



Toward a Reconceptualization of Guilt

Michael Friedman M.D.

To cite this article: Michael Friedman M.D. (1985) Toward a Reconceptualization of Guilt, *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, 21:4, 501-547, DOI: [10.1080/00107530.1985.10746099](https://doi.org/10.1080/00107530.1985.10746099)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00107530.1985.10746099>



Published online: 28 Oct 2013.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 6



View related articles [↗](#)



Citing articles: 7 View citing articles [↗](#)

Toward a Reconceptualization of Guilt

FREUD'S CONCEPTUALIZATION OF GUILT, stated most clearly in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, remains the predominant conceptualization of guilt in psychoanalysis although it is embedded in a theory of motivation (drive theory) that has been increasingly rejected. According to Freud, guilt is the fear of an internalized threat of loss of love and loss of protection from a variety of dangers. While it is difficult to overestimate the importance of the fear of an internalized threat of loss of love as a motivation in human life, I do not believe that this concept represents what people ordinarily mean by guilt. More importantly, it has, in my opinion, obscured a significant line of human motivation and has impeded the effective treatment of a wide range of psychopathology. The purposes of this paper are (1) to examine Freud's concept of guilt; (2) to review some recent research and theory in developmental psychology and evolutionary biology which point to an alternative concept of guilt; (3) to review several attempts within psychoanalysis to modify or supplement Freud's concept of guilt, all of which can be seen as efforts to move toward this alternative concept; (4) to make some tentative suggestions toward a reconceptualization of guilt; and (5) to illustrate some clinical implications of this reconceptualization.

This paper has grown out of my participation in the Mount Zion Psychotherapy Research Project led by Joseph Weiss and Harold Sampson, whose insight into the importance of unconscious guilt in psychopathology has inspired the research of our group as well as this essay (Weiss, Sampson, et al, 1986). The classical psychoanalytic concept of guilt, however, did not fit our data. We used terms like survivor guilt and separation guilt (Weiss, Sampson, et

al, 1986; Friedman, 1985). It was my opinion that a central concept in need of such extensive alteration required examination.

I. Herds and Hordes: Freud's Concept

In Chapter IX of *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* Freud considered and rejected a very interesting hypothesis. The hypothesis, advanced by an English sociologist, W. Trotter (1919), was that human behavior could be better described and explained by postulating, in addition to the self-preservative and sexual instincts, a set of instincts which he called collectively the gregarious or herd instinct. Trotter distinguished three forms of the herd instinct, the aggressive, the protective, and the socialized, all of which involve a sensitivity to the needs of other members of one's species and tend to result in behavior that benefits these other members. Trotter credited Pearson for pointing out the biological significance of such an instinct:

[Pearson] called attention to the enlargement of the selective unit effected by the appearance of gregariousness, and to the fact that therefore within the group the action of natural selection becomes modified (p. 24). [The herd instinct] would appear to have the effect of enlarging the advantages of variation. Varieties not immediately favourable to the individual may be supposed to be given by it a chance of survival (p. 22).

Manifestations of the herd instinct, according to Trotter, include loyalty, a feeling of duty, and a tendency to identify and comply with other members of the herd (pp. 31–33). Expressions of the protective and socialized forms of the instinct include conscience, guilt, empathy, and altruism (p. 40). Altruism is a natural expression of the herd instinct; the gregarious animal is altruistic because he must be, not because he decides to be (p. 46). Trotter viewed psychopathology as a result of the conflict between one's own needs and the needs of others as perceived. The herd instinct endows the needs of others with the energy of instinct (p. 87). Trotter did not entertain a romantic view of the herd instinct. He believed it to be responsible, in its protective and socialized as well as its aggressive forms, for many of the worst as well as the best expressions of the human spirit.

Freud dismissed Trotter's idea as not helpful in explaining group behavior. Although Trotter's herd instinct may indeed have been less helpful than Freud's own ideas about identification and the ego ideal in explaining the kinds of group behavior that Freud

chose to explore, I think it is likely that Freud understood the general significance of Trotter's hypothesis and rejected it because it was so basically incompatible with his own theory of motivation. We can recognize in Trotter's herd instinct an early statement of what would now be called the theory of prosocial instincts. I shall discuss this theory in some detail later in the paper. Here I wish to emphasize that even the logical possibility (let alone the actual likelihood) of prosocial instincts presupposes a concept of instinct quite different from Freud's concept of drive. The logical possibility of a set of prosocial instincts requires a concept of instinct like that of Bowlby (1982), which is drawn from the field of ethology:

Behaviour that traditionally has been termed instinctive has four main characteristics: (a) it follows a recognizably similar and predictable pattern in almost all members of a species (or all members of one sex); (b) it is not a simple response to a single stimulus but a sequence of behaviour that usually runs a predictable course; (c) certain of its usual consequences are of obvious value in contributing to the preservation of the individual or the continuity of a species; (d) many examples of it develop even when all the ordinary opportunities for learning it are exiguous or absent (p. 38).

Given this concept of instinct it remains an open question whether there are prosocial instincts, i.e., somewhat unlearned, universal tendencies to behave under certain circumstances in ways that benefit other members of one's species. Evidence for a theory of prosocial instincts would include a demonstration that the inheritance of such behavioral tendencies was consistent with the theory of natural selection, evidence for the universality of such tendencies as well as data supporting the thesis that prosocial behavior cannot entirely be accounted for by socialization experience.

Freud's theory of motivation precludes even the logical possibility of prosocial instincts. According to drive theory all motivation derives ultimately from an individual's attempt to discharge endogenously generated accumulations of stimulation. Freud believed that his theory was consistent with the theory of natural selection because these accumulations of stimulation could best be discharged through certain self-preservative or reproductive behaviors. According to drive theory an individual's deepest motivation is by definition egoistic, having as its goal the discharge of his own accumulated tensions. Any benefit that may accrue to others must be derivative, a result either of sublimations of or

defenses against egoistic motivation. There is, by definition, no prosocial instinct or non-derivative altruism¹ in Freud's motivational theory. It is, of course, no surprise to find that a theory which views even one's experience of and attachment to another person as deriving from the other's ability to act as a vehicle through which one may discharge one's tensions, also views behavior which benefits the other person as derivative of more fundamental egoistic motivation.

There is a second related, but not identical, reason why Trotter's theory of the herd instinct was unacceptable to Freud. Greenberg and Mitchell (1983) have pointed out the difficulty of separating psychology from metapsychology. One's vision of human experience and one's theory of meaning inform one's theory of mechanism. Freud's vision of human experience stressed the competitive rather than the cooperative elements of human interaction. This vision was not forced upon him by his metapsychology; it was, rather, embodied in his metapsychology. Trotter's herd instinct was a theoretical embodiment of a very different vision of human experience. Freud believed that man was motivated by self-interest and fear. An example of his model of altruistic concern is the neurotic fear that a loved person may die, which masks a wish that he may die. The altruistic concern "is merely compensating for an underlying contrary attitude of brutal egoism" (*SE* XIII, p. 72). Social feeling, for Freud, is a defense against envy. "Social justice means that we deny ourselves many things so that others may have to do without them as well" (*SE* XVIII, p. 121). Freud's view of primary uncontaminated human motivation is well expressed by his description of the father of the primal horde engaged in relentless, jealous, ruthless pursuit of his sexual pleasure: "A violent, jealous father who keeps all the females for himself and drives away his sons as they grow up" (*SE* XIII, p. 141). "He loved no one but himself or other people insofar as they served his needs"

¹ "Altruistic" and "prosocial" are used interchangeably in this paper, although in the developmental psychology literature the latter term is typically the more inclusive. Both terms are used here to refer to behavior whose intended purpose is the benefit of another person. This intended purpose need not be conscious. Advantage or disadvantage may or may not accrue to the performer of an altruistic act, but neither constitute part of his intention. "Altruistic" is also used in this paper as a scientific and not an ethical term. What is under discussion is not the goodness of human nature but the nature of human nature.

(SE XVIII, p. 123). All the sons who band together in cooperative ventures are merely making do. They too would, if they could, be primal fathers. "Let us venture then," wrote Freud, "to correct Trotter's pronouncement that man is a herd animal and assert that he is rather a horde animal, an individual creature in a horde led by a chief" (SE XVIII, p. 121).

The radical consistency of Freud's position is illustrated by some of his comments on the affection of children for their parents and the protective and affectionate behavior of parents toward their children, which would seem to be exceptions to his theory.

Children love themselves first, and it is only later that they learn to love others and to sacrifice something of their own ego to others. Even those people whom a child seems to love from the beginning are loved by him at first because he needs them and cannot do without them—once again from egoistic motives. Not until later does the impulse to love make itself independent of egoism. It is literally true that *his egoism has taught him to love*" (SE XV, p. 204).

The affectionate behavior of parents toward their children is "a revival and reproduction of their own narcissism . . . Parental love, which is so moving and at bottom so childish, is nothing but the parents' narcissism born again . . ." (SE XIV, p. 91). The Biblical story of the judgement of Solomon, commonly understood as a story about the triumph of maternal instinct over maternal narcissism, is discussed by Freud as an illustration of the role of envy in the demand for justice. Most people would say that the true mother is recognized by her willingness to lose her child rather than have the child come to harm. Freud says that the story illustrates the envy of the deprived. "If one woman's child is dead the other shall not have a live one either. The bereaved woman is recognized by this wish" (SE XVIII, p. 121).

When Freud came, in Chapter VII of *Civilization and Its Discontents*, to formulate his concept of guilt he was constrained by a theory of motivation that ascribed to a child little more than the motives of self-interest and fear. He was also constrained by a belief he held about how children perceive their parents. Throughout his writings Freud assumed that children perceive their parents as powerful. Parents may be frustrating or gratifying, cruel or kind, loving or unloving, but they are always strong authorities. There are few suggestions in the *Complete Psychological Works* that children can perceive their parents (especially their fathers) as weak, fragile,

confused, sad, damaged, depressed, hopeless, etc. Freud shared this belief with others of his time and culture. Freud needed a concept of guilt consistent with his beliefs that a child is motivated by self-interest and fear and that he perceives his parents as strong authorities, capable of dispensing much needed love and protection, or of abandoning him to the dangers of the world and of their own passions.

Freud posed the problem thus: "What means does civilization employ in order to inhibit the aggressiveness which opposes it, to make it harmless, to get rid of it, perhaps?" (*SE XXI*, p. 123). He assumed that man's instinctive tendency is to satisfy his aggressive needs upon others and that only civilization opposes this. He does not consider the possibility of an instinctive opposition to instinctive aggression (for example, the way in which an animal can be inhibited in his attack if his conspecific victim surrenders and bares his throat). Freud's answer is that the child, helpless and dependent upon his parents, fears their loss of love and protection. This fear motivates the child to condemn as "bad" those of his actions and impulses which displease his parents. In its early stages this fear of loss of love is a "social anxiety". As the parental authority becomes increasingly internalized and autonomous the anxiety is experienced as a sense of guilt. For the present discussion the important issue of how to describe the *structure* of the super-ego or, more generally, how to describe the structural results of the internalization of experiences with parents is not germane. What I am concerned with in this paper is the *content*, affective and cognitive, of what Freud calls the super-ego's expression in guilt. Freud's answer is clear. The affective content of guilt is fear and the cognitive content is the belief that one may lose the love and protection of one's parents:

Thus we know of two origins of the sense of guilt: one arising from fear of an authority, and the other, later on arising from fear of the super-ego . . . First comes renunciation of instinct owing to fear of aggression by the *external* authority. (That is, of course, what fear of the loss of love amounts to, for love is a protection against this punitive aggression.) After that comes the erection of an *internal* authority, and renunciation of instinct owing to fear of it—owing to fear of conscience" (*SE XXI*, pp. 127–128).

