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The likely impact of John Macmurray's philosophy upon the theory and practice of both psychoanalysis and psychotherapy has been recognised by commentators such as the present author,[1] Colin Kirkwood,[2] and most substantially by Graham S. Clarke, whose monograph *Personal Relations Theory: Fairbairn, Macmurray and Suttie*[3] argues for a synthesis of Macmurray's work with that of two other Scots, the object-relations psychoanalyst W. R. D. Fairbairn (1889–1964), and the psychoanalytically-oriented psychiatrist Iain D. Suttie (1889–1935). Macmurray's affinity with these two figures suggests an interesting corollary. Could Macmurray have been informed and influenced in some way by psychoanalytic or psychotherapeutic ideas? To some extent, this hypothesis is partially confirmed by Macmurray's acknowledgement in *Persons in Relation* (1961) of Ian Suttie's work, where he describes the latter's monograph, *The Origins of Love and Hate* (1935), as an 'important contribution to psychotherapeutic theory'.[4]

Macmurray's tendency to eschew reference to thinkers other than the leading lights of the Western tradition (Descartes, Kant, Hegel) means that his explicit mention of Suttie is very much a one-off. Yet, despite this paucity of straightforward acknowledgement, there is in his work significant evidence for the influence of psychoanalytic ideas. The undated typescript 'Religion in the Modern World' (which may be periodised by its references to Hitler as a contemporary) sets out some of Macmurray's seemingly idiosyncratic views on what psychoanalysis can teach theologians and philosophers. Freud had, of course, argued that religious experience could be explained as one might any other psychopathological symptom—as, for instance, a regression

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[1] Gavin Miller, *R. D. Laing* (Edinburgh, 2004), chapters 4–5.

[2] Colin Kirkwood, 'The persons-in-relation perspective: Sources and synthesis', in *The Legacy of Fairbairn and Sutherland: Psychotherapeutic Applications*, ed. by Jill Savege Scharff and David E. Scharff (New York, 2005), 19–38.

[3] Graham S. Clarke, *Personal Relations Theory: Fairbairn, Macmurray and Suttie* (London and New York, 2006).

[4] John Macmurray, *Persons in Relation* (London, 1961), 45.

to early relations of dependency,[5] or as an expiatory ritual with somewhat murky Oedipal origins.[6] Macmurray, however, uses the logic of psychoanalytic explanation against its founding father. The elements of religion that interest Freud, such as wish-fulfilment or irrational guilt, are to Macmurray merely 'the religious phenomena of our familiar world'.[7] Such phenomena are indeed *prima facie* evidence for the illusoriness of religious belief, and for the propriety of its analysis as a symptom. Yet, while conceding that our religious life is typically irrational, Macmurray argues that such illusory religiosity arises from the repression and dissociation of a genuine religious impulse:

> the conscious life of Europe is inimical to religion and contains a powerful inhibition which forces its natural religious impulses into the unconscious. The form of our conscious life is determined by this inability to bring our religious nature into consciousness. So all our European religions have been 'unconscious'–phantasy fulfilments of suppressed wishes, childish and illusory; while our *conscious* efforts in the field of religion are efforts to prevent our religious nature finding a real expression.[8]

By adopting a theory of the unconscious mind that avoids Freud's sexual monism, Macmurray can contend that just as there are 'people who adopt a mode of life which has no place for any natural expression of sexual impulses',[9] so too there is 'a religious impulse in us, which the form of our social life prevents from expressing itself in a real and actual form'.[10]

For Freud, as is well known, the dissociation of the sexual impulse from consciousness leads to a variety of symbolic substitutions of a more or less compulsive nature, the archetype of which is the imagery found in dreams. Macmurray, with his broader account of the unconscious mind, argues that the philosopher of religion therefore has to 'do what the psycho-analyst has to

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[5] Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, trans. by W. D. Robson-Scott (London, 1928).

[6] Sigmund Freud, 'Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics', in *Totem and Taboo and Other Works*, ed. by James Strachey, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London, 1955), 1–162.

