing model for the understanding of dreaming and memory, with a kind of salute to the DNA: "For everything of value in life begins with the binding of what is new to the accumulated knowledge of the past, from the DNA molecule to human love" (Palombo, 1978, p. 222). Moreover, in Peterfreund's own model, "information" is a term stretched well beyond its usual meanings, to metaphorically cover all psychological processes, including those requiring the activation of body processes. The problem of energy is still present in his use of "information processing."

There is a comparable difficulty in the earlier suggestion by Robert R. Holt, a prominent psychoanalytic theorist, that energy is not *transmitted* neurally; the nervous impulse could be compared to "the traveling flame of an ignited train of gunpowder" (Holt, 1965, p. 109). What "ignites" this "flame"? Recent exposition of how DNA is "transcribed" into RNA is also thoroughly infused with energy language, but contains no recognition of the fact. Thus Darnell (1983) writes that the "transcribed sequences *are transported* to the cytoplasm . . ." (p. 90, emphasis added). The transcription "is accomplished by" an enzyme process, which "binds" to the DNA, "selects" a location on the DNA nucleotide, and "then moves rapidly down the DNA chain" (p. 91). Darnell is thus led to use an action verb, "moves," and to give it attributions of speed and changing location. There is no reason, as far as I am aware, not to say that these RNA processes involve "motility," traditionally a function of living organisms, and one of the concepts Peterfreund rejects. Recently, at a conference on the state of knowledge concerning DNA, a further suggestion was made: Mark Ptashne of Harvard University reported on research showing

that certain proteins "control" whether a gene will activate cells in its DNA pattern or not; DNA could also be turned off, as it were, if the protein contacts it at a different site. This protein process is known to occur in bacteria and is strongly suspected to occur in higher organisms as well (Ptashne, noted in Schmeck, 1983).

In 1984, a new theory of how cells transfer energy was reported by Samuel Besman of U.S.C. The old theory held that energy is carried throughout cell production by a compound called adenosine triphosphate, or A.T.P. New evidence however suggests that for brain, heart, and muscle cells, where energy requirements are comparatively high, a special substance called creatine, produced in the liver, is the effective carrier. While A.T.P. remains at the local cell site where it is produced, creatine moves in a circular pattern, from mitochondria to the wall of a muscle fiber and back again to the mitochondria where it acquires more of the energy molecule, a phosphate, from the A.T.P., and sets out again for the muscle wall fiber. This micro-pattern of energy movement is affected by macro-movement of the organism as a whole: "Exercise stimulates energy production, Dr. Besman said . . ." ("Cells Transfer," 1984). This suggests that chronic energy blockage in the organism such as Reich described under the heading of "armor," even chronic feelings of tension and slackness, are connected with decreased energy production in the body, potentially down to the level of the cell.

The brain cell, which seems to be the part of the body that information processing theorists adopt as their unacknowledged body metaphor for how processing actually occurs, has also come to be seen recently in a new way. As with the transfer of energy by the cells which I have described, the process is now viewed as a two-directional flow pattern. The old model of the neuron (as depicted in textbooks until 20 years ago or even more recently) had a "stalk-like main tube," down which a signal was transmitted, much as if it were a wire.

> But transport in the axon is no longer thought to be a one-way flow. It is now known that there is also a retrograde, or reverse flow, by which substances needed by the cell are brought back up the axon to the main cell body, sometimes even beyond the synapses. (Schmeck, 1984, p. C7)

Since 1975, "many previously unknown neurotransmitters" in brain chemistry have been discovered. In the minute bubbles called "vesicles," near the synapse, it is now believed that more than one such neurotransmitting chemical may be contained in a single site. The technical nature of these findings, their empirical adequacy, and their precise implications are beyond the scope of the present study, but the discoveries lead to one pertinent generalization: energy considerations are crucial to information processing at any level of "information," and all such levels involve the mind-body organism. Moreover, not only are these energy processes crucial, they are also

complex. They can no longer be taken for granted by anyone who wishes to propose an information processing theory of psychoanalysis or for that matter a theory of cognitive science. Peterfreund's belief that the "highly specific nature of drives, motility, development and differentiation" (Peterfreund, 1971, p. 80), are given more sophisticated delineation in information processing terms, must be reconsidered in light of the new work which shows that energy processes themselves are not so "highly specific," that is, unidirectional, as was once believed.

A similar argument can be made with respect to mind-body emotional relations. Recent research on the nature of emotion has shown that the human body is more complicated than had been thought: formerly it had been assumed that the physiological basis of emotions is approximately similar for a whole range of emotions from love to fear. But as Richard J. Davidson reports, we now have discovered neural patterns which "strongly suggest that there are unique brain pathways which orchestrate each emotion" (Davidson, quoted in Goleman, 1984c; see Davidson, 1984). These unique brain pathways would not be necessarily incompatible with information processing theory, but they suggest a different and more interesting human body which underlies information as a metaphor for describing human life. The commonly used metaphor of a "feedback loop" now seems to imply an unconscionable simplification of the functional processes of the DNA/RNA, the brain cell, and the mind-body relationships in emotional experience. Information processing theory as it existed at the time Peterfreund wrote his book would now have to be modified to provide an adequate metaphor for describing the human organism, whether in psychological or physiological terms. An energy component has to be incorporated thoroughly into any such theory in order to obtain persuasive force in the context of current research in several disciplines.

In a later revision of his own theory, Peterfreund has stated that the model of the psychoanalytic process which he has constructed has a long way to go before it can make a claim to adequacy of precision: he now regards the various flow-charts of information processing and the explanations he offers as valuable for understanding the "conditions for the occurrence of experiential phenomena" (Peterfreund, 1980, p. 333), but they are not usable as yet for understanding what those phenomena are, in psychological terms. Although he has by no means reversed his opposition to the use of energy constructs, I would interpret his later clarification as at least providing an opening for their reintroduction into theory.

In addition to denying the general notion of psychic energy, Peterfreund has often argued along a complementary axis: not that there is *no* psychosexual energy involved in a psychoanalytic theory of the mind, but that there is no "special" energy. There is only (as one of his quoted sources puts it) "the energy from the metabolic mechanisms that lie behind all the cellular activity

involved in behavior" (Dethier and Stellar, 1964, quoted by Peterfreund, 1971, p. 80). But Peterfreund both declines to discuss such energy, and to consider how any energy of whatever description is present at the many levels of his multilevelled information processing theory. Thus his conclusion that there is no *special* sexual psychic energy becomes assured, a function of his choice of terms. In fact, he prevents asking himself pertinent questions about energy and the mind by first constructing a dichotomy between "physical energy" which is lawful, biologically sound, confirmed, and scientifically respectable, and "psychic energy," which is arbitrary, conceptually chaotic, unobservable, and not accepted by modern biology (Peterfreund, 1971, pp. 49-59).

From the perspective of the sexual body, it would have been preferable for psychoanalytic thinking to keep the theory pathways open, provisionally, even with such concepts as "psychophysiological energy," until such time as science begins to develop usable psychic energy findings. There would then be time enough to decide whether the term "libido" should be taken literally (as Peterfreund does) to specify an energy different from all others in the human organism (pp. 54-55), or if it indicates a sexual quality of energy that is compatible with an understanding of the human organism and indeed necessary to make sense of sexuality as well as of the fundamental psychoanalytic generalizations. In this regard, it is significant that Otto Kernberg, in his own reformulation of a psychoanalytic model of the human mind, is led to introduce certain mysterious entities which he labels "affect dispositions" to account for the fact that the processes of object-relations have got to be energized by some force; else they do not function as processes (Kernberg, 1975, pp. 339-341). Energy just does not seem to be avoidable as a concept necessary for understanding the sexual body.

*Peterfreund and the Sexual Body*

Peterfreund is among the very few analysts to grant that empirical findings which have strongly correlated male erection with REM sleep patterns are significant for psychoanalytic theory (Fisher, 1966). But he does not follow up on his own recognition that these findings tend to confirm Freud's belief that "sexuality has a special place in dream formation" (Peterfreund, 1971, p. 250), except to say that the erections are "sexual stimuli" which may activate "new sources of information and new programming levels" during sleep (p. 285). I cannot agree that the neurophysiology which links the penile erection and the dream process (during REM sleep) is made intelligible this way. Here, just where psychoanalytic information processing theory should be sharpest, it appears helpless. Nothing is gained by calling erections "sexual stimuli."

