

## CHAPTER THREE

# ANALOGUES OF ORIGINAL SIN: THE POSTULATE OF INNATE DESTRUCTIVE AGGRESSION

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In an earlier article, I have given my account of how it came about that Freud, through his deep loyalties to cultural authority, took steps to water down, and finally to reverse, his early emphasis on the sexual body (Efron, 1977). As a theory, psychoanalysis did not come firmly under the influence of this reversal until the 1920's, and at first only uncertainly, through Freud's postulation of a death instinct (Freud, 1920a). The theory of a death instinct is speculative, and it remains in unclear status within psychoanalytic thought today. It is not necessary to discuss it as such, but the issue it raises is important because the postulation of an innately destructive "instinct" of some general description is necessary if the implications pointing toward sexual freedom in Freud's work of the classical period are to be negated. Today, probably the bulk of writers who accept psychoanalytic assumptions believe that there is an "aggressive" instinct, and that Freud assumed so too. However, the derivation within Freud's theorizing of this aggressive instinct is dubious. As the highly perceptive volume on psychoanalytic terms by Laplanche and Pontalis (1973) notes, Freud had explicitly *rejected* the idea of an aggressive instinct during his classic phase; as these authors also point out, even the death instinct theory of 1920 does *not* rest on data that bear a relation to "aggressive behavior" (pp. 17, 19). Freud of course had an awareness of the reality of aggression in all of his work, but Laplanche and Pontalis are not persuasive in their tacit suggestion that this early practice was but an unexplicit formulation of the later theory of aggression, which Freud had had in

mind all the while he actually was stressing the libido, a form of life instinct. Stepansky (1977) has offered an elaborate justification of another kind: Freud had plenty of evidence at hand for the aggressive instinct prior to 1920, but he kept refusing to allow it any theoretical resonance, for reasons determined by Freud's own psychological needs. For a long time, according to Stepansky, Freud needed to "celebrate the triumph of the libido theory" (Stepansky, 1977, p. 111), and when Freud did begin to comment on the possibility of aggression as an instinct, he did so in the context of repelling Alfred Adler's attempt to re-center psychoanalysis on a theory of aggression which denied the primacy of sexuality (Stepansky, 1977, pp. 112-142). On the other hand, it could be that Freud knew what he was doing; it may be true, as the distinguished psychoanalyst Gregory Rochlin (past President, Boston Psychoanalytic Society) has claimed, that Freud concentrated on infantile sexual conflicts and "chose to withhold psychoanalytic consideration" of aggression and of anything else that might blur his focus upon "conflicts which were plainly and immediately sexual" (Rochlin, 1973, p. 74). If so, it is a sign that he knew what he wanted to emphasize.

Freud's move toward understanding aggression as an inherent destructive *Aggressionstrieb* is far from clear on theoretical grounds. Indeed there are clearer statements in the later Freud of a need to *propose* such a theory of aggression than there are on what it really is supposed to be (Rochlin, pp. 11-12, 104). By 1930, Freud, in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, was reverting to notions of the "natural wickedness of man" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1973, p. 20), which were soon to obscure his own originality. Still worse, his innovative suggestions about aggression, when they finally were made, called for a linkage of libido with death and aggression: a portion of the death instinct "is placed directly in the service of the sexual function, where it has an important part to play. This is sadism proper. Another portion . . . with the help of the accompanying sexual excitation . . . becomes libidinally bound" within the human organism, as "erotogenic masochism" (Freud, 1924, pp. 163-164). This passage, cited as the central one on the topic by Laplanche and Pontalis (1973, p. 19), is complicated and full of problems in meaning. These need not be taken up in the present context: the issue I wish to address is that of overall theoretical direction. Freud not only moved his theory significantly close to an endorsement of the reality of an *Aggressionstrieb*: he also blurred the critique of authoritarian controls over sexuality by bonding sex with aggression, in the formulations just quoted. This bond is much regretted by Rochlin (p. 12), who sees no scientific warrant for it. However, later psychoanalytic theory on this issue after Freud is not any better; one must agree with Rochlin's observation that "Nowhere in psychoanalysis have concepts been founded on less clinical study or given over more to polemics than in the area of aggression" (Rochlin, 1973, p. 179).

Recent thinking on aggression from non-psychoanalytic disciplines would

seem to leave the issue moot. Mary Midgley (1978) has argued from a sociobiological perspective that the high incidence of intraspecific killing in humans, in other words warfare, makes it absurd to deny the existence of innate destructive aggression. When it comes to evidence not based on this deductive argument, however, Midgley has little to offer, nor does she try to explain how it can be that some societies do not make war. The directors of the Center for Research on Aggression, located at Syracuse University, on the other hand, maintain that there is *no* evidence for the theory of innate destructive aggression. Their recent anthology of studies on aggression in cultures all over the globe is a model for their approach, which is to study aggression in its many specific cultural contexts without adopting any empirically dubious doctrines about instinct (Goldstein and Segall, 1983).