[7] Edinburgh University Library, John Macmurray Papers, John Macmurray, 'Religion in the Modern World', t.s., Gen 2162.2.40.1 3.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., 6.

[10] Ibid., 7.

do in the interpretation of dreams. For all European religion is dream religion. It is a highly disguised expression of the real substance which lies behind it'.[11] The nature of our repressed Christianity may, Macmurray argues, be understood by interpreting psychoanalytically the Christian doctrine of salvation: the other-worldly community of the afterlife presented by organized Christianity displaces, and substitutes for, a universal Christian community in *this* world. As Macmurray has it in *Reason and Emotion*, Jesus's task was not 'the creation of the Kingdom of Heaven in Heaven. […] It was the task of creating conscious community among all men everywhere'.[12] That we are not seeking more vigorously a real universal congregation can be explained by the dominance of institutional religion, which Macmurray characterises in 'Religion in the Modern World' as 'the main social organization for side-tracking our religious impulses'.[13]

Macmurray's 1938 article, 'A Philosopher Looks at Psychotherapy',[14] further explains what he sees as the connections between religion and psychotherapy. In order to ground his claim that there may be a repressed intersubjectivity analogous to, or perhaps ultimately replacing, the repressed sexuality of Freudian theory, Macmurray draws explicitly upon Suttie's *The Origins of Love and Hate*, arguing that

> the essence of love is to be found not in sexuality but in the inherent mutuality of the original relation of mother and child. The breaking of that relation in its original organic form sets the problem which is the general problem of human life. For it produces inevitably an anxiety reaction.[15]

Thereafter, the ego is directed towards securing itself in a world perceived as inhospitable and dangerous: 'No situation and no person can be trusted. The available energy is all directed towards security and defence'.[16] But, although institutional religion may suppress our intersubjective life, Jesus himself was trying to overcome our anxiety, and to restore our original capacity for love. Christian faith is not the fideistic adherence to a creed; it is instead an

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[11] Ibid., 3.

[12] John Macmurray, *Reason and Emotion*, 2nd edn (London, 1935), 249.

[13] Macmurray, 'Religion in the Modern World', 2.

[14] John Macmurray, 'A Philosopher Looks at Psychotherapy', *Individual Psychology Medical Pamphlets*, no. 20 (1938), 9–22.

[15] Ibid., 21.

[16] Ibid., 19.

emotional attitude—'Jesus […] means by "faith" an attitude to life in which anxiety is overcome'.[17]

Macmurray's transformation of the psychoanalytic hermeneutic of suspicion may seem arbitrary and idiosyncratic—the act, perhaps, of an isolated and peripheral thinker unable to abandon the culture and traditions in which he was raised, and willing, therefore, to perjure his intellect by the wilful transformation of what was (at the time) a dominant movement in Western thought. But such an interpretation of Macmurray's place in European ideas would proceed from both an impoverished understanding of Scottish intellectual history, and a quite defective account of the history of psychoanalysis and related movements. If we think of the history of psychoanalysis as a narrative that begins with Freud, and then moves through metropolitan centres such as London, New York, and Paris, then this presumption will entirely obscure Macmurray's vital position in a vigorous tradition of psychotherapeutic thought. Macmurray's influences are hard to perceive because he does not rely upon Freudian or Jungian ideas. Instead, he owes a significant debt to the psychotherapeutic tradition established by Alfred Adler (1870–1937). The invisibility of this connection owes as much to Adler's relative obscurity as to Macmurray's. Paul E. Stepanksy argues that

> [i]t is a revealing oversight in the history of modern psychiatry that Alfred Adler has yet to be accorded his just due. Despite Adler's important role in the history of psychoanalysis and his obvious stature as the founder of Individual Psychology, the study of his thought and the explication of his system have remained the preserve of committed partisans. In the course of the continuing polemical exchanges between 'Freudians' and 'Adlerians', Adler's thought has been deprived of the critical and contextual examination it warrants.[18]

One aspect of this unexamined context—as this article will demonstrate—is the impact of Adlerian ideas upon Macmurray's philosophy.

