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## THE POINTS OF VIEW AND ASSUMPTIONS OF METAPSYCHOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

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### I. ON THE PRESENT STATE OF METAPSYCHOLOGY

Freud first used the term metapsychology to indicate that his psychology deals with what is beyond the realm of conscious experience (1887-1902, p. 246). Later, however, he defined metapsychology as the study of the

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After this paper went to press we found a formulation by Edward Glover which parallels the major thesis we present here: "No mental event can be described in terms of instinct alone, of ego-structure alone, or of functional mechanism alone. Even together these three angles [dynamic, structural, economic] of approach are insufficient. Each event should be estimated also in terms of its developmental (ge-

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assumptions upon which the system of psychoanalytic theory is based (1917, p. 222). While metapsychological statements are scattered throughout Freud's writings, Chapter VII of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, the "Papers on Metapsychology" (fragments of a never-completed work; see Jones, 1955, pp. 184-187), and the "Addenda" to *The Problem of Anxiety* are our sources for reconstructing Freud's metapsychology.

These sources, however, do not fulfill the program implied in Freud's definition. They do not state systematically that minimal set of assumptions on which the psychoanalytic theory rests. Indeed, in all these sources propositions stating observations, theories, and underlying assumptions are closely interwoven. Systematic studies in metapsychology, however, will have to distinguish between empirical propositions, specific psychoanalytic propositions, propositions of the general psychoanalytic theory, and propositions stating the metapsychological assumptions.<sup>2</sup> In formulating the assumptions which follow here, we have avoided using specific psychoanalytic concepts. We are not yet in a position to present formal definitions of the terms used in stating these assumptions. We are, however, aware that without such definitions a set of assumptions is of limited value and that, indeed, some of the assumptions presented here are little more than covert definitions. Thus the formulation of the definitions will probably modify this statement of the assumptions.

At some point in the development of every science, the assumptions on which it is built must be clarified. Freud meant metapsychology to do just that for psychoanalysis. This justifies our attempt to state explicitly and systematically that body of assumptions which constitutes psychoanalytic metapsychology. We dwell on this justification because from the standpoint of daily clinical practice what follows here may appear to be an unnecessary, sterile, formalistic exercise. Yet a systematization of metapsychology is necessary, if only because the increasing use of the metapsychological points of view in the literature is often at odds with Freud's definitions, without the authors' justifying this or even indicating an awareness of it. Moreover, often only one point of view is made use of,<sup>3</sup> although accord-

netic] or regressional significance, and in the last resort should be assessed in relation to environmental factors past and present. The last of these criteria, namely the relation of the total ego to its environment, is the most promising of all. It suggests that the most practical (clinical) criterion of weakness or strength should be in terms of adaptation" (1947, p. 8).

<sup>2</sup> For instance: *empirical proposition*: around the fourth year of life boys regard their fathers as rivals; *specific psychoanalytic proposition*: the solution of the oedipal situation is a decisive determinant of character formation and pathology; *general psychoanalytic proposition*: structure formation by means of identifications and anti-cathexes explains theoretically the consequences of the "decline of the oedipus complex"; *metapsychological proposition*: the propositions of the general psychoanalytic theory which explain the oedipal situation and the decline of the oedipus complex

ing to Freud a metapsychological analysis is to describe a mental process in all its aspects, i.e., from all the points of view (Freud, 1915b, p. 181).

The three metapsychological points of view formulated by Freud—the dynamic, the topographic, and the economic—will guide us in our attempt to formulate the assumptions upon which the psychoanalytic theory rests. But these very points of view require reassessment.

While the topographical conception of the mental apparatus in terms of the systems *Ucs.*, *Pcs.*, and *Cs.* was superseded by the structural conception in terms of the id, ego, and superego, Freud never explicitly replaced the topographic point of view of metapsychology by a structural one. Though it remains necessary to distinguish between *Ucs.*, *Pcs.*, and *Cs.*, since these distinctions are the observational points of departure for all psychoanalytic theory, the term topographic should not be retained for these, because it still seems to imply that, contrary to Freud's final view, *Ucs.*, *Pcs.*, and *Cs.* are more than psychological qualities (Freud, 1915b, pp. 192-193; 1923, pp. 16-18; 1940, p. 38).<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, while the psychoanalytic theory is undoubtedly a genetic psychology, Freud apparently took this so much for granted that he saw no necessity to formulate a genetic point of view of metapsychology. It could be argued that the genetic point of view is not of the same order of abstraction as the three classical points of view, because every genetic proposition in the theory of psychoanalysis involves dynamic, economic, and structural relationships. But this argument fails to distinguish between psychoanalytic propositions (see p. 796, n. 2) on the one hand and metapsychological points of view and assumptions on the other. Even though in various psychoanalytic propositions one or another metapsychological point of view or assumption may be dominant, all psychoanalytic propositions involve all metapsychological points of view. Only the assumptions of metapsychology are independent from each other.