For psychoanalysts of liberal persuasion, such as Rochlin or Milton Klein (1981b, discussed above), the problem is one of an unfortunate discrepancy between psychoanalytic theory and empirical findings. Rochlin discusses at some length, in fact, the dubious status of "aggression" as an instinct in ethology at all (pp. 52-83). The issue however is more loaded emotionally than such a critique would suggest. The attribution of aggression in some innate, destructive form to human nature places psychoanalytic thought within the many cultural traditions of body-denigration and sexual repression that it initially had broken away from. If Freud was still somewhat hesitant about how to resolve the problem as late as 1937 (as Rochlin shows, 1973, p. 12), later major innovators generally have not been. Melanie Klein—who is credited by J. Bowlby (1980c, p. 384) as being the only theorist after Freud to succeed in bringing about major alteration in the psychoanalytic view of anxiety in infancy—is the key figure here.

The actual attribution of destructive innate aggression to infants came mainly from her. Heinz Kohut, tacitly recognizing her importance, states that what Melanie Klein had called the "paranoid position"—a construct that has become one of the most successful theoretical moves toward making aggressive destruction innate from the age of 3 months or so—does not "constitute the emergence of elemental, primary, psychological givens. . ." (Kohut, 1980, p. 121). Kohut, in denying the innate destructive aggression theory of human nature, was articulating a position which had by his time become unorthodox. (We will examine his views and their bearing on the problem of the sexual body in a later chapter.) Klein, however, claimed that the infant's "position" in very early psychological development had to be paranoid (Klein, 1948c) and her claim has been accepted by many psychoanalytic writers since her contributions. For her as for most later theorists, the mother is assumed to be one who will either reflect or threaten the infant's total dependency. Her existence as an autonomous woman separate from the body of the infant must be perceived first of all as a threat to the infant's self. At 6 months or even at 3 months, the infant will realize the danger of being separated, and will imme-

diately fantasize the sadistic destruction of the mother who brings this threat.

The implications of such an approach for an underlying theory of human nature are brought out in a statement by Klein's disciple, John Arnold Lindon. Lindon, who wrote the article on Klein for the volume *Psychoanalytic Pioneers* (Lindon, 1966), was President of the Psychiatric Research Foundation at that time. He got "great help", he said, from Melanie Klein herself, in writing his piece. His assumptions about human nature are clear:

The superego begins to operate, in Klein's opinion, much earlier than it does according to Freud's views. From babyhood on, the perceived parts of the mother—and soon the perceived parts of other people in the child's surroundings—are taken into the self as part objects, forming the basis for a variety of identifications, favorable and unfavorable. In the fifth or sixth month of life, with the increasing integration of the ego, the infant begins to realize, at first only intermittently, that the gratifying objects he needs and loves are aspects of the frustrating ones he hates and, in fantasy, destroys. He has matured to the point of perceiving whole objects.

With this discovery, he begins to feel concern about these loved objects, for he cannot yet distinguish between his fantasies and their lack of actual effects. He experiences feelings of guilt and the urge to preserve these objects and to make reparation to them for harm done. . . . Feelings of guilt, such as occasionally arise in everyone, have very deep roots in infancy, and the tendency to make reparations plays an important role in one's sublimations and object relations. This leads to a completely new approach to the understanding of Adam and Eve's original sin and guilt. (Lindon, 1966, p. 370)

I should say that this view of the neonate's mind gave not just a new understanding but a new lease on life to Sin and Guilt, as innate primary human qualities.

Klein herself minced no words. The child's sadistic fantasies directed against the inside of the mother's body "constitute the first and basic relation to the outside world and to reality" (Klein, 1948b, p. 238). I would certainly not want to deny that young infants can and do have passionate emotions, and that given the right circumstances, these could be sadistic in quality. But Klein believed that these were the feelings that make up the first and basic relation to the world.