It is Peterfreund's hope that information theory can be united with the findings of biology to produce a unified theory of mind and body, but his own

distinction of physical energy from psychic energy serves to separate the two and to give his theory a mentalistic cast. "Information" thus can easily become a root metaphor that presupposes a mind to read it, rather than a body-mind organism to experience it. Another theorist who has contributed to the further development of the information processing model of psychoanalysis, Robert Rogers, has pointed to "a cognitive bias in Peterfreund's arguments" (Rogers, 1980, p. 29). Rogers argues that Peterfreund was warranted in rejecting Freud's instinctual drive concepts, but not in rejecting wholesale everything that was entailed by these concepts (Rogers, 1980, pp. 29-33).

Rogers himself has gone on to develop the connection of information processing and psychoanalysis in the area of dream interpretation. He shows how certain dreams and the analytical comments on these dreams by the dreamers themselves may be fitted into an information processing framework in such a way that their "textuality" becomes susceptible to determinate interpretations. Yet in this successful application of information processing to psychoanalytic dream interpretation, Rogers, like Peterfreund, takes little note of the specifically sexual content of the dreams. Both of the specimen dreams he analyzes in his article partake heavily of sexual detail. In one of these, a woman struggles to fend off sexual advances, and then, while no longer dreaming, acts out a fear of becoming pregnant. In an interesting feat of analysis, Rogers brings both the dream and the wakeful behavior into one unified framework of information processing (Rogers, 1981, p. 442). In the second dream, the dreamer (this time a man) describes and orders his dream in terms of "anal erotism." The dream ends with the man waking to his own hysterical laughter, which he himself interprets as a symbol of sexual gratification (Rogers, 1981, p. 443). Given the prominence of sexual body imagery in these dreams, I would expect some comment on sexuality and its importance within the information processing theory of psychoanalysis, but none is forthcoming from Rogers, who thus appears to forget his earlier insight into the excessively cognitive orientation of Peterfreund's work.

To return to the work of Peterfreund, we may ask what is the source of his (as well as Rogers') excessive weighting of the cognitive, other than a theoretically insignificant matter of personal taste? Like many information process theorists, Peterfreund's diagrams and vocabulary suggest that the brain (as Lewis Thomas put it) is some sort of "intricate but ultimately simplifiable mass of electronic circuitry governed by wiring diagrams." That might have been a reasonable assumption in the 1950's, but it now appears, Lewis Thomas writes, that the brain might be more like

> a fundamentally endocrine tissue, in which the essential reactions, the internal traffic of nerve impulses, are determined by biochemical activators and their suppressors. (Thomas, 1979, p. 167)

The combination of glandular (endocrine) tissue and biochemical processes suggested by Thomas as the nature of the brain, provides the rudiments of a terminology that is compatible with the perspective of the sexual body. The endocrine system, which Dewey long ago pointed out was involved in even the most abstract thinking (Dewey, 1934, p. 157), is one of the "ductless" glandular sources, providing input directly into the bloodstream, and connected with hormonal adjustments. Thomas' terminology suggests a model of the brain and its functioning that is more scientifically probable than that which Peterfreund had in mind in his concern to align psychoanalysis with science.

*Orgasm and Information Processing*

There is one especially interesting internal strain within Peterfreund's writing over the issue of the sexual body versus the information-processing brain. His several comments on the orgasm illustrate not merely the point he wishes to make—namely that traditional psychoanalytic theory hopelessly simplifies sexual description down to a matter of drive and discharge—they also reveal a centering of his attention on sexuality that is classically Freudian, but which is nowhere given theoretical recognition in his information-theory terminology. Thus, while his case histories center strongly on sexuality and its problems, there is no chapter or section on the psychoanalytic information-theory of sex.

Orgasm represents a physiological event of "extraordinarily intricate neural, hormonal, muscular and visceral attention" (Peterfreund, 1971, p. 55). To understand it, it is useless to think of the libido "because no relationship has ever been established between sexual psychic energy and the world of biology and neurophysiology" (p. 55; see also p. 154). Reich would certainly have disagreed here, but Reich is not cited. As Peterfreund attempts to make good on his claim that information theory can deal with the theory of orgasm better than classical analysis ever could, he sounds far more classical and even more Reichian than he is aware. Sexuality, Peterfreund holds, is "a highly complex, multidetermined phenomenon which ranges from mild activation to full orgastic discharge . . ." (p. 269). This is undoubtedly so, but the multilevels involve more than a quantitative difference along the progression from mild to full; the "full" orgastic discharge is by all accounts a qualitatively loaded event. In another passage, given in the context of a discussion of the theory of analytic process from the perspective of information theory, Peterfreund comments:

> . . . continued sexual excitement which cannot be consummated (fully abreacted) can be accompanied by tension and stress and a consequent longing for a full discharge. Considerable relief of tension and stress occurs when the full discharge takes place. (1971, p. 353)

Here, the concept of "longing" is a qualitative energy consideration, not well integrated into Peterfreund's theory. The notion of "full discharge" is Reichian, and the emphasis on the "relief of tension and stress" through this discharge is straight out of the classical drive theory of Freud. More important, Peterfreund is using all this sexual material to construct his root metaphor for the dynamics of the analytic process itself. But to subsume all this sexuality under the following abstract axiom merely blurs the sexual emphasis:

> *The optimal analytic process makes possible the full activation of many partially activated control systems related to drives and emotions. Clinically, this results in the phenomenon of abreaction.* (1971, p. 343, emphasis in original)

The full orgastic discharge and the longing for it when it is blocked suggest a much more sexual metaphor than anyone would guess from the phraseology just quoted; it is not merely one of several "control systems" which are "related to drives and emotions." As if to acknowledge that the statements on orgasm in *Information, Systems and Psychoanalysis* (1971) are not enough, Peterfreund has returned to the problem of representing orgasm and the "sexual control system" in a later publication (Peterfreund, 1980), but has now been careful to admit that the flow-chart he offers is necessarily a highly simplified and schematic one (1980, pp. 339-340). Possibly the very labelling of the orgastic process as a "control" system provides new obscurity; Peterfreund specifies that orgasm involves a loss of voluntary control and a dimming of consciousness.

The liberatory impetus of the classical Freudian assumptions about sexuality within culture is also blurred by Peterfreund, but it is not really buried. In another section of *Information, Systems, and Psychoanalysis*, Peterfreund offers a fine description of how biological activity, including subjective psychological experience, may be understood in terms of information programming at different, inter-related levels (1971, pp. 169-179). In his illustrative examples, however, he again becomes more specifically sexual than his terminology allows, and this time, he also implies a value judgment that has nothing to do with information process theory. Several of his women patients who "had highly traumatic early experience, including repeated enemas," had developed as adults a great fear of intercourse. In effect, they had become subject to an inner voice, "a monitoring conscience," which said to them, "You must not" (p. 172). I see no difficulty in accepting Peterfreund's description of this sort of conscience as a "subroutine" which interferes with "the information processing necessary for normal sexual activity," such as the "activation" of a pleasurable body-image (p. 172). The value judgment, however, should be made explicit: the analyst is in favor of the dissolution of the interfering conscience and the capacity of the woman to have fully gratifying sexual love.

This value judgment of the analyst could be called his "program," but such designation would not change the fact that a value is at stake, one that denies the right of the authoritarian family to inflict repeated enemas on the sexual body of a young girl. Similarly, it is one thing to say, as Peterfreund does, that the analytic situation calls for a "reprogramming" of sexual curiosity, and another to define that reprogramming as "freedom of expression of sexual curiosity in the analytic situation with minimal inhibition of anxiety" (pp. 263-264). The first formulation has the value-free coloration of information processing, while the second honestly makes a culturally sensitive—and complicated—value judgement about sex and the knowledge of sex.