This conceptualization of guilt posed an immediate problem for Freud. He knew that "the severity of the super-ego which a child develops in no way corresponds to the severity of treatment which

he has himself met with" (SE XXI, p. 130). This seems true, even if one takes into account the hidden cruelties in child-rearing (Miller, 1983) that Freud either did not know about or did not think important (the tormenting discipline inflicted on Schreber by his father; the hypocrisy of Dora's family). Freud tried to solve this problem in several ways. The child, he said, experienced his father as more severe than he actually was because the child projected onto his father his own revengeful aggressiveness in the face of early frustration. Also, adducing a Lamarckian phylogenetic model, Freud said that the child was constitutionally predisposed to experience his father as severe because "the father of prehistoric times was indeed terrible" (SE XXI, p. 131). Freud accounted for the energy of the super-ego and the severity of a person's guilt by assuming that frustrated aggression was turned inwards, channelled through the super-ego and directed against the ego. Last, Freud added Alexander's explanation of the severe super-ego of children of loving and over-indulgent parents: "The 'unduly lenient and indulgent father' is the cause of children's forming an over-severe super-ego, because, under the impression of love that they receive, they have no other outlet for their aggressiveness but turning it inwards" (SE XXI, p. 130). While there are undoubtedly important insights contained in some of these explanations, they have an *ad hoc* quality, which I believe even Freud recognized. The reconceptualization of guilt I shall propose in this paper will obviate the need for these solutions by eliminating Freud's problem.

Freud held to this conceptualization of guilt throughout the rest of his writings. For example, in the *New Introductory Lectures* he writes:

As is well known, young children are amoral and possess no internal inhibitions against their impulses striving for pleasure. The part which is later taken on by the super-ego is played to begin with by an external power, by parental authority. Parental influence governs the child by offering proofs of love and by threatening punishments which are signs to the child of loss of love and are bound to be feared on their own account. This realistic anxiety is the precursor of the later moral anxiety. So long as it is dominant there is no need to talk of a super-ego and of a conscience. It is only subsequently that the secondary situation develops (which we are all too ready to regard as the normal one), where the external restraint is internalized and the super-ego takes the place of the parental agency and observes, directs and threatens the ego in exactly the same way as earlier the parents did with the child" (SE XXII, p. 62).

The phenomenon which Freud called guilt is of incalculable importance. It is difficult, as I have said, to overestimate the significance of fear of loss of love, whether internalized or not, as a motivation in human life. I believe, however, that Freud failed to capture in his definition the essence of what people mean by guilt. Freud's guilt is not the guilt of Lady Macbeth.² It is not the guilt of a survivor of the Holocaust (Niederland, 1961, 1981). It is not the guilt of a mother who believes she has damaged her child. A mother who has, for example, been responsible for her child's disability or death does not feel guilty primarily because she fears the loss of love of *her* internalized mother. Guilt was for Freud, and remains for much of psychoanalytic theory, the fear of an inner policeman, formed by one's experience with a threatening parent, representing, in however distorted a form, the threats of that parent, and fueled by one's own hate.

It is the thesis of this paper that Freud and Trotter were *both* right. Man is a horde *and* a herd animal. As a horde animal his selfish and aggressive behavior is controlled in part by a fear of retaliation which can become internalized. Freud called the internalized fear of retaliation guilt. I think a better word for it would be super-ego anxiety. Guilt refers, I believe, to a distress that derives from our being *herd* animals. It reflects a biological sensitivity to and concern for the needs of significant others, and arises when one believes one has injured or failed to help these others. The phenomenon of guilt derives from what evolutionary biologists are now calling the altruistic line of motivation in human life. By negating the importance of primary (not defensive or derivative) altruistic motivation and by assimilating the concept of guilt to the concept of what I am calling super-ego anxiety Freud obscured an important line of human motivation and placed constraints on what psychoanalysts have been able to observe and have told their patients about their deepest motives.

At the conclusion of Chapter VII of *Civilization and Its Discontents* comes a remarkable addendum, so typical of Freud's relentless attempt to cover all the ground and so characteristic of his intuitive

² Freud, by his own admission, could not understand Lady Macbeth's guilt (*SE* XIV, pp. 318–324).

understanding when his theory was not quite right and his determination not to hide the rough edges. Freud admits that he has not yet explained the sense of guilt that arises when a person really has committed a misdeed. "Of this event, which is after all an everyday occurrence, psycho-analysis has not yet given any explanation" (*SE XXI*, p. 131). Freud calls this kind of guilt remorse. He explains the remorse felt by the sons of the primal father after they had killed him as follows:

This remorse was the result of the primordial ambivalence of feeling towards the father. His sons hated him, but they loved him, too. After their hatred had been satisfied by their acts of aggression, their love came to the fore in their remorse for the deed . . . Now, I think, we can at last grasp two things perfectly clearly; the part played by love in the origin of conscience and the fatal inevitability of the sense of guilt . . . The sense of guilt is an expression of the conflict due to ambivalence, of the eternal struggle between Eros and the instinct of destruction or death (*SE XXI*, p. 132).

This statement is remarkable because it is so very different from the concept of guilt Freud had just proposed. It is one thing to say that oedipal guilt is the fear of an internalized threat of retaliation for wanting to kill one's father and replace him. It is quite another thing to say that oedipal guilt is remorse, based on love, which one feels for wanting to kill and replace one's father. Freud did not develop the concept of remorse or guilt based on love. He did not think it belonged in the province of psychoanalysis (*SE XXI*, p. 132).

II. An Alternative Model: Recent Advances in Developmental Psychology and Evolutionary Biology

Although the scientific study of the development of moral judgment has been carried on for over half a century (Piaget, 1932) it is only recently that concentrated attention has been directed to the development of prosocial behavior (Mussen and Eisenberg-Berg, 1977; Eisenberg, 1982). Much of the fruitful investigation in this area has been done within the tradition of social learning theory which stresses the importance of reinforcement contingencies in shaping and maintaining prosocial behavior. According to social learning theory children are inherently egoistic. They learn through a long series of rewards and punishments to be empathic and altruistic. This theory has much in common with psychoana-

lytic theory. One social learning theorist has even defined conscience as a "conditioned anxiety response to certain types of situations and actions" (Eysenck, 1960), which is very close to Freud's definition of guilt. Even theorists who emphasize the child's use of imitation and complex cognitive skills in learning prosocial behavior believe that he is motivated to learn this behavior by the traditional egoistic motivations of self-interest and fear. There is no question of the enormous importance of rewards and punishments in shaping and maintaining prosocial behavior. The effects of both positive and negative reinforcement on prosocial behavior have been demonstrated in the laboratory and have been convincingly proposed as an important explanation of the increase in prosocial behavior with age as well as the development with age of moral judgement in the direction of increasing altruism (Rushton, 1982). Restated in psychoanalytic theory, there is no question of the importance of parental love, and the child's fear of the loss of this love in developing his empathy and altruism. The question is whether this is a sufficient theory. There is increasing evidence that it is not.

Martin Hoffman (1981) in reviewing the evidence for an independent altruistic motive system notes that the traditional assumption of psychology, that altruistic behavior can ultimately be explained in terms of self-serving motives is just that, an assumption. "Empirical evidence for this view has not been advanced, perhaps because the conception of humans as egoistic beings seems so obvious that the evidence is unnecessary" (p. 125). Hoffman believes that this assumption derives in part from a misunderstanding of the theory of natural selection.

The original Darwinian notion of survival of the fittest appeared to leave little room for altruism. The image it conjured up was one in which each individual competed with others, and natural selection favored egoistic, self-preserving behavior. Those individuals who were stronger than others, for example, were more likely to live longer, reproduce, and pass their genes to offspring. The more recent view of evolutionary theorists, based on evidence from fossil remains (bones, tools, weapons), observations of mammals and ethnographic descriptions of primitive groups, is that early humans did not live alone but in small groups. Such groups produced more offspring (who presumably then continued to live in groups) than those individuals not living in groups. Consequently, current evolutionary theory does not ignore the necessities of cooperative social existence (pp. 121-122).

Darwin himself did not ignore the importance of cooperative social existence and took a much broader view of his theory than did many of its later adherents, including Freud. Darwin's discussion of the evolution of neuter insects (Darwin, 1859) is an example of his understanding of the need to account for altruistic behavior in evolutionary terms. Recently several models have been proposed by evolutionary biologists, all consistent with the theory of natural selection, which point to the logical possibility and actual likelihood that genotypic and phenotypic structures mediating altruistic behavior in humans have evolved. The models are group selection (Wynne-Edwards, 1962), inclusive fitness (Hamilton, 1964), and reciprocal altruism (Trivers, 1971). Very briefly, they emphasize that the theory of natural selection explains the evolution of species, not the existence of particular descendants of certain individuals. A species' genetic fitness is measured not only by the genetic fitness of its individual members, but by their enhancement of the fitness of other species members who share the same genes. This is essentially Hamilton's concept of inclusive fitness. Trivers' model of reciprocal altruism extends the concept of inclusive fitness to show that natural selection would even favor the evolution of certain altruistic tendencies directed to non-related individuals. These models do not imply that there are specific sets of genes determining specific social behaviors, but merely that it is unlikely that we would have survived as a species unless we had inherited some structures mediating altruistic behavior, that is some tendencies to help each other under certain circumstances.

Natural selection operates on the boundaries within which ethical systems can develop and it buffers humans against arbitrary indoctrination by capricious ideologies or programs of reinforcement that would work against the long-range survival of the human genotype (Wolff, 1978, p. 91).

These advances in evolutionary biology do not prove that there is an altruistic line of motivation in human life. They do, however, clearly place the burden of proof, as Hoffman points out, on any theory that reduces apparent altruistic motivation to egoistic motivation. Bowlby echoes these sentiments:

Once gene survival is recognized as the true criterion in terms of which the [adaptive] function of instinctive behavior is measured some old-standing problems evaporate. That some instinctive behavior has a func-

tion of direct and immediate benefit to kin is only to be expected . . . This means that altruistic behavior springs from roots just as deep as does egoistic . . . (1982, p. 133).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to review the large body of experimental data supporting the theory of an independent altruistic motive system. The reader is referred to Hoffman (1981) for a more comprehensive account. Hoffman cites studies which demonstrate the automatic quality of many altruistic responses (5–10 sec. latency) as well as studies which show that learning curves obtained with the cessation of *another* persons's distress serving as the only reinforcement closely resemble learning curves obtained when the cessation of the subject's *own* distress serves as the reinforcement. He also cites his own study (Sagi and Hoffman, 1976) of the empathic distress of newborns which shows that one-day old infants react to the distress cries of other infants with cries that are indistinguishable from the cries of infants who are in actual distress, and are different from the infants' reactions to equally loud and intense nonhuman sounds.

In addition to Hoffman's important study of the reactive cries of newborns, there is a gradually increasing number of studies of the very early development of empathic and altruistic responses which suggest that such responses are not entirely learned. Classical psychoanalytic and cognitive-developmental (Piaget) theories do not predict the clear display of altruistic behavior before the age of around 5 years (Eisenberg, 1982, p. 9). Social learning theory could conceivably account for an earlier appearance of pro-social behavior on the basis of imitation and reinforcement contingencies but it would be hard pressed to account for the universal appearance of altruistic tendencies in very young children (1- and 2-year olds). While there has long been a large body of anecdotal evidence known to parents and psychologists (Rheingold and Hay, 1980) that places the onset of altruistic behavior in roughly the second year of life, it is only in the past few years that this has been demonstrated through formal research.

