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Hermann's Concept of Clinging in Light of Modern Drive Theory

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(Translated by Lindsay Adshead)

Variations on Drive Theory from Hermann to Kernberg

Born in Budapest in 1889, Imre Hermann became a member of the Hungarian Psychoanalytic Association in 1919 and was one of the founders of the “Budapest School.” As one of the few analysts who remained in Budapest during the totalitarian regime, he was a pillar of the Hungarian psychoanalytic movement until his death in 1984. He published over 150 works in several languages, many of which have provided a valuable impetus to other studies. Among other subjects, his writings dealt with the theory of clinging, latent and manifest thought processes, the analyses of artistically gifted people and philosophers, and psychoanalytic methodology.

At an international conference held in Budapest on November 11–12, 1989, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of his birth, it was asked why, considering Hermann’s anticipations of much modern psychoanalytic thought, he is relatively seldom quoted. The reason is probably not only because of his isolation in Budapest, but also because his style of writing was not always very systematic. I shall be looking more deeply into his clinging theory as it seems to me not only to be characteristic of Hermann’s original way of thinking, but also to provide a major stimulus for contemporary psychoanalysis. I shall do this by way of John Bowlby, who held clinging to be one of the five drive patterns forming so-called attachment.
I consider Hermann's clinging theory still superior to Bowlby's attachment theory in some respects, although Bowlby's theory derives in part from Hermann's. My work with pedophiles has proved the usefulness of clinging as a concept, which has often been used by Hungarian psychoanalysts, especially in the interpretation of psychosomatic illnesses and depressive conditions (Veress 1989; Lukacs 1989; Nemes 1990).

According to Livia Nemes (1990), Hermann concentrated on this theme beginning in the early 1920s (1923, 1926, 1931, 1933), before finally identifying (1936a) a new pair of (component) instincts—clinging/searching—with the intention of investigating their connection with sadomasochism. In "Clinging, Fire, Feelings of Shame" (1941) and "Man's Basic Drives" (1943), he elaborated on these thoughts. In brief, Hermann saw a connection between the need of small children to cling to their mothers and the biological instinct universally observed among young primates to cling to their mothers. At the same time, however, he defined this need as a component instinct analogous to the partial drives—especially sadism/masochism/ voyeurism/exhibitionism—described by Freud in "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes" (1915). He postulated the variability of the drive object, with the possible permutations being reversal into the opposite, the subject's turning against himself, repression, and sublimation. In the case of the clinging drive, reversal into the opposite leads to "searching," but is also reflected in hiding and the resistance to enforced separation as possible drive vicissitudes.¹

It was partly the variability of the drive pattern that led Freud to postulate the existence of a basic psychic energy (libido), which can be invested in the representations linked with the drive patterns (especially the objects) in various and alternating ways. Unlike Bowlby later, Hermann did not reject this concept of psychic energy, but his acceptance of it was equivocal. He held that the pair of opposite drives, clinging and searching, derived originally from the ego instincts (i.e., those serving self-preservation), but then became effective through anaclisis (1941, 257). He believed that aggression too was closely connected with the clinging drive (which may be compared to the oral phase in its time of onset and cathexis). This means that clinging can express itself on the one hand in physical tenderness and on the other in "aggressive grasping."
Hermann's Concept of Clinging

It remains unclear whether the partial drive of clinging as described by Hermann is a result of libido and aggression, or whether the latter secondarily invest in this partial drive, which is in fact an innate instinctual pattern, a neuronal automatism, that only becomes linked with mental representations as a result of psychological development. This confusion has a historical basis, as the concept of instinct as understood by Konrad Lorenz or Bowlby had at that time still not been worked out. In any case, Hermann, like Ferenczi (1913, 1924), spotlights the biologically important relationship between mother and child. He designates the primal trauma to be the separation from the mother and the fact that clinging becomes forbidden. The fear of separation is innate and independent of maternal traumatization. It represents the primal model of the trauma, so that even the fear of castration becomes merely a reflection and recollection of this early object loss (1936b, 445). In this sense Hermann may be considered one of the forerunners of object relations theorists. He also makes reference to Melanie Klein, but criticizes her theory for its neglect of clinging as a generally observable phenomenon. He links Klein's _Beraubungswunsch_ (desire to rob) with a frustrated wish, i.e., the nonappearance of drive-related clinging behavior in the child. This gives the child the feeling—or should one say the fantasy?—from the very beginning that something, or rather someone, has been taken away from him. The later _Gegenraub_ (counterrobbing) tendency is only a reaction to this anxiety-invested representation (1941, 269).