Finally, since Hartmann's and Erikson's studies of adaptation, it has become clear that psychoanalytic theory has always implied basic assumptions concerning adaptation, though with varying degrees of emphasis

<sup>4</sup> The readers and discussants of this paper expressed special concern about this point. Therefore we want to stress that we do not question the importance of these so-called "topographical" distinctions as the empirical points of departure of the psychoanalytic theory. However, we deny that they have a metapsychological status, since they are accounted for by dynamic and economic considerations as the sources referred to readily show. We consider this issue at greater length in an extended statement of metapsychology which is in preparation. (The extended discussion of this point is in Gill (1963). In the light of this discussion, we would, in this paragraph, have taken care to use "unconscious," "preconscious," and "conscious," instead of the systemic terms, "*Ucs.*," "*Pcs.*," and "*Cs.*," and would have said that the term "topographic" should be retained to describe the relationship of contents to consciousness. My monograph, which began as a collaboration with Rapaport, is the only part of the "extended statement" referred to here and later, that has been written. It deals with the issues we intended to write about more fully. See also Rapaport

only part of  
life in  
assumptions  
behind Freud's  
theories

3 pts of view

(Freud, 1915a, pp. 136, 140). So far, however, we have not had an explicit formulation of these assumptions or of an adaptive point of view in metapsychology. Moreover, there are still some psychoanalysts who refuse to recognize that the psychoanalytic theory does imply adaptive assumptions. They equate adaptation with adjustment, and fear that to take adaptive considerations seriously leads inevitably to the course taken by various schools of psychoanalytic thought who employ their enthusiastic discovery of environmental relationships for the purpose of defensive denial of drive and intrapsychic conflict. These psychoanalysts to the contrary notwithstanding, the question is not whether adaptive considerations form a part of psychoanalysis, but rather: Is the adaptive point of view of the same level of abstraction as the others? can it be considered "metapsychological" at all? or can the adaptive propositions of psychoanalysis be satisfactorily derived from the classical points of view which Freud, in his definition of metapsychology, conceived of in the context of a mental process without reference to environmental relations? An adequate discussion of this issue requires an analysis of the relation between behavior and mental process.<sup>6</sup> Here we shall assume that (a) psychoanalysis is a theory concerned with the explanation of those changes which we term behavior; (b) psychoanalysis assumes that all such changes have a psychological explanation (determinism); (c) a system of metapsychology must include the dynamic, economic, structural, genetic, and adaptive points of view.

Metapsychology proper thus consists of propositions stating the minimum (both necessary and sufficient) number of independent assumptions upon which the psychoanalytic theory rests. Metapsychology also includes the points of view which guide the metapsychological analysis of psychoanalytic propositions, both observational and theoretical. Here we will group the assumptions according to the points of view to which they pertain. Since, for the moment, the only test of the necessity, sufficiency, and fruitfulness of such assumptions is the demonstration of their role in familiar psychoanalytic propositions, we shall attempt to give such a demonstration on the propositions of the psychoanalytic theory of affects.

## II. POINTS OF VIEW AND ASSUMPTIONS OF METAPSYCHOLOGY

### (A) The Dynamic Point of View

#### (1) Definition

The dynamic point of view demands that the psychoanalytic explanation of any psychological phenomenon include propositions concerning the psychological forces involved in the phenomenon.

<sup>6</sup> This question was raised by almost every reader of the early drafts of this paper, and we consider it in the extended statement already referred to.

Discuss how when called for is metapsychology

PA assumptions

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Freud wrote:

Our purpose is not merely to describe and classify the phenomena, but to conceive them as brought about by the play of forces in the mind . . . which work together or against one another. We are endeavoring to attain a *dynamic conception* of mental phenomena [1916-17, p. 60].

dynamic forces

- (2) The assumptions and their significance
  - (a) There are psychological forces.

