

THE INTERNATIONAL PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL LIBRARY

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No. 44

PRIMARY LOVE  
AND PSYCHO-ANALYTIC  
TECHNIQUE

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LONDON

THE HOGARTH PRESS

AND THE INSTITUTE OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

1952

## PREFACE

... because there were no facilities for ... at the Budapest University. We were ... We married soon after I had finished my ... a few months later started our analytic ... I. Sachs in Berlin on the same day. After ... us changed over to Ferenczi, and we ... under him. Starting with our shared ... *and Taboo* till her death in 1939, ... studied, lived and worked together. All our ... whose mind they had first arisen—were ... tested, probed and criticised in our endless ... then it was just chance that decided which ... a particular idea. Apart from psycho- ... in interests were anthropology and educa- ... and medicine, and usually this factor ... write about the idea. We published only ... though almost all of them could have been ... joint names. In fact, our development was ... this book would be incomplete, in the true ... without her contribution; that was one of ... luding in this volume the last paper she ... the Mother and Mother-love'.

... my thanks to Miss Barbara Cooke, Miss ... r and to Mr. Francis Stuart for helping me ... papers published only in Hungarian or ... arsy proved invaluable as an inexorable ... and as a reliable censor of the references

M. B.

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Part One

*INSTINCTS AND OBJECT-RELATIONS*

## PSYCHO-ANALYTIC TECHNIQUE

oedipal time to light. For the explanation of the theory of primary narcissism proved

that the theory of primary object-love is also based on extrapolation. But it is much nearer, and secondly our negative notion. Some features of the theory were enumerated in this paper, and the originals quoted. All of them are in the advantage of our theory of escape as—for the theory of primary object-love the adverbs 'not yet' and 'already'. For the theory be examined, above all in the case of the psychotic. Whether, beyond the question, the way will lead to primary narcissism is undecided for the time being. I, in my opinion the time has come for the biologists in facing the end of

## VI

### LOVE FOR THE MOTHER AND MOTHER LOVE <sup>1</sup>

By ALICE BALINT <sup>2</sup>

(1939)

THE mother-child relation has been at the centre of psycho-analytic interest right from the beginning. Its importance became even greater when, in the exploration of our cases, it was found necessary to go back regularly into pre-oedipal times. As this is the earliest object-relation, the beginnings of which reach into the nebulous times where the frontiers of ego and external world merge into each other, it is of paramount importance both theoretically and practically. Thus it is quite understandable that each of us has tried his mettle on the mother-child relation. My contribution to this problem is mainly an attempt at a résumé, and I can only claim originality for the point of view from which the summing up was carried out.

#### I

Clinical examples may serve as a starting-point. I begin with a case in which love for the mother was expressed in a particularly peculiar way. This was the case of a woman patient whose main symptom was that she had to be the slave of her mother. Her unsuccessful attempts at liberation soon became revealed as reactions to disappointments, for in reality she loved her mother and made enormous sacrifices in order to try to satisfy her, which, however, she never succeeded in doing. It was astonishing that the daughter was absolutely helpless in face of

<sup>1</sup> Parts of this paper were first published under the title 'Reality Sense and the Development of the Ability to Love' in the S. Ferenczi Memorial volume: *Lélekelemzési tanulmányok*, Budapest, 1933. The final version appeared in German under the title 'Liebe zur Mutter und Mutterliebe' in *Int. Z. f. Ps. u. Imago* (1939), 24, 33-48, in English in: *Int. J. of Ps.A.* (1949), 30, 251.

<sup>2</sup> See Preface, p. 6.

the unreasonable reproaches of her mother and reacted to them with guilt feelings which were quite incomprehensible to her. An extraordinarily strong masculinity complex gave the first explanation of these guilt feelings. Right from the beginning of the analysis it stood out clearly that she wanted to replace her father (and a generous lover) *vis-à-vis* her widowed mother. The first years of the analysis were almost completely taken up with a working through of her masculinity complex. By the end of this phase, her relation to her mother had improved considerably. She had attained an almost normal freedom of movement, could come and go as she liked and had a private life as befits an adult. In her sexual life, too, there was a change for the better. A capacity for orgasm developed, although somewhat labile, in place of an absolute frigidity, and repeated, though interrupted, pregnancies pointed also in the direction of accepting the feminine rôle. But despite all these improvements, her feelings of anxiety and guilt towards her mother remained in unmitigated strength. It was the analysis of her death wishes against the mother that led to the discovery of the deep roots of the guilt feelings. It came to light that the death wishes did not originate in any hatred against her mother. This hatred served only as a secondary rationalisation of a much more primitive attitude, according to which the patient simply demanded that her mother 'should be there' or 'should not be there', according to the patient's needs. The thought of her mother's death filled the patient with the warmest feelings, the meaning of which was not repentance but something like 'How kind of you that you did die, how much I love you for that.' The patient's guilt feeling proved to be well founded in reality, i.e. in the type of love she felt towards her mother. This was a kind of love of which one would indeed be afraid and which explained fully why the patient never wanted to have children. We discovered in it the deep conviction that it belongs to the duties of a loving mother to let herself be killed for the well-being of her children, should an occasion demanding it arise. In other words we discovered in this 'daughter of a bad mother' that deep down she demanded *absolute unselfishness* from her mother. She loved her mother as the only human being who—at least for her unconscious—allowed for the