In 1943 Hermann almost totally dismissed the idea of primary aggression (Hermann 1943; Vikár 1989) and advanced the idea that aggression derives from a frustration of clinging and therefore supports the "aggression-frustration hypothesis" and not the hypothesis of the primary death drive (Thanatos), as claimed by Klein. Hermann interestingly describes the vicissitudes of this primary clinging drive, which are obviously linked with affects and ideas. A paradigmatic experience is that of feeling warmth (like warm milk) flowing from the mother's body into the child's. The gestures of raised hands to be found in many representations of Egyptian deities and in hieroglyphics are interpreted by Hermann as unconscious symbolizations of clinging.²

One vicissitude of the clinging drive is the grooming (delousing) behav-
ior among young apes. Initially this was wrongly considered to be solely a hygienic procedure in which they removed parasites from each other. In fact, as more recent studies by researchers into primates have shown (Goodall 1988), it is a gesture of tenderness that plays a major role in the social life of higher apes. In humans this clinging drive (easily observable in babies) is massively frustrated, as the female body has lost its hair (to which a baby can cling) and babies are carried around much less than in the case of primates, especially in the more developed cultures. Reactions to frustrations of this need can include hair and skin disorders (alopecia, eczema), destructive behavior with the hands or feet, and self-inflicted wounds, or a total reversal into extreme “searching,” flight tendencies, etc. Hermann also describes how the experience of the dual union in clinging has a direct influence on the structure of thinking.

With his hypothesis that frustration can be converted more or less directly into affects and ideas, Hermann’s outlook shows similarities in methodology with that of Klein and her followers, many of whom came from the Budapest School. At the same time, however, it demonstrates a certain distancing from Freud’s point of view regarding instinctual drive economy. Like the Kleinian School, rather than referring to abstract sources of drives, Hermann tends to refer to primal fantasies, which generate new fantasies when frustrated.

Reviewing Hermann’s work, Dénes Lukács (1989) tried to determine why so few subsequent psychoanalytic authors discussed his theory or cited it only in passing. For example, the ego psychologist Heinz Hartmann (1953) did not consider the opposites “clinging” and “searching” to be a partial drive. He saw them as an aspect of object relations, as for him drive and object were opposed as concepts. René Spitz (1965), Willi Hoffer (1947), Edith Jacobson (1964), and Margaret Mahler et al. (1975) all mentioned clinging, but none of them could decide if Hermann’s observation derived from the sphere of drives or rather from the sphere of the instinctually “automatic” (reflex).

In 1959 Michael Bálint constructed the typology “ocnophile” and “philobat,” which is similar to the pair of opposites “clinging” and “searching,” and referred to Hermann’s work. Nemes (1989) emphasizes that the relationship between Hermann’s ideas and the pair of opposites ocnophile-
philobat goes much farther than Bálint would admit. Sometimes Bálint even used the same words as Hermann to describe the ocnophilic (clinging) and philobatic (searching) types. Bálint believed, however, that the child's need to cling was not primary, but a reaction to separation anxiety. The philobat has been separated from a labile, unreliable object and thus avoids ties, sometimes in a paranoid way. Bálint is referring here to Ferenczi (1913, 1924), with his metaphor of the boundlessness of the intrauterine condition and the feeling of omnipotence associated with it. This was for Ferenczi the basis of "primary love." But Bálint and Hermann both believed in the idea of a deeply innate need for attachment.