In a series of well controlled studies Zahn-Waxler and Radke-Yarrow (1977, 1982, 1983) and their colleagues at the Laboratory of Developmental Psychology of the NIMH trained mothers to record their children's responses to naturally occurring and simulated incidents of distress at home. The children's ages ranged from 10 months to 2-½ years. Empathic and altruistic responses

were included in the categories of response reported on by the mothers. Empathic responses occurred as early as 10 months. Many of the children were performing caregiving functions by the age of 1-1/2 years.

Not only do they comfort another person by patting, hugging, or presenting an object, but also they have more sophisticated and complex methods of attempting to help. They express verbal sympathy, they give suggestions about how to handle problems . . . they appear to try to cheer others up and they sometimes try alternative helping responses when a given technique was not effective . . . The behaviors appear to be intended to reduce suffering in others and to reflect concern for the victim in distress (1982, p. 126).

The following is an example of an altruistic response reported in their study:

I'd been working hard, and I was overtired. I started to cry and argue with my husband, John. Anne (21 months old) came and put her arms around me; she looked very confused and a little worried. Then John left and we were quiet. I went and sat down, trying to pull myself together. Anne came over, and she climbed onto my lap and she said "Hi," with a very eager look on her face. Then she sat next to me in the chair for a minute, and she folded her hands. She looked at me, and she said "Hi," several times. I couldn't help smiling and saying "Hi," back to her. But I still had tears in my eyes. Then she put her arms around my neck, and she put her head down next to mine and began to pat my shoulder. She was really very consoling. It was very sweet. Then she leaned over, and she kissed me on the forehead. And that just cleared up all the depression, and I reached over, and I hugged her. And then she began to smile, and she look relieved (1983, p. 247).

While not overlooking the effect of imitation and reinforcement on prosocial behavior, the authors were impressed by the early onset and universality of the phenomena they observed.

Altruism was found to develop in virtually all of the children studied, and most children showed similarity in their total repertoire of prosocial responding. The very first signs of responding were remarkably similar in form from one child to the next and they tended to occur within a narrow time frame shortly after the first year of life (1982, p. 125).

The authors take issue with theories of early personality development which emphasize "the infant's gradual transition from narcissism, egocentrism and desire for immediate self-gratification, to the eventual internalization, control, and coordination of its own needs and impulses with the demands of society" (1983, p. 247).

They see these theories as biasing observers against seeing the potential for prosocial behavior in young children.

Mothers, too, not infrequently assume that their young children are ego-centric and incapable of caring for others' needs. Sometimes they actually misinterpret their children's prosocial behaviors. Prosocial behaviors are often quietly and subtly conveyed. They do not carry with them the 'drama' of a child's temper tantrum or acute state of woe, and hence are more likely to go unnoticed (1983, p. 258).

The authors conclude that their data attests to the universality of prosocial behavior in the very young child and "suggest possible biological or maturational mechanisms" (1982, p. 125).

Martin Hoffman (1981, 1982, 1984) perhaps has gone the farthest in developing a theory of prosocial motivation by suggesting just what the inherited capacities and tendencies mediating altruistic behavior might be. His theory of empathy and guilt, while not addressing in any detail the issues that concern us as clinicians, nevertheless forms the kernel of the reconceptualization of guilt proposed in this paper. I shall, accordingly, review it in some detail.

In discussing the criteria for an inherited altruistic response system Hoffman notes that it must be reliable in the sense of serving as a buffer against maladaptive local social norms and flexible in that it must be subject to perceptual and cognitive controls and able to be balanced in any particular situation with the demands of an egoistic response system (1981, pp. 126–127). He suggests that empathy fulfills these requirements. Hoffman defines empathy as an affective response more appropriate to someone else's situation than to one's own (1982, p. 281). He presents evidence that empathy is a universal human response subject to cognitive and perceptual control for which there is a constitutional basis and which motivates an individual to altruistic action (1981, pp. 128ff). He described several modes of empathic arousal which range from the reactive cry of the newborn (Sagi and Hoffman, 1976), through associative and conditioned empathic responses, to complex cognitively and symbolically mediated empathic role taking. All of these modes of arousal have involuntary components. This is important because "it shows that as humans we may involuntarily and forcefully experience others' emotional states rather than the emotional states pertinent and appropriate to our own situation . . . that we are built in such a

way that distress will often be contingent not on our own but on someone's else's painful experience" (1984, p. 112).

Hoffman links the developmental levels of empathy to the development of the child's cognitive sense of the other. *Global empathy* is experienced by the child in roughly the first year of life, before he has achieved a stable self-other differentiation. Examples of global empathy are the reactive cry of the newborn and the distress cries of the 10–14 month old children in the Zahn-Waxler and Radke-Yarrow study in response to the distress they witnessed in others. *Egocentric empathy* characterizes the child in the second year of life who has achieved substantial self-other differentiation or "person permanence". These children "cannot yet fully distinguish between their own and the other person's inner states, however, and . . . their efforts to help others . . . consist chiefly of giving the other person what they themselves find most comforting" (1982, p. 287). *Empathy for another's feeling* begins to develop around the ages of 2 or 3 and parallels the child's growing recognition of others as having inner states independent of his own. *Empathy for another's general plight* develops by late childhood or early adolescence along with one's recognition that others have "personal identities and life experiences beyond the immediate situation" (1982, pp. 286–288).

Hoffman discusses two kinds of prosocial motive arising from empathic distress. The first he calls a "quasi-egoistic empathic distress response". Simply put this means that "the best way to reduce one's empathic distress may ordinarily be to get rid of its source, namely, the other's actual distress. The best way therefore may be to help" (1982, p. 290). A second motive is termed by Hoffman "sympathetic distress".

Once people are aware of the other as distinct from the self, their own empathic distress, which is a parallel response—a more or less exact replication of the victim's presumed feeling of distress—may be transformed at least in part into a more reciprocal feeling of concern for the victim. That is, they continue to respond in a purely empathic, quasi-egoistic manner—to feel uncomfortable and highly distressed themselves—but they also experience a feeling of compassion or what I call sympathetic distress for the victim, along with a conscious desire to help because they feel sorry for him or her and not just to relieve their own empathic distress (1982, p. 290).

Although Hoffman occasionally writes as though sympathetic dis-

stress were an elaborately conditioned response to empathic distress that occurs as a child begins to distinguish self from other, he generally seems to believe that it represents an independent aspect of empathically based altruistic motivation which comes into play later than empathic distress.

Hoffman's conceptualization of guilt follows directly from his theory of empathy.

Thus far in my analysis, the observer is an innocent bystander. A special case of interest is that in which the cues indicate that the observer is the cause of the other's distress. It seems reasonable to assume, when one feels empathic distress, that if the cues indicate that one has caused the victim's distress one's empathic distress will be transformed by the self-blame attribution into a feeling of guilt. That is, the temporal conjunction of empathy for someone in distress and the attribution of one's own responsibility for that distress will produce guilt (1982, p. 297).

Guilt has three components. Its affective component is empathic distress; its cognitive component is the belief that one has caused this distress; its motivational component is a disposition to repair the distress one believes one has caused. Guilt presupposes an awareness of the self and other as separate entities and the ability to make causal inferences involving one's own actions (1982, p. 299). With increasing cognitive maturity the varieties of guilt possible extend to include guilt over inaction as well as guilt toward suffering people one has never met (1982, p. 302). Hoffman does not consider the pathologies of guilt, but discusses its *adaptive* function as an additional prosocial motive. By disposing a person to avoid harming others and to make reparation if he does, guilt adds an additional biologically based prosocial motive to the motives of empathic and sympathetic distress.

However incomplete Hoffman's theory may be as a clinical theory of guilt, he has achieved a major reconceptualization with significant clinical implications. Later in this paper I shall attempt to enlarge his theory in the direction of a clinical theory. At this point I would like to review several attempts within psychoanalysis to supplement or modify Freud's concept of guilt, all of which seem to me to have much in common with Hoffman's model.

III. Developments Within Psychoanalysis

Melanie Klein

In a series of papers beginning shortly after Freud wrote *Civi-*

lization and Its Discontents Melanie Klein effected what I believe to be a major reconceptualization of guilt, one that is more in accord with the point of view presented here. Klein's wish to stress her continuity with Freud may be partly responsible for the general lack of appreciation of the difference between his concept and hers. Melanie Klein's theory of guilt is essentially an expansion of what I termed Freud's addendum to his concept of guilt. By emphasizing guilt and the "drive" to make reparation as deriving from *love* she corrected Freud's one-sided emphasis on self-interest and fear as the primary motivations in human life.

In a short paper, *On Criminality*, written in 1934 Klein set out in abbreviated form much of what she was to say about guilt over the next 15 years. Melanie Klein was fully cognizant, to say the least, of a super-ego populated with menacing introjects, images of threatening parents distorted by the child's projection of his own aggressive impulses onto his parents and by his fears of retaliation:

The small child first harbours against its parents aggressive impulses and phantasies, it then projects these on to them, and thus it comes about that it develops a phantastic and distorted picture of the people around it. But the mechanism of introjection operates at the same time, so that these unreal imagos become internalized, with the result that the child feels itself to be ruled by phantastically dangerous and cruel parents—the super-ego within itself (1975, p. 259).

She is careful, however, not to call the fear of these introjects (their abandonment or retaliation) guilt—she calls it anxiety. She conceives of two stages of super-ego development (later to become the paranoid and depressive positions). In the first stage the child's aggressive phantasies against its parents arouse anxiety lest they retaliate. In the second stage these aggressive phantasies "become the basis for feelings of guilt and the wish to make good what it has done in its imagination" (1975, p. 259).

In *A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States* (1935) Klein formulated her theory of the depressive position. Money-Kryle (1975, p. 433) summarizes it as follows:

Briefly, the theory posits that in the first year at roughly four to five months a significant change occurs in the infant's object relations, a change from relation to a part-object to relation to a complete object. This change brings the ego to a new position in which it is able to identify with its object so that while formerly the infant's anxieties were of a paranoiac kind about

the preservation of his ego, he now has a more complicated set of ambivalent feelings and depressive anxieties about the condition of his object.

Guilt (which is not sharply distinguished from remorse and depressive anxiety) is the distress accompanying the belief that one has damaged one's loved object. The depressive is filled with anxiety for the object while the paranoiac is afraid for himself.

The ego comes to a realization of its love for a good object, a whole object and in addition a real object, together with an overwhelming feeling of guilt towards it. Full identification with the object . . . goes hand in hand with anxiety for it (of its disintegration), with guilt and remorse, with a sense of responsibility for preserving it intact against persecutors and the id, and with sadness relating to expectations of the impending loss of it (1975, p. 270).

Klein departs from Freud's interpretation of the self-reproaches of the depressive. She says that these are not primarily reproaches against the introjected object, but true self-reproaches based on a belief that one has injured the object. The reproaches against the object can even be defenses against self-reproach. She also suggested a different interpretation of the dynamics of suicide. Abraham and Glover had emphasized the suicide's attempt to destroy the introjected bad object. Klein emphasized the suicide's attempt to preserve the external or introjected object by destroying the dangerous self. Klein explicitly rejects the idea, which she ascribes to Rado, that the deepest fixation-point in the depressive is due to threatened loss of love. It is, she claims, rather due to guilt and remorse over having damaged the loved object.

In *Love, Guilt and Reparation* (1937) Melanie Klein writes of the "drive" to reparation stemming from one's love and one's guilt over having damaged the objects of one's love. She writes of an unconscious sense of guilt underlying many forms of psychopathology which is based on a dread of being a danger to the loved one (1975, p. 309). Klein is very clear that guilt and the "drive" to make reparation are not derivative or defensive phenomena, but primary motivations based on love.