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possibility of such a demand. Both the attempts at liberating  
 herself and the exertions made in the attempt to satisfy her  
 mother now gained a new significance. They were obviously  
 also counter-cathexes with the help of which she maintained  
 the repression of her primitive form of love. Also the significance  
 of the identification with the husband (lover) of the mother  
 could be clearly recognised. In the first layer this identification,  
 as previously stated, served as a gratification of her masculine  
 desires. In the deeper layer, however, it was the expression of  
 the patient's demand for love in the reversed form. Just as the  
 mother was loved by her lovers, so did the daughter want to be  
 loved by her mother. And just as the mother unscrupulously  
 exploited the men and then dropped them when they became  
 useless (old or sick), so did the daughter want to use her mother  
 and then get rid of her according to her whims. While the  
 patient let herself be exploited by her mother, she tried second-  
 arily to *gain from hatred the strength necessary for that unscrupulous*  
*ruthlessness which in her mother she envied so much.*

This, the deepest layer of the attitude towards the mother,  
 cannot be regarded as ambivalence proper (just as we cannot  
 say that a huntsman hates the game he intends to kill). When  
 children, with the most innocent face in the world, speak of the  
 desirable death of a loved person, it would be quite erroneous  
 to explain this by hatred, especially if the wish concerns the  
 mother or one of her substitutes. The little daughter who is of  
 the opinion that mummy should peacefully die in order that  
 she (the daughter) might marry daddy does not necessarily  
 hate her mother; she only finds it quite natural that the nice  
 mummy should disappear at the right moment. The ideal  
 mother has no interests of her own. True hate<sup>1</sup> and with it  
 true ambivalence can develop much more easily in relation to  
 the father whom the child gets to know right from the begin-  
 ning as a being who has interests of his own.

The next case concerns a homosexual patient of twenty-one  
 who complained above all of his incapacity to find and to win  
 someone who would love him. Gradually it came to light that  
 it was he who could not love (in the social sense). We learn how

<sup>1</sup> True hate is *pure aggressiveness*; pseudo-hate is originally always a  
 demand for unselfishness from the mother.

little he knows of the men with whom he has homosexual relations and from whom he demands excessive tenderness. His lack of interest in other people becomes clear and with it the tendency to claim from anyone and everyone the same gratuitous love that the infant claims from his mother. At this level it becomes clear that he does not want at all to love and to be loved in the sense common to adults. Through his claims the partner who loves him (the patient) causes him anxiety, makes him frightened. Eventually the patient becomes aware that he really wishes to find someone who, not out of love—for lovers are egotistic—but out of chivalry, would heap presents on him. We soon learn that the 'chivalrous duty' really stands for 'parental duty'. The essence of the parental duty is that parents make no demands upon their children because they do only their duty—yielding to the pressure of public opinion—in providing for their children irrespective of whether the children are brave or naughty. These are the comfortable 'lovers'. It is not difficult to discover that underlying this disguise is the primitive way of loving of the infant who does not yet know of his mother as a separate entity having her own interests and who has not yet been compelled to make this discovery. Later, when the mother demands a return for her love she will be felt to be a nuisance and her demands will be refused. 'I do not want to be loved at all', the child appears to say defiantly. In reality it ought to be 'Why am I not loved in the same way (i.e. unselfishly) as I was before?'