John Bowlby is the psychoanalyst who has tried most consistently to work out a change of paradigm, away from Freudian drive theory and toward the instinct theories commonly found in ethology, such as those of Lorenz and Tinbergen (1938). In *Attachment* (1969), Bowlby radically reformulates the bond between mother and child, though he leaves uncontested the importance of the child's early attachment to its mother. Bowlby distances himself from the "secondary drive" theory, which plays a central role in both psychoanalysis and learning theory. According to this theory, the mother assumes an importance for the child only as a result of fulfilling its vital needs. But Bowlby also distances himself from the assumption of a primary need to return to the womb (as claimed by Ferenczi in his attempt to formulate a genital theory in 1924). He provides a new framework for the observation that there is a primary need for an object expressed in sucking and clinging to it.

In accordance with the "control theory" and the "instinct theory" propounded by Lorenz and Tinbergen, he assumes there are preformed motor behavioral programs in the brain, automatic reflexes which are set in motion by certain stimuli from the environment (signals) and brought to an end by other stimuli. Automatisms of this kind have been proved to be behind the "egg-rolling movement" seen in the greylag goose and in many other movement sequences unique to given species. It is assumed that the "following behavior" observed in young animals is due to the phenomenon of imprinting, which is responsible for adaptation to the surroundings in general. Instinct patterns are compared to a fragmentary (i.e., incomplete) computer program. The gaps in the program are closed up only through
experience with the surroundings the first time the program is run through. (Chicks are imprinted by the clucking of the mother hen.) But this metaphor from modern technology merely provides another mechanistic model to explain instinctual drives, in the same way that Freud used the hydrodynamic metaphor. The attachment behavior described by Bowlby has the biological task of creating an attachment between the baby and its mother.

According to Bowlby's control theory (1958), this attachment is established and secured primarily by five instinctual motor patterns. These are sucking, clinging, crying, laughing, and following. The stimulus ending these patterns of attachment is the sound of the mother's voice, her appearance, or her touch. Bowlby later elaborated on his theory and adopted a large number of other instinctual patterns, some of which compete with each other and which may likewise bring about attachment. The classic signs of attachment appear in the human baby later than in primates and can be observed between the first and fifth years. They then disappear at least superficially, on the one hand due to the fact that there is greater variation in the objects of attachment, and on the other because the growing capacity for symbolization removes the attachment pattern from the physical sphere, bringing it into the sphere of mental representations and feelings.

This radical reformulation seems to make it unnecessary to refer to drive economy, to displaced libido and aggression, and to cathexes and anticathexes (making theory a kind of pseudophysics). Just as when using a computer one does not need to think about how much energy is required to change its program—its flexibility is only a question of its storage capacity and software—in Bowlby's control theory one does not need to fall back on Freud's conceptualization of drives as the constantly effective energy from the soma to explain the searching for an object. It is much more a question of finding out which interfering factors in everyday experiences render the attained level of symbolized attachment insufficient, and make it necessary to create attachments anew in the most direct form possible, perhaps even a physical one. But many psychoanalysts have rejected this, claiming that it sounds just as mechanistic as Freud's original drive model.

Bowlby's model is in fact inadequate, especially with regard to the
changeability of drive-needs, described so clearly by Freud in "Instincts and
Their Vicissitudes" (1915). Consider that the passive role can be just as
satisfying as the active role under certain circumstances. (In children's games
it can be as much fun to play the child as to play the mother, to play the
hunted animal as to play the lion hunter.) Consider too that objects are to
a great extent interchangeable, that symbolizations are so variable that a
wide range of activities (from reading a novel to going to the opera, from
running a race to waging an election campaign) could in theory correspond
to similar drive needs. Hermann's model describes in a more comprehensi-
ble way than Bowlby's the mutability of these models of component in-
stincts. This can also be seen in Hermann's originality regarding the vicissi-
tudes possible in the case of the clinging drive, i.e., the attitude toward fire
and prudishness on the one hand, and laws of black-and-white, dualistic
logic on the other. Bowlby, however, mentions Hermann's works merely in
not consider clinging to be an object relation.