Interestingly, Peterfreund can refer to "a feeling of joy and life," and "an inborn urge to touch," when he is talking about the mother-child relationship (1971, pp. 356-357). Here his opposition to vitalism does not seem to deter him, as it does in theorizing about adult sexuality. In a rhetorical question, Peterfreund asks his readers "what words can describe the qualities of the experiences of love, sexual passion or the sexual orgasm?" (p. 331). He does not describe these qualities, but he knows they are there, somewhere outside his theoretical discourse. Throughout his book, there is a tension between feelings for life, including Peterfreund's astonishment that life goes on at all, and his need for order (see especially p. 99). This tension, however, is a common one, and the psychoanalytic revolution has pointed to the area where that tension is most acute, namely in the dynamics of the sexual body.

If another theorist interested in the uses of information processing theory (and in other cognitive science projects such as Artificial Intelligence) were to reconsider Peterfreund's version of the psychoanalytic process, and if that theorist were not besieged by the contradictory attractions of vitalism and schematic order, than there might be some way to answer the question posed earlier, namely of whether information processing theory is capable of providing a suitable root metaphor for the sexual body. Certainly there are fundamental objections to Peterfreund's reconstruction of the mind in terms of a series of schema which exist in relations of connectivity. Such objections could be derived from Iran-Nejad and Ortony's recent biofunctional model of memory, mental content and awareness, which dispenses with the notion of relatively permanent structures of schema in the mind (Iran-Nejad and Ortony, 1984). I myself would not wish to try to resolve the issue by showing, in the manner of Iran-Nejad and Ortony, that the reality of the sexual body cannot possibly fit the dimensions of Peterfreund's theory, although many aspects do not fit the theory as it stands, as I have tried to show. Rather than a dispute resolvable through an appeal to the facts, I suspect that ultimately what is at stake in the differences of approach to psychology in the work of Peterfreund versus that of, for example, Iran-Nejad and Ortony, is their respective world hypotheses, underlying their respective root metaphors. Iran-Nejad and Ortony do not cite Pepper, but they would rightly be classified

as Contextualists in Pepper's categorization of world hypotheses; Peterfreund, insofar as he allows his need for order to dominate his sense of the sexual body, would be an archetypal Formist. To point out these divergences is not to preclude an improved treatment of sexuality and of life energy within information processing theory, even on a Formistic basis. Once that is attempted there will then be opportunity for reassessment.

## Kohut's Innovation: The "Self" and the Sexual Body

Given the willingness with which most psychoanalytic thinkers have accepted the notion of innate destructive aggression as a part of human nature, the rise to prominence since the late 1970's of the theories of Heinz Kohut is especially striking. For Kohut did explicitly reject the theory of innate, destructive human aggression. He did this in the course of developing his theory of the Self, and partly in response to criticisms raised regarding his neglect of the topic of aggression in the volume, *The Analysis of the Self* (Kohut, 1971; see Ornstein, 1978, pp. 103-104). The late inclusion of aggression into his theory is hardly a chronological accident; it reflects Kohut the man. Unlike the purveyors of the image of the infant as a little sadist and as asocial raw material to be made into a fit member of society, Kohut is not at all all fascinated with infantile hate and destruction. When he discusses evidence for his theories built on childhood memories, his words seem to glow with delight in describing those phases of mother-infant interaction, such as the game of "little-piggy," in which contact is close and warm. Kohut saw this favorite example as evidence of the infant's ability to experience in play its very early sense of a "cohesive body-self" within the beneficial context of the mother's embrace, "just at the right moment," when the child offers its "total self" for the enjoyment and "confirming approval" of the mother (Kohut, 1978, pp. 742-745). Kohut's sense of destructive aggressive behavior did not center on the infant at all, in fact; he did not even think that adult destructiveness was mainly a matter of people individually losing control of themselves:

> The most gruesome human destructiveness is encountered, not in the form of wild, regressive, and primitive behavior, but in the form of orderly and organized activities in which the perpetrators' destructiveness is alloyed with absolute conviction about their greatness and with their devotion to archaic omnipotent figures. (Kohut, 1978, p. 635)

The speeches of Heinrich Himmler are offered as an instance (Kohut, 1978, p. 635).

Kohut's theory of the infant includes several features that remove it from most current, prevalent psychoanalytic models. For one thing, he eventually came to assume, although in a qualified way, "that even at the very beginning of psychological life," the instinctual drives "are already integrated into larger experiential configurations" (Kohut, 1978, p. 790). Initially, Kohut had

assumed that "the child's experience of himself as a body-mind unit" was slowly built up out of "the experiences of single, unconnected body parts and of isolated bodily and mental functions." He points out that this was the assumption of most of his psychoanalytic colleagues. But in his theory of the self, Kohut became "doubtful" about the wisdom of such a view (Kohut, 1978, pp. 746-747). There might even be evidence, he thought, for the existence of "a rudimentary self at the beginning of life . . ." (p. 756). In any event Kohut was not afraid of that possibility, nor did he prefer to place major theoretical weight on evidence extrapolated from the neonate; "we stand on firmer empirical ground" with evidence from early childhood (p. 756). Evidence for at least a rudimentary self in childhood occurs in abundance within the reconstructions of psychoanalytic treatment.

It is the psychoanalytic transaction of analyst/analysand which Kohut values above all else for providing the strongest evidential base for the theory: there, during the prolonged empathetic immersion of the analyst in the mind of the analysand, arises the material that is distinctively psychoanalytic and which cannot be subordinated to conventional empirical canons of evidence. Although Kohut shares little with Reich, he might have agreed with Reich's axiom that "correct clinical observation never leads one astray" (Reich, 1968, p. 34). The problem is that of determining what makes such clinical observation "correct." At least Kohut, like Reich, did not make the error of assuming that the aggression he observed clinically, in the process of conducting analyses, was direct evidence for the existence of an innate destructive instinct in human nature.

Kohut also showed a strong awareness of the differences between the child's "balance of psychic forces" and that of the adult (1978, pp. 861-862); this distinction is not an obvious one in most current psychoanalytic theory which tends to extrapolate entirely from the infant mind to that of the adult. These differences between Kohut and the predominant theories make his divergence on the issue of aggression all the more serious. His contribution may be part of a new theory that carries the original impetus of Freud's work without the moralizing retreats into analogies of sin and evil that have characterized many other adaptations, including some by Freud himself.

We are ready to ask, then, what Kohut's theory of aggression was, as he expressed it in his most advanced work. In *The Restoration of the Self* (1977), the book in which Kohut presented for the first time his actual theory of the self (1977, p. 207), the status of destructive aggression within human nature is taken up directly. "The child's rage and destructiveness," Kohut says, "should not be conceptualized as the expression of a primary instinct that strives toward its goal or searches for an outlet" (1977, p. 118). Kohut is deliberately going against or beyond *Trieb*, or drive-theory; given that, his statement may not be remarkable, although it does tell us that rage and destructiveness are not *primary* instinctual equipment of the human being. What is more, they are not primary within the self either:

> They [rage and destructiveness] should be defined as regression products, as fragments of broader psychological configurations, [they] should be conceived as fragments of the broader psychological configurations that make up the nuclear self. (Kohut, 1977, p. 118)

Nor does emotional expression in infancy prove anything to the contrary: "Although traumatic breaks of empathy (delays) are, of course, experiences to which every infant is unavoidably exposed, the rage manifested by the baby is not primary" (1977, p. 118). Destructiveness of course often occurs. Kohut has no intention of concealing the uglier facts of human nature. But he believes that these should be taken as a secondary line of development.

Kohut in fact arrives at a position much like that of Pepper, writing over 25 years ago. For Pepper, aggression is an "injective," something that is spontaneously injected into a more primary drive toward satisfaction. Once the object of the act is attained (unless it turns out to be a false object) aggression subsides into its usual subordinate position. It is not the basic thing, nor even one of the basic things, people want (Pepper, 1958, pp. 160-166). Although Kohut is arguing a theory of the self as primary rather than a theory of drives as primary, he talks much the same language as Pepper: "Normal, primary, nondestructive aggression, in its primitive as well as in its developed form, subsides as soon as the goals that had been striven for are reached . . . ." However, if there has been a history of chronic and traumatic frustration "in childhood, then chronic narcissistic rage, with all its deleterious consequences, will be established" (Kohut, 1977, p. 121). Explicitly, Kohut disagrees with the Melanie Klein school: there is no need to consider any of the infant's fantasy life nor its expressions of rage "as a primary given—an 'original sin' requiring expiation, a bestial drive that has to be 'tamed' . . ." (1977, p. 124).