The possibility of certain personal unconscious determinants should not be overlooked for Klein's disposition to arrive at these findings. Her life-history is seldom mentioned in the literature. The recent memorial papers on Klein in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* are silent regarding her psychological conflicts, despite some biographical information and laudation (Joseph, 1983). In fact, Klein (1882-1960) had an unusually stressful childhood and adolescence in which two of her siblings died. Both were extremely significant to her emotional development. Her sister Sidonie, who was 4 years older than Melanie, died at the age of 9. "Sidonie was bedridden for a year before her death and spent a great deal of her time teaching Melanie what she knew" (Lindon, 1972, p. 33). Melanie also had a close relationship with her brother, Emmanuel, who was 5 years older than she; he encouraged her to believe in

her creative and intellectual capabilities, especially in music and literature, the fields of his interest. However, he had a heart condition and died at 25, when Melanie was 20 (Lindon, 1972, pp. 33-34). At 21, Klein married, perhaps partially in an effort to protect herself from the loss she must have felt. The marriage caused her to give up her ambition to study medicine, a goal she had set at the age of 14, and one which she always regretted not having pursued (Lindon, 1972, p. 34). The marriage ended in 1923 after the period of Klein's first deep immersion in psychoanalytic therapy as both analysand and analyst. She did not remarry. Her further analysis with Karl Abraham ended in 1925, after 14 months, when he suddenly died. Shortly after this further trauma, she moved to England (Lindon, 1972, p. 36; cf. Segal, 1980). This life-history indicates a special vulnerability to the threat of death to loved ones, and suggests a need to defend against such fantasies. It would be no surprise if her theories were a major part of her defense.

At a formal, professional level, Klein derived her theory from the kind of evidence that Kohut takes as essential to psychoanalysis, from prolonged empathetic clinical immersion. But the immersion was in the context of her specialty, child analysis. Without questioning this sort of evidence, we must still question the derivation. Klein could not psychoanalyze anyone 3 months or 6 months of age. Her work was one of hypothetical reconstruction in that respect. How did Klein determine that the environmental setting was not basically the energizing force behind the sadistic fantasies?

In a lecture given to U.C.L.A. students in 1962, D.W. Winnicott (1965, p. 117) admitted that in his opinion Klein's low estimate of environmental factors did not stem from the facts, but from her bias. He said that she formally acknowledged the role of the environment, but she was just not capable, personally, of taking it into account. Winnicott should have added, however, that her writings often show what can only be called a deep hatred of infants, possibly revealing a projected hatred of herself. Consider for example the following assertion: "In the very first months of the baby's existence," Klein wrote in 1934, it wants to destroy the mother's body "by every means which sadism can suggest" (Klein, 1948c, p. 282). Or, to take a statement from 1930, the baby wants "to possess himself of the contents of the mother's body and to destroy her by every weapon which sadism can command . . ." (Klein, 1948b, p. 236). The language chosen here is significant. When we speak of "every weapon which sadism can command" we are evoking everything from whip to torture chamber. It is a way of blurring the small range of weaponry at an infant's disposal, such as biting, into that whole manifold. The image suggested, of a tiny infant imagining and employing sophisticated torture apparatus, is transparently the fantasy of an adult, laid onto a baby. This baby—a theory-maker's artifact—is credited implicitly with an ego capable of the foresight needed to plan a course of elaborate torture. The same artifact however is not credited with the native intelligence to discern that its mother

and itself are centered in two separate bodies, and thus to avoid the "paranoid position" entirely.

Such little monsters can not be handled too firmly. In the case history of Erna, a six year old described in Klein's 1926 essay, "The Psychological Principles of Infant Analysis," we learn that the little girl's neurosis dated from her period of toilet training. "This training, which Erna had felt as a most cruel act of coercion, was in reality accomplished without any sort of harshness and so easily that, at the age of one year, she was perfectly clean in her habits" (Klein, 1948a, p. 148). The child was only disturbed because of "the heavy blow" to her narcissism which struck her "when she imagined" that this training "meant the loss of the excessive affection bestowed on her in infancy" (*ibid.*). Needless to say, the "in reality," the "excessive" and the "imagined" are Klein's value judgments. Klein's value terms might have signalled a serious problem in her approach, but the essay on Erna went on to become the basis for the first chapter of Klein's book, *The Psycho-Analysis of Children* (1932).

Practical problem masks theoretical conclusion. It is so hard to know what an infant is fantasizing that the effort to guess at it has a necessarily privileged space, if theory is going to try to know this material at all. The psychoanalytic theorist is characteristically drawn to make such a guess, as her or his assumptions draw the analyst more and more deeply into suppositions on the earliest states of mind in an infant, those states which may underlay all future intrapsychic conflict. Here the analyst is unable to take the safe path of the behavioral psychologist and simply leave the unobservable alone. The result of such guesswork, however, may indicate at least one thing reliably: the kind of thinking the psychoanalyst was doing, when the topic was actually human nature itself, rather than any neutral description of a psychological process.