Even in the small child one can observe a concern for the loved ones which is not, as one might think, merely a sign of dependence upon a friendly and helpful person. Side by side with the destructive impulses in the unconscious mind both of the child and of the adult, there exists a profound urge to make sacrifices, in order to help and to put right loved people who in phantasy have been harmed or destroyed. In the depths of the

mind, the urge to make people happy is linked up with a strong feeling of responsibility and concern for them, which manifests itself in genuine sympathy with other people and in the ability to understand them, as they are and as they feel (1975, p. 311).

Klein frequently emphasizes that children worry about hurting their parents and that they continually look for reassurances that their parents are not damaged. She writes about people who ruin their lives out of unconscious guilt over having damaged their parents.

In *On the Theory of Anxiety and Guilt* (1948) Klein further clarified the difference between the two concepts. Anxiety (or persecutory anxiety) relates predominately to fear for the self, for the annihilation of the ego; guilt (or depressive anxiety) is predominantly fear lest the loved object be destroyed. The former is ultimately derived from the death instinct and the latter from Eros.

The feeling that the harm done to the loved object is caused by the subject's aggressive impulses I take to be the essence of guilt. (The infant's feeling of guilt may extend to every evil befalling the loved object—even the harm done by his persecutory objects.) The urge to undo or repair this harm results from the feeling that the subject has caused it, i.e., from guilt. The reparative tendency can, therefore, be considered as a consequence of the sense of guilt. The question now arises: is guilt an element in depressive anxiety? Are they both aspects of the same process, or is one a result or a manifestation of the other? While I cannot at present give a definite answer to this question, I would suggest that depressive anxiety, guilt and the reparative urge are often experienced simultaneously (1975a, p. 36).

As an example of the clinical importance of the distinction between paranoid and depressive anxiety Klein describes a patient who defends against his guilt by experiencing himself as the object of persecution. He accuses the analyst of harming him and remembers earlier grievances as a way of escaping from an overwhelming burden of guilt and despair (1975a, p. 37).

Melanie Klein viewed guilt as a result of the conflict between the life and death instincts. She emphasized the child's aggressive and destructive impulses and believed that he was guilty primarily about these impulses. Klein also viewed both persecutory and depressive anxiety as deriving from instinctual processes largely independent of experiences with parents. Parents, for Klein, can mitigate the ravages of persecutory and depressive anxiety by being loving and strong. There is little indication in her writings that they may severely exacerbate a child's experience of anxiety

or guilt. Both of these aspects of Klein's theory of guilt reflect her relative neglect of the child's experiences in his family and the conclusions he draws from these experiences. I shall take a different point of view, emphasizing the importance of the specificities of a child's experiences in his family, especially his experience of his parent's psychopathology and/or misfortunes, in determining the nature and extent of his guilt. It is important to note, however, that Klein stressed that the child's guilt over his aggressive and destructive impulses was not an internalized fear of retaliation for these impulses, but an independent and primary motive, stemming from the life instinct, to repair the harm caused by the death instinct. Melanie Klein took the concept of guilt as far as it could go toward an altruistic conceptualization while still remaining within the constraints of a modified drive theory. Her conceptualization was limited by her failure to adopt either a phylogenetic or an ontogenetic adaptive point of view.

Arnold Modell

Of all the psychoanalytic writers with whom I am familiar Arnold Modell (1965, 1971) has come the closest to the altruistic-adaptive reconceptualization of guilt being proposed in this paper. In *The Origin of Certain Forms of Pre-Oedipal Guilt and the Implications for a Psychoanalytic Theory of Affects* (1971) Modell describes a phenomenon which he believes is of universal significance and "not confined to a particular diagnostic group, but represents a fundamental human conflict" (p. 340). The phenomenon is "survivor guilt". The concept of survivor guilt had been introduced into contemporary psychiatric literature by Niederland (1961), who described the severe guilt experienced by survivors of the Holocaust. Typically, after struggling to begin a new life and often succeeding, these people succumbed to a variety of symptoms like depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic conditions (Niederland, 1981). Niederland believed these symptoms to be identifications with loved ones who had not survived. His patients often appeared and felt as if they were living dead. Niederland believed that these identifications were motivated by guilt, which he called survivor guilt. The survivors experienced an "ever present feeling of guilt . . . for having survived the very calamity to which their loved ones succumbed" (1961, p. 238). He concluded that his patients' pathology was not due to prior unconscious hostile wishes toward their loved

ones, but rather to the fate that befell them and to the patients' unconscious belief that merely remaining alive was a betrayal of the dead.

Modell broadened the concept of survivor guilt to include more subtle forms of survival accompanied by unconscious guilt. For example, one of his patients was a talented woman who had married well and had achieved financial and professional success. She had risen far above the fate of her parents. The patient undid her success by experiencing it as unreal, only acting. She felt that "she was simply acting the part of a young matron culled from the pages of a women's magazine" (1965, p. 326). The patient provoked fights with her husband which eroded her marital happiness, and allowed herself little pleasure in any of her activities. She tried to convince Modell that she was unfit for and unworthy of psychoanalysis by reporting bizarre and cruel behavior. The patient's "deepest conviction was that she had no right to a life better than that of her mother, which was perceived by her as a life of hardship and degradation" (1965, p. 326). This patient believed that she had depleted her mother and robbed her siblings of their share of love. "Her basic conviction was that love was a concrete substance, and that its supply was limited; if she possessed anything that was good, it meant that someone else was deprived" (1965, p. 326). Another patient described by Modell was a successful man whose sister was hopelessly schizophrenic. This man punished himself for being better off than his sister by drinking excessively and by deadening his feeling for others (1971, p. 340). Modell concludes that there is "in mental life something that might be termed an unconscious bookkeeping system, i.e., a system that takes account of the distribution of the available 'good' within a given nuclear family so that the current fate of other family members will determine how much 'good' one possesses. If fate has dealt harshly with other members of the family the survivor may experience guilt" (1971, p. 340).

Modell also writes about "separation guilt" which is guilt based on a belief that growing up and separating from mother will damage or even destroy her. More generally, separation guilt is guilt based on a belief that evolving one's own autonomy, having a separate existence, a life of one's own, is damaging to others. Modell's concepts of separation and survivor guilt overlap somewhat. What they have in common is a belief that one's own welfare

is at the expense of another's. They are both forms of distress (guilt) occasioned by a belief that by pursuing normal developmental or life goals one is harming a significant other.

In his 1971 paper Modell attempted to explain the phenomena of survivor and separation guilt by placing them in a biological context. Invoking the evolutionary biological model of group selection Modell suggested that these forms of guilt are metaphorical extensions of an inherited altruistic impulse to share food with other members of one's group.

The altruistic impulse to share food promotes the survival of the group. The alternative would be survival of a few of the stronger individuals who would greedily hoard the available food supply, but, as has been observed, there is a survival value in maintaining the group rather than the isolated individual. It is reasonable to suppose that evolution might favour the survival of those individuals who experience guilt when they behave greedily and that the guilt leads to the prohibition of the wish to have everything for oneself. This form of guilt, which in man's earlier history contributed to the survival of the group, continues to be inherited and continues to exert its influence upon modern man, although its original function may no longer be relevant. However, due to man's capacity for metaphorical thinking, the experience of guilt did not remain limited to its original objects, i.e., the obtaining of food, because food can be symbolically elaborated as the acquisition of that which is 'good' " (1971, p. 342).

It is hard to understand why Modell thinks that natural selection should have operated only on the altruistic impulse to share food or why he believes that altruistic motivation is no longer being selected for. These considerations aside, Modell's ideas represent an important advance. He has brought some basic evolutionary theory (which is less speculative than he seems to think) to bear on some very important but neglected clinical facts. He has offered an explanation for guilt which is an advance over Klein's explanation based on the instincts of love and death. Modell, however, seems uneasy with his innovation and attempts to accommodate it to classical theory. He emphasizes the role of oral greed in the etiology of survivor guilt. He also reduces survivor guilt first to a form of pre-oedipal guilt and then to a primal fantasy arising independently of the super-ego and later regulated by it (1971). This attempted accommodation fails, in my opinion, and only succeeds in obscuring the importance of his contribution.

Harry Stack Sullivan

Sullivan dismissed guilt as a phenomenon of relatively minor importance (1956, pp. 112–115). He wrote about conscious guilt and viewed it either as anxiety attendant upon a clearly perceived violation of one's moral code, or a defense against unconscious anxiety. He also made statements which could be taken to mean that he did not believe a person capable of altruistic concern for another before preadolescence (see Searles, 1958, p. 228). These aspects of Sullivan's thought tend to obscure what I believe to be a similarity between some of his central ideas and the point of view presented here. Sullivan included what I am calling guilt in his concept of anxiety. According to Sullivan, a person's self-system is largely organized around his attempts to avoid anxiety. This does not mean that there is no potential for an emergent social self, rather that the distortion of this potential, the psychopathology is an attempt to avoid anxiety. (Sullivan is contrasting his view that psychopathology has to do with the quest for security with Freud's view that it is more related to the vicissitudes of satisfaction.)

According to Sullivan, there are two sources of a child's anxiety. One is parental threat of loss of love (withdrawal, disapproval, etc.). The other is the anxiety which the child experiences when a parent is anxious: "*The tension of anxiety, when present in a mothering one, induces anxiety in the infant*" (1953, p. 41). The process whereby the anxiety is communicated is *empathy*.

The rationale of this induction—that is, *how* anxiety in the mother induces anxiety in the infant—is thoroughly obscure . . . [However] those who have had pediatric experience or mothering experience actually have data which can be interpreted on no other equally simple hypothetical basis. So although empathy may sound mysterious, remember that there is much that sounds mysterious in the universe, only you have got used to it; and perhaps you will get used to empathy (1953, pp. 41–42).

The child learns to avoid anxiety both by renouncing behavior that leads to his mother's withdrawal and disapproval and by renouncing behavior that causes her to be anxious. Anxiety occasioned by mother's withdrawal or disapproval is, when structuralized, close to what I am calling super-ego anxiety. The child's empathic experience of his mother's anxiety following some be-

havior of his which he believes caused that anxiety is an example of what I am calling guilt.

In Sullivan's system the distinction between harming and being harmed is blurred. He presumably would not see my distinction between super-ego anxiety and guilt as important. In many instances the distinction is, in fact, blurred. It is certainly blurred for infants who have not achieved a stable self-object differentiation, and may have been blurred for many of the severely ill patients whom Sullivan treated. However, it is important to note that Sullivan did place great emphasis on the child's attempt to avoid harming his mother by causing her to be anxious, and that he believed that her anxiety, empathically communicated, became a central shaping force of the child's personality and psychopathology.

Harold Searles

Although he has not addressed the *concept* of guilt, Harold Searles (1958, 1979) has written for almost three decades about the infant's and child's primary, non-derivative love and sense of responsibility for his mother. "Innate among man's most powerful strivings toward his fellow men, beginning in the earliest years and even earliest months of life, is an essentially psychotherapeutic striving" (1979, p. 380). Searles believes that "altruistic loving relatedness" is the "basic stuff of human personality" and that "it is with a wholehearted openness to loving relatedness that the newborn infant responds to the outside world" (1958, pp. 227-8). He decries the emphasis in the psychiatric literature on the infant's need to *receive* love and upon the failure of those about him to *give him* the love he needs, and the neglect of the infant's and child's need to express his own love to others. Searles believes that the preschizophrenic child's love for and loyalty to his psychologically damaged mother is a major motivating force in the development of his illness. The patient sacrifices his individuality in an effort to restore his mother and suffers from deep and crippling lifelong guilt for not being able to help her (1979, p. 385). The patient views his recovery as a damaging abandonment of his mother, and his guilt over abandoning her is a major impediment to his recovery. "He cannot bear to grow out of the relationship and leave her there, tragically crippled" (1958, p. 231).