The same fear of being loved, or to express it more correctly, fear of the demands of the (love) partner, is shown in the third case. The patient, while in analysis, told the following dream: 'As he enters his flat he sees a large tube in the middle of the room; he lies down on it as if on a bed. It changes in fact into a bed (or couch), but soon it becomes an old woman who makes lewd, grunting sounds. He feels disgust and descends from her although she tries to hold him back.' The immediate cause of the dream was his having seen how his mother was spoiling her grandchild whom she wanted to have completely to herself. With great misgiving he recognises the repressed eroticism in her action and at the same time feels ashamed of his own jealousy. Beneath the jealousy there is also a sympathy with

with whom he has homosexual relations demands excessive tenderness. His attitude becomes clear and with it the attitude of everyone and everyone the same gratuitous claims from his mother. At this level he does not want at all to love and to be loved by adults. Through his claims the patient) causes him anxiety, makes the patient becomes aware that he is not the one who, not out of love—for lovers' duty, would heap presents on him. 'Chivalrous duty' really stands for the parental duty is that parents love their children because they do only under the pressure of public opinion—in fact irrespective of whether the children are these are the comfortable 'lovers'. It is that underlying this disguise is the attitude of the infant who does not yet know of his identity having her own interests and is compelled to make this discovery. Later, when a return for her love she will be felt his demands will be refused. 'I do not want to be loved by the child appears to say defiantly. In fact I am I not loved in the same way (i.e. as I am?)

needed, or to express it more correctly, the love partner, is shown in the third analysis, told the following dream: 'I see a large tube in the middle of the room if on a bed. It changes in fact into a woman who becomes an old woman who makes me feel disgust and descends from her and pushes him back.' The immediate cause of the dream is seen how his mother was spoiling him—he wanted to have completely to her—he recognises the repressed erotism in the same time feels ashamed of his own attitude but busy there is also a sympathy with

his little nephew who, apparently, has to face the same fate as he (the patient) himself. The time will come when the nephew, too, will try to get out of the grandmother's clutches, and she will hold him back in just the same way as she held him, her son. The dream contains many layers, among others several indications of the patient's castration anxiety. From our point of view, the most important feature is the indignation which the patient experienced on discovering the erotism in the (grand)mother love. Until then, when criticising his mother's attitude, he had thought of lack of understanding and not of selfishness. Now she had changed into that grunting old thing who uses her son for her own lust. In fact, *he* has the same attitude towards all women. The sexual desires of the woman he feels to be painful and frightening. The women must be willing but not demanding. He likes best to approach them as a cry-baby who wants to be pitied and comforted. Marriage is prohibited, for then the woman gains something and because of that he cannot believe in the purity of her love. Reciprocity of demands is as incomprehensible to him as to an infant who lives as an ecto-parasite on his mother. One of his main symptoms is his predilection for quite little girls who, however, can be represented by obscene pictures of children. The children, whom he treats as dolls and for whose feelings he need not care, signify in fact the mother. They are the true, unselfish objects of love.

In these three cases the attitude towards the love-object was interpreted in the course of analysis in various ways: as an oral tendency to incorporation, as a narcissistic attitude, as a need to be loved, as egoism, etc., as suggested by the material at the particular time of the interpretation. Yet, ultimately, the version that seemed most adequate was that which I used when describing the case material. The oral tendency to incorporate appeared as only one special form of expression of this kind of love which could be present in a more or less clearly marked form. The conception of narcissism did not do justice to the fact that this kind of love was always firmly directed towards an object, the concept of passive object-love (the wish to be loved) was least satisfactory, especially because of the essentially active quality of this kind of love. We come nearest to it with



the conception of egoism. It is in fact an *archaic, egotistic* way of loving, originally directed exclusively to the mother; its main characteristic is the complete lack of reality sense in regard to the interests <sup>1</sup> of the love-object. I shall call this egoism—which in fact is only the consequence of the lack of reality sense—naïve egoism, to differentiate it from the conscious neglect of the interests of the object.

A particularly clear picture of this love, directed especially towards the mother, emerges, in my opinion, from certain quite general phenomena of the transference which appear in each case independent of age, sex and form of illness, and are also to be found in training analyses, i.e. in practically healthy people. I have described these transference phenomena in a paper <sup>2</sup> on the handling of the transference as a paranoically over-sensitive and yet inconsiderate egocentric attitude, the maintenance of which is made possible by a characteristic blindness concerning the person of the analyst; for during treatment the analyst is not a man who has his own interests as other men have. The insight necessary to change this attitude is attained, as a rule, only during the period of growing detachment from the analysis, and even then only very gradually. I would add yet another example to this general description.

A patient asks for one more session per week. His wish is justified in so far as he comes only four times a week because of the lack of time. In spite of this I preserve my passivity and restrict myself to the analysis of this wish which helps us to gain insight into the emotional life of the patient. The wish for one more session each week revealed itself as a declaration of love of the affectively very inhibited patient. At the same time, however, it was the defence against his becoming conscious of the emotional urge. He wanted to have one more session in order to avoid feeling the longing by which his love betrayed itself. Really he wanted the extra session in order not to be compelled to love me—as he explained it to me in detail on this occasion. The most painful thought for him was that possibly I might not have time for him, i.e. that our interests

<sup>1</sup> I mean here both the libidinal and the ego-interests of the object.