Even though the precise circumstances are as yet unclear, the evidence for Macmurray's involvement with the Adlerian tradition is compelling. 'A Philosopher looks at Psychotherapy' (see above), was published by the Individual Psychology Association (IPA), a society dedicated to the furtherance of Adlerian therapy. Macmurray also met the New Zealand-born psychothera-

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[17] Ibid., 17.
[18] Paul E. Stepansky, *In Freud's Shadow: Adler in Context* (Hillsdale, NJ, 1983), 1.

pist Maurice Bevan-Brown (1886–1967) in April 1939 when the former spoke
at a conference in the village of Jordans, near London[19] – Bevan-Brown was
closely associated with the IPA, and was for some time its chairman. Further
evidence (and perhaps a reference to the same occasion) is provided by Phyllis
Bottome in her biography of Adler, where she describes how 'Professor John
Macmurray made an after-dinner speech at the Individual Psychological Medical
Society in the early spring of 1939'.[20] According to Bottome's informant, a
friend of Adler's who was present at the event, Macmurray 'was the only one
who mentioned Adler. He said that we should think of Adler as one whose
work is greater than that of any other psychologist'.[21] Indeed, Macmurray was
not alone in his admiration for Adler; the latter was becoming a significant
intellectual and personal presence in Scotland. Adler was invited to Aberdeen
University in 1937 to give a series of lectures; these were attended, according
to D. G. Boyle, 'not just [by] medical students and staff, but students from
arts and divinity, and even members of the local aristocracy'.[22] Bottome also
records that, during his stay, Adler visited the village of Corgarff, to meet the
'Rev. John Linton […] who was translating Adler's *Social Interest: A Challenge to
Mankind* [this translation was published in 1938 – GM]'.[23] In fact, Adler died
during this visit to Aberdeen, struck down in Union Street by a heart attack on
28 May 1937, not long before he was due to give his final lecture in Marischal
College.[24]

Some more specific sense of Macmurray's debt to Adler is provided in
the 1930 pamphlet, *Today and Tomorrow: A Philosophy of Freedom*, written to
accompany Macmurray's radio broadcasts on 'Reality and Freedom' from
the same year. Among the texts given as further reading to listeners is
Adler's *Understanding Human Nature* (1928).[25] Adler's book, first published as
Menschenkenntnis in 1927, clearly informs at least some of Macmurray's ideas.
Adler refers to the inferiority complex – that 'mechanism of the striving for
compensation with which the soul attempts to neutralize the tortured feeling of
inferiority'.[26] Just as Macmurray argues that those without faith strive anxiously

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[19] John E. Costello, *John Macmurray: A Biography* (Edinburgh, 2002), 281.

[20] Phyllis Bottome, *Alfred Adler: A Portrait from Life*, 3rd edn (New York, 1957), 238.

[21] Ibid., 239.

[22] D. G. Boyle, *Psychology: The Aberdeen Connection* (Aberdeen, c.1993), 67.

[23] Bottome, *Alfred Adler*, 256.

[24] Boyle, *Aberdeen Connection*, 68.

[25] John Macmurray, *Today and Tomorrow: A Philosophy of Freedom* (London, 1930), 28.

[26] Alfred Adler, *Understanding Human Nature*, trans. by Walter Beran Wolfe (London, 1928), 75.

for power in the midst of communal life, so Adler argues that a psyche beset by such a 'pathological power-drive'[27] participates only superficially in that inescapable 'logic of communal existence' which he terms 'social feeling'[28] (in Adler's original German, the term is *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*–a better translation would be 'community feeling'). Adler's likely influence upon Suttie, and so indirectly upon Macmurray, is also apparent in *Understanding Human Nature*.[29] Suttie argues in *The Origins of Love and Hate* that the original social relation between mother and child is repressed and distorted into a power relation by a 'taboo on tenderness'[30] that prohibits harmless expression of love and affection. Similarly, for Adler, at least one of the contexts that might provoke an inferiority response is that in which