Kohut was not guilty, therefore, of one thing he has been accused of by his suspicious colleagues: "elaborating on the contributions of the English object-relations school" and failing to acknowledge that fact (Gargiulo, 1978, p. 616). One effort to show that Kohut derives from the object-relations theory of Fairbairn (Robbins, 1980, pp. 484-488) fails to show how Kohut's theories of the self have any relation to Fairbairn's basic idea that the infant's first psychological internalization of an object is "a defensive measure" brought about by the "unsatisfying" nature of the so-called "original object," namely "the mother and her breast" (Fairbairn, 1965, p. 224). A recent effort to align Kohut with Mahler, on the grounds that both of them envision an early narcissistic phase in the infant (Hamilton, 1982, pp. 41-42) is also wide of the mark. Mahler found the infant at first to be subject to autism and then psychosis, and certainly did not invent or theorize a model of the infant whose "self" was of any positive value.

It is evident that Kohut situated his theory of aggression within assumptions about human nature that were very different from those of Melanie Klein, Anna Freud, or Winnicott. Where they looked at the infant's sexual body and read a message of sadistic hatred or of sexual instincts which will

threaten to retard or interrupt character development (A. Freud, 1935, p. 20), Kohut looked at the young child and found a problematic of the self. Kohut also had a different aim: although, like almost all makers of psychoanalytic theory after Freud, he too wanted to get away from the emphasis on "drives" (sexual and other), he saw a clear need to extend the theory in such a way as to make it a world hypothesis in its actual as well as its intended coverage.

Let us now consider two main components of Kohut's special theory of psychoanalysis and attempt to place these with the problems of sexuality and the sexual body which I have located as the most important cultural heritage of psychoanalytic thought. The first of these components is Kohut's proposal for an extension of the psychoanalytic method into the normal practice of all the sciences, and the second is his major theory of the self.

Kohut took the nature of psychoanalytic analysis, with its prolonged, empathetic, introspective immersion by the analyst in the inner life of the analysand, as the primary source of its generalizations as well as the core of its method. Recognizing that this method is seriously different from the time-honored ideal of objective, noninvolved observation, he maintained that it was exactly in its difference that psychoanalysis could make its great contribution. In the near future, Kohut looked forward to the possibility that the analyst would

> become the pacesetter for a change in the hierarchy of values of all the branches of science concerned with man, through a shift from a truth-and-reality morality toward the idealization of empathy, from pride in the scientifically controlled expansion of the self. (Kohut, 1978, p. 676)

Such an expansion would bring human beings together in social relations by uniting science with social values. In outlining this new ideal of science, Kohut immediately recognized certain objections which were soon raised. He did not always have a firm answer to these objections. One such objection was raised by Bennis (1974), namely, that empathy in human social interaction, far from advancing social values, could be (and usually is) used for destructive and manipulative purposes (Kohut, 1978, p. 706). Kohut did not give a direct answer here, except to revert to showing the essential uses of empathy throughout the development of human psychological and social life.

A serious difficulty arises in his further discussion, however, concerning the qualities of empathy itself. In these, the problem posed by the perspective of the sexual body to theory appears just beneath the surface language. Kohut is constrained to avoid the charge that the observer using empathy scientifically would fall back on intuition alone, without the possibility of correction. The analyst resists such "empathic pseudoclosures" by patiently beginning "the greatest variety of possible configurations" and evaluating the emerging factual material in their light, in order to test "the correctness, the exactness, and the relevance of the meaning" that he, the analyst, has given to the

materials (Kohut, 1978, p. 711). As a defense of objectivity, this may do, but it is difficult to reconcile this reserved kind of scientific "trial empathy," as Kohut calls it, with the greater claims he makes adjacently for the empathy as a "power that counteracts the human's tendency" in our own era "toward seeing meaninglessness and feeling despair" (p. 713). An "insufficient or faulty empathetic responsiveness" is the cause of psychological distortions of personality; such deprivations produce "intense needs" to be valued and accepted (p. 713). Empathy by its nature is a feeling process, and thus involves emotional processes that are not purely cognitive. To deal with "intense needs" empathetically will require emotional depth and intensity.

Inevitably the range of feelings in this process involves the whole human being, and unless we wish to say that the body and sexuality are disconnected from intense feelings, it involves the sexual body as well. From a Reichian perspective (which Kohut would have rejected), the answer to Bennis' objection cannot be found by reverting to the provisions for caution in the cognitive applications of empathy—these may actually destroy the empathy unless they are followed only as one phase of psychoanalytic inquiry (cf. Dewey, 1934, pp. 144-145). Nor could the intense needs be met without a consideration of the psychological health of the analyst. This would involve a value judgement about sexual health that Kohut declines to make, inasmuch as for him, psychoanalytic training in itself, when completed and followed in good faith, would take care of any problem of destructiveness in the analyst. Other sciences, outside of psychoanalysis, would benefit from an interchange with it, and an acceptance of its empathetic method would also eventually bring the socially destructive uses of their disciplines under control. But the question of the analyst's psychosexual health is inseparable from the basic question asked from the perspective of the sexual body: does psychoanalytic theory in its revised form adequately accommodate sexuality in its extended sense, as Freud proposed? Nor are Kohut's own statements on sexuality very encouraging, as I shall show in a moment. Nonetheless, it is apparent that the problems of science in society that Kohut was addressing are real.

In his psychology of the Self, Kohut extended psychoanalytic theory to reach vital questions that it had so far been unable to address. He emphasized among these the profound feeling of despair—and it is a despair without guilt—of analysands in late middle age over their failure to carry out aims set for themselves in earlier years by their own selves. The resulting "incompleteness" of the self is a major clinical datum, not to be accounted for or dealt with through traditional theoretical equipment. This despair is part of a broad historical shift in the kinds of disturbances psychoanalysts were encountering. The new patients had come from a background of coldness and impersonality, to the extent that the anonymity of the Trial in Kafka's novel has become a common experience.

> Most analysts will, I believe, agree with me that the forms of the psychic illnesses we are treating are changing, that, even though they might still be in the majority, we are seeing fewer people whose disorder is the result of unsolvable inner conflicts, and increasingly more who suffer from having been deprived of the give and take with a close and interested environment that would have enabled them to shed the asocial grandiosity of infancy and thus become self-confident and secure participants in a meaningful world of adults. (Kohut, 1978, p. 681)

Again, Kohut is addressing a most serious cultural problem. It is one that Bowlby has seemed to bypass, in his concentration on the mother-infant dyad. That Kohut could realize, after years of attempting to deal with the new problems within the framework of theory he had already learned (and which he taught to others), that new theoretical developments were needed to meet the new challenges, is entirely to Kohut's credit.

Thus he developed his psychoanalytic psychology of the self. In doing so, however, he tended to separate self and the human body, self and biology, self and sexuality. Indeed one of Kohut's most unsatisfactory innovations is his stipulation that the self arises in the psychological experience of the infant "next to and, more and more, above his experience of body parts and single functions" (1978, p. 749). There is warrant within Freud for regarding auto-erotism as a matter of gaining pleasure from a part of the body, while narcissism represents a more unified kind of self-pleasure. The problem with Kohut's extension of this line of thought is that it tends to ignore the body altogether. Like so many others, Kohut wanted to discuss "broad reconstructions of total feeling states in childhood rather than . . . narrow dynamic interpretations of drives versus defenses" (1978, p. 883). The discussion of drives, he maintained, had led to a mechanical, virtually subhuman discourse. At one point, Kohut compares drive psychology to trying to understand the living organism by means of the psychoanalytic equivalent of organic chemistry (1978, pp. 883-884). Kohut realizes that Freud had taken

> a psychobiological stance when he formulated his observations in terms of drives and psychic energy [but believes] the basic meaning of Freud's theoretical system had gradually changed, that. . . the terms Freud originally meant to fit into a biological frame of reference have now indeed become metaphors that refer to psychological data and psychological relationships. (1978, p. 904)

Even the concept of energy and its "cathexes" should be taken now as a kind of "symbolic logic" of psychology (p. 904). So far as we know about sexual "drive" in psychoanalysis, we know it only as a general quality of driveness that appears in various degrees and functions during our "introspective investigation of inner experience" (p. 227).