Arthur H. Feiner and Edgar A. Levenson

Feiner and Levenson (1968) have described the ways in which a young adult's impulsive, destructive, provocative and self-destructive behavior can function, and is in fact unconsciously intended to function, as a means of protecting one or both parents. Although they do not address the concept of guilt, they use the word in a way that is congruent with the reconceptualization proposed in this paper. These young adults, part of a population of college dropouts studied intensively in a project of the William Alanson White Institute, sacrificed their own development in order to maintain a homeostatic family system (Jackson, 1957) which protected their parents from facing their own individual and marital problems.

One patient, Ronald, dropped out of school following an acute schizophrenic episode. When he returned home he played out the role of the "monster". He dressed in filthy clothing, had no friends, slept all day and physically threatened his mother. Ronald's mother had had several hospitalizations for paranoid decompensations. His father, by playing the role of a conscientious and patient man who "carried the load of a crazy son and a crazy wife", was able to deny his own pathology (the therapist thought he was the most disturbed family member). Father's self-righteous and blaming behavior provoked his son into episodes of self-loathing which resulted in Ronald's compliant assumption of his role as the "monster". Ronald's mother's envy of his progress in therapy and her worry about the competence of her own therapist led her also to needle her son into angry outbursts. Through his rages and other symptoms Ronald sacrificially helped to "divert the mother's rage, guilt and competitive anxiety" and to maintain "the family picture of the father as a benign authority . . ." (pp. 561-563).

Another patient, Mary, in order to protect her mother from mother's experience of profound depression, which had resulted in one hospitalization, became a cause for mother's worry and anger by virtue of her promiscuous sexual behavior and poor performance at school. Mary's parents hesitated to go away on vacation because they would worry about what Mary would do in their absence. "In this way, by worrying over her daughter and not going away, [her mother] could disguise from herself the fact that she and her husband are not happy with each other, that they would

probably have little to say to each other . . ." Mary expressed anxiety about leaving home to go to boarding school. Feiner and Levenson see this as an expression of Mary's worry about her mother. "Without Mary being present to bolster the mother's defenses, it seemed to the therapist that the mother would very likely have another psychotic episode. The degree of compassion and genuine concern underlying ostensibly acting-out behavior can too often be underestimated" (pp. 564–565).

Hans Loewald

In *The Waning of the Oedipus Complex* (1979) Loewald has proposed a broadened understanding of oedipal guilt which he hopes will counteract the "contemporary decline of psychoanalytic interest in the oedipal phase and oedipal conflicts and the predominance of interest and research in preoedipal development, in the infant-mother dyad and issues of separation-individuation and narcissism . . ." (p. 753). Loewald suggests that we view the oedipal crime as an inevitable psychological parricide required by the individuation and maturational process.

In an important sense, by evolving our own autonomy, our own super-ego, and by engaging in nonincestuous object relations, we are killing our parents. We are usurping their power, their competence, their responsibility for us, and we are abnegating, rejecting them as libidinal objects. In short, we destroy them in regard to some of their qualities hitherto most vital to us (p. 758).

It is no exaggeration to say that the assumption of responsibility for one's own life and its conduct is in psychic reality tantamount to the murder of the parents, to the crime of parricide, and involves dealing with the guilt incurred thereby. Not only parental authority is destroyed . . . but the parents, if the process were thoroughly carried out, are being destroyed as libidinal objects as well . . . (p. 757).

Loewald's reinterpretation of oedipal guilt is very close to Modell's concepts of survivor and separation guilt. He presents a case of a brilliant young student who was having trouble finishing his thesis. The patient was working in the same field as his father, who had died a year earlier. In the (father) transference the patient pulled for encouragement and support from Loewald, although he kept coaching Loewald not to offer inappropriate encouragement by reminding him repeatedly that the thesis was entirely the patient's responsibility. The patient was thus offering to restore his father in the transference, hoping that his offer would not be

needed or accepted. The patient experienced completing his thesis and continuing on to a career more successful than that of his father as parricide. Hostile wishes toward his father, while undoubtedly present, were not the primary cause of the patient's guilt. The point is that the patient experienced his normal developmental goals as hostile, and damaging to his father.

Loewald's contribution renders an invaluable service by calling attention to the guilt attendant upon the process of individuation. Otto Rank, many years earlier, made a similar contribution (Menaker, 1982). However, by shifting the meaning of oedipal guilt Loewald gives the impression that classical theory is still intact. He is also unclear about the distinction I am making in this paper, a distinction which both Klein and Modell in their own ways also believe to be important. Classical theory can, with minor changes, accommodate guilt over individuation and separation if this guilt is conceptualized as an internalized fear of punishment for the individuation and separation, for example, abandonment by the parent from whom one is separating. I believe that this was Rank's view. More recently it is the view proposed by Masterson (1976). Loewald does not clearly take this position, nor does he adopt the position I am proposing of viewing separation guilt as distress over hurting the parent from whom one is separating independent of any fears of retaliation.

Joseph Weiss and Harold Sampson

Weiss and Sampson have emphasized the way in which a child will distort or renounce his normal developmental goals in order to maintain his ties to his parents. The child experiences guilt whenever he believes that his motives, traits, or behavior threaten these ties. A child's ties to his parents can be threatened either because he is in danger of being harmed by them or they by him:

The child's motive for developing a sense of guilt, as Freud discussed it, stems from his dependency on his parents. The child needs his parents to protect him from a variety of dangers, including the danger of their punishing him. He therefore dares not risk the loss of their love. In order to retain it, he develops a powerful wish to obey his parents, be loyal to them, and to be like them . . . Freud . . . assumed that guilt arises from a particular kind of disruption in the child's relationships to his parents; that is, a disruption which arises from behavior which the child experiences as provoking punishment or rejection. Perhaps just as important, however, in the production of guilt is the disruption which arises from behavior

which the child experiences as worrying, saddening, hindering, draining, or humiliating a parent, or expressing disloyalty to the parent (Weiss, 1985, p. 78).

Dysfunctional object ties are maintained not so much because they are a source of comfort and gratification, but because their relinquishment is believed to be harmful to the object:

A crucial factor in a patient's continuing attachment to infantile objects and to infantile gratifications is unconscious guilt about wanting to turn away from early objects, to exercise self-control, and to run his own life. Thus therapy is not a process in which a patient gradually and reluctantly renounces infantile satisfactions. Rather, in the course of therapy a patient gradually comes to feel reassured that he may relinquish infantile object ties and pleasures without harming the analyst and without becoming overwhelmed by guilt toward earlier objects (Sampson, 1976, p. 261).

Weiss's clinical examples stress the way in which a child will comply or identify with a parent to avoid harming the parent or to make reparation for harm the child believes he has done:

A patient who suffers from separation guilt may attempt to overcome the guilt by inflicting certain kinds of punishment on himself. He may, in particular, punish himself by intensifying in a self-tormenting way his ties to the parent whom he believes he has hurt by his independence. He may, by identifying with the parent toward whom he feels separation guilt, acquire certain of that parent's most self-destructive behaviors or traits. He may, for example, ruin his marriage by raging at his wife as his father ruined his marriage by raging at his wife . . . He may . . . develop excessive timidity or alcoholism or overeating or impulsiveness, etc. Or . . . to reduce his separation guilt [a person] may punish himself, not by identifying with the parent from whom he separated, but by complying in a self-tormenting way with the parent. That is, he may adopt some foolish or maladaptive behavior such as he unconsciously believes a parent wanted him to adopt. He may, if he infers that his mother wanted him to remain dependent on her, become sick and hence dependent on her. Or, he may develop some crippling symptom which prevents him from becoming independent (1985, pp. 84–85).

IV. Preliminary Suggestions Toward A Reconceptualization of Guilt

The following discussion is intended as a contribution to an enlargement of Hoffman's altruistic-adaptive reconceptualization of guilt into a clinical theory. To recapitulate Hoffman's theory very briefly, there is a biologically based independent altruistic motive system in humans mediated by empathy. This motive system has

two distinguishable components. The first is empathic (and sympathetic) distress which motivates the empathically distressed person to help the truly distressed person. The second is guilt, which is empathic distress accompanied by the belief that one has caused the other's distress. Guilt motivates a person to avoid harming others and to make reparation if he does.

I propose to define guilt as *the appraisal*,³ *conscious or unconscious, of one's plans, thoughts, actions, etc. as damaging, through commission or omission, to someone for whom one feels responsible.* Feeling responsible for someone includes both the ability to respond empathically to his needs or distress and an empathically based motivation to help. The degree both of empathic response and of the accompanying motivation to help will depend on many factors. One important factor is the relationship one has to the person for whom one feels responsible. Relationships which are actual or symbolic instances of nuclear familial relationships, for example, will generally carry a high degree of feeling of responsibility.

I am calling guilt an *appraisal* in part to emphasize that it is a person's *belief* that he has harmed or may harm someone which contributes to his guilt. This belief may not be accurate. In fact, it is a person's inaccurate and irrational beliefs about the harmful consequences of his plans, thoughts, and actions which are of greatest importance to a clinical theory of guilt.

The appraisal that I am calling guilt has (following Hoffman) three components: an affective, a cognitive, and a motivational. The affective component of guilt is a combination of empathic distress, the content of which will vary across situations, plus a common feeling, difficult to capture in words, but perhaps best described by Melanie Klein's term, depressive anxiety. The cognitive content of guilt is the belief that one's plans, thoughts, or actions are damaging to a person for whom one feels responsible. The motivational component consists of a plan either to avoid an intended action, to make reparation, or to defend against the guilt.

Throughout the following discussion I shall focus on the child's concern for, empathy for, and loyalty to his parents, and the child's guilt over harming his parents. Although the most significant instance of altruistic motivation from an adaptive point of view is probably a mother's concern for and care of her child, from the

³ For a theory of emotions as appraisals see Bowlby (1982), Chapter 7.

point of view of psychopathology the most important expression of altruistic motivation is probably the child's concern for and loyalty to his mother (and father).

A child's concern for and loyalty to his parents is a product of many factors. Clearly, the child's identification with his parents' concern for him is one important factor. Another is the reinforcement the child receives for his devotion to his parents and the fear he may have of losing their love if he is not devoted. What I am emphasizing in this paper, however, is the child's altruistic concern for his parents. In addition to, and building upon the empathically based altruistic motivation described by Hoffman there may be another biologically based source of a child's devotion to his parents. It is to the child's advantage to be loyal and devoted to his parents. This loyalty and devotion help to insure that he will receive the care and support he needs to survive. Parenting is hard work. The love and devotion of one's children go a long way toward lightening the task. It would make sense from an adaptive point of view if children were predisposed to adore their parents, and to be devoted and loyal to them. The fact that this would usually be to the child's advantage does not mean that the child would therefore be egoistically motivated. Loyalty that is based on rewards and fears of punishment for disloyalty is egoistically motivated. The loyalty that I am trying to describe in this paper is altruistic loyalty because the child experiences this loyalty and the accompanying concern, empathy, guilt, etc. as a bottom level motivation. His deepest experience and most profound conscious and unconscious intentions include his empathy for his parents, his devotion to them, his wish to help them, and his guilt if he believes that he has harmed or failed to help them. To a degree not generally recognized, psychopathologies are pathologies of loyalty.