> [t]he child's attitude becomes so fixed that he cannot recognize love nor make the proper use of it, because his instincts for tenderness have never been developed. It will be difficult to mobilize a child who has grown up in a family where there has never been a proper development of the feeling of tenderness, to the expression of any kind of tenderness. His whole attitude in life will be a gesture of escape, an evasion of all love and all tenderness.[31]

An appreciation of such connections with Adlerian thought is essential to an understanding of the way in which Macmurray's work incorporates psychotherapeutic ideas. Take, for instance, the concept of 'egocentrism' as it appears in Macmurray's pre-war publications such as *Reason and Emotion* (1935) and *Freedom in the Modern World* (1932; 2nd edn, 1935). The first chapter of *Reason and Emotion* argues that the central obstacle to emotional and intellectual development is egocentrism (or its various rough synonyms, such as 'subjectivity', 'immaturity', 'irrationality', and 'self-concern'). Although egocentrism does have a moral aspect (Macmurray implies that the morally egocentric act in terms of their 'subjective inclinations and private sympathies'[32]), the phenomenon is clearly something more than the selfishness

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27 Ibid., 76.
28 Ibid., 167.
29 For the suggestion that Suttie's thinking might owe something to Adler's concept of 'social feeling', I am indebted to Dr Nathan Kravis, Associate Director to the Institute for the History of Psychiatry, University of Cornell.
30 Ian D. Suttie, *The Origins of Love and Hate* (London, 1935), 80–96.
31 Adler, *Understanding Human Nature*, 38.
32 Macmurray, *Reason and Emotion*, 23.

that might be traditionally opposed to a sense of duty. There is, for instance, an egocentrism in science, namely 'the desire to retain beliefs to which we are emotionally attached for some reason or other. It is the tendency to make the wish father to the thought'.[33] Egocentrism also has artistic and religious aspects, apparent when we 'try to distinguish good art from bad by the kind of pleasurable effect it has on the spectator or the listener',[34] or when we 'think of religion as giving us something; as consoling us in trouble; helping us in difficulties, strengthening us in the face of death, and so on'.[35] There can also be an egocentrism in emotions such as love:

> In feeling love for another person, I can either experience a pleasurable emotion which he stimulates in me, or I can love *him*. We have, therefore, to ask ourselves, is it really the other person that I love, or is it myself? Do I enjoy him or do I enjoy myself in being with him? Is he just an instrument for keeping me pleased with myself, or do I feel his existence and his reality to be important in themselves?[36]

The snares of egocentrism are legion: even those who feel keen guilt, and so seem to possess a properly altruistic morality, may be using duty to cloak their own unconscious egocentrism. Macmurray considers the example of a woman who has wronged her friends, and who revels in her guilt, rather than feeling concern for those she has injured:

> self-abasement is just as unreasonable, perhaps even more unreasonable, than her previous state of mind. It is a compensation which still enables her to be concerned with herself. It is still childish, immature and egocentric. Self-pity and self-disgust are just as irrational as self-assertion.[37]

Even good actions can be corrupted by self-concern: Macmurray explains in *Freedom in the Modern World* that '[b]y being good and unselfish we can feel good and important and kind, and we can make other people feel how good and kind we are'.[38] In summary, egocentric or 'unreal' people, as Macmurray calls them, are

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[33] Ibid., 21.
[34] Ibid., 52.
[35] Ibid., 53.
[36] Ibid., 32–3.
[37] Ibid., 30.
[38] John Macmurray, *Freedom in the Modern World*, 2nd edn (London, 1935), 160.

out of touch with the world outside them and turned in upon themselves
[…]. What they demand of the outside world is that it should stimulate
them and be agreeable to them and satisfy them. […]. They are not
interested in other people; they want other people to minister to their
self-esteem, to recognize them, think highly of them, respect them and
love them.[39]