Not only can drive not be analyzed in the empathetic transaction except to say that it is an abstraction; if I read Kohut rightly, he is saying it need not be investigated further (1978, p. 227). What this means in effect is that biology

may as well be forgotten. But such sidestepping is not convincing. After all, sexual drive sometimes occurs quite dramatically, and not as a mere abstraction that shares a quality of driveness; the belief that Freud's original psychobiology has "gradually" changed to metaphor is wishful; indeed it is virtually magical thinking on Kohut's part, with nothing less in mind than the "gradual" dispersal of sex into verbal metaphors and symbolic logic. If drive psychology eventually degenerated into some version of inorganic chemistry, perhaps that is more due to the cultural habits that tend to classify the human body as an inert corpus rather than a living organism. Besides, if we go back and read Freud's early statements on sexuality, we will find that he did not treat it as mechanical drive, later to be given its metaphorical aura; he spoke daringly of the baffling intermix of physical (sometimes gross physical) sex with sexual symbolism and with figurative language.

Without meaning to, Kohut is following the conceptual trajectory taken by George S. Klein, who also wanted to avoid mere chemistry. Klein, in a serious reconsideration of Freud's theory of sexuality, candidly began by admitting that something has been lost with the failure of the term libido. He admitted that present theories are devoid of any account of what psychic energy is. Then, after a glance in the direction of the old libido concept (Klein thought it not too bad) and perhaps also in the direction of instinctual drives, Klein went on to say that data of a chemical or glandular nature are not useful, because the theory of psychoanalysis is concerned with the "cognitive meaning" of the sexual (Klein, 1967, pp. 178-179). The remarkable thing about Kohut's similar view is that he was not one of those who placed supreme value on the cognitive. In one exchange with a critic, he even affirmed that if it were possible to produce a completely rational humankind, he would not wish to do so, because passion and the irrational are also part of life (1978, p. 915). The cultural pressures toward evading the sexual, however, are so strong, so embedded, so "overdetermined," as psychoanalysis would put it, that Kohut ends up not far from Klein on this matter of the sexual.

What should have been done? Second guessing an original theorist like Kohut is too easy. He took the risks, and his commentator can only follow his thought. But an obvious suggestion must be made. Instead of moving with most other theorists to eliminate drive theory (and with it sexuality), Kohut and others might have read their mandate as one of enlarging and reformulating the theory without losing its core. Thus while "drive" might go, sex cannot. The theoretical demands here are by no means unreasonable. A way of achieving the shift successfully from drive to a better concept of sexual need was opened by Reich in 1921, while Reich was still a young and loyal member of the Viennese psychoanalytic school. Entitling his paper, "Concerning the Energy of Drives," Reich argued that it would never be possible to clarify what the term "drive" meant, at least not in scientific terms suitable for psychology. Yet the term was central. It was therefore advisable to shift the

level of inquiry "to the psychological and functional peculiarity of sexual pleasure," which entailed an understanding of the human mind's capacity to "re-experience" that pleasure through its mnemic function. In other words, sexual instinctual drive is better understood in functional terms which explain how the individual self is "assimilated" into the experience of pleasure (Reich, 1975, p. 153). Reich realized that the purely quantitative nature of Freud's notion of an instinctual drive would never permit an adequate grasp of what was at stake in this central function of the human sexual body. Reich's own later work is largely free of any reliance on the "drive" concepts, despite his deep involvement in the dynamics of orgasm. Reich's shift in the level of inquiry worked for him as a way of retaining the sexual body in theory. Kohut, in the final pages of *The Search for the Self*, similarly speaks of his aim to invent a framework which would "not disregard" the value of the old (1978, p. 937); but it appears that he was more successful in relating his theories to what he calls "the group self in the psychoanalytic community" (p. 937) than in continuing Freud's unfinished advance into sexual complexity. It will remain for future users of Kohut's theory to reinvest it with the libido—or with a more sophisticated sexual energy concept—which it needs.

*Kohut and the Sexual Body in Therapy*

I suggest that Kohut's very language of the self calls for the missing element of the sexual. If we can refer to a "tension arc" between two major elements of the developing self, as Ornstein does in describing Kohut's theories (Ornstein, 1978, p. 99), then we will be led eventually to ask what that "tension arc" consists of in bodily terms. How is such tension felt? What are its physiological correlates? Let us accept Kohut's conclusion that the self does not satisfy itself in the manner of drive tension and release, but instead that it has its fulfillment in "the glow of *joy*," and its blockage in "the anticipation of *despair* e.g. of shame and empty depression" (Kohut, 1978, p. 757). Then let us ask what all those feelings are like, in the body. The glow of joy is going to be connected with the capacity for joy; the glowing quality may even be a feature of what Reich called orgastic potency. The empty depression is also a bodily feeling, an *energy* blockage. Let us also recognize that the plight of the new patient, caught in a "cold" social world and starving for "give and take with a close and interested environment" (Kohut, 1978, p. 681) is experiencing a feeling of contactlessness, which is an energy disturbance. As for the self rising aside from or above the body (which is the implication of Kohut's theory), the suggestion cannot be anything but misleading. It is even possible that the self is a fundamentally *biological* feature of organic life. At least some biologists speak about the distinction between "self" and "not-self" in lower invertebrates (Theodor, 1970, cited by Thomas, 1974, p. 8). Apparently, certain sponge cells will not accept transplants from others of the same

species, but will accept such transplants if the donor is taken from closely adjacent organisms of exactly the same features as those which are rejected. Biologists speculate that this cannot be explained on any grounds except that of the self, which is therefore not the highflown self of the human mind. It is very much a body self.

But Kohut eventually had little use for the body in his theory, even though he himself occasionally refers to the "body-self." His description of a patient named Mr. W. is a key instance. After much therapeutic work, Kohut found that it was "the influence of the mother's personality" that lay behind Mr. W.'s troubles. This is no news in psychoanalysis, of course, but it is intriguing that what Kohut says of this mother is that

> while her attitude had been one of dutiful caretaking, of a fulfillment of obligations, she had not been able to relate to the child with calming emotionality. She emerged as a woman . . . deeply insecure about herself—especially about her own body. (Kohut, 1977, pp. 160-161)

Here I perked up, expecting that "body" would have to be a categorical term for the self. But in fact that does not occur. The "body-self" Kohut refers to does not even merit an index entry among the approximately 100 terms glossed under the headings Self, Self-object, and Self-psychology. The Self, Kohut finally says, if taken broadly as "the center of the individual's psychological universe . . . is, like all reality . . . not knowable in its essence . . . . It cannot be defined, now or ever" (1977, pp. 310-311). All that we *can* know is the self "as a specific structure in the mental apparatus" (p. 310). On the one hand it is the very omission of the body which makes self a mystery like that of Soul; on the other, such an omission reduces self to the level of part of a mind machine. If it is true, as one report has it, that Kohut ended a major lecture on his theory before a New York psychoanalytic audience with the fervid question, "*What if man is not an animal?*" (Malcolm, 1983, p. 120), then the resistance to his theories by traditional analysts takes on a more than merely reactionary cast.

To be sure, denials must be expected here: Kohut, just because he doesn't talk body language does not for a moment wish to deny the body; there could be no self worthy of the name that was not first and foremost a body self, and so on. But these protestations cut no theoretical ice, since what they amount to is saying that if we talk a language of mental constructs and of cultural forms such as "ambitions and ideals" (Kohut, 1977, p. 234), and have good motives in doing so, the body will take care of itself. Well, it won't. A gross fact of Mr. W.'s mother being deeply disturbed about her own body gets lost: her sexual body has no theoretical resonance, let alone recognition. And were it to have that recognition, it would only raise the whole question of whether that sort of basic problem should even be thrown into the theory of the Self, or if it is best

discussed in terms of natural energy, sexuality, drive, instinct, repression, or denial—indeed in all those terms which are now considered outmoded in psychoanalysis.