I believe that difficulties experienced by Hermann in bringing the
phenomena surrounding instinctive clinging within a theoretical framework
can be overcome by applying theoretical models that go one step farther
than Bowlby's. For example, according to Heinz Lichtenstein (1961), the
instinct patterns clearly delimited by ethologists can hardly be observed any
longer in man. A large number of gestures, facial expressions, impulsive
movements, and so forth, do show their affinity with these instinct patterns.
But he believes that, in the primary relationship, the mother helps the child
to choose from among a large number of impulses, many of which are
totally contradictory and not adapted to reality, those which lead to satis-
fying communication. As a consequence, this guarantees an individual form
of adaptation to reality, partly by identification with the mother. This
"identity theme" resulting from communication with the mother represents
a totally individual selection from the stock of preexisting instinctual pat-
terns and controls later motivation, mainly unconsciously. Like Bowlby,
however, Lichtenstein rejects the Eros-Thanatos polarity as the effective
energy behind the unconscious.

The current state of the controversy over drive theory cannot be re-
viewed in detail here, but the most accommodating synthesis would seem
to be that formulated by Otto Kernberg in *Object Relations Theory and Clinical Psychoanalysis* (1976). Kernberg takes into consideration not only the most divergent needs but also the most up-to-date knowledge. He too presupposes that there are innate instinctual patterns and basic affects that, when activated, initially form memory traces that combine perceptions of part of the self, part of the object, and affect into a kind of "affective memory." His explanation for psychological splitting is based on the hypothesis that these seeds are initially stored in the memory only according to the criteria of "good" and "bad," and can only be recalled in connection with the appropriate affect. Later, once constancy of the self and object have been achieved and objects can not only be perceived but also experienced as a whole, simple, automatic, physical instinctual patterns will hardly be observable. These will give way to more integrated drives that have grown out of experience with objects, and only then can one reasonably refer to memory-linked motivation as "libido" and "aggression." Libido and aggression thus become secondarily integrated products of primitive affects (such as arousal and anger) that are the "building blocks" of drives and of biological instinctual patterns like "clinging" or "fight and flight" (Kernberg 1990). If Hermann had used this model, he would probably have found it easier to see clinging as an instinctual pattern in the ethological sense and yet to chart its fate according to the development of libidinal and aggressive impulses.

I should like to try to clarify Hermann's "clinging concept" by showing how drive-related behavior patterns seen in primates are directly observable in some people and by showing with what fantasies (ideas and affects) they may be linked. I shall take as an example only certain aspects of pedophilia and refer the reader to other publications (Berner 1985, 1993) for further discussion of the phenomenon of pedophilia. The importance to pedophiles of the complex and intense relationship with the mother, combined with the frequent absence or inadequacy of contact with the father, was observed initially by Freud in *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood* (1910). Otto Fenichel (1931) believes the psychic mechanism leading to pedophilia to be the same as the one generally underlying male homosexuality, i.e., identification with the mother and the subsequent narcissistic object-choice. This is also true in the case of heterosexual
pedophiles. They tend to be rather effeminate men who in their childhood and puberty often fantasized that they were girls. “They fall in love with little girls, whom they see as an embodiment of themselves, and to whom they want to give everything which their own mother denied them” (21). In this chapter the role of the objects will not assume primary importance. Instead I shall focus attention on the kind of attachment need, the drive-related feelings of attraction, and the “clinging” element, i.e., the desire to grasp hold, exhibited in pedophilia.

The Phenomenology of Pedophilia

Many pedophiles see themselves as extremely tender and caring, even in their sexualized behavior toward children; holding close, stroking, and touching are the main erotically charged actions. They also feel that they are merging into one with the object of their desire, and they overlook the dominance and the suggestive pressure they are exerting. In psychotherapy it very soon becomes clear that the theme of dominance—the contrast between big and small, powerful and powerless—plays a major role in their erotic feelings. There is an erotically charged relationship between a totally dependent, small partner, who still needs looking after and teaching, and a dominant partner, who in his fantasy takes on the role of the caring teacher. It also becomes clear that elements from the pedophile’s relation with his mother are repeatedly acted out in his erotic fantasies, although no solution to the aggressive conflicts behind them can be found.