To understand the centrality of egocentrism in Macmurray's thought
requires an investigation of his relation to Adlerian psychotherapy, and in
particular to the work of the German therapist, Fritz Künkel (1889–1956).
Künkel trained as a medical doctor, before fighting in the First World War,
and – like Macmurray – being seriously wounded by shrapnel.[40] Künkel's
injury was so serious (the loss of an arm) that he abandoned work as a phy-
sician, and retrained as a psychotherapist. After close involvement with the
Adlerian group in Berlin during the 1920s, Künkel began to establish himself
as a theorist and populariser of psychotherapy, developing and disseminat-
ing a psychotherapy in which the practitioner's main goal was, in the words
of Martha Deed, 'to help his patients to give up their egocentricity and to
become more and more able to participate in the process of creation'.[41]
Whether by accident or design, Künkel was working in the US when the
Second World War broke out, and there he decided to stay, living and work-
ing in Los Angeles until his death.[42]

As ever with Macmurray, there is little in the way of explicit reference that
might reveal Künkel's influence: Macmurray's only direct statement is appar-
ent in the bibliography to *Today and Tomorrow*, where he refers to Künkel's
Let's be Normal! (1929) – albeit as '*Let's be Moral*'.[43] But this lack of explicit
acknowledgement has no bearing on the extent of Künkel's influence upon
Macmurray. Examination of Künkel's *Let's be Normal!*, the English translation
of which precedes *Reason and Emotion* by six years, convincingly reveals at
least one source for Macmurray's vocabulary of 'egocentrism' (and, as set out
in *Reason and Emotion*, its antonym, 'objectivity'[44]). In his book, Künkel gives

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39 Ibid., 159.

40 John A. Sanford, 'The Life of Fritz Künkel', in *Fritz Künkel: Selected Writings*, ed. by
     John A. Sanford, (New York, 1984), 1–5 at 2.

41 Martha Deed, 'Attitudes of Four Religiously-Oriented Psychoanalysts', *Pastoral
     Psychology,* 20, no. 193 (1969), 39–44 at 41.

42 Sanford, 'The Life of Fritz Künkel', 4.

43 Macmurray, *Today and Tomorrow*, 28.

44 See, for instance, the different kinds of objectivity in science and art, as proposed in

several very similar examples of the egocentric attitude corrupting an apparently 'objective' interest. For instance, 'When a man takes a trip for egocentric reasons, to be able to say, for instance "I have been there and there", he has no pleasure in the trip itself. He wishes it were over before he starts'.[45] Or, if a student studies for an examination egocentrically, he 'uses the examination to quiet his need of recognition, or, what amounts to the same thing psychologically, he needs it to lessen his feeling of inferiority'.[46] In both these examples, the acquisition of knowledge (by acquaintance, or propositionally formed) is in the service of one's self-image. Something similar is proposed by Künkel for egocentrically motivated moral behaviour:

> Let us imagine that an old man has fallen on the street, and that a young man hurries to help him up. Such assistance can serve one of two purposes. Either the purpose is to help the person hurt, or the helper performs his good deed for a reward. If the first purpose outweighs the second, we call the man's behavior 'objective'; if the latter purpose is determinant, we call his behavior 'egocentric'.[47]

Indeed, egocentrism is to Künkel the central psychopathology. In *What it Means to Grow Up* (first published in English in 1936) he asserts:

> The most important of the distinctions which occur in the more recent books analyzing character is that indicated by the two words Egocentricity and Objectivity. The words designate the two opposed attitudes, the two different kinds of behaviour, or we might even say, the two different sets of purposes that prevail generally, in ourselves and in others. A boy who makes an electric bell because he enjoys working with his hands, or because the bell is a necessity, is acting objectively. But a boy who installs a bell with the one idea of earning the admiration of his parents, or his uncles and aunts, or his schoolfellows, is acting egocentrically.[48]

Macmurray, *Reason and Emotion*, 155–6.