*Kohut and the Renewal of Sexual Candor in Psychoanalytic Biography*

Despite these deep antipathies to the sexual body within Kohut's theory, there is another side to it which encourages the open discussion of the adult sexual body. In his divergence from other psychoanalytic theories of development, Kohut allows for a recognition of the inconvenient or "unruly" aspects of sexuality which do not fit civilized norms, and he does not tilt the balance toward a negative evaluation of these aspects of sexuality. His concept of a "grandiose self," which he postulated as one of the necessary components of the mature self, contradicts the moralizing direction of other psychoanalytic theories: the person's self develops not by becoming progressively attuned to the real world and to the responsibilities it brings, but (in one of its major phases) by constructing a "grandiose self" and to some extent acting upon it. Kohut did not suggest that this aspect of the self was the core of the self, or the sole determinant for maturity. The concept of a grandiose self is a part of his long-term theoretical work on the theory of narcissism. But in that work, and not only in the concept of a grandiose self, Kohut created nonjudgmental theoretical concepts for those needs of the self which could not be confined within conventional notions of mature behavior. In particular, Kohut's creation of the category of the "grandiose self" (which is not to be mistaken for the whole self) serves to allow nonjudgmental thinking with regard to adult sexual contact and sexual relationships, where other theories either insist that sex be a part of the ideal of love or that it be labelled as pathological. His more traditional colleagues in psychoanalysis have taken him to task for such theorizing (see for example, Giovacchini, 1977; Tuttman, 1978). What these abstract formulations on the self might mean in a life situation is shown, I think, in the autobiography of the psychoanalyst Richard C. Robertiello, M.D., a self-acknowledged follower of Kohut (Robertiello, 1979a, p. 7; 1979b, p. 128). Robertiello discusses with candor and self-criticism, but not with self-reproach, his adult sexual life. This includes his several marriages and a number of love affairs outside marriage, including two "primary love relationships" with schizophrenics (p. 119). This is not to suggest that Robertiello's book is devoted to an account of his sexual relationships; indeed the bulk of the book is about his life as a son, a father, and as a grandson, in the light of psychoanalytic concepts he has integrated from Kohut and from other branches of psychoanalysis. It is all the more impressive that he has integrated his self-analytic account of adult sexuality with his childhood experiences. This is no small achievement, and goes a long way to

make his book an important addition to the literature of Kohut's theory, as well as to the field of autobiography.

Robertiello's book could signal the beginning of a renewed personal candor in psychoanalytic writing, concerning the analyst as sexual being. Freud had revealed a great deal of himself—over 50 of his own dreams are analyzed in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Freud, 1900)—but this beginning was not carried very much further by his followers and successors during psychoanalysis' long struggle for professional survival and acceptance. Ernest Jones' long and non-monogamous relation with Loe Kann, a patient of his whom he married (Brome, 1982), has only recently become known; it would appear in fact that Jones had a troubled, not entirely controllable sexual life which is not reflected in his carefully nourished persona as the highly stable pioneer for Freud (Brome, 1982). I suggest that Jones defended against a fear of exposure (to which Brome alludes) by casting aspersions in his biography of Freud against the stability and the character of his rivals among the psychoanalytic pioneers such as Otto Rank and Sandor Ferenzi (Brome, 1967). Robert Coles, Erik H. Erikson's admiring biographer, as well as Erikson himself in autobiographical accounts, showed a great deal of avoidance when it came to dealing with the psychodynamics of Erikson's having been abandoned by his father before birth, being adopted by his Jewish stepfather, Dr. Theodore Homberger, and later changing his name to Erikson and his religious orientation to Christianity (Coles, 1970; Roazen, 1976). Coles' biography in fact is largely silent on the sexual body. It begins with a chapter on Kierkegaard, as a way of introducing Erikson who also lived in Denmark, but well after Kierkegaard had died—an ennobling but evasive strategy. Melanie Klein did not offer a self-analysis of her highly traumatized childhood, in which siblings, with whom she was closely involved, died (Lindon, 1972). When Heinz Hartman was honored with a volume of essays by other analysts, the biographical sketch resembled hagiography, rather than biography, much less Freudian biography. Hartman had lived his adult life, apparently, in "serenity and freedom from conflict. . ." (Eissler and Eissler, 1966, p. 13). David Rapaport seems to have worked himself to death; for example, he sometimes climbed the four flights of stairs to his office at N.Y.U. if he happened to arrive before the elevators started running. At the time, Rapaport was taking a sabbatical from his position as therapist. He did the climbing even though he had a heart condition and chronic leg cramps. Rapaport died of a heart attack in that sabbatical year, 1960, at the age of 49. The account of his life by his friend, the psychoanalytic theorist Robert Holt, is devoid of psychoanalytic comment, although it provides the details I have mentioned (Holt, 1967). Robertiello's autobiography would make such a eulogistic biography uncalled for in his own case; his failings would not need to be concealed. His book is a contribution to the acknowledgement and even the celebration of the analyst as a person with a sexual body, rather than the analyst as idealized mind. Without

Kohut's theoretical advance, Robertiello might not have written what he did, or at least not for publication. In this instance, Kohut's theory helps to make the sexual body comprehensible, even though formally Kohut moves away from it.

Such hopes for a connection between Kohut's theory and the psychoanalytic theory of the adult sexual body, however, are probably futile, at least as the theory stands. With the posthumous publication of Kohut's completion of his theoretical work (Kohut, 1984) and the rise of a "school" of Kohutians, the high cultural status of the "self," conceived in asexual terms, is rapidly obliterating any trace of the sexual body. The ominously entitled volume in Kohut's honor, *The Future of Psychoanalysis*, edited by Arnold Goldberg (Goldberg, 1983) lacks discussion of sex, sexuality, the sexual body, or the body at all. A chapter called "The Phenomenology of the Self" (Meissner, 1983) contributed to this volume by Father W.W. Meissner, S.J., a prominent psychoanalytic theorist and anti-Reichian, is asexual; Meissner does not so much as mention the excellent phenomenological theory of the body by the philosopher Richard M. Zaner (Zaner, 1964, 1967, 1981). The program for the *Seventh Annual Self Psychology Conference*, held in Toronto on October 19-21, 1984, does not breathe a whisper of anything bodily or sexual in its numerous titles for paper and workshops, despite the fact that the focus of this Kohutian conference is given as "Questions and Controversies." Robertiello does not appear as a participant, nor did he contribute to Goldberg's anthology on Kohut's theory. Robertiello's book itself has attracted no attention in the psychoanalytic literature.

There is one interesting exception, however, to the general pattern of desexualization among those theorists dealing with Kohut's innovations. In the volume entitled *Kohut's Legacy* (Stepansky and Goldberg, 1984), Joan A. Lang (1984) takes up the theme of gender identity in the light of Kohut's work. Lang notices that the psychology of the self thus far lacks any specific treatment of gender identity, and locates the source of the omission in the theory's "deemphasis of drives and instincts," as well as in Kohut's unexamined assumption that "sex and gender differences" are fairly obvious biological matters (Lang, 1984, pp. 52-53). Although Lang is correct to deny that obviousness, she makes a dubious choice of empirical evidence for her own point of departure regarding the sexual body. For her, it is "clearly demonstrated" that gender identity is fixed within the child by the age of eighteen months, "in conformity with parental beliefs about their child's sex, regardless of the chromosomal reality" (Lang, 1984, p. 53). But is this actually a clearly demonstrated fact? Lang cites in support the work of Stoller (1968) and Money and Ehrhardt (1974), but as I have argued in "The Adult Sexual Body" (above), the conclusion that gender identity is fixed in accordance with parental beliefs is by no means warranted in view of more recent studies, such as that of Imperato-McGinley et al. (1979). A closer look at research on

gender identity and chromosomal factors might have made Lang hesitate in reaching her conclusion that the gender of the parent who serves a "mirroring" function for the infant, usually the mother and therefore female, should not make any difference. Either parent could serve equally as "mirror" or as idealized "selfobject," Lang suggests, and she holds that Kohut supplies no impediment in theory toward this position (Lang, 1984, p. 68). Although I would not accept her reasoning, based on a different perception of the relevant research evidence, I do not wish to dismiss Lang's tentative effort to relate Kohut's theory of the self and the sexual body. Once the problem has been broached, and the theory of the self has been opened to the range of evidence available in research on sexuality, then a major step toward giving the perspective of the sexual body its due has been taken. Any errors of fact and disputes over the interpretation of fact will be resolved, given sufficient investigation and granting a recognition of the incompatibilities of differing world hypotheses.