Patient G was a thirty-four-year-old man who came voluntarily to psychotherapy following a prison sentence. He had married very early (at eighteen years old), and the marriage had been a disaster for both partners. When his wife threatened him with divorce after four years of marriage, he responded by threatening to commit suicide; but this did not prevent his wife from divorcing him. Two years later he was found guilty on eight counts of committing sexual acts with under-age girls. Following this first conviction, the patient married his first wife again and lived with her for another six years. The marriage became increasingly difficult, however, as his wife began to drink and had extramarital relationships. At this point the patient turned to his daughter, then aged twelve, and began abusing her.
This led to a second and final divorce and eventually to psychotherapy on release from prison after a conviction on that charge.

The patient had never known his father, who had died in the war. He had grown up with his mother and his sister, who was two years older than he. When he was twelve he was sent to a welfare institution for frequently running away from home. There he had his first homosexual relationships with boys of the same age. His future wife, the sister of a social worker in the children’s home, was much more sexually experienced than he. In therapy it soon became clear that small hands had a particular erotic importance for the patient (a common phenomenon with pedophiles). In the tram he could not resist grabbing hold of the hand of a foreign-looking child and holding it tight for several stops. In addition to his obviously dominant position, it was the delicate little hand that created an important precondition for his sexual striving and the impulse to act it out. In the course of therapy the patient got to know a much younger woman. Here too he found that his intellectual superiority played a sexually stimulating role. The strangely split relationship with this partner became clear in a scenario in which he would go for a walk with her in the park and sense a deep, pleasurable feeling of security on holding her hand and feeling its pressure. This can be compared with the feeling of being held. At the same time, he sought to avoid being seen with this woman, whom he despised both for her unfortunate taste in clothes and also for her silliness. He feared being despised by others for being her partner.

The importance of holding hands and stroking plays a role not only for this patient. Another of my patients was caught by the police only because he could not resist ostentatiously walking hand-in-hand with a child he had seduced. A third patient described his main sexual fantasy as the idea of touching girls’ delicate hairless genitals with his fingers. As he spoke of this, he continually uttered the word “delicate” in an emotional way. Another relatively young pedophilic patient recorded his fantasies in the form of children’s comics that he drew himself. He was fixated on children’s hands and lower arms; here fluffy hair and protruding veins were major elements of his arousal. But it was not only the hands and arms that figured prominently in his fantasy, but the acts of clinging and holding on. This is further demonstrated in the following example.
Patient K was a young man who had not only had numerous contacts with male prostitutes, but had sometimes even actively seduced little boys. He stressed that the children were "totally in agreement" and prided himself on the extreme tenderness and understanding that allegedly characterized his seductive behavior. He was never able to accept that his physical superiority played a role, although this was the very aspect determining his erotic strivings toward the children. A dream from the initial phase of therapy throws light on the specifically pedophilic type of relationship, where the borderlines between self and object have ceased to exist.

The dream: The patient is a small boy and does not want to play with the other children in the field as they seem to him to be too rough and wild. The other children fight and hit each other. He runs away across a field to a wood. A man follows him and opens his arms to pick him up. He runs into the man's arms, is picked up, and looks into his face, only to see that he himself is this man.

A second dream related by this patient demonstrates the theme of dominance from another angle. He grew up more or less without a male role model and was frequently forced to change foster mothers due to an unusual home situation. This dream shows how frighteningly superior and sexually aggressive women appeared to him to be, and how delicate little boys served to calm his fears.

Second dream: He was playing an organ surrounded by a boys' choir. A woman teacher, a friend of his, pushed her way through the group of boys and destroyed the wonderful musical harmony with her shrill, powerful soprano voice. The boys smiled condescendingly; the woman was embarrassed and ran away. He felt sorry for her.