[45] Fritz Künkel, *Let's Be Normal!: The Psychologist Comes to His Senses*, trans. by Eleanore Jensen (New York, 1929), 92.

[46] Ibid., 91.

[47] Ibid., 31.

[48] Fritz Künkel, *What it Means to Grow Up: A Guide in Understanding the Development of Character*, trans. by Barbara Keppel-Compton and Hulda Niebuhr (London and New York, 1936), 3.

For the egocentric personality, claims Künkel (and Macmurray agrees), an objective relation to the world is a means to some other end—namely, the 'ego-ideal':

> the egocentric, whether he knows it or not, always acts according to self-evaluation. He has an ego-ideal which he strives to attain, a guiding image by which he measures his worth or worthlessness. He judges everything that happens on the basis of whether it brings him nearer this guiding image or not.[49]

In Künkel's words, '[t]he purpose of every objective function is service to the world. The purpose of every egocentric function is service to the ego'.[50]

Künkel's vocabulary of the 'ego-ideal' and the 'guiding image' develops Adler's account of the way in which a fictional self-image may act as a goal for the personality. According to Adler, the child 'obtain[s] security by striving towards a fixed point where he sees himself greater and stronger, where he finds himself rid of the helplessness of infancy'.[51] For the healthy personality, this fictional goal is merely a crutch, which may be given up when one actually reaches the powers and privileges of maturity, and no longer feels so acutely one's weakness and incapacity before the world. Rather as an architect might erase the guidelines on a drawing, so the healthy individual is 'able at all times to free himself from the bonds of his fiction, to eliminate his projections (Kant) from his calculations, and to make use only of the impetus which is given him by this guiding line'.[52] An everyday example of my own may prove helpful: the child who is told that eating spinach will make him as strong as Popeye uses this fantastic ego-ideal in order to force down an unfamiliar and unappetizing food. But, as the child develops, the fictional goal of being like Popeye disappears, to be replaced—in the ideal case—by a realistic appreciation of a wholesome food, both as a pleasure in itself, and as a means to health. However, the neurotic personality (and for Adler this particularly means that created in the constitutionally inferior child),

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[49] Künkel, *Let's Be Normal!*, 32.

[50] Ibid., 31–2.

[51] Alfred Adler, *The Neurotic Constitution: Outlines of a Comparative Individualistic Psychology and Psychotherapy*, trans. by Bernard Glueck and John E. Lind (London, 1918), 53.

[52] Ibid., 54.

keeps before his eye his God, his idol, his ideal of personality and clings
to his guiding principle, losing sight in the meanwhile of reality, whereas
the normal personality is always ready to dispense with this crutch, this
aid, and reckon unhampered with reality.[53]

The neurotic, in other words, clings to the ideal or fiction of future power and
potency, hypostatizing it into a reality, albeit an unconscious one. Somewhere
at the back of his mind, the neurotic is still eating his spinach in the hope that
he will (eventually, one day) turn into Popeye—or, as Adler puts it, that he will
'escape from the feeling of inferiority in order to ascend to the full height of
the ego-consciousness, to complete manliness, to attain the ideal of being
"above."'[54]

   The ego-ideal or guiding fiction, in Adler's system, provides a fictional end
that eventually is dispensable to the mature, healthy personality; the accom-
plishments once imagined as a means to the fictional goal of security and
power come to be valued as ends-in-themselves. To be egocentric in the
sense developed by Künkel's appropriation of Adler, and then adopted by
Macmurray, is therefore not essentially to be self-interested, or whimsical, or
merely subjective in one's attitudes: it is instead to treat any relation to the
world as *in fact* a means to the (illusory) imago of security and power. Even the
most moral and realistically minded of individuals may be egocentric if these
attitudes are in the service of such a guiding image. As Stepansky points out,

> Adler did not contend that the neurotic character was incapable of
> altruistic behaviour, but he did argue that such behaviour only became
> manifest when it could be incorporated into the neurotic's 'search for
> significance' […]—when it served to promote interpersonal superiority
> in contexts where the display of overt ambition would be a liability.[55]

But where Adler frequently uses constitutional inferiority to explain the
hypostatisation of the ego-ideal, Künkel emphasises instead problems in the
early relationship between mother and child in order to explain why the latter
should feel so acutely its own weakness, and so cling, in neurotic compensa-
tion, to a guiding image. Künkel's account of the origins of egocentricity is
provided in *Character, Growth, Education* (first published in English in 1938).