This assumption underlies, for example, all the propositions concerning drives, ego interests, and conflicts. It is significant because it implies that we can study these forces by psychological methods of observation, without recourse to an organic substrate.

This assumption does not distinguish between conscious and unconscious psychological forces, because that distinction is not an assumption but an inference from empirical observations, and is thus a proposition of the special theory of psychoanalysis but not of metapsychology (Freud, 1914, pp. 16-17).

The application of this assumption to the psychoanalytic theory of affects leads to the formulation of an often implied (A. Freud, 1936) but unstated psychoanalytic proposition: affect—like any other energy discharge—must be conceived of as the work of a psychological force, and thus the introduction of the concept of an affect force—in addition to the concept of drive—force—becomes necessary, and this, as we shall see, leads to the formulation of other implied but unstated propositions concerning psychological forces.

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- (b) Psychological forces are defined by their direction and magnitude.

This assumption underlies, for example, all the propositions concerning the strength of and the work performed by drives. It is significant because it postulates that in psychoanalysis, as in other sciences, all forces can and should be treated purely in terms of their magnitude and direction, and thus relegates propositions concerning the qualitative differences between psychological forces to the special theory of psychoanalysis. Freud wrote: "The simplest and likeliest assumption as to the nature of instincts would seem to be that in itself an instinct is without quality" (1905, p. 168).

The application of this assumption to the theory of affects indicates that the direction of the affect force is determined not by an external goal but by the affect-discharge channels, and that the magnitude of the affect force is determined not only by the magnitude of the drive force but also by the

<sup>7</sup> Quantitative considerations are involved in both the dynamic point of view (magnitude of force) and the economic point of view (quantity of energy), and it is perhaps for this reason that Freud (1915a) did not always distinguish them. For the argument that they are independent of each other in spite of the relationship between

threshold and capacity of these affect-discharge channels. Thus the application of this assumption leads to a new formulation: there are psychological forces whose direction is determined by goal-objects and whose work changes both the external and the internal environment, and there are psychological forces whose direction is determined by intrapsychic organization and whose work consists of altering the internal environment alone.<sup>6</sup>

(c) *The effect of simultaneously acting psychological forces may be the simple resultant of the work of each of these forces.*

This assumption underlies, for example, the propositions concerning conflict, ambivalence, and the relationship of drives in the id. It is significant because it postulates that under certain conditions, certain simultaneously acting psychological forces follow the simple composition law of vectorial addition of forces, and sets for the general theory of psychoanalysis the task of specifying the forces which do so and the conditions under which they do so.

The psychoanalytic propositions concerning ambivalent and mixed affects imply the assumption of the action of some affect-forces in accordance with a simple composition law.

(d) *The effect of simultaneously acting psychological forces may not be the simple resultant of the work of each of these forces.*

This assumption underlies, for example, the propositions concerning overdetermination, fusion, defusion, and the integration of pregenital partial drives under genital primacy. It is significant because it postulates that under certain conditions, certain drives acting simultaneously do not follow the simple composition law of vectorial addition and sets for the general psychoanalytic theory the task of specifying the forces which do not do so, the conditions under which they do not do so, and the composition laws which they follow instead. The fact that at present we have no such specifications indicates both the prematurity of this systematization and its heuristic potential: it shows that the concepts of instinct fusion and overdetermination are unclear, and it challenges a re-examination of the observations and the theory pertaining to them.

The psychoanalytic propositions concerning the genesis of discharge and overflow affects from the clash between drive forces and restraining forces (of structure), and those concerning the origins and effects of signal affects, imply the assumption of the action of affect forces according to laws other than that of simple vectorial composition.

## (B) *The Economic Point of View*

### (1) *Definition*

The economic point of view demands that the psychoanalytic explanation

of any psychological phenomenon include propositions concerning the psychological energy involved in the phenomenon.

Freud wrote:

[The] economic [point of view] . . . endeavours to follow out the vicissitudes of amounts of excitation and to arrive at least at some relative estimate of their magnitude [1915b, p. 181];

and

The economic, or, if you prefer, the quantitative factor,<sup>6</sup> . . . is . . . closely bound up with the pleasure-principle . . . [1933, p. 105].

These statements contain not only the formulation of the economic point of view of metapsychology but some of the economic assumptions also.