Melanie Klein encountered opposition in her years in England, but the battles she and her followers fought with classical analysts could not overcome her basic predisposition to credit all pathology to the innate workings of the mind. Ernest Jones, who sponsored her in England and sometimes disagreed with her over the years, was too close to her in his presuppositions to offer a corrective: ". . . there is no danger of any analysts neglecting external reality," he announced in 1935, "whereas it is always possible for them to disregard Freud's doctrine of the importance of psychical reality" (Jones, 1935). What I have been attempting to show in this discussion of Klein, however, is not merely the privileging of internal reality, but its interpretation in accordance with a moral presupposition about human nature, namely that in the infant there can only be immaturity and a raw, selfish primordial ego, which must be broken, controlled, and directed into the standards of adulthood.

Winnicott's admission that Melanie Klein did not have the ability to take the environmental factors in child pathology seriously did not get into print until 1965. By 1975, when the Institute for Psycho-Analysis and Hogarth Press

re-issued Klein's *Narrative of a Child Analysis*, re-evaluation was more than due. This case of 10-year old Richard had originally come out posthumously in 1961. Its influence, however, dates back to the actual 93-session analysis that Klein did during a four-month time period during 1941. One reviewer astutely commented: ". . . the amazing closeness with which Klein followed every detail and verbalized her observations with attributions of motive and phantasy ['interpretations'] . . ." would have made little Richard unable to forget for a second that "he was not alone" (Padel, 1975). Padel found plenty of evidence that Klein read Richard's life selectively, in favor of her own preconceptions. As early as the second session, the boy seems to be trying desperately "to get her to let up a bit, to put a little space between them . . . ." She resolutely missed signals. Or so Padel thinks. Klein herself must have sensed something not going right, because in 1946, when she brought out the case of Richard, in a shortened version, she "inverted the sequence of material of the whole session and gave the impression of increasing closeness throughout it" (Padel, 1975, p. 799).

Melanie Klein was the founder of the British school of object relations, which remains perhaps the most influential of all psychoanalytic theories today. As theory, object relations is far too complex to be described in detail in the present study (cf. Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983, for an excellent descriptive and critical review of object relations theory). The point I want to bring out is a fatal instability in the theory due to the presence of a basic layer of sexual body hatred, deriving from the work of Klein, overlaid now with a language that does not deal with the body at all, except as providing imagery for the mental representations that permit object relations to be formed (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983, pp. 138-139). The instability is created, on the one hand, by the positive attitude that informs object relations thought with regard to the infant's social growth: "The object-relations theorists are exceptions among the majority of psychoanalysts in this vein. Their recognition of object-seeking bonding takes into account the infant's need for stimulation" (Cicchetti and Pogge-Hesse, 1981, p. 240). This seems to overcome Freud's inaccurate sense of infantile emotional life as a process of tension-reduction. But on the other hand, the object relation theorists follow Freud in emphasizing "the *disorganizing* effect of affect . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 237). The infant is locked within an endopsychic battle of good and bad "part objects" and good and bad mothers. The doctrine of part objects endows the body with the function of providing the imagery for a psyche that is inherently prone to split its emotional perceptions of the objects, that is to say the persons, to whom it relates. That these theories are not subject to practical empirical test is affirmed by Kline, in his careful review of all psychoanalytic evidence that could be accepted by psychologists of all theoretical persuasions (Kline, 1981, pp. 416-418). Not only is the supporting evidence a reconstruction on the part of the therapist rather than an observation which may eventually be con-

firmed, but there is scant chance of devising a confirmation or disconfirmation of any kind. We have a "body" in theory only: it can never be made palpable, and unlike the sexual body, it cannot give any trouble to theoretical constructs.

The legacy of Klein's highly negative body imagery was recognized by some of the later theorists, who did not want to follow her in that respect. Guntrip for example found that the infant could not in *any way* achieve a good relation to the mother's body, nor to its own, in Klein's theory: "I cannot see how, on Klein's assumptions, a baby can ever experience a really good breast at all" (Guntrip, 1973, p. 67). By "good breast," he refers to the "part object" that precedes full ego functioning, in Klein's theory, and it is inevitable that this part object, by virtue of its importance in development, and its inherent reference to the human female breast, is a theory of the body—the bad body, as Guntrip realizes. But working in the wake of Klein, Guntrip himself could only struggle to clean up this bad body, despite his best efforts to assert that object relations theory assumes a "psychosomatic whole" in its model of the infant (*ibid.*, p. 94). This infant was considered in such a way as to postulate a newborn wreck, hardly able to function in any way except irrationally, with virtually no cognitive capacities at all. Indeed Guntrip's defensive assertion that he never had meant to deny the psychosomatic whole, the mind-body unity in human infantile existence, is followed closely with another statement that separates the two, in a way that would cripple interdisciplinary research. The object relations theorist Fairbairn, whose theory Guntrip endorses, had a very clear idea of the problem; Fairbairn, says Guntrip,

clearly saw that just as biology studies somatic processes by methods that throw no direct light on our subjective personal experiences, so psychodynamic science studies the subjective personal experiences of the psychosomatic whole by methods that throw no direct light on biological processes. (Guntrip, 1973, p. 94)