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[53] Ibid., 66.
[54] Ibid., 37.
[55] Stepansky, *In Freud's Shadow*, 123.

The scenes described in it are strikingly familiar to anyone acquainted with Macmurray's account of the mother-child relation in post-war publications such as *Persons in Relation* (1961), based on his Gifford Lectures of 1954. Egocentrism, says Künkel, is a sign of 'previous disturbance of the Primal-We'[56] – this curious phrase indicates, says Künkel, that in early life, 'The acting subject is not the child himself, but the community of mother and child, the Primal-We in its entirety'.[57] For Macmurray, too, 'the mother-child relation is the original unit of personal existence'[58], 'a "You and I" with a common life'.[59] In normal development, claims Künkel, the primal community is maintained by a relationship of faith between child and mother. He gives the example of a mother who must leave the room in order to prepare some food for her infant, and so appears to abandon her child, and to break the norms of feeding that ruled their Primal-We:

> With her voice and her expression she affirmed unequivocally her loyalty to their community. Nevertheless her departure was felt to be a denial of the We-subject, and hence a betrayal. Yet not a complete betrayal. Should one trust that reassuring look in her eye more than the evidence of one's own eyes which said 'she has gone'? Was it perhaps possible that she had gone away without breaking up the We? The child is unable to arrive at any clear understanding. His tension capacity is not yet sufficient. He cannot yet recognize in his mother's absence the contribution of service to the We. His tension capacity is, however, already sufficiently great for him not to forget the oath of fidelity that lay in her eyes.
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>   Amidst all this uncertainty his mother returns. That decides everything.[60]

The comparisons with Macmurray are again clear, for the Scottish philosopher refers to what he calls a 'rhythm of withdrawal and return'.[61] If the child is to become a competent agent, he must endure the 'deliberate refusal on her [the mother's] part to continue to show the child those expressions of her care

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[56] Fritz Künkel, *Character, Growth, Education*, trans. by Barbara Keppel-Compton and Basil Druitt (Philadelphia, 1938), 18.

[57] Künkel, *Character, Growth, Education*, 21.

[58] Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 62.

[59] Ibid., 60.

[60] Künkel, *Character, Growth, Education*, p. 47.

[61] Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, p. 87.

for him that he expects'.[62] However, since 'the child's stock of knowledge is too exiguous, the span of his anticipation too short', he can only appreciate that '[t]his refusal is […] an expression of the mother's care for him'[63] if he maintains a 'positive attitude of confidence that the expected response will come in due time'.[64] Indeed, Macmurray merely generalizes Künkel's concrete example of withdrawal and return in which the mother 'goes into the kitchen and comes back again'.[65]

For the non-egocentric personality, claims Künkel, 'all kinds of unpleasantness will be borne in the consciousness that, when all is said and done, the world-order merits confidence'.[66] However, there are also primal communities in which such restoration of the 'We' does not occur. For whatever reason—be it the child's anxious nature, the length of the withdrawal, the mother's inability to reassure, and so forth—the child is 'led astray by anxiety for the ego',[67] and concludes, in effect, that '[h]owever small one may be, one must look after oneself'.[68] Macmurray, too, describes such egocentrism as what ensues when the child loses faith in the meaning of the mother's withdrawal: 'activity becomes egocentric, concerned with the defence of himself in a world which is indifferent to his needs'.[69] Egocentrism, for Macmurray, is not strictly self-love, but is rather a 'fear of the Other' that involves 'a concentration of interest and activity upon the defence of the self'.[70]