### (2) *The assumptions and their significance*

#### (a) *There are psychological energies.*

This assumption underlies, for example, all propositions concerning the effects of drive forces, since—by universal definition—the work of a force always expends energy. Its significance is akin to that of the assumption concerning psychological forces: it enables us to study the expenditures, displacements, and transformations of psychological energy, without first having to establish the physiological-biological energy which is its somatic substrate.

The relationship between force and energy stated above may suggest that we should reduce the economic to the dynamic point of view, or vice versa. But since forces, which (by definition) have a direction, cannot account for displacements and transformations, and energies which (by definition) are directionless quantities cannot account for directional phenomena, we need—just as physics does—both energy and force concepts.

All psychoanalytic propositions concerning affects imply this first economic assumption, since all affects involve displacement (e.g., discharge) of ENERGY.

#### (b) *Psychological energies follow a law of conservation.*

This assumption underlies, for example, all propositions concerning displacements of cathexes. It is significant because it serves both as a justification and a guide for tracing psychological phenomena to their causal roots: without the assumption of conservation, tracing the fate of cathexes in displacement processes would be meaningless.

The proposition that the amount of drive energy which is discharged in an affect varies directly with the amount of drive energy seeking discharge, and inversely with the amount of drive energy discharged through other channels, implies this economic assumption.

(c) *Psychological energies are subject to a law of entropy.*

This assumption underlies, for example, all propositions concerning mobile cathexis and primary process: it is the statement of the pleasure principle in general terms. It is significant because it makes superfluous the postulation of a constancy "principle" and a nirvana "principle," since these "principles" represent only the effects of the entropy (pleasure) principle operating under diverse structural conditions.

The conflict theory of affects, which conceives of them as emergency discharges, implies this economic assumption.

(d) *Psychological energies are subject to transformations, which increase or decrease their entropic tendency.*

This assumption underlies, for example, all propositions concerning neutralization (desexualization, deaggressivization) and binding, as well as de-neutralization (sexualization, aggressivization) and mobilization of catheses. It is significant because it conceptualizes the conditions under which energy does and those under which it does not seem to follow the law of entropy, and thus serves as the foundation for the explanation of the transition from the primary to the secondary process, and of the relationship between energy and structure in psychological phenomena.

The theory of signal affects, and Fenichel's propositions concerning the "taming" of affects, imply this assumption.

(C) *The Structural Point of View*

(1) *Definition*

*The structural point of view demands that the psychoanalytic explanation of any psychological phenomenon include propositions concerning the abiding psychological configurations (structures) involved in the phenomenon.*

This definition is our construction. Freud does not give a definition of the structural point of view,<sup>10</sup> and states only the necessity to replace the topographic point of view by the structural one:

... we land in endless confusion and difficulty if we cling to our former way of expressing ourselves and try, for instance, to derive neuroses from a conflict between the conscious and the unconscious. We shall have to substitute for this antithesis another, taken from our understanding of the structural conditions of the mind, namely, the antithesis between the organized ego and what is repressed and dissociated from it [1923, p. 17].

<sup>10</sup> ["Rapaport and I . . . [in "The Points of View and Assumptions of Metapsychology"] were in error in saying that Freud had never defined the structural point of view. We should have referred to his definition of the topographic point of view, . . . (1923, p. 17). I give a number of

(2) *The assumptions and their significance*

(a) *There are psychological structures.*

This assumption underlies the propositions concerning the id,<sup>11</sup> ego, and superego, those pertaining to the mental mechanisms, Hartmann's (1939) propositions concerning "apparatuses," and Erikson's (1950b) concerning "modes" and "modalities." Its significance is akin to that of psychological forces and psychological energies: it indicates that we are dealing with structures inferred from behavior, regardless of their organic substrate. This assumption implies that Hartmann's motor, sensory, and memory apparatuses are not somatic organs, but rather psychological regulations related to these organs (see Freud, 1900, p. 546).

The propositions concerning affect-discharge channels and thresholds—both inborn and acquired—and those concerning the structural segregation of affect-charge, imply this assumption.

(b) *Structures are configurations of a slow rate of change.*

This assumption underlies, for example, all propositions concerning character traits, defences, the "persistence of the past in the present," and those pertaining to fixed formations which are used by psychological processes as means (e.g., concepts, motor executive habits). It is significant because on the one hand it distinguishes structures from processes of a fast rate of change (e.g., discharge and reaccumulation of libido); and on the other it stresses the configurational character of structures and brings into focus the fact that psychological structures are abiding patterns in the flux of processes, from which we infer them.