<sup>2</sup> Balint, A.: 'Handhabung der Übertragung auf Grund der Ferenczischen Versuche'. *Int. Z. f. Psa* (1936), 22.

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It is in fact an *archaic, egotistic* way of relating exclusively to the mother; its main feature is a complete lack of reality sense in regard to the mother as an object. I shall call this egoism—which is a consequence of the lack of reality sense—*archaic* and attribute it from the conscious neglect of

the nature of this love, directed especially towards the mother. In my opinion, from certain quite specific transference which appear in each particular sex and form of illness, and are also revealed in analyses, i.e. in practically healthy patients, these transference phenomena in a certain way resemble the transference as a paranoically inconsiderate egocentric attitude, the latter being made possible by a characteristic attitude of the person of the analyst; for during the analysis of a man who has his own interests in mind it might be necessary to change this attitude during the period of growing detachment and even then only very gradually. I shall now give an example to this general description.

A patient, one session per week. His wish is to have only four times a week because of his illness. Of this I preserve my passivity and analysis of this wish which helps us to understand the personal life of the patient. The wish for more sessions revealed itself as a declaration of love of an inhibited patient. At the same time, the patient was against his becoming conscious of his love. He wanted to have one more session in order to prolong his longing by which his love betrayed him. The extra session in order not to be alone. He explained it to me in detail on the basis of a painful thought for him was that he was not alone for him, i.e. that our interests

are identical and the ego-interests of the object. (See *Übertragung auf Grund der Ferenczi-Notizen*, 1936, 22.)

might clash. *He wished to be with me but, if possible, in such a way as not to be compelled to take notice of me.* It would have been easy to attribute this attitude to narcissistic withdrawal of libido at a moment when the tension created by the longing had passed a certain point. On the other hand, his wish was undeniably a declaration of love. The correct way is to assume that here we have to deal with love, that archaic love, the fundamental condition of which is the complete harmony of interests.<sup>1</sup> For this love the recognition of the *actual* love-object is superfluous, i.e. 'anyway, it wants the same as I do'. This apparently insignificant observation is in my opinion important, for it may possibly explain something of the essence of that subjective self-sufficiency which we assume the satisfied infant possesses.

Another characteristic of archaic love is pseudo-ambivalence. In the case of primitive object-relation an alteration in the behaviour towards the object is not necessarily the consequence of an altered emotional attitude (love, hate), but originates in the child's naïve egoism. In this naïve egoism the antagonism that exists between self-interest and the interest of the object is not perceived at all, e.g. when a little child, or the patient in this particular state of transference, feels that the mother (or the analyst) must not be ill, then it does not mean concern for the well-being of the other, but for one's own well-being which might possibly be endangered by the other's illness. That this is really so is shown by the very unfriendly way in which the child—or the patient—reacts to the actual occurrence of the dreaded illness. Must we then doubt the love-character of this behaviour? After an illness of several months I had a good opportunity for studying the question. My patients, without exception, were angry with me because they felt wronged by the fact that I had been ill, a feeling that was, in a way, justified by the real situation. Their anger was the most forceful expression of their infantile love and attachment. I want to draw attention to the fact that the expressions 'attachment', 'clinging' as well as the German 'Anhänglichkeit' and the Hungarian 'ragaszkodás' (adhesiveness, stickiness),

<sup>1</sup> Another patient equally inhibited in his emotions said once, towards the end of the session, '*Es geht zu Ende mit uns*' (We are nearing our end).

describing this kind of infantile love, are beautiful examples of unconscious knowledge.

Although I do not doubt that everyone will recognise in this description the kind of love that is directed especially towards the mother (I have only repeated what is generally known), I wish to emphasise the observation that most men (and women)—even when otherwise quite normal and capable of an 'adult', altruistic form of love which acknowledges the interests of the partner—retain towards their own mothers this naïve egotistic attitude throughout their lives. For all of us it remains self-evident that the interests of mother and child are identical, and it is the generally acknowledged measure of the goodness or badness of the mother how far she really feels this identity of interests.