The point of view of this paper is that psychopathology is, broadly speaking, the result of the renunciation of normal developmental goals due to considerations of danger. The proposed reconceptualization of guilt creates two broad, independent categories of danger which motivate a child to renounce his normal developmental goals: danger to himself, and danger to his significant others. The renunciation of normal developmental goals because their pursuit is believed to constitute a danger to one's self is comparatively well understood. Such danger includes rejection, abandonment, humiliation, shame, physical attack, etc., all of

which I am including in the category "loss of love and protection from a variety of dangers." When internalized, the fear of these dangers is what I am calling super-ego anxiety. Although it most often combines with super-ego anxiety in determining a person's motives, guilt constitutes an independent motive system.

If a child believes that the pursuit of a normal developmental goal, for example, autonomous and individuated functioning, will harm a parent, he will tend to renounce this goal to avoid guilt, or he will experience guilt if he does not renounce the goal. The child will be motivated to renounce his goal whether or not he believes, in addition, that the damaged parent will retaliate by rejecting, humiliating, attacking him, etc., or that by virtue of being damaged the parent will no longer be able to function as an adequate parent, i.e. that he will lose a needed relationship.

The child's renunciation of his normal developmental goals often assumes the form of identification with dysfunctional parental values. Children adopt parental values and support parental self-images not only because they are dependent on their parents but also to protect what they unconsciously perceive as their parents' vulnerability:

One of the principal ways in which children attempt to protect . . . their parents is by preserving their parents' narcissistically invested illusions about themselves. When parents are in fact defective, sadistic, corrupt, rejecting, or neglectful, but desperately need to see themselves as strong, superior, loving and virtuous, children will feel an intense obligation to deny their realistically critical perceptions of their parents. These denials and idealizations are maintained at a great cost to the child in the sense that the child must repress his real anger and distress about being mistreated, must sacrifice some portion of his reality testing in an attempt to convince himself that what he sees is not true, and must forgo real opportunities for healthier relationships with other adults in order to perpetuate his parents' sacred fictions about themselves (Bush, 1985).

Survivor Guilt

One important advantage of the proposed reconceptualization is that survivor guilt, which in my opinion plays a significant role in so many forms of self-destructive behavior, no longer suffers the theoretical fate of being a neological supplement to oedipal guilt or a primal fantasy regulated by the super-ego, but an important, expected example of guilt which can arise in a variety of way at a variety of times in the life cycle. Survivor guilt is the guilt

that arises when one believes that one could have helped but failed to help a loved one. It is a guilt of omission. It is the guilt of people who believe they have better lives than those of their parents or siblings. The greater the discrepancy between one's own fate and the fate of the loved person one failed to help, the greater the empathic distress and the more poignant one's guilt. Searles (1966) has even suggested that many of us may have chosen the profession of psychotherapy on the basis of unconscious guilt over having failed to cure our parents. When one considers the degree to which survivor guilt is a motivating force in so many lives and the central place it holds in our literature from *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* to *The Glass Menagerie*, while being relatively ignored by our theories, one can begin to appreciate the extent to which Freud's conceptualization has influenced our thinking.

Experiences Leading to Super-ego Anxiety Versus Experiences Leading to Guilt

If one separates guilt from what I am calling super-ego anxiety Freud's problem of the discrepancy between the severity of a child's treatment and the severity of his guilt disappears. One would expect a direct relationship between the severity of a child's treatment in the form of humiliation, rejection, physical attack, etc., and the severity of his super-ego anxiety. However, one would not expect a direct relationship between the severity of a child's treatment so conceived and his guilt. Guilt is the appraisal of one's actions as harmful to a significant other and can arise in the absence of parental severity. The following example illustrates the way in which a child can come to feel very guilty in the relative absence of parental severity or threats of loss of love:

Miss L., the only child of an elderly retired couple, decided at age 30 to move out of her parents' home. She was the center of their lives. Her mother still made Miss L.'s clothes and her father kept her car in perfect condition. They both waited up for her when she (infrequently) went out at night and they traveled far across the city to take out books from the library where she worked (to increase the library use and support their daughter's profession). Miss L.'s parents recognized the importance of their daughter's independence and encouraged her to move out. Her father helped her to look for an apartment; her mother bought new furniture for her. Both parents were, however, depressed about Miss L.'s imminent departure and she knew it. She overheard her mother crying

once in the middle of the night. She intercepted some information her father had solicited about old folks' homes.

Miss L. lived with her parents for thirty years primarily because she believed that moving out and having an independent life would hurt them. She had curtailed her social experiences and had failed to develop a reasonable degree of independence and competence in many areas of living largely out of compliance with what she believed to be her parents' need to be a part of her life and to take care of her. Miss L.'s parents controlled her behavior not primarily by punishment or threats of loss of love, but by demonstrating how certain of her actions hurt them. Miss L. remembered that when she was ten she had wanted to discontinue her violin lessons and join the school hockey team. Her mother tearfully told her that she might do as she wished. It was her mother's tears, and not her mother's however subtle threat of withdrawal or loss of love, which primarily prevented Miss L. from discontinuing her violin lessons. Although the kind of love which Miss L.'s parents provided was not exactly the love a child needs to thrive, nevertheless Miss L. did not feel in any significant danger of losing this love even as she began increasingly, while in therapy, not to comply with what she believed to be her parents' wishes and consequently to "hurt" them.

Blame and Punishment

Blame is the attribution of causal responsibility for the distress of others. It is a central experience leading to guilt. The importance of being blamed as a major factor in the development of guilt and of psychopathology, while generally understood, has not found its proper place in psychoanalytic theory. Children are often held responsible for parental problems, misfortunes, and moods. The readiness with which they accept responsibility for their parents' problems has several sources. Children rely on their parents to teach them about the world. They are predisposed to believe what their parents tell them. They also tend to be egocentric and to think omnipotently. If a parent reinforces a child's natural omnipotence by telling the child that he is capable of determining the parent's fate the child will tend to believe this. The experience of blame also reinforces the child's altruistic tendency to be responsive to and take responsibility for his parent's distress.

Repeated experience of blame in childhood can result in a profound conviction of one's culpability and unworthiness and leave one extremely vulnerable to blame in later life. Quite disparate forms of adult psychopathology, from severe depressive reactions to uncontrolled rage, can be precipitated by blame and can repre-

sent both a compliance with the blame and a defense against the accompanying guilt.

A child can be blamed by a parent with little threat of loss of love. More frequently, however, blame is accompanied by threats of loss of love or other trauma. Punishment is the infliction of trauma accompanied by blame. It produces a combination of super-ego anxiety and guilt. Experiences of punishment are powerful because they not only shape a child's behavior and thinking by making him anxious and guilty, but they also suggest to the child ways in which he can make reparation to the blaming parent, i.e., by punishing himself in the way in which he was punished by the parent.

Guilt as a Defense

Most parents would not traumatize a child without some belief that the child was being appropriately traumatized, i.e., punished for something damaging that he had done or punished for his own good (Miller, 1983). However, even if a child is traumatized without being blamed, for example, by a psychotic and cruel parent, or by an accident of fate, he will tend to take responsibility for this trauma and blame himself, thereby adding guilt to his anxiety. This is a consequence not only of the child's egocentric and omnipotent thought processes, but also of the anxiety attendant upon the child's perception of his parents or the world as arbitrarily traumatic. Guilt becomes in these instances a defense against anxiety. "It is better to be a sinner in a world ruled by God than to live in a world ruled by the Devil" (Fairbairn, 1943).

The tendency of parents to rationalize their infliction of trauma on their children by blaming them, and the tendency of children to blame themselves for their experience of trauma at the hands of their parents or of the world, i.e., the tendency of both parents and children to view trauma as punishment, is partly responsible for the confusion between super-ego anxiety and guilt. In other words, because some measure of guilt accompanies most experiences of super-ego anxiety, it becomes more difficult to see that they are different experiences with different causes.

Self-punishment

A child may behave self-destructively in compliance with what he believes to be an abusive parent's wishes. He treats himself as

he was treated by the abusive parent in order to retain his dependent connection with the parent. Berliner (1947) has documented this kind of self-destructive behavior, which is motivated by anxiety. Self-destructive behavior is more often motivated by guilt and is properly termed self-punishment. A variety of different phenomena are referred to as self-punishment.

The empathic distress and the depressive anxiety accompanying guilt can themselves be very painful, and these are sometimes referred to as self-punishment. The anticipation of these painful feelings motivates a person to renounce plans which he believes will lead to actions harmful to significant others.

Self-punishment is often used to refer to an irrational attempt to make restitution for the harm one believes one has done, by complying with what one believes are the harmed person's wishes. The forms taken by this kind of self-punishment are determined by one's early experiences in the family, especially of punishment, and the beliefs one comes to hold about how to make reparation to other family members. The law of the talion is only one of a variety of models (Weiss, 1985).

Self-punishment can be a defense against the empathic component of guilt. By sharing the fate of the person one believes one has harmed or failed to help one diminishes one's empathic distress (which is a function of the discrepancy between one's own state and that of another) and thereby diminishes one's guilt. Most importantly, perhaps, self-punishment is a defense against the cognitive component of guilt. By inflicting suffering on one's self, one can more easily deny that one has caused another to suffer. By a process of magical thinking one becomes the victim and therefore not the offender.

Aggressive-Destructive Wishes

The child's hostile wishes toward his parents are an integral part of Freud's concept of guilt. It was by the child's projection of these hostile wishes onto his parents and his subsequent internalization of imagined threats of retaliation that Freud largely explained the discrepancy between the true severity of a child's parents and the child's guilt. Aggressive-destructive wishes also form an integral part of Melanie Klein's concept of guilt. Although for Klein the child's motivation for making reparation was an expression of the child's love rather than his fear, as it was for Freud, nevertheless

she believed that the child's guilt and reparative efforts resulted from his (very) destructive wishes toward his parents.

According to the proposed reconceptualization of guilt, a child's aggressive, destructive, or hostile wishes toward his parents are not a necessary condition for the development of his guilt, although they will certainly tend to contribute to it. What creates guilt is the child's appraisal of his intentions as destructive. A child may come to believe that his normal developmental and reasonable life goals are harmful to his parents. He will then feel guilty about having these goals. Miss L., prior to therapy, had renounced her desire to move out of her parents' home and lead an independent life because she believed it would hurt her parents. Modell's patient renounced her right to a happy marriage and a productive life because she believed that these advantages had been obtained by depriving her mother and siblings of their share of good fortune. These people, as a result of experiences in the family, came to appraise their normal life goals as destructive to the people they loved and renounced them out of guilt.

Varieties of Guilt

It is probably apparent from the above discussion that a child (or adult) can come to feel guilty about virtually any of his intentions. Oedipal guilt holds a unique position in classical theory as being the occasion for the formation of psychic structure. Theories which have emphasized different varieties of guilt have tended to call them pre-oedipal or pre-structural, thereby diminishing their importance and preserving classical theory. This is an example of what Mitchell (1984) has called the "developmental tilt". According to the proposed reconceptualization of guilt, oedipal guilt would no longer retain its unique position, but would become one very important variety of guilt. It is important to note, also, that the meaning of oedipal guilt changes somewhat under the proposed reconceptualization. Oedipal guilt becomes, roughly, a boy's appraisal of his wish to take his father's place with his mother as damaging to his father. The degree of a boy's oedipal guilt would depend in part on how threatened he believed that his father was by competition. Some fathers might even enjoy their son's competition for their wives' affections. In a sense, the weaker the father, not the stronger and more terrible, the greater the oedipal guilt (Joseph Weiss, personal communication). A boy's perception

of his oedipal father as powerful and intimidating may be a way of restoring a father whom the boy unconsciously perceives as weak and threatened by the boy's competition (Bush, 1984, p. 2).