The propositions asserting that affects are configurations of drive forces, restraining forces, discharge channels, etc., and the clinical propositions concerning the resistiveness to change of predominant, moodlike, and individually characteristic affect forms, imply this assumption.

(c) *Structures are configurations within which, between which, and by means of which mental processes take place.*

This assumption underlies, for example, all propositions concerning "interstructural" processes (e.g., conflicts) and "intrastructural" processes (e.g., synthetic function) and means- or executive-apparatuses. It is significant because it implies that the conception of displacements, transformations, and exchanges of energy, and the conception of the work of forces, involve structures.

The propositions concerning the origin and role of affects in interstructural conflict, the "intrastructural signal" theory of anxiety, and the propositions concerning the role of affect-discharge channels and thresholds in affect phenomena, imply this structural assumption.

(d) *Structures are hierarchically ordered.*

This assumption underlies, for example, all the propositions concerning . . . the ego, the id too is a structure.

the mutual relations of the id, ego, and superego, and Hartmann's (1939) propositions pertaining to the "rank order of ego functions." It is significant because it is the foundation for the psychoanalytic propositions concerning differentiation (whether resulting in discrete structures which are then coordinated, or in the increased internal articulation of structures), and because it implies that the quality of a process depends upon the level of the structural hierarchy on which it takes place (Rapaport, 1957).

Freud's (1926), Jones's (1929), and Fenichel's (1941) propositions concerning the hierarchy of affects imply this assumption.

#### (D) The Genetic Point of View

##### (1) Definition

The genetic point of view demands that the psychoanalytic explanation of any psychological phenomenon include propositions concerning its psychological origin and development.

Freud does not give a definition of the genetic point of view. However, he does imply it in his statement of the genetic character of psychoanalysis:

Not every analysis of psychological phenomena deserves the name of psycho-analysis. The latter implies more than the mere analysis of composite phenomena into simpler ones. It consists in tracing back one psychical structure to another which preceded it in time and out of which it developed. . . . Thus from the very first psycho analysis was directed towards tracing developmental processes. It . . . was led . . . to construct a genetic psychology . . . [1913, pp. 182-183].

The genetic point of view is also implied by his concept of the complementary series, which involves both constitutional-maturational and environmental-experiential factors:

. . . the relation between the two [factors] is a co-operative and not a mutually exclusive one. The constitutional factor must await experience before it can make itself felt; the accidental factor must have a constitutional basis in order to come into operation. To cover the majority of cases we can picture what has been described as a 'complementary series', in which the diminishing intensity of one factor is balanced by the increasing intensity of the other [1905, pp. 239-240].

Hartmann and Kris have come close to defining the genetic point of view:

The genetic approach in psychoanalysis does not deal only with anamnestic data, nor does it intend to show only "how the past is constituted." Genetic propositions describe why, in past situ-

#### (2) The assumptions and their significance

##### (a) All psychological phenomena have a psychological origin and development.

This assumption underlies, for example, all clinical psychoanalytic propositions which are not simply descriptive. It is significant because it distinguishes psychological phenomena from most physical and chemical phenomena, since it implies that psychological phenomena can be understood only by the study of their origin and development. This distinction does not imply that psychological changes are produced by forces other than those acting in the present, but that the forces which are effective in the present and their conditions of action can be inferred only by genetic study. However, autonomous structures and functions, though they too have a psychological history and origin, can be described and their effects can be predicted without reference to their history. Like the assumptions pertaining to psychological forces, energies, and structures, this genetic assumption too predicts that psychological origin and development can be dealt with without recourse to the somatic-physiological substrate. Even the effects of gross somatic changes can be treated in psychological terms.

The clinical propositions concerning the ontogenetic origins and history of affects imply this first genetic assumption.

##### (b) All psychological phenomena originate in innate givens, which mature according to an epigenetic ground plan.

This assumption underlies, for example, all the propositions concerning libido development, Hartmann's (1939) concerning autonomous ego development, and Erikson's (1950b) concerning psychosocial epigenesis. It is significant because it amplifies Freud's "constitutional" factor (" . . . an individual's first experiences in childhood do not occur only by chance but also correspond to the first activities of his innate or constitutional instinctual dispositions" [1905, p. 183]), and brings into focus the biological-maturational character of psychoanalysis as a science, setting it sharply apart from the learning theories whose emphasis is mainly or solely on experience.<sup>12</sup>

The propositions concerning inborn affect-discharge channels, Freud's theory of the developmental stages of anxiety, and Erikson's theory of the specificity of psychosocial stages for the development of shame and guilt, imply this assumption.