Before leaving this subject and turning to discussion of maternal love, I wish to return for a moment to a remark of mine on the love towards the father.<sup>1</sup> Although the *paterfamilias* has assumed many maternal traits and is, therefore, treated by the child in many ways like the mother, yet that archaic tie linking mother and child is missing. The child's learning to know the father is governed by the reality principle. Such general observations as, for instance, that children are usually more obedient with their fathers than with their mothers cannot be wholly explained by the fact that the father may be more strict than the mother. The child behaves towards the father more in accordance with reality because the archaic foundations of an original, natural identity of interests has never existed in its relation to the father. The mother, however, must not want anything that might run contrary to the wishes of the child. The same explanation holds true for the greater pedagogical effectiveness of strangers. Folk tales seem to confirm this, the wicked mother is always the stepmother, while the wicked father is not necessarily the stepfather; and this is true for both son and daughter. (It is, in fact, a further argument for the archaic nature of the kind of love described above; it is revealed in similar form in both sexes, and is therefore likely to be of pre-oedipal origin.) Hence: *love for the mother is originally a love without a sense of reality, while love and*

<sup>1</sup> Balint, A.: 'Der Familienvater', *Imago* (1926), 12, 292-304.

love for the father—realities of reality.

Turning now to the example. A young man, the criminal psychologist who The lecturer spoke of, happily married and in love, and then tried to be even, and was a miserable failure. He had not the right to express their love. She was a woman who killed, and her love was a love without a sense of reality. She was a woman who killed, and her love was a love without a sense of reality. She was a woman who killed, and her love was a love without a sense of reality.

The woman who killed, and her love was a love without a sense of reality. She was a woman who killed, and her love was a love without a sense of reality. She was a woman who killed, and her love was a love without a sense of reality.

Reborn we see that under the domination of their fingers and any feelings of guilt or shame, they are in touch with their own hearts. On the contrary, they are their living children. Tending rights in their

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*water'. Iago 1926, 12, 292-304.*

*hate for the father—including the oedipus situation—is under the sway of reality.*

2

Turning now to mother love, I will again start with an example. A young mother told me her opinion of a lecture on criminal psychology which she had heard on the previous day. The lecturer spoke about the case of a woman who was unhappily married and in her despair murdered her two daughters, and then tried to commit suicide. She did not die, however, and was condemned to fifteen years' imprisonment. The lecturer considered this sentence to be unjust, and my patient agreed with him. The explanation added by her was, however, very remarkable. She thought the sentence was unjust because the woman could not be considered a 'public danger'—she had killed only her own children. In the ensuing discussion it became increasingly clear that the idea of the children having any right to express their opinion did not even enter her mind. She considered the whole occurrence as the internal affair of the mother because *one's own child is indeed not the external world.*

I do not need to emphasise how strange the woman felt after the voicing of these, to her, quite natural thoughts. What she said was a piece of archaic reality which—in our civilisation—is expressed only under various disguises. Primitive people, however, regard infanticide as something that is in no way connected with murder. It is a domestic, internal affair of the family, and society has nothing to do with it.

Roheim wrote that the Central Australian mothers, when under the domination of 'meat hunger', bring about an abortion with their fingers and eat the foetus. He does not mention any feelings of guilt or remorse. The foetus appears to these women to be, in the strictest sense of the word, their own property with which they may do as they like. One can even think of the rule whereby every second child is eaten by the family as a restriction of sovereignty, because by this means life is safeguarded for a certain number of children. But we must not think that the Australian women are in general 'bad' mothers. On the contrary, they give a full measure of maternal care to their living children. They are even capable of great sacrifice, spending nights on their knees and elbows crouching over their

babies in order to protect them from the cold with their own bodies.

Some reports of the Esquimaux show a transitional stage between those Australian mothers who unconcernedly eat their children and our conscious attitude. (I say 'conscious attitude' because cannibalistic desires towards children are by no means rare in dreams, etc.) For example, it has been reported that an Esquimaux woman who ate her child during a period of famine is now paralysed and cannot hold her urine. The inhabitants of the village consider that this state was brought about because she 'ate a part of herself'.<sup>1</sup> It happens even more frequently that during a famine children would be left behind to die of cold. On such occasions the Esquimaux show a harshness as well as a resoluteness which amazed the author who reported on this matter, for he was well aware of the love and tenderness usually felt by the Esquimaux for their children. It is under the pressure of a terrible emergency that the children are thus abandoned, just as we ourselves would sacrifice our most precious possessions when shipwrecked in order to save our own lives. An additional important detail which is quite familiar to the people of more primitive ways of thought than our own, and appears strange to us only because of our high regard for any individual, is the fact that children can be produced at will, just like any other chattels.