This split in stance, while hedging on any formal rejection of mind-body relations, throws all the emphasis on psychological experience conceived as separated, for all practical intent, from biological knowledge. The various attempts of Fairbairn, Guntrip, and Winnicott to reformulate object relations so that it did not lead to a hatred of the sexual body, as it does in Klein's theories, fail to come to grips with the intractable nature of world hypotheses: Klein's writing could not be revised to make her theory come out on the side of life, without destroying her theory. In fact, the later theorists who have followed her have merely tempered her constructs while preserving their bias against instinct, biology, body, and sexuality. As Guntrip put it (1968, p. 129), the theory is very clear that the infant "*starting life with a primitive and undeveloped psyche, just cannot stand the loss of his object.*" In other words, the infant, nominally a psychosomatic whole, is actually a maladjusted entity,

whose imagined symbiotic delusory tie to his/her "object" (usually the mother) is just too terrible to give up, without necessarily incurring dangerously pathological hazards.

Among Klein's more revealing "adultomorphic" attributions (Schachtel's term, 1959) to the infantile mind, is the notion that the infant's destructive impulses and emotions "arouse persecutory anxiety in the infant," since the infant for reasons of perceptual and developmental immaturity must attribute these destructive feelings to others. Anxiety in early childhood she likewise attributes to "the child's fear of his own aggression, which he can only partially control" (Lindon, 1972, pp. 44, 47). As Lindon believably puts it,

The child is anxious about damage he does to himself by uncontrolled aggression (for example, in screaming fits) and about the harm he may do to others. (Lindon, 1972, p. 47)

This set of assumptions would do justice to a disturbed adult with a highly active conscience; the notion that screaming fits in children are replete with feelings of concern for the damage they may do to adults, is adultomorphism *par excellence*. Screaming fits can have more in them than aggression in any case—terror, for example. But it would not even be necessary for the object relations theorist to investigate "many apparently odd manifestations, such as inexplicable phobias of infancy" (Lindon, 1972, p. 49); these are conveniently regarded within the theory as part of the process of "working through" the depressive position already posited to account for them. The opportunity for psychological "artifact" here is virtually unlimited.

Melanie Klein's major rival in psychoanalytic thinking about children was Freud's daughter Anna. Anna Freud arrived in England somewhat later than Klein. As early as 1926, however, the same year that Klein came to England with the case of little Erna already completed, Anna Freud, later to be of the greatest importance in the development of English and American child analysis, lectured in Vienna on one of her own cases; that lecture would be reprinted in her book, *The Psycho-Analytical Treatment of Children* (1946). Miss Freud had been treating a six year old girl who eventually confided to her the content of her fantasies. These were of an anal nature. At first Anna Freud welcomed the patient's trust, but when it turned out that the child was going home and offering anal fantasies at the dinner table, and that her family had walked off in righteous disgust (and with dead silence), the analyst quickly reconsidered. Horrified, she reports that the child had gone on to abandon "all restraints in other respects as well. In a few days she had become transformed into a cheerful, over-bold and naughty child, by no means dissatisfied with herself" (A. Freud, 1946, p. 47). The child's guardian came to Anna Freud to complain. It is interesting that this girl's acting-out looked to her analyst like the giving up of "all" controls. Anna Freud now began to try

to undo what she terms her analytic "blunder." She put pressure on the girl to stop, and whenever the child lapsed into what Anna Freud calls "naughtiness and perversion," the analyst acted swiftly by deliberately throwing her back into the illness that had begun to be relieved: "there remained nothing for it but for me to bring about the neurosis again . . ." After several rounds of this, the little girl began acting properly. Such comportment seems to have been what her therapist, obviously frightened by her patient's new freedom, was most committed to uphold (A. Freud, 1946, pp. 46-49; cf. the revised translation, A. Freud, 1974, pp. 61-65).

Anna Freud, though justly honored for her continuation of her father's work, also, in some of her formulations, provides a good example of the body-hating tendency in later psychoanalysis. She carried this hatred not only into her theories on young children, but on into notions of adolescence as well. A remark of hers, not usually quoted, shows this clearly; it is from her most famous book, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*:

There is in human nature a disposition to repudiate certain instincts, in particular the sexual instincts, indiscriminately and independently of individual experience. This disposition appears to be a phylogenetic inheritance . . . (A. Freud, 1966, p. 157)

During puberty, when bodily maturation causes "a sudden accession of instinctual energy," this antagonism is brought to fruition, as "an active defense mechanism." We must pinch ourselves to see if we are awake here, so blatantly anti-sexual is Anna Freud's stance regarding adolescent sexuality. Her authority continued to be enormous in the further development of the psychoanalytic theory of human nature, as we can see from her being cited in 1972 by Albert J. Solnit, President of the American Psychoanalytic Association, as one who had safely settled the fact that there is an innate aggressive, destructive instinct.