According to Hermann, the fantasies of harmony and merging are aspects of clinging. But let us focus on this instinctual clinging drive, rather than on the character of the object, as is customary in modern psychoanalysis. Since it is mainly aspects of very early maternal object relations that are repeated here, the corresponding patterns of drive-determined relations also appear in their original form, which is to a certain extent animal-like and closely related to the reflex instinctual pattern. In Hermann's view, running away (hiding) and being found are both related to clinging and form a diametrically opposed drive pair. Bowlby regards running away as separate from clinging in the proper sense and as one of
the five instinctual patterns that form attachment. However, running away, hiding, searching, and clinging are all so dynamically and dialectically intertwined that to have them stand as independent "instinctual patterns" ignores important issues. Running away can serve to ward off the desire to cling, but on the other hand, it can also serve to intensify emotional excitement, making clinging even more pleasurable.

Clinging and Pubic Hair

Pubic hair can take on a strongly phobic character among pedophiles. This is usually interpreted on the oedipal level, but can also be understood within the framework of the dynamics of clinging. The hair initially represents the dominance of the adult. As a remnant of the fur of our ancestors, hair is also the passive organ of clinging. Hermann realized that children have a primal attraction to fur/hair, e.g., to furry toys and to animals that can be stroked. This fur initially has the character of a transitional object and does not attain a secondary—or dangerously phallic—character until later. Fear of hair can also express a deep ambivalence toward the pregenital mother, and in certain circumstances can hide a fear of the mother's mouth.

Many pedophiles consciously avoid sexual intercourse. Sexual fear is focused on fear of penetration. The erection vanishes as soon as the penis enters the feared vagina. In fantasies that are initially only preconscious, the vagina becomes the dangerous, all-devouring mouth, which swallows everything up. The representation of the powerful maternal object leads to a fear that the mother's animal greed would destroy the penis. The preference for small, delicate openings, however, also means the preference for an object to which the pedophile is superior. He can identify with this inferiority to such an extent that he himself no longer needs to be afraid.

The idea of the powerful, superior woman leads pedophiles to perceive their penis by contrast as acutely small and absolutely insufficient. Here the fear felt by many men of being sexually inadequate is exaggerated and cannot be overcome. The background is not so much unconscious rivalry with other men and (conscious) feelings of envy, but the frightening idea of being swallowed up or laughed at by the powerful mother.
Patient K, for example, reported the traumatic experience of his sexual attempts in puberty, where girls of his age had made fun of him for his small penis. Patient G, on the other hand, still slept with his mother in one bed at the time of therapy. He often dreamed that he was lying on top of somebody whom he could smother, or that someone was lying on top and smothering him. Sometimes this was accompanied by the fear of being buried alive. Then he would wake up bathed in sweat. In association with these dreams he remembered the war, and it occurred to him that, as they were walking across a field in the war, his mother had in fact thrown herself on top of him, and he had heard the sound of planes and shooting in the distance. (If we try to understand this memory in the psychoanalytic tradition as a “primal scene fantasy,” although the patient had no associations confirming this, we might stress the overwhelming closeness of the mother and the abstract distance of the father who was in the war and who was here represented only in the form of threatening sounds.)

It is often noticeable that pedophiles use their hands and fingers as more or less the only penis substitute with which they try to penetrate the dangerous female openings. This substitute formation could be a regressive step toward the clinging pattern. In young primates, when the clinging need is frustrated, a number of activities with the hands can be observed as surrogates, ranging from “grooming” (delousing) themselves and others, to mutual touching of the hands, and tickling with the index finger. This kind of exploratory approach using the index finger can also often be observed in young adult primates (Goodall 1988). Older and sexually exhausted male animals often react to genital presentations by females with tender grooming behavior instead of sexual activity. Here, too, male animals show clearly that when sexual stimulation is obstructed, it is replaced by caring behavior.