Insofar as there is an epigenetic unfolding of developmental issues in a child's growth it may be possible to roughly classify the varieties of guilt into developmental categories. For example, an infant or child may come to experience his normal need for nurturance and his normal need to make contact with his mother as upsetting to her. The guilt over these needs or intentions is in some sense earlier than the guilt a child might experience for wanting to separate from his mother. Similarly, the guilt over wanting to separate from mother may be in some sense earlier than the guilt over competing with father for mother's affections. It is important to understand, however, that these are all life-long issues and that difficulties with guilt of one developmental category does not necessarily imply great difficulty with guilt of "subsequent" developmental categories, nor is there any simple correlation between the variety of guilt from which a person suffers and the degree of his psychopathology or his prognosis.

V. A Clinical Illustration: The Repression and The Return of Sad Objects

To illustrate the way in which altruistic motivation and guilt can function in the maintenance of pathological object ties I shall, in this last section, suggest a possible interpretation of the case of Harry Guntrip (1975) who has generously left us a posthumously published account of aspects of his analyses with Fairbairn and Winnicott. Guntrip sought treatment partly because of recurrent episodes of exhaustion and depression which punctuated a very productive and almost compulsively active life. He believed that the meaning of his symptoms lay in his early relationship with his mother and in the death of an infant brother when Guntrip was three and a half years, for all of which he had a complete amnesia.

Guntrip's mother had had a difficult childhood: "My mother was an over-burdened 'little mother' before she married, the eldest daughter of 11 children and saw four siblings die. Her mother was a feather-brained beauty queen, who left my mother to manage everything even as a schoolgirl. She ran away from home at the age of twelve because she was so unhappy, but was brought back" (p. 149). Guntrip's mother did not want children. She told Harry

that she only breastfed him because she believed it would prevent another pregnancy. She experienced Harry as a burden. When she had her second child she refused to nurse him and probably did not care well for him, and he died. Harry was told that at age three and a half he walked into a room where his younger brother was lying dead on his psychotically depressed mother's lap, and became frantic. Shortly thereafter he became physically ill with a series of psychosomatic problems and was sent away to live with an aunt, where he recovered. Guntrip had no memory of these events, which were told him by his mother. What he did remember were the following several years, after he returned home from his aunt's, which were characterized by a prolonged and painful struggle with his mother. Guntrip says that he tried to coerce his mother into mothering him by a series of psychosomatic illnesses. He also defied her. She responded with violent rages and beatings. This lasted until he was seven. His mother at that point became successful in business and was consequently less depressed and more supportive of her son, who had meanwhile become less dependent on her and involved in a life of his own away from home.

Except for the brief account quoted above, Guntrip's description of his mother is one of a violent, rejecting woman. He remembers her rages and physical attacks. He describes her as "my dominating bad mother," "my aggressive mother", and "my severe dominating mother". She "squashed" him. She was "a savage woman" who attacked him. These are undoubtedly accurate descriptions of Guntrip's experience of his mother. Note, however, the easy access he has to this experience. His amnesia is for his experience of his mother's sadness and depression and for the tragedy of his brother's death.

Consider the possibility that Guntrip suffered all his life from a profound unconscious sense of guilt over having damaged his mother simply by virtue of living and that this guilt was further compounded by his inability to help his mother and by having survived his brother, who succumbed to the mother's neglect. If this were true, then Guntrip's unresolved trauma, evident in his persisting repression and symptoms, would not have been so much his experience of his mother's attacks or even of her prior failure to relate to him, but his experience of her sadness, depression, despair and probably blame, and the beliefs he unconsciously came to hold that he had caused her unhappiness by being alive, and

that he had contributed to his brother's death by having taken what little nurturance his mother had to offer. Guntrip repressed the memory of his mother's and brother's tragedies in part because he felt responsible for them. He became in his memory (which partly reflected the reality) the victim rather than the offender. One recalls Melanie Klein's description of a patient who experienced himself as an object of persecution and remembered early (doubtless accurate) traumas as a way of defending against an overwhelming burden of guilt and despair (1975a, p. 37).

In light of this hypothesis, Guntrip's efforts to get his mother to mother him were motivated not only by his need for her actual ministrations but also, and perhaps more importantly, by his need to disconfirm his belief that she did not want him to live. His efforts to get his mother to relate may also have had the unconscious purpose of helping *her*, by arousing her from her depression and withdrawal. His periodic depressions and periods of exhaustion in later life may have been attempts at reparation either in the form of a compliance with his mother's wish (as he experienced it unconsciously) that he die, or in the form of identifications out of guilt with his depressed mother and with his dead brother. Guntrip struggled all his life against this compliance and these identifications.

What went wrong in Guntrip's analysis with Fairbairn? In an early paper Fairbairn (1940) had emphasized the importance for psychopathology of the child's belief that his love for and need of his mother, his desire to make contact with her, is damaging to her. This belief, which he then called the schizoid position, comes close to the above formulation of Guntrip's difficulties. However, in his late papers Fairbairn seems to have lost this important insight. Although his metapsychology, unlike Freud's, is consistent with an emphasis on altruistic motivation, his sensibilities seem to have lain in a different direction.

Central to almost all of his formulations is an emphasis of the child's total dependence on significant others. Early disturbances around dependency constitute the psychological bedrock for all subsequent emotional events, and all relationships are evaluated within the context of their function as gratifiers of dependency needs (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983, p. 179).

Fairbairn's concept of the "bad" object is one which frustrates the child's need. Although the sad object is for Fairbairn a bad object,

it is bad because it is unavailable for the child's dependency needs. According to Fairbairn, the child maintains his ties to his sad mother because he needs a mother and she is the one he has. I believe that in addition the child maintains his ties to his sad mother because he wishes to help and console her and feels guilty if he cannot. This guilt can motivate an irrational reparative self-punitive identification with the sad mother.

Guilt plays a central role for Fairbairn in the formation of psychic structure; however, he viewed guilt primarily as a defense against anxiety:

The child would rather be bad himself than have bad objects; and accordingly we have some justification for surmising that one of his motives in becoming bad is to make his objects 'good'. In becoming bad he is really taking upon himself the burden of badness which appears to reside in his objects. By this means he seeks to purge them of their badness; and, in proportion as he succeeds in doing so, he is rewarded by that sense of security which an environment of good objects so characteristically confers. To say that the child takes upon himself the burden of badness which appears to reside in his objects is, of course, the same thing as to say that he internalizes bad objects. (1943, p. 65).

Thus guilt becomes in Fairbairn's system primarily a self-protective device as it was, in a different vein, for Freud. Any attempt by Guntrip to explore his guilt toward his mother would probably have been seen by Fairbairn as defensive. Interpretations of guilt, even as a defense, were to be avoided because they may, by prematurely removing a patient's defense against his experience of the bad object, necessitate further compensatory repression (Fairbairn, 1943, p. 69). In my experience interpretations of irrational guilt, assuming that they are properly timed, often help a patient to relinquish his pathological identifications and compliances with parents based on irrational reparative and self-punitive motives, and enable him to lift his repression of his experience of parental trauma because his conscious experience of this trauma will be less augmented by the pain of feeling responsible for it.

Guntrip describes Fairbairn as interpreting oedipal dynamics. Greenberg and Mitchell reconstruct a more characteristic account of Fairbairn's possible approach:

In Fairbairn's system, Guntrip's images and feeling states would be viewed . . . as a return to [his mother], a longing for the reestablishment of his early connection to her, in her depression and aloofness, her morbidity and desolation—an unconscious yet tenacious holding on to her. This holding on is reflected in a dream Guntrip recounts, illustrating in the

most concrete and literal terms Fairbairn's notion of object tie: 'I was working downstairs at my desk and suddenly an invisible band of ectoplasm tying me to a dying invalid upstairs, was pulling me steadily out of the room. I knew I would be absorbed into her. I fought and suddenly the band snapped and I knew I was free' (1983, p. 216).

Fairbairn would presumably have seen this dream as reflecting "devotion, and allegiance to the depressed and desolate mother of Guntrip's early years. The collapses, so dreadful to him represent a longing for a reunion with the dead and lifeless core of the mother, with whom the dead brother remains in envied union" (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983, p. 281). In my view, this dream represents the conflict between Guntrip's desire, on the one hand, to abandon his mother (not withdraw into hopeless, schizoid isolation as in Guntrip's own theory, but survive, and, unlike his mother, have a life of creative work) versus, on the other hand, his identification and compliance with his mother (his ties to her) motivated by guilt. Guntrip does not envy his dead brother's union with the lifeless core of his mother; he feels profoundly sorry for both of them and guilty over not having helped them and even of having harmed them by surviving.

This is an important point and bears elaboration. If one assumes that people come to experience themselves the way they do within a relational matrix, then the abandonment of that matrix will generate both a feeling of disconnectedness and a concern for the damage done to the other (Stephen Mitchell, personal communication). The fabric of attachment is woven both of egoistic and of altruistic elements. However, the relative importance of the egoistic and altruistic elements will vary across situations. A young child who attempts to resist compliance with a parent's devaluing view of him may experience this feeling of disconnectedness as a terror of isolation or abandonment; that is, he may be motivated to comply with his parent's devaluation largely for egoistic reasons. However, for a grown man who has experienced success in his work and in intimate relationships, fear of disconnectedness or isolation may be a minor element in his motivation for continued identifications and compliances with early objects. His continuing attachment to his parents and identification with their dysfunctional values and life style is likely to be motivated more by guilt over abandoning *them*. Avoidance of the sense of loneliness which a person may experience when he abandons the relational matrix of his childhood should not necessarily be assumed to be his major

motivation for remaining within that matrix. Furthermore, feelings of loneliness or isolation can be unconscious self-punitive identifications with the people one believes one is harming by abandoning the matrix. ("I deserve to feel cut off because I have cut off my family.") They may also be attempts to deny that one is the offender. ("I am the one who is alone and abandoned, not the one who has abandoned others.")

Guntrip emphasized his transference experience of Fairbairn as alternatively his bad mother or his good father. More important, in my opinion, was Guntrip's worry about Fairbairn, his troubled perception of Fairbairn as a withdrawn and fragile man:

As I was finally leaving Fairbairn after the last session, I suddenly realized that in all that long period we had never once shaken hands, and he was letting me leave without that friendly gesture. I put out my hand and at once he took it, and I suddenly saw a few tears trickle down his face. I saw the warm heart of this man with a fine mind and a shy nature" (p. 149).

Guntrip tried to help Fairbairn. He became an enthusiastic proponent of Fairbairn's theory. When Fairbairn became ill Guntrip decided to terminate his analysis. He had some insights into his problems that he could not share with Fairbairn: "I suddenly saw the analytical situation in an extraordinary light, and wrote him a letter which I still have, but did not send. I knew it would be a bigger strain on him than he could stand in his precarious health" (p. 151).

Winnicott was of more help. Why? Guntrip's theory, and this may also have been Winnicott's theory to some extent, was that Winnicott filled a deficit, became Guntrip's good mother and partly replaced or supplemented Guntrip's internalized bad mother. "All through life we take into ourselves both good and bad figures who either strengthen or disturb us . . ." (p. 156). "Winnicott [entered] into the emptiness left by my nonrelating mother so that I could experience the security of being myself" (p. 155). Winnicott's early interpretations reflect this theory. They emphasize Guntrip's need for his mother and the mother's failure to meet this need. "If I don't say something, you may begin to feel I'm not here." "You're afraid to stop acting, talking or keeping awake. You feel you might die in a gap like Percy, because if you stop acting mother can't do anything. She couldn't save Percy or you. You're bound to fear I can't keep you alive, so you link up monthly ses-

sions for me by your records." "You began to feel afraid I'd abandoned you. You feel silence is abandonment. The gap is not you forgetting mother, but mother forgetting you, and now you've relived it with me" (pp. 152-153). These interpretations were helpful, in my opinion, in part because they mitigated Guntrip's guilt over having wanted and having struggled to obtain the kind of care which his mother had led him to believe she could only supply at great cost to herself. By his accurate and empathic recognition of the deprivations of Guntrip's early childhood Winnicott implicitly validated Guntrip's entitlement to the maternal care of which he had been deprived.