The occasion of Dr. Solnit's statement was a survey on aggression by Dr. Leo Stone, published in the *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* (Stone, 1971). This extensive review of the scientific evidence for backing up the theory of innate destructive aggression concluded that *there simply was no such evidence to be had*: "I do not regard as proved, nor as pragmatically useful, the concept of primary or essential aggression." The next year, President Solnit went into action with a rebuttal, arguing politely that pragmatically—that is, in a "heuristic" sense—there was plenty of use for the assumption. With the aid of ridicule, Solnit also argued that Stone's caution, as well as the caution of Charles Brenner (1971) on extrapolating the evidence back into unanalyzable states of earliest infancy, was quite unnecessary. As far as Solnit was concerned Anna Freud had proven the assumption well enough in her comments on young children, over a period of nearly 50 years.

### Winnicott's Hatred of Infantile Sexuality

Probably the most influential descendant of Melanie Klein's object relations approach was the British psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott (1896-1971). He is widely credited with being a wise and reasonable man, concerned more with the child than with theory. The suggestion that he too carried on the psychoanalytic tendency toward hatred of the sexual body will undoubtedly be greeted with disbelief.

Winnicott did not repeat such giveaway formulations as that of the baby lusting after "every weapon which sadism can command." Winnicott for the most part was engaged in practical hospital work with children; his essays are full of sensitive comment, but little formal theory. It is said that during his 40 years at the Paddington Green Children's Hospital in London, he "had seen some 60,000 mothers and children" (Ramzy, 1977, p. xii). Unlike Klein he was able to say that "we deal with" reality "according to the way we have had reality introduced to us at the beginning" (Winnicott, 1957, pp. 171-172). Where Klein emphasized the "internal object," the mother image that the infant created in its own mind, Winnicott turned to what he called "the transitional object" as the key factor in early development. A "transitional object" such as a security blanket or teddy bear is a possession, but is not merely something "external" for the infant. Because the transitional object is never under "magical" or "omnipotent" control, it is crucial for the part the child can make it play in learning to get away from the world of totally infantile gratifications (Winnicott, 1971, pp. 10-11).

Despite these important differences with Klein, Winnicott worked largely within the same problematic to which Klein herself was drawn. His article of 1935, "The Manic Defence," is regarded as one of the earliest uses of Klein's theories, in fact (Winnicott, 1957). The theory that emerges from Winnicott's work, informally, and by deduction, is not saved from Klein's implications; it is only made unclear by his reluctance to engage in formal theory. Winnicott still assumes that the infant is unfit by birth for the world of reality, and therefore must be helped to reduce his or her wishes to "normal" proportions. Notwithstanding his realization that there must be a "facilitating environment" for the healthy maturation of the child, he took his stand squarely with the psychoanalytic pessimists, regarding the human ability to ever grow up no matter what the environment: in his popular book addressed to mothers and fathers, Winnicott (1964) wrote that "throughout life" there must always be an "essential dilemma" stemming from the fact that "even the best external reality is disappointing because it is not also imaginary, and although perhaps to some extent it can be manipulated, it is not under magical control" (p. 128). Such a statement about "even the best external reality" is loaded with unacknowledged metapsychological and metaphysical presuppositions. Winnicott is declaring that it is impossible to have a reality which is at

once external, an "object" such as Virginia Woolf's lighthouse, and also "imaginary," as that lighthouse also is, for the characters in her novel. Woolf assumed that it is not only possible but essential that any mature view of external reality be able to resonate to both the factual and the imaginary dimensions (Woolf, 1927). Why Winnicott thought this was impossible to do is far from clear, but perhaps it finally came down to an unrecognized metaphysical assumption, namely that what is "out there," external, is also inherently unsatisfying to the aggression-driven human nature that he believed in.