But what triggers this regression into the early clinging pattern? Perhaps early traumatizations caused by a mother figure perceived as overly powerful and not counterbalanced by a father cause pedophiles to attribute the castration threat to the mother. Indications of conscious and unconscious fear of castration can in fact be found among pedophiles much more often and more clearly than fully developed oedipal conflict constellations (Berner 1993).
Consequences of a Frustration of the Clinging Need

Hermann described the hand as an erogenous zone in the act of clinging. He believed that clinging to the mother's body is not merely directed behavior leading to a particular end (just as sucking and coitus do not merely fulfill biological needs). It is the first manifestation of the libido and of the love for the mother, and the instruments of this love are hands and feet. The hands of the human baby are frustrated in this libido satisfaction and so look for replacement satisfaction. They try to find the replacement satisfaction either independently or in connection with replacement satisfaction from the oral zone (finger-sucking). If the baby sucks its finger it obviously does not become aware only of the function of the mouth, but also of that of the hand. In the language of libido theory, this satisfies not only the mouth zone but also the hand zone. The fact that the satisfaction of the hand zone is dependent on the need for satisfaction of the mouth zone leads us to another group of observations. Let us look at what happens to the hands during the sucking or feeding, . . . As the food reaches the mouth the child opens its hand, . . . At a certain age the baby expresses its strength by means of its hands; its fingers are stretched out wide or pressed tightly together. If we assume that this power behind sucking has erogenous origins we must also accept that the strength in the hands observable during sucking also has the same origins, . . . Both mouth and hand are related parts of one system. (1941, 253)

According to Hermann, this "expression of strength" is a reflection not only of libido, but also of aggression. The clinging drive can become either gentler, leading to tender stroking, or more brutal, leading to aggressive grasping. In the erotic sensations of pedophile patients, this close connection between oral stimulation and stimulation of the fingers and hands does in fact play an important role. But this connection must be seen in the context of the patients' strangely ambiguous approach to tenderness. Tenderness is highly idealized. The nontender, coarse elements of the pedophile's sexual stimulation and their effect on the child are usually totally overlooked. During therapy, patients only seldom become aware of this discrepancy. Then they recall with pain the "lack of oneness" with the child at the moment of greatest arousal. Other patients, who are from the start more conscious of the discord between their own experience and that of the child, exhibit another form of splitting. They try to hide their own arousal from the child, to restrict the actual experience with the child, and to fulfill their erotic wishes only in fantasy and when they are alone.
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The combined hand/mouth eroticism is linked for the most part with yearning fantasies of total merging and self-dissolution in the mutual embrace. This is easier to see in pedophiles than in cases described by Hermann and his followers. There these tendencies appeared as neurotic symptoms following a defensive process and could only be interpreted in the course of therapy. (According to Freud [1905], perversion resulting from regression to an infantile satisfaction pattern is—by analogy with photography—the “positive” picture. Neurosis stems from a defense against this same pattern, and is thus the “negative.”)

Both the foregoing survey of the literature and my own clinical experiences show that for pedophiles the focus of traumatic experience in childhood lies mainly in an early conflict constellation with the mother, who is from the very beginning experienced as aggressive, moody, changeable, and lacking in tenderness. Father figures leave no memory traces for a long time. Sometimes two women (mother and grandmother) compete for the child. To understand how these constellations affect inner representations, it is important to see how bodily needs are dealt with. It has become clear to me that the frustration of the clinging drive as described by Hermann (hairlessness of the woman’s body, clothes preventing skin-to-skin contact between mother and baby) plays a major role in pedophilia. A mother who is often overactive and nervous makes it difficult for the child to have longer phases of body contact and a “flowing of warmth” from body to body. I believe, however, that overindulgence of the child’s needs for merging—by constantly carrying the child around, sleeping with the child, etc.—can also lead to a fixation in the form of an increased clinging need.

The frustration or fixation of the clinging need may lead to an increased psychic representation of the hand and mouth as erogenous zones. Only a few authors have so far studied the psychological meaning of these representations. D. W. Winnicott (1945) investigated the importance of the hand and the thumb, their relationship to the transitional object, and thus also to the sense of reality and to the sense of separation of subject and object. Willi Hoffer (1947) similarly described the importance of the hand in relation to orality and to initial ego-integration. He argued that the differentiation of the ego from the common matrix of ego and id shows itself on the surface of the child’s body, when finger-sucking causes two
sensations at the same time, one oral and one tactile. This satisfies the oral partial drive and results in autoerotic pleasure. Around the twelfth week, when the hand is capable of voluntary and not just reflex movements, the baby puts it in its mouth to reduce the oral tension. In the case of very small babies, the hand competes so much with the nipple that the hand has to be held away from the mouth so that the baby will suck at the breast. From the twelfth week the baby can be observed to bite other objects, but not its own fingers and hand, so these are not the victims of oral aggression. It is possible here to postulate the first experiences of separation between self and not-self. (It is unnecessary to rehearse these ideas anew in the light of the recent findings of developmental psychology [Stern 1985].)