The eating of children, which for the Australian woman is a simple satisfaction of an instinctual need free from any burden of guilt and is for the Esquimaux woman a desperate action undertaken only in a desperate emergency which may have dire consequences but is something to be pitied rather than condemned, appears in Hungarian folklore as the punishment in hell for those women who bring about a miscarriage.<sup>2</sup>

The institution of abortion is a paramount factor in the relation between mother and child. Women all over the world know of artificial abortion, so that it is women who have the final say about the existence or non-existence of a child. (This fact is undoubtedly one of the reasons why the mother appears sometimes so weird and gruesome to the child whose life

<sup>1</sup> Rasmussen: *Thulefahrt* (1926), p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> *A magyarság néprajza* (Folklore of the Magyars), 4, 156.

them from the cold with their own

Esquimaux show a transitional stage mothers who unconcernedly eat their attitude. I say 'conscious attitude' towards children are by no means example, it has been reported that an ate her child during a period of and cannot hold her urine. The in- sider that this state was brought of herself'.<sup>1</sup> It happens even more mine children would be left behind sions the Esquimaux show a harsh- ness which amazed the author who he was well aware of the love and the Esquimaux for their children. It terrible emergency that the children s we ourselves would sacrifice our when shipwrecked in order to save al important detail which is quite re primitive ways of thought than ce to us only because of our high s the fact that children can be pro- ther chattels.

which for the Australian woman is a instinctual need free from any burden imaux woman a desperate action rate emergency which may have something to be pitied rather than agarian folklore as the punishment o bring about a miscarriage.<sup>2</sup>

is a paramount factor in the rela- child. Women all over the world so that it is women who have the or non-existence of a child. (This e reasons why the mother appears ruesome to the child whose life

1926, p. 358.  
folklore of the Magyars), 4, 156.

depends in the truest sense of the word on whether it pleases her or not.) The undeniable fact of psychogenic sterility points to another fact, namely that *the child who is born is always the child who was wanted by the mother*. Moralising condemnation or penal prosecution of artificial abortion are probably only defensive measures against the dangerous, absolute power of the woman. It is another defensive measure that the right over the child's life which originally was maternal was transferred to the *pater-familias*. It argues for the primordially of the maternal right that it is an informal and private affair of the woman. The paternal right, however, is a social institution.

In spite of these limitations on the archaic maternal rights which have been imposed by civilisation, it probably remains true of most children born that they are born as the realisation of the instinctual wishes of their mothers. Pregnancy, giving birth, suckling and fondling are instinctual urges to a woman, and these she satisfies with the help of her baby.<sup>1</sup> Physical proximity lasting as long as possible is pleasurable to both mother and child. In fact, I believe—turning again to anthropology—that those rules which separate man and wife after the birth of a child, often for many months, have their origin in the desire of the woman to enjoy without disturbance the new relationship with her infant. The unlimited confidence of the child in the love of his mother grows from this mutuality, and later it will be badly shaken by the foreboding or by the actual experience of the mother's being able to dissolve this link at will, and by her power to substitute one child by another.

Maternal love is intended,—according to its instinctual sources—only for the very young child, the infant depending upon the mother's body. That is why we so often see mothers who—influenced by their cultural patterns—continue to nurse and fondle their children far beyond infancy even until they are quite grown up and still think of them as their 'little ones', however big and tall they may be, a sentiment often openly expressed both in words and behaviour. For the mother the

<sup>1</sup> See Ferenczi's notion of 'parental eroticism' in *Thalassa*, New York (1938) (German original: *Versuch einer Genitaltheorie*. Int. Psa. Verlag (Vienna, 1924.)

child is never grown up, for when grown up he is no longer her child. Is not this yet another proof of the remoteness of maternal love from reality, just as the child's love is remote because he never imagines his mother as a being with divergent, that is to say, self-interests? *Maternal love is the almost perfect counterpart to the love for the mother.*

Thus, just as the mother is to the child, so is the child to the mother—an object of gratification. And just as the child does not recognise the separate identity of the mother, so the mother looks upon her child as a part of herself whose interests are identical with her own. *The relation between mother and child is built upon the interdependence of the reciprocal instinctual aims.* What Ferenczi said about the relation of man and woman in coitus holds true for this mother-infant relation. He meant that in coitus there can be no question of egoism or altruism, there is only mutuality, i.e. what is good for one is right for the other also. *In consequence of the natural interdependence of the reciprocal instinctual aims there is no need to be concerned about the partner's well-being.*

This behaviour I call *instinctive maternity* in contradistinction to *civilised maternity*.<sup>1</sup> This can be studied best in animals, or with quite primitive people. In it naïve egoism plays the same rôle as in the child's love for the mother. But, if we consider both partners (mother and child) simultaneously, we can speak with Ferenczi of mutuality. The mutuality is the biological, the naïve egoism the psychological aspect. *The biological interdependence makes the naïve egoism psychologically possible.* Every disturbance of this interdependence calls forth a development beyond the naïve egoism.