There are also a few rumblings of discontent in another recent volume devoted to the psychoanalytic theory of empathy, with an emphasis on Kohut's pioneering work in this problem (Lichtenberg, Bornstein, and Silver, 1984). Although 13 of the 15 essays in the volume seem to be quite devoid of any interest in sexuality or the human body, the remaining two essays form an interesting contrast. In one of these, on the topic of infantile experience, Virginia Demos warns that feeling is still important; affect must be given a central role in the understanding of infancy, and we may be making a mistake in expecting that the concept of "empathy" will allow us to remain in touch with affect (Demos, 1984). The other dissenting essay is by William Condon, whose controversial work on the synchrony between infant body movement and adult speech I have discussed in Chapter Six (Condon and Sander, 1974a, 1974b). In his contribution to this volume on empathy, Condon argues eloquently for a consideration of "communication" as something more than the transmission and processing of "information bits" (Condon, 1984, p. 56). But it is plain from the tone and context of this essay that Condon is arguing as an outsider whose ideas have little connection with those of the other contributors, except for that of Demos. Nonetheless, the inclusion of these two essays may prove fruitful to the development of a sexual body perspective within Kohutian theory.

Kohut's own last essay on a recognizably sexual body topic, "A Reexamination of Castration Anxiety" (Kohut, 1984, pp. 13-33), is a disappointment, a disembodiment. No one would guess, while reading this essay, that castration anxiety contains a fearful reference at some point (unconscious or not) to the male sexual organ which is threatened with being cut off. Instead the anxiety is neatly placed within a succession of defects in internalized "selfobjects" (representatives of the person's human surroundings and "available to him as sources of idealized strength and calmness" [Kohut, 1984, pp. 51-52]). Castra-

tion anxiety is given its theoretical position in that developmental succession, as is every other sort of crisis, trauma, or neurosis. Not that this is an error. If one grants the basic theory of Kohut's "self," there is no choice but to so place castration anxiety—but the excision of the sexual body does not necessarily follow as a consequence of the theory. In practice, there could be much more attention to the sexual body than within the theory, as Kohut himself showed through most of his career as therapist; but in theory there will have to be a revision which explicitly restores the self to its sexual body connections. Otherwise Kohut's followers will find themselves outside of the psychoanalytic Freudian tradition, operating with a set of concepts that are "above it all," or with too much of a "good thing." Like all adherents to the innumerable split theories of human life referred to by Dewey, they have already come to regard "the higher and ideal things of experience" as essentially disconnected from the flesh (Dewey, 1934, p. 20). In this mind-body split they would find affinity with other psychoanalytic theorists of the present, however. It has been observed that M. Masud R. Khan, the psychoanalyst who has attempted to deny the importance of the recent challenges to current orthodoxy, "considers the self to be an almost mystical source of strength" (Gordon, 1983). And as Gordon points out, there is a fundamental difference with Freud in Khan's attitude. The current orthodoxy thus defends something that Freud would not have recognized, a self beyond the sexual body.

*The Case of the Brief "Peck": Theoretical Implications*

Kohut's case history material does more than counter his tendency to direct his theoretical efforts away from the problematics of the sexual body; his clinical vignettes are full of suggestions, often implicit or unstated, for further thought regarding the nature of psychosexuality. One such case, discussed in Kohut's last book (1984, pp. 156-160), provides an especially rich context for speculation about the place of the sexual body within self-psychology. This is the case of a man in his mid-forties who repeatedly brought up a certain childhood memory in his analytic sessions with Kohut. The patient had been a very lonely child; once his parents moved from a small town to Chicago, when the boy was four or five years old; here the boy no longer enjoyed "the lively company" of either adults or children. From that point on, his parents were largely absorbed in their professional careers (Kohut, 1984, pp. 156-157). The vivid memory in question is one that moved Kohut; it had "great poignancy" for him (p. 57). It made him feel "a stirring of compassion" for the patient, and this access of emotion in the therapist disrupted the therapeutic quality of empathy which Kohut believed to be essential (p. 157). The memory consisted of "a single, vivid image" of the patient's mother (p. 157), but the father who also was recalled as part of the context of this image, was very important for the meanings which emerged from it. Kohut describes the patient's key memory as follows:

> Dressed up as Madame Pompadour, she [the patient's mother] was giving him a quick goodbye kiss—a "peck," as he called it—carefully avoiding closeness so as not to disturb her elaborate makeup and wig, and then leaving him quickly for a costume ball despite the fact that he was quite sick with high fever and the measles that evening. (Kohut, 1984, p. 157)

The father, who had been waiting outside the child's room, was "dressed up as a knight" (p. 159); evidently the child did see him even though he did not join the goodnight kiss or "peck."

One of Kohut's major points regarding the interpretation of this seemingly bizarre image is that it did not fall into place in a classical Freudian schema: the patient's vivid scene in memory might have turned out to be a screen memory masking deep Oedipal conflicts (p. 158), but no such meaning emerged. On the face of it, the patient's memory might well have been a "moment that bore witness to his early emotional deprivations" (p. 159), but this commonsense idea also turned out to be quite mistaken in the network of associations and psychological needs which the patient came to explore.

The memory kept recurring, even after Kohut had attempted to get the patient past it, and into presumably more significant material, by communicating his compassionate "emotions" to the patient (p. 157). No progress was made until Kohut asked himself why he had felt such compassion in connection with the telling and re-telling of the memory of the "peck." Once Kohut did change his focus to a self-analytical one, he noticed that the memory had an affective context, one in which the body language was important:

> I began to notice . . . that the memory was very vivid, that it stood out in bright colors, so to speak, against the gray-on-gray dreariness of his accounts of lonely childhood masturbation and masturbatory eating. And I was also able to notice that the patient's mood and tone of voice were not depressed when he told of his mother's early leaving. On the contrary he described her in her exciting costume and the waiting father in his knight's outfit with a degree of vitality and pleasure that was completely absent from the accounts of this otherwise dreadful period of his life . . . . (Kohut, 1984, p. 158)

These affective clues did not prove deceptive. What was so valuable for the patient in this memory was a feeling of joyousness in the context of his parents' celebratory mood. The "peck" was an essential component of the cherished image. This memory was not exactly one of having been happy, but it was perhaps the next best thing: it was "a moment in his life from which he tried to derive strength and vitality . . ." (p. 159). Contrary to Kohut's conventional psychoanalytic expectations, the memory did not collapse into, or serve as the denial for, a meaning quite the opposite of its joyous feeling-context; it really did seem to be this patient's psychological equipment for survival and even the nucleus for the development of psychological health. The fact that his parents could be felt, in this one vivid image, as being together and vital was the important thing. The costumes they wore gave their "imagoes" a twofold aspect (p. 159) which did not connote falsity for this

patient, but instead permitted the merging of their usual unaffectionate mode of relating to the boy with a greatly amplified sense of their vital union as parents. He could at least *attempt* "to derive strength and vitality from this image" (p. 159). It took many long years, however, before the potential value of this image could be brought to fruition in the context of the analytic situation. Kohut maintains that his ability to empathically understand and value the meaning of this patient's cherished image—and not the therapist's compassion—was what accounted for a decisive shift in the transference. The memory did *not* recur after this shift, and the man's analysis, Kohut reports, led "ultimately . . . to a result that I can without hesitation characterize as a cure" (p. 159).