In any case, the hand seems to represent an important center of self-experience for the baby. René Spitz (1962) observed babies who very early showed the tendency to put one of their hands into their mother’s mouth in a sort of exchange for putting the mother’s nipple into their mouth. Egle Laufer (1982, 103) studied the strange phenomenon that many women avoid masturbating with their hand and formed the hypothesis that the little girl unconsciously identifies her hand with that of her mother and that the form of relationship with the mother strongly influences girls’ attitudes toward masturbation in various stages of development. The hand can thus become the source of fear, and the unconsciously aggressive fantasies against the mother can play a major role in the chronic wrist-slitting syndrome.

**Self-Representation and Object-Representation**

If one tries to imagine the picture that the pedophilic patient has of himself and of his mother, the hypothesis of drive-related clinging alone is insufficient. The structure of the object relations and their origins is worthy of study, both for its role in the concept of clinging and for its own sake. In a speech in honor of Hermann’s eightieth birthday, Robert Bak (1972) attempted to trace the development of clinging from the oral to the phallic position. By means of examples, he demonstrated the link between sadism and traumas in the oral-sadistic phase. A reactive increase in the clinging need always plays a role here as a consequence of frustration by the mother (Bak 1968). This is also connected with the fantasy of the huge mother.
Bak sought to show that perversion is a question not only of drive needs, but also of the activation of differentiated object- and self-representations. It is beyond the framework of this chapter to try to pursue the important role played in pedophilia by object-representations and self-representations on the one hand and narcissism on the other. I have already mentioned several times that partial object representations of the mother can have a very cruel, sadistic character; images of the father role are usually abstract and distant but often just as sadistic (Berner 1993). The hostility expected from most objects contributes to the restriction and inhibition of many needs, and leads to the superficial inhibition of aggression (and corresponding unconscious hate) and to gestures revealing childish, anxious subservience and its underlying needs.

**Conclusion**

Hermann's understanding of clinging as a drive-pattern can be very useful in understanding the specific character of erotic desires and behavior in pedophiles. The clinging metaphor has great flexibility: it has links with Bowlby's instinctual patterns, but is less rigidly mechanistic and biologically preprogrammed. It has similarities with Freud's concept of partial drives and is compatible with the idea of secondary integration into libidinal and aggressive motivational systems. The many symbolizations of this primary physical clinging pattern have been described by Hermann and his followers. The formation of perversion in pedophilia offers an opportunity to study an erotic clinging pattern *in statu nascendi* (as a positive picture to the negative of neurosis). For the treatment of pedophilia it is important to be aware that the vicissitudes of self- and object-representations are closely bound up with the erotic drive. The narcissistic character structure behind paraphilic dynamics is crucial to therapy and has been more often described in the last few years than the erotic drive. The aim of this chapter has not been to discuss the complicated story of object-representations and character structures emphasized in modern psychoanalytic theory. I have sought rather to show how too few attempts have been made since Freud to work out a concept of drive and its links with instinctual patterns in animals. Hermann was a pioneer in this field. Phylogenetically old instinctual pat-
terns found among primates are still observable among humans, although the form of these patterns is now no more than fragmentary. Despite their enormous theoretical importance, these have been given too little consideration by psychoanalysts since Hermann.

NOTES

1. For the German Trieb I will use the word “drive” as far as humans are concerned.

2. And today we know that even the oldest cave paintings, dating back some 30,000 years, have hands (both with and without fingers) as a theme (Nougier 1984, 101).

REFERENCES


Hermann's Concept of Clinging


1943. *Az ember ösi östonei (Man's Basic Drives).* Budapest: Pantheon.