##### (c) The earlier forms of a psychological phenomenon, though superseded by later forms, remain potentially active.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The question has been raised whether or not this contrasting of psychoanalysis and learning theories is justified: learning theories too speak of biological roots of behavior, such as hunger, thirst, and sex. This contrast rests on the maturational implications of psychoanalysis and on the drive concept of learning theories which includes

This assumption underlies, for example, all propositions concerning regression, both pathological and in the service of the ego. It is significant because it justifies the use of pathological and exceptional phenomena for the exploration of the origin and development of normal and common phenomena.

Fenichel's (1941), Bibring's (1953), and Schur's (1953) propositions concerning regressive replacements of signal affects by ontogenetically earlier affect forms imply this genetic assumption.

(d) *At each point of psychological history the totality of potentially active earlier forms codetermines all subsequent psychological phenomena.*

This assumption underlies, for example, the propositions concerning the integration of previous psychosexual and psychosocial achievements under the primacy of the dominant, i.e., phase-specific, psychosexual and psychosocial tendency. (However, propositions concerning autonomous structures and functions do not imply this assumption.) It is significant because it implies that each integrate is determined by previous solutions (i.e., achievements) and that previous unsolutions may be remedied by subsequent integrations.

This genetic assumption is implied by the propositions of the theory of affects which state that the form and significance of anxiety in a person's life are determined by the methods he has adopted to cope with typical danger situations.

### (E) *The Adaptive Point of View*

#### (1) *Definition*

*The adaptive point of view demands that the psychoanalytic explanation of any psychological phenomenon include propositions concerning its relationship to the environment.*

Freud came closer to formulating an adaptive point of view than either a structural<sup>14</sup> or a genetic one: in his "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes," he puts the polarity "ego vs. external reality" on a par with the economic polarity, "pleasure vs. pain" (1915a, p. 140). Nevertheless, only Hartmann's (1939) and Erikson's (1950b) theories made clear the necessity for the explicit formulation of this point of view.<sup>15</sup>

#### (2) *The assumptions and their significance*

(a) *There exist psychological states of adaptedness and processes of adaptation at every point of life.*

Instinctual impulses, modes of reaction and attitudes of childhood are still demonstrably present in maturity and in appropriate circumstances can emerge once more" (1913, p. 184).

<sup>14</sup> [See p. 802, n. 10—Ed.]

<sup>15</sup> The contributions involving this point of view made by Horney, Sullivan, etc., are

The concept of *adaptedness* is implicit, for instance, in Freud's propositions concerning the coordination between drive and object, and in Hartmann's and Erikson's propositions concerning inborn preparedness for an evolving series of average expectable environments. The concept of *processes of adaptation* is implicit, for instance, in Freud's propositions concerning the progressive shift from the predominance of primary-process to secondary-process functioning in the course of development, and in Hartmann's (1939) and Erikson's (1950b) propositions that each developmental step gives rise to and solves problems in relation to external reality. This assumption is significant because it implies that the human being, just like any other organism, can be understood only in relation to its ecological niche, to which it is fitted by evolution and with which it is in balance or is striving for balance at every point of its life; and because it establishes grounds for distinguishing between adjustment (conformity) and adaptation, since it implies alloplastic as well as autoplasic adaptation processes.

Erikson's (1950a) and Spitz's (1937) propositions concerning inborn affect reactions, and Fenichel's (1941) propositions concerning the taming of affects in the course of development, imply this first adaptive assumption.

(b) *The processes of (autoplasic and/or alloplastic) adaptation maintain, restore, and improve the existing states of adaptedness and thereby ensure survival.*

This assumption underlies Freud's proposition that the reality principle subserves the pleasure principle, and is at the core of Hartmann's theory of adaptation and Erikson's theory of psychosocial epigenesis. It is significant because from it can be derived both the propositions which lend psychoanalysis its biological character and those which give it its psychosocial character.

Freud's propositions concerning anxiety as an inborn adaptedness and anxiety signal as a result of adaptation to situations of reality danger imply this second adaptive assumption.