Despite his slight interest in formal theory, Winnicott knew that he was finally dealing with a worldview, not merely a psychology. As the process of decathecting the transitional object goes on over the years, the meanings of this object and other "transitional phenomena have become diffused, have become spread out over the whole intermediate territory between 'inner psychic reality' and the 'external world as perceived by two persons in common,' that is to say, *over the whole cultural field*" (1971, p. 5, emphasis added). Prior to such culturalizing, the infant is considered quite incomplete and incapable of experiential depth: "I repeat here," Winnicott wrote in his key essay, "The Location of Cultural Experience" (1971, p. 99), "a human infant must travel some distance from early experiences in order to have the maturity to be deep." Indeed, as Pruyser has argued, the infant postulated by Winnicott will travel all the way into the "public symbol systems" of the arts, literature, science and religion (Pruyser, 1984, p. 60). The infant by learning to play in his transitional space thus "slides out of playing into cultural experience of every kind," as Winnicott (1965, p. 188) put it. But what seems not to occur either to Winnicott or to Pruyser is that this slide may not be altogether a good thing: Not "every kind" of cultured imagination which the infant may develop is necessarily a healthy development. Winnicott could speak confidently of parenting as the process by which is "handed on . . . the whole torch of culture and civilization" (1965, p. 101). But the "whole torch" is exactly the problem: after Freud, after two World Wars, such blanket endorsement of civilized values is highly questionable. This problem is not a serious one for Winnicott or Pruyser, nor for Klein before them, because their implicit assumption remains that the infant, to start with, is so embedded in aggression and in irrational desire that an immersion in the norms of civilized culture is simply a moral necessity. That way alone does the infant eventually "have the maturity to be deep."

In denying that capacity to the newborn, Winnicott did not mean to say that the very early infant is lacking in strong feelings. It is merely that Winnicott rejects the value of these. Winnicott's profound connections with one of the most anti-bodily traditions in Western thought, that of Plato (or at least one major side of Plato) are revealed in another of his statements in his crucial essay on cultural experience. Implicitly, he moves toward his own

need, no doubt born of his own upbringing in a culture which has its own "contempt for the body, fear of the senses, and . . . opposition of flesh to spirit" (Dewey, 1934, p. 20) to devalue the sexual body of the child. Consider the implications of this statement in his discussion of childhood play: "It is to be noted that the phenomena that I am describing have no climax. This distinguishes them from phenomena that have instinctual backing, where the orgasmic [sic] element plays an essential part, and where satisfactions are closely linked with climax" (Winnicott, 1971, p. 9). The use of the term "orgiastic" is an interesting "slip" here, hinting at fears looming up. Discussing the role of instinctual gratifications, Winnicott declares it a "fact" that these pleasures are at the first stage of neonatal life "part-functions" (as Klein would have agreed), which would become "seductions"—a word italicized by Winnicott—unless they occur when the person has "a well-established capacity . . . for total experience . . ." (1971, p. 98). The infant obviously would not have this capacity as far as Winnicott was concerned. Quite as Plato might have put it, "It is the self that must precede the self's use of instinct; the rider must ride the horse and not be run away with" (Winnicott, 1971, pp. 98-99). The metaphor is modelled upon Plato's Charioteer in *The Phaedrus*, where an authoritarian Soul must rein in, and harshly reign over, the dark, wild horse of the body (see Reeves, 1958, pp. 34-37, 198-202). Winnicott's whole notion of the special psychological space in which play occurs and culture is elaborated, is premised on a denigration of the biological factors; he finds these factors hardly worthy of serious attention by psychology: "this potential space is a highly variable factor," whereas the actual world is largely pregiven, and unlike "personal or psychic reality" is "biologically determined . . ." (Winnicott, 1971, p. 103; see also p. 98).

It is in light of this suspicion of the instinctual life—and therefore of infants themselves—that we may understand the function of Winnicott's serious theory of the nature of play. There is no denying that his observations on the meaning of play are very sensitive. But play experiences are given their special value, according to his own words, by virtue of their nonresemblance to orgasm. Freud of course had shocked the world with his insistence that infants not only are sexual but that they have orgasms at the breast. But the "experiences called playing" which Winnicott emphasized, are "non-climactic"; psychoanalysts, he thought, have "failed" to give these as much importance as they have allotted to "the significance of instinctual experience and of reactions to frustration . . ." (1971, p. 98).

As Winnicott delineates the problem of infancy, both the costs of the frustration of instinct, and psychoanalysis' critical edge toward cultural demands that would call for such frustration, are devalued. Instead we have an emphasis on non-climactic play, which serves as Winnicott's version of the good white horse of obedience in Plato's metaphor. Now it is not especially evident that play has no climaxes; in fact Winnicott's most extensive case

history, that of a little girl nicknamed "the piggle" (to be discussed shortly), shows several references to "climax" in his play with this girl, and in the context of sexually loaded psychological contents, at that (Winnicott, 1977, p. 181). In a gross contradiction, Winnicott stipulates that playing has to be "spontaneous" in order to be developmentally valuable (1971, p. 51), but rules that it must not on any account involve genital arousal (p. 52).