The absence of the classical "Oedipal triangle" (p. 158) in this vignette is in one sense its theoretical point: It was not a matter of the instinctual drives of aggression and sex, but the needs of the human being struggling to develop as a self. However, the perspective of the sexual body would lead to the assumption that even without a preponderance of Oedipal dynamics, the self is significantly sexual. Here the key element may be the interpersonal constellation within the image of the boy's parents in joyous union and his own sense of himself as the child of such a union. I would suggest that Kohut is rediscovering, in the patient's progression through analysis, the importance of a particular kind of sexual fantasy, which has been described in another psychoanalytic case history dating from the year 1969.

In fact, Marion Milner's *The Hands of the Living God* (Milner, 1969) is probably the most detailed case history in the entire literature of psychoanalysis, and probably one of the longest case histories produced by any of the various psychotherapies. At the climax of the 16 years of Milner's treatment of her schizophrenic patient, Susan, was the key fantasy that the patient finally was able to create: a fantasy in which she had "loving parents in her inner world" (Milner, 1969, p. 337). Milner formulates the theory behind this creation as follows:

> Psychic health seems to be conceived of, unconsciously, as a state in which the two parents are felt to be in creative intercourse within the psyche. (Milner, 1969, p. 362)

Milner describes this fantasy as a "psychoanalytically-observed fact" (p. 362), but I do not think it has been observed at all frequently. It may have been discovered first by Milner herself insofar as it has had any recognition in the field of therapy. In any case, it is hardly a well-known theory. Kohut, in his vignette, seems to have rediscoverd the curative value of a fantasy that Milner found in her work, but one that she did not theorize as part of the dynamics of self-psychology.

Milner's reference to the "creative intercourse" of the internalized parents is phrased in language suggesting sexual union, while Kohut's description of

the couple includes the highly sexual image of Madame Pompadour, who is mirthfully involved with a "knight" who is "dressed up" but hardly armored. Milner, in another passage, seems to imply that the fantasy is one of procreation, though not simply of the birth of a child but of a capacity to create basic emotional well-being:

> The task of growing to maturity requires the capacity to set up inside one the fantasy of containing parents who love each other and can be conceived of as creating, in an act of joy and mirth. (Milner, 1969, p. 399)

In terms of Milner's formulation, the mature psyche must "contain" the pair of joyous, loving parents. Her suggestion of "joy and mirth" is not unlike Kohut's patient's perception in his memorable image of his parents dressed in party costumes, but with the complementary feeling of the parents being the ones who joyously contained him in their mirth. From the perspective of the present study we may postulate that the life-sustaining fantasy of Kohut's patient as well as that of Milner's patient contains a reference to the sexual body. It is not a representation of separate parental figures in isolation but of loving parents whose relation implies positive sexual feelings for each other, in fact with each other. Although Kohut was right not to find this fantasy a screen memory for Oedipal conflicts, he is misleading in his apparent assumption that he is dealing with the dynamics of the nuclear self and its "selfobjects" without reference to sexuality.

It should be acknowledged that Milner's patient may warrant the use of Milner's descriptive phrase, "parents who love each other," insofar as her fantasy is concerned, whereas Kohut's patient may only have been able to lay claim to a fantasy of parents who enjoy each other and who include him in their joy during the intense duration of the experience recalled repeatedly in his memory. In the Milner case history, one therapeutic goal was to develop the enabling fantasy of mutally loving parents who create in joy and mirth, while in the Kohut case history, the object was not to create, but to focus empathically upon a fantasy the patient had already developed but which could not function adequately in the interests of the patient's own psychological health until that fantasy was incorporated into his analytic process. Susan, Milner's patient, assuredly did not have any better childhood experience than did Kohut's patient, even though there were many ways in which the two childhood life narratives were not comparable. Despite the considerable differences between the two cases, both histories can be interpreted as evidence that a minimum of affectionate somatosensory contact with the parents during early childhood was vital for the creating of whatever degree of joyous, self-regulated functioning these patients finally were able to attain. The Kohut case vignette is especially interesting theoretically for its suggestion of how one, seemingly very slight, episode of the "peck" could become the effective source for survival, and later in life, for the "cure" which Kohut is able to

report. A process of "amplification" of affect (Tomkins, 1980) must have taken place. What these two cases suggest is that in psychoanalysis the therapeutic goal is defined by the capacity of a patient to successfully amplify certain prized or cherished emotional experiences of the sexual body after recalling them to consciousness. This statement of a goal implies that if either Kohut's or Milner's patient had had *adequate* affectionate somatosensory contact during infancy and childhood, it would not have been necessary for them to fall back upon their capacity for the amplification of affect in order to bring themselves to maturity. Amplification is in this context a kind of survival mechanism. It is in this context also a process which requires that there be some genuinely joyous affect which may be amplified; in other words, if Kohut's patient had never experienced anything like the "vital" pair of parents who came into affectionate somatosensory contact with him, even in the minimal form of the "peck," then he would not have been able to progress in his therapy nor in his maturation as an adult. The sexual body basis of health may be glimpsed in these two cases, not in the straightforward sense outlined by Prescott (1979), but in a therapeutic context. From the perspective of the sexual body, the "peck" received by the little boy was essential for his development of what Kohut calls his "nuclear self" (Kohut, 1984, p. 159).

The vignette of the little peck suggests questions for all three of the theories discussed in the present chapter. How does some semblance of "attachment" occur finally, through therapy, when in fact during most of the duration of the childhood of Kohut's patient, such bonding was not in evidence? How does the information processed through this vivid image of the body briefly kissed by his costumed mother become transformed into a life-sustaining fantasy? Perhaps there is significance in the fact that the scene occurred during a time of illness, in which the little boy was "quite sick with high fever" and with the measles (Kohut, 1984, p. 157). This situation may have been one that produced an especially receptive bodily condition, and an amplifying process might have been activated by the fever. For Kohut's self-psychology, some problems might be to understand how the nuclear self incorporates an image of the joyous parental couple, and why it is important that there be an implicit (or explicit) sexual connection between the two members of this couple.

## Ethology, Information Processing Theory, and Self Psychology: Current Biases and Long-Term Prospects for the Sexual Body

There seems to be no serious reason why any of the three major revisions in psychoanalytic theory discussed in this chapter could not begin to incorporate a great deal of increased consideration regarding the sexual body. Such biases and omissions as I have brought out in each of the three point to current fissures which cause these theories to lose contact with the sexual body, but

there is no reason to regard these fissures as central. Bowlby may have chosen a relatively asexual version of ethology on which to model his theory of attachment; Peterfreund may have been overconfident that he need pay no heed to energy consideration; and Kohut may have succumbed, finally, to the traditional temptations of the theory of the self, namely to erect the theory at a level where it can have no contact with the biological human organism.

These are serious faults and should be recognized as such by any who are concerned that the psychoanalytic tradition continue to speak for the complexity of the sexual body, no matter how professionally embarrassing or institutionally inconvenient it may be to carry on the tradition of Freud. But the faults may be corrected in future revisions of these three theories. The three constitute a group of extraordinary efforts to align psychoanalysis and science. Nor is it science in some futile "quest for certainty" (Dewey, 1929b) that these theorists have in mind. Kohut's interest in the problem of the analyst's active participation in the clinical evidence that his theory values so highly, places his self-psychology within the manifold of projects which recognize that theories are creative constructs. Yet Kohut's self, Peterfreund's conscious and unconscious information processing, and Bowlby's ethologically grounded theory of basic human emotional attachment all stumble continually against a number of unavoidable problems concerning the sexual body. An encouraging recent development is Peterfreund's own honest report of his patients' frequent complaint, during follow-up interviews conducted years after analysis, that far too little attention had been paid to their sexual problems (Peterfreund, 1983; see also Whitman, 1984, p. 383). Perhaps this report indicates the beginning of a change in emphasis in which the sexual body will again begin to receive attentions from some branches of psychoanalysis. While the obvious recommendation of this chapter would be to focus upon sexuality in all three of the theories, I am well aware that psychological theories are most often prized precisely because they do not get very close to the body or to sex at all.