If in man, as is the case with animals, the mother-child unity were replaced without any gap by mature sexuality, i.e. by the man-woman unity, naïve egoism could perhaps suffice for the whole of life as a method of loving. The interval, characteristic for man, between the infantile and the adult period, i.e. the two phases of life in which a mutual interdependence of two beings is naturally given—leads to a discord which must be resolved. This discord, increasing parallel with the develop-

<sup>1</sup> For 'civilised maternity' see Alice Balint: 'Die Grundlagen unseres Erziehungssystems', *Z. f. ps. Päd.* (1937), 11, 98-101.

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• Alice Balint: 'Die Grundlagen unseres . . . 1937, 11, 98-101.

ment of civilisation, is resolved to a great extent by the *progressive strengthening of the power of the reality sense over the emotional life.*

Tact, insight, consideration, sympathy, gratitude, tenderness (in the sense of inhibited sensuality) are signs and consequences of the extending strength of the reality sense in the sphere of emotions. The real capacity for loving in the social sense is a secondary formation created by an external disturbance. It has nothing to do directly with genitality. The genital act is really the situation in which the reciprocal interdependence as experienced in early childhood is re-created. Everything learnt in the meantime may play an important rôle in wooing, but must be forgotten during the act. Too much reality sense (tact), a too precise delimitation of one partner from the other, is disturbing, causes coldness, may even lead to impotence, for example the anxiety of some neurotics—originating from training in cleanliness—that they might disturb or even disgust their partner by their body odour or by some involuntary sound or movement.

The first disturbance of the naïve egoism is caused by the mother's turning away from her growing child. This turning away may be expressed either directly as true estrangement or indirectly in the mother trying to delay in some way the development of the child. I think there is no need to give examples here. For the child it would be quite natural if the mother were to remain his (or her) sexual partner even after the period of infancy. Her reluctance can only be attributed by the child to the disturbing influence of some external power. In fact this is true with animals where the infantile period is followed immediately by sexual maturity. It is the strength of the father animal which is the only obstacle to the sexual union of mother and child. With man it is different: the sexual significance of the child for the mother ceases to exist much earlier than the time of the child's attaining sexual maturity, i.e. the time when he could be a sexual partner in adult form to the mother. The instinctual attachment to the mother is replaced by instinctual rejection by the mother. From this it becomes clear what is the essential difference—in spite of many corresponding traits—between maternal love and love for the



in the emotional life. Man cannot renounce object-love without suffering severe impairment.<sup>1</sup>

## 4

The different kinds of loving have been classified by psycho-analysis according to several principles: first as to their relation to aim-inhibition, secondly as to whether they belong to a component instinct or to genitality. Using the one principle the concepts of oral, anal and genital love were developed, using the other those of tender and of sensual love. A third principle of classification results from contrasting narcissistic with object-libido, leading to narcissistic and object-libidinal forms of love, which in some way are connected with the difference between egoism and altruism. And finally Ferenczi's differentiation must be mentioned, that of active and passive love, which he uses as often as not in place of the customary terms—narcissistic and object-libidinal love—but without exactly stating whether passive object-love is identical with narcissistic love or not. The principle I use in differentiating the several forms of love is their relation to the sense of reality. Object-love proper has two mainstays, (a) gratification of needs by their objects, (b) reality sense.

(a) exists from the beginning, especially if we accept the teachings of Ferenczi's Theory of Genitality according to which the whole of sexuality including the auto-erotic function, is founded on an object-orientated tendency.

(b) this is developed only gradually. On the basis of observations of a form of love, the most characteristic trait of which is the scanty development of the reality sense (the object is recognised but not its self-interests), I assume that along with a gradual development of the reality sense there is a gradual development of object-love. The parallel between these two developments is not quite complete. The extension of the rule of the reality sense over the object-relations is limited by two powerful factors: as is well known, one of these factors is the far-reaching independence from the external world which is

<sup>1</sup> cf. the observations by the analyst and pediatrician, E. Petö: 'Säugling und Mutter', *Z. f. päd. Päd.* (1937), 11, 244. In English: *Int. J. of PsA.* (1949), 30, 260.

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made possible in the libidinal sphere by the auto-erotic (according to Ferenczi autoplasic) method of gratification. The second factor is the interdependence between mother and child (and later between man and woman in coitus). The instinctual interdependence of two beings creates a situation in which the recognition of the object's own interests is unnecessary. This is the basis of naïve egoism in the sphere of object-libido.