Winnicott said other things to Guntrip which are mentioned but not incorporated into Guntrip's theory of deprivation and replacement. He interpreted depressive position dynamics. Winnicott believed that Klein's concept of the depressive position ranked with the oedipus complex in its importance in psychoanalytic theory (Winnicott, 1962). He agreed with Klein's emphasis on guilt over aggressive and destructive impulses. He called this "personal guilt" and called the reparation stemming from the ability to tolerate this guilt feeling "true reparation". Winnicott was also aware of the child's assumption of responsibility for a parent's psychopathology, especially a mother's depression, and the child's need to heal the parent before he can proceed with his own life (Winnicott, 1948). However, he called the associated guilt "false guilt" and the associated attempts at reparation "false reparation" (1948). The understanding of this false guilt and false reparation were important, but only as a necessary condition for the analysis of the patient's true guilt and urge to make reparation for his aggressive and destructive impulses. The depressed, inconsolable mother is pathogenic primarily because she does not afford her child an opportunity to make successful reparation for these impulses.

Winnicott's concept of guilt is very close to Klein's and therefore differs importantly from the reconceptualization proposed in this paper. Winnicott's understanding of the causes and meaning of Guntrip's guilt were probably different from my own. However, Winnicott, unlike Fairbairn, focussed on Guntrip's guilt. Guntrip rejected Winnicott's interpretations of his "primitive sadism . . . ruthlessness and cruelty" (Guntrip, 1975, p. 153) which were probably Winnicott's attempts to get Guntrip to deal with his "personal" guilt. Guntrip may have heard these interpretations as blame and

assimilated them to his mother's experience of his natural exuberance and normal demands as damaging to her. Guntrip was very appreciative, however, of Winnicott's interpretations of his ceaseless attempts to make reparation. Winnicott went further than this; he told Guntrip how much Guntrip had given *him*:

You too have a good breast. You've always been able to give more than take. I'm good for you but you're good for me. Doing your analysis is almost the most reassuring thing that happens to me. The chap before you makes me feel I'm no good at all. You don't have to be good for me. I don't need it and can cope without it, but in fact you are good for me (p. 153).

Winnicott also explicitly addressed Guntrip's belief, formed through interaction with his mother, that his normal demands, his need to "use the object" were damaging:

You had to know that I could stand your talking hard at me and my not being destroyed. I had to stand it while you were in labor being creative, not destructive, producing something rich in content. You are talking about 'object relating', 'using the object' and finding you don't destroy it. (p. 153).

Winnicott chatted with Guntrip shortly before he died. His cheerfulness, his strength, and his willingness to allow Guntrip both to "use" him and to give him something important may have helped Guntrip to feel less guilty over having damaged and failed to help his mother. Guntrip had had difficulty facing the death or departure of people for whom he cared. The night after he had safely (without overwhelming guilt or despair) experienced his grief at Winnicott's death Guntrip dreamed for the first time of his depressed, immobilized mother. There began a series of vivid dreams culminating in a dream of his experience of his brother's death:

I was standing with another man, the double of myself, both reaching out to get hold of a dead object. Suddenly the other man collapsed in a heap. Immediately the dream changed to a lighted room, where I saw Percy again. I knew it was him, sitting on the lap of a woman who had no face, arms or breasts. She was merely a lap to sit on, not a person. He looked deeply depressed, with the corners of his mouth turned down, and I was trying to make him smile (p. 154).

Guntrip closes his own case history as follows:

After all the detailed memories, dreams, symptoms of traumatic events, people and specified emotional tensions had been worked through, one

thing remained: the quality of the over-all atmosphere of the personal relations that made up our family life in those first seven years. It lingers as a mood of sadness for my mother who was so damaged in childhood that she could neither be, nor enable me to be, our 'true selves' (p. 155).

By overcoming to some extent his irrational guilt over having damaged his mother and brother, not by his destructive and aggressive impulses, but by his desire to live and thrive, Guntrip was better able to face their sadness and the tragedy of their lives.

The ideas set forth in this paper are intended as a preliminary and tentative step toward a clinical theory of altruistic motivation and guilt. They may also be viewed as a contribution to a biology of the relational/structure (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983) viewpoint in psychoanalysis. I have tried to build some bridges between existing clinical theory, which is hampered by one aspect of Freud's theoretical legacy and by a lack of conversance with developments in other fields, and biological theory and experimental psychology, which may not have sufficient access to the kind of data available to us as clinicians.

REFERENCES

- Berliner, B. (1947) On some psychodynamics of masochism. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, **16**:459-71.
- Bowlby, J. (1982) *Attachment*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Bush, M. (1984) The role of unconscious guilt in psychopathology and psychotherapy. Unpublished.
- Bush, M. (1985) Talk presented at a conference, "The Paradox of Failures in Living: Issues in The Psychotherapy of Masochistic Disorders", New York University, June 1, 1985.
- Darwin, C. (1859) *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. Excerpted in Caplan, A. L., Ed., *The Sociobiology Debate*. New York: Harper and Row (1978).
- Eisenberg, N. (1982) *The Development of Prosocial Behavior*. New York: Academic Press, Inc.
- Eysenck, H. J. (1960) The development of moral values in children. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, **30**:11-21.
- Fairbairn, W. R. D. (1940) Schizoid factors in the personality. In: Fairbairn (1952), *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Fairbairn, W. R. D. (1943) The repression and the return of bad objects. In: Fairbairn (1952), *Psychoanalytic Studies of the Personality*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Feiner, A. H. and Levenson, E. A. (1968) The compassionate sacrifice: An explanation of a metaphor. *Psychoanalytic Review*, **55**:552-573.
- Freud, S. (1961). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*. London: Hogarth Press.

- Friedman, M. (1985) Survivor guilt in the pathogenesis of anorexia nervosa. *Psychiatry*, **48**:25–39.
- Greenberg, J. R. and Mitchell, S. A. (1983) *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Guntrip, H. (1975) My experience of analysis with Fairbairn and Winnicott. *International Review of Psycho-Analysis*, **2**:145–156.
- Hamilton, W. D. (1964) The genetical evolution of social behavior. *The Journal of Theoretical Biology*, **7**:1–52.
- Hoffman, M. L. (1981) Is altruism part of human nature? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **40**:121–137.
- Hoffman, M. L. (1982) Development of prosocial motivation: Empathy and guilt. In: Eisenberg, N. (1982).
- Hoffman, M. L. (1984) Interaction of affect and cognition in empathy. In: Izard, C., Kagan, J. and Zajonc, R. eds., *Emotions, Cognition and Behavior*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Jackson, D. D. (1957) The question of family homeostasis. *Psychiatric Quarterly Supplement*, **31**:79–90.
- Klein, M. (1975) *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works: 1921–1945*. Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence.
- Klein, M. (1975a) *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works: 1946–1963*. Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence.
- Loewald, H. (1979) The waning of the oedipus complex. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, **27**:751–75.
- Masterson, J. F. (1976) *Psychotherapy of the Borderline Adult*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Menaker, E. (1982) *Otto Rank: A Rediscovered Legacy*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Miller, A. (1983) *For Your Own Good*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux.
- Mitchell, S. A. (1984) Object relations theories and the developmental tilt. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, **20**:473–99.
- Modell, A. H. (1965) On having the right to a life: An aspect of the super-ego's development. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, **46**:323–31.
- Modell, A. H. (1971) The origin of certain forms of pre-oedipal guilt and the implications for a psychoanalytic theory of affects. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, **52**:337–46.
- Money-Kyrle, R. E. (1975), Explanatory note (p. 433). In: Klein, M. (1975).
- Mussen, P. and Eisenberg-Berg, N. (1977) *Roots of Caring, Sharing, and Helping*. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company.
- Niederland, W. G. (1961) The problem of the survivor. *Journal of the Hillside Hospital*, **10**:233–47.
- Niederland, W. G. (1981) The survivor syndrome: Further observations and dimensions. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, **29**:413–26.
- Piaget, J. (1932) *The Moral Judgement of the Child*. London: Kegan Paul.
- Rheingold, H. L. and Hay, D. F. (1980) Prosocial behavior of the very young. In: Stent, G. S., Ed., *Morality as a Biological Phenomenon*. Berkeley: University of California Press, (1980).
- Rushton, J. P. (1982) Social learning theory and the development of prosocial behavior. In: Eisenberg, N. (1982)

A RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF GUILT

- Sagi, A. and Hoffman, M. L. (1976) Empathic distress in newborns. *Developmental Psychology*, **12**:175–176.
- Sampson, H. (1976) A critique of certain traditional concepts in the psychoanalytic theory of therapy. *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, **40**:255–262.
- Searles, H. F. (1958) Positive feelings in the relationship between the schizophrenic and his mother. In: Searles, H. F. (1965), *Collected Papers on Schizophrenia and Related Subjects*. New York: International Universities Press.
- Searles, H. F. (1966) Feelings of guilt in the psychoanalyst. *Psychiatry*, **29**:319–323.
- Searles, H. F. (1975) The patient as therapist to his analyst. In: Searles, H. F. (1979), *Countertransference and Related Subjects*. New York: International Universities Press.
- Sullivan, H. S. (1953) *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.
- Sullivan, H. S. (1956) *Clinical Studies in Psychiatry*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.
- Trivers, R. L. (1971) The evolution of reciprocal altruism. *The Quarterly Review of Biology*, **46**:35–57.
- Trotter, W. (1919) *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*. New York: The MacMillan Company.
- Weiss, J. (1985) *The Psychoanalytic Process: Part One: Theory and Clinical Observation*. Unpublished. In press as: Weiss, J., Sampson, H., and The Mount Zion Psychotherapy Research Group (1986), *The Psychoanalytic Process: Theory, Clinical Observation, and Empirical Research*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Weiss, J., Sampson, H. and The Mount Zion Psychotherapy Research Group (1986) *The Psychoanalytic Process: Theory, Clinical Observation, and Empirical Research*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1948) Reparation in respect of mother's organized defense against depression. In: Winnicott, D. W. (1975), *Through Paediatrics to Psychoanalysis*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1962) A personal view of the Kleinian contribution. In: Winnicott, D. W. (1965), *The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment*. New York: International Universities Press.
- Wolff, P. H. (1980) The biology of morals from a psychological perspective. In: Stent, G. S., Ed., *Morality as a Biological Phenomenon*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.
- Wynne-Edwards, V. C. (1963) Intergroup selection in the evolution of social systems. *Nature*, **200**:623–626.
- Yarrow, M. R. and Waxler, C. Z. (1977) The emergence and functions of prosocial behavior in young children. In: Hetherington, E. M. and Parke, R. D., Eds., *Contemporary Readings in Child Psychology*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Zahn-Waxler, C. and Radke-Yarrow, M. (1982) The development of altruism: Alternative research strategies. In: Eisenberg, N. (1982).
- Zahn-Waxler, C., Radke-Yarrow, M. and King, R. (1983) Early altruism and guilt. *Academic Psychology Bulletin*, **5**:247–259.

921 The Alameda
Berkeley, California 94707