(c) *Man adapts to his society—both to the physical and human environments which are its products.*

This assumption underlies, for example, all propositions concerning the role of society's morality in superego development, and Hartmann's (1939) and Erikson's (1950b) propositions pertaining to psychosocial development. It is significant because it lays the groundwork for understanding psychosocial development and for explaining the similarities between the customs of primitive societies and the phenomena of individual pathology in civilized man, without involving the assumption of the inheritance of acquired characteristics.

This assumption is implied in Erikson's (1950a) proposition that the

society's affect forms determine what forms of affects its individuals can develop.

(d) *Adaptation relationships are mutual: man and environment adapt to each other.*

This assumption underlies, for example, all psychoanalytic formulations concerning the central role in human development of the infant's prolonged helplessness, the critical role the child's various phases of development may play in the parents' pathology or further maturation, and Erikson's propositions concerning mutuality. It is significant because it provides the foundation for the psychological equivalent of biological ecology, as specified, for example, in Erikson's (1950b) formulation of the cogwheeling of the needs of the child and of the caretaking people at each point of development.

The propositions of Erikson (1950a) and Spitz (1957) concerning the dual role of affects in mutuality (dyadic) relationships and those of Schilder (1930) concerning affects as communications, imply this assumption.

### III. CONCLUSION

In this paper we have stated and discussed the points of view which guide metapsychological analysis and the assumptions which constitute metapsychology proper.

We repeat the definitions and assumptions here in synoptic form.

The *dynamic* point of view demands that the psychoanalytic explanation of any psychological phenomenon include propositions concerning the psychological forces involved in the phenomenon.

- (a) There are psychological forces.
- (b) Psychological forces are defined by their direction and magnitude.
- (c) The effect of simultaneously acting psychological forces may be the simple resultant of the work of each of these forces.
- (d) The effect of simultaneously acting psychological forces may not be the simple resultant of the work of each of these forces.

The *economic* point of view demands that the psychoanalytic explanation of any psychological phenomenon include propositions concerning the psychological energy involved in the phenomenon.

- (a) There are psychological energies.
- (b) Psychological energies follow a law of conservation.
- (c) Psychological energies are subject to a law of entropy.
- (d) Psychological energies are subject to transformations, which increase or decrease their entropic tendency.

The *structural* point of view demands that the psychoanalytic explanation of any psychological phenomenon include propositions concerning the

- (a) There are psychological structures.
- (b) Structures are configurations of a slow rate of change.
- (c) Structures are configurations within which, between which, and by means of which mental processes take place.
- (d) Structures are hierarchically ordered.

The *genetic* point of view demands that the psychoanalytic explanation of any psychological phenomenon include propositions concerning its psychological origin and development.

- (a) All psychological phenomena have a psychological origin and development.
- (b) All psychological phenomena originate in innate givens, which mature according to an epigenetic ground plan.
- (c) The earlier forms of a psychological phenomenon, though superseded by later forms, remain potentially active.
- (d) At each point of psychological history the totality of potentially active earlier forms codetermines all subsequent psychological phenomena.

The *adaptive* point of view demands that the psychoanalytic explanation of any psychological phenomenon include propositions concerning its relationship to the environment.

- (a) There exist psychological states of adaptedness and processes of adaptation at every point of life.
- (b) The processes of (autoplastic and/or alloplastic) adaptation maintain, restore, and improve the existing states of adaptedness and thereby ensure survival.
- (c) Man adapts to his society—both to the physical and human environments which are its products.
- (d) Adaptation relationships are mutual: man and environment adapt to each other.

The arguments we have presented for the points of view, however, differ both in kind and in strength from those for the assumptions.

The metapsychological points of view, even if some of the five presented have been formulated as such here for the first time, have a history. Though their use in the literature has been rather haphazard, some experience has accumulated concerning them, and it can be asserted with confidence that these five points of view are necessary and sufficient to a degree which recommends that they should be accepted—for the time being—as the framework of psychoanalytic metapsychology.

The situation is different with the assumptions. It is not yet possible to assess whether or not these assumptions are necessary, and whether this set of assumptions is sufficient—when coupled with observational data—to yield the existing body of psychoanalytic propositions. Such an assessment could be achieved only by systematic study, by continuing to subject psychoanalytic



plications are accounted for by this set of assumptions. The future development of psychoanalysis as a systematic science may well depend on such continuing efforts to establish the assumptions on which psychoanalytic theory rests.

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