I arrive at the concept of primary *archaic object-relation without reality sense* through extrapolation. It is the last link in a series which is constructed from the various grades of adaptations to reality in the field of object-relationship. Accordingly there exists an archaic form of love of which the essential determinant is the lack of reality sense towards the love-object and not the prevalence of any component instinct. (To avoid a possible misunderstanding I wish to emphasise that one must differentiate strictly between forms of gratification, e.g. oral, anal, etc., and forms of love, e.g. naïvely egoistic, altruistic,<sup>1</sup> etc.). The development of the socially higher forms of love derives as a consequence of adaptation to reality. This classification is closely related to Freud's distinction between sensual and aim-inhibited love, for aim-inhibition is indeed the most important of the factors, originating in the influence of the external world, which bring about the development of emotional life; pure sensuality, on the other hand, knows solely 'the erotic reality sense' and can exist, in relation to the partner, fairly comfortably coupled with naïve egoism.

The point at which my train of thought deviates somewhat from that of Freud is the significance I attribute to the rôle of the libidinal object-relation in this connection. Freud, too, traces back the growth of object-love to the irreplaceability of the external world, but the basis of this irreplaceability according to him lies not in the erotic but in the self-preserving instincts. In dependence on the gratifications of the self-preserving instincts the first object-relations develop which,

<sup>1</sup> cf. M. Balint: 'Zur Kritik der Lehre von den prägenitalen Libidoorganisationen', *Int. Z. f. Psa.* (1935), 21, 525-43. English version ('Critical Notes on the Theory of the Pregonital Organisations of the Libido') reprinted in this vol., p. 49.

however, are soon replaced by the auto-erotic investment of the libido. It is only by this *détour* via auto-erotism that the libido finds its way back—in the course of further development—to the world of objects. Freud assumes that ‘certain of the component impulses of the sexual instinct have an object from the very beginning and hold fast to it; such are the impulse to mastery (sadism), to gazing and curiosity’.<sup>1, 2</sup> After the completion of the theory of the libido by the theory of narcissism it then appeared ‘that auto-erotism was the sexual activity of the narcissistic phase of directions of the libido’,<sup>3</sup> whereby this narcissistic phase is assumed, as is well known, to be the primary phase.

I have tried, from observable phenomena, to represent this early phase as an archaic object-relation lacking any sense of reality, but from which what we are wont to call love develops directly under the influence of reality.

My assumption can easily be described in terms of ego and id. The archaic love without reality sense is the form of the love of the id, which persists as such throughout life, while the social reality-based form of love represents the manner of loving of the ego.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Freud: *Introductory Lectures*, Fifth ed. (1936), p. 276. London: Allen & Unwin.

<sup>3</sup> Freud: op. cit., p. 347.

Balint, M.: 'Zur Kritik der Lehre von den prägenitalen Libidoorganisationen', *Int. Z. f. Psa.* (1935), **21**. English version ('Critical Notes on the Theory of the Preenital Organisations of the Libido') reprinted in this vol., p. 49.

Hermann, I.: 'Sich-Anklammern—Auf-Suche-Gehen', *Int. Z. f. Psa.* (1936), **22**. (To cling—to go.)

Rotter-Kertész, L.: 'Der tiefenpsychologische Hintergrund der inzestuösen Fixierung', *Int. Z. f. Ps.* (1936), **22**. (The depth-psychological background of the incestuous fixation.)

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# APPENDIX

## *Dual-unity and Primary (Archaic) Object-relation*

In several contributions to the discussion of this paper it was suggested that I abandon the term primary object-relation in favour of the term 'dual unity'. I am of the opinion, however, that it is more helpful to use terms in such a way that emphasis is given to quite small deviations in theory, and thus to increase the general understanding. I. Hermann, E. P. Hoffman and L. Rotter-Kertész emphatically stress the fact that they do not want to think of dual unity as a form of object-relationship at all, whereas I, on the contrary, actually think of a possible, very primitive object-relation which already exists before one can assume an ability to distinguish between ego and object, i.e. already in the id, so to speak. The starting-point of these ideas is Ferenczi's well-known concept of '*passive object-love*'. In my paper on this subject—printed in the Ferenczi Memorial Volume—I used only this term. Later, under the influence of M. Balint's ideas on the 'new beginning' in which he emphasises the active features in early infantile behaviour, as well as partly under that of I. Hermann's work on the instinct to cling, I thought that the term *passive* was not a suitable description of a relation in which such markedly *active* tendencies as the instinct to cling play a paramount rôle. Since then I have used—as in the present paper—in place of '*passive object-love*' mainly the terms '*archaic*' or '*primary object-relation*' (*object-love*).

This latter term I could only change to 'dual unity' if those using it changed their views and accepted dual unity as a primitive kind of object-relation, or else if I, for my part, could relinquish the idea that object-relations are as old as their biological basis.