We can hardly overestimate the importance to psychoanalytic therapy and theory of having one of its most prominent representatives, one who is greatly respected for his humanity and untheoretical practicality, base his major theories on the presumed unimportance of instinctual gratification and orgasm that infants have in their play behavior. So far as I can see, Winnicott never troubled to give evidence for his denial of such crucial bodily facts. It would seem that despite his reputation as an unfanatical, practical, modest man, Winnicott had engaged in a hatred of infantile sexuality every bit as serious as Melanie Klein's.

This hatred does reveal itself, in fairly undisguised form, in the case history of "the piggle." Beginning when the girl was 29 months old, the treatment continued for a total of 16 "on-demand" consultations, ending when she was five years old, in October, 1966. The parents of the girl add an affirming postscript dated 1975 (Winnicott, 1977, pp. 199-201). Nothing is said in this parental note of the adolescent's sexual development. The girl consented to the publication of the case history (p. 201). The care with which the case has been edited and published is much to be praised. The record comprised, however, is not entirely laudable. Things begin to go awry, I think, in the second session, where Winnicott decides to take a "risk" and interpose his own interpretation of a toy truck the girl was involved with: "I said: It's the mother's inside where the baby is born from" (p. 24). The girl agreed, and added a detail that must have fitted Winnicott's Kleinian theories of infant hatred of mothers: "Yes, the black inside" (p. 24). There is no telling whether this is part of the power of suggestion, nor what the girl's attribution might mean aside from the workings of Winnicott's procedure, inasmuch as the inter-play he has with the girl is a mesh of her initiatives and his theoretically conditioned counterplay.

In the 14th session, however, there is a most revealing occurrence. As Winnicott himself notes, it is here that the girl for the first time shows "evidence of potential capacity for genital enjoyment" (p. 184). He is referring to this part of the account:

She took a train with lots of wheels and enumerated the wheels, giving them colors. She fondled this engine lovingly and mouthed it and rubbed it across her thighs, and then over her head from back to front. This turned into a game, so that the engine came down over her face and fell onto the floor accompanied by a noise which had a climax. (p. 181)

It seems fair enough to say that the girl at this point is making contact with essential dynamic forces in her own sexual life. The moment is a fragile one, and would be valued by anyone who cared about sexuality. The remainder of this "consultation," however, provides just the opposite denouement. Her game-playing evolves toward an acting out of birth, or "the idea of being born," as Winnicott sees it (p. 183). After some transformations in the game, Winnicott reports that it took the following form:

Then I had to become a house, and she crept inside the house, rapidly becoming bigger until I could not contain her any longer and pushed her out. As the game developed, I said "I hate you," as I pushed her out. (p. 183)

Winnicott's statement of hate toward the child is all his own; nothing in the session warrants it. Hate had not been mentioned. The fact that hatred can be injected by her therapist into the little girl's profound fantasies about birth and the body, and that this injection follows upon the first evidence of genital gratification, is almost beyond comment. Sure enough, the girl's next feelings, immediately following the above sequence, are at once disturbed:

This game she found exciting. She suddenly got a pain between her legs and soon afterwards went out to pass water. (p. 183-184)

The pain is a genital one, Winnicott's euphemism notwithstanding. Would it have been there without his own "I hate you"? That question is more to the point than his own overlay of interpretation: "The climax of this [game] was getting in touch with the mother's need to be rid of the baby when it is too big. Associated with this is sadness about getting bigger and older, and finding it more difficult to play this game of being inside mother and getting born" (p. 183). These ideas may reflect Winnicott's idea of birth, and his own sadness; nothing of the kind is reported of the girl. The curious attribution of "climax" to an inferred, psychological construct also seems to reflect his own gratification. Winnicott had encountered genital sexuality in this girl and had succeeded in putting it into its rightful, painful and sad place.

In this he is following Melanie Klein, even though he is different enough from her not to be called a Kleinian (Lindon, 1972, p. 50). His negative attitude toward the sexual body is more important, for the present study, than are the various differences. Nor is the connection between Winnicott and Klein simply a problem of influence. As Lindon rightly points out, by the early 1970's, it had become clear that a large number of psychoanalytic theorists who were not Kleinians had come around to "conclusions that are similar to the most controversial ones of Klein," although they often failed to credit her (Lindon, 1972, p. 54). It could be said, in fact, that Margaret Mahler's theories of infantile autism and psychosis are more extreme even

than Klein's, since Klein never maintained that infants went through psychosis: they merely suffered from "transient periods of psychotic-like fantasies" (Lindon, 1972, p. 42).

The turn away from the sexual body in psychoanalysis had, by 1970, become one of its most widely shared assumptions. Fortunately there are significant qualifications to be made, in later chapters, of this conclusion. Something in psychoanalytic theory seems finally to reject the many continued efforts of its revisionists to make the sexual body an unimportant or even nonexistent entity.