Künkel describes two modes of egocentric response: in the first, 'the child will try to master his surroundings, and external dialectical processes will play the chief part in the development of his character'; in the other, 'the child's behavior will be more passive'—he 'inclines toward dreaminess or contemplativeness, and seeks to subdue the external world "from afar."'[71] 'This contrast', claims Künkel, 'corresponds […] exactly to the differentiation introduced by C. G. Jung […] under the names "Extrovert" and "Introvert."'[72] As Künkel makes clear, these two responses, the assertive and the submissive, may mingle in one personality—one egocentric child, for instance, manifested

[62] Ibid., 89.
[63] Ibid., 89.
[64] Ibid., 87–8.
[65] Künkel, *Character, Growth, Education*, 46.
[66] Ibid., 47.
[67] Ibid., 38.
[68] Ibid., 38.
[69] Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 89.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Künkel, *Character, Growth, Education*, 67.
[72] Ibid., 67.

a 'good deal of naughtiness and obstinacy, but also a certain amount of affectionate behavior and cajolery […] for reasons of "policy."'[73] This twofold taxonomy of the egocentric personality is echoed by Macmurray. If the child fails to 'overcome the negative motivation', then one of 'two courses will tend to become habitual',

> there will be produced an individual who is either characteristically submissive or characteristically aggressive in his active relation with the Other. This contrast of types of disposition corresponds to the distinction drawn by psychologists between the 'introvert' and the 'extravert' [*sic*].[74]

Macmurray even repeats Künkel's characterization of the submissive, introverted response as one of 'policy': the child 'remains egocentric and on the defensive; he conforms in behaviour to what is expected of him, but, as it were, as a matter of policy'.[75]

It is therefore Künkel's theory which lies behind Macmurray's psychotherapeutic re-interpretation of the Gospels, a project which continues from the inter-war period to post-war work, such as the 1964 radio broadcasts for Lent given under the general title 'To Save from Fear'. In these talks, Macmurray explicitly casts Jesus as a psychotherapist who 'diagnosed the mortal sickness from which people suffer as fear'.[76] The fear in question is not everyday rational fear towards some conscious object or possibility; rather 'the fears that matter are the deep fears, which we have suppressed so that we are unconscious of them'.[77] The fear, of course, is that which may arise in the rhythm of withdrawal and return. An individual possessed by such unconscious fear of the other, 'will constantly act as if the world is a dangerous place, and live on the defensive',[78] and so will display two characteristic emotional attitudes – 'he hides himself from you behind a facade of pretence or formality, or else he tries to dominate you. He is either submissive or aggressive'.[79] In either

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[73] Ibid., 50.

[74] Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 104.

[75] Ibid., 102.

[76] Edinburgh University Library, John Macmurray Papers, John Macmurray, 'To Save from Fear: 2. Faith and Love', t.s., Gen 2162.2.38, 2.

[77] Edinburgh University Library, John Macmurray Papers, John Macmurray, 'To Save from Fear: 1. Fear and Faith', t.s., Gen 2612.2.38, 3.

[78] Ibid., 3.

[79] Ibid., 4.

case, the genuinely intersubjective self is obscured by an ego-ideal built upon unconscious fear and anxiety. As Macmurray explains in *Persons in Relation*,

> Both dispositions are egocentric, and motivate action which is for the sake of oneself, and not for the sake of the Other [...]. Such action is implicitly a refusal of mutuality, and an effort to constrain the Other to do what we want. By conforming submissively to his wishes we put him under an obligation to care for us. By aggressive behaviour we seek to make him afraid not to care for us.[80]

The Adlerian lineage of Macmurray's psychotherapeutic Christianity should now be clear: indeed, these two egocentric responses of aggression and submission can be traced back, via Künkel, to Adler's account of '[d]efiance and obedience, *Trotz* and *Gehorsam*' as 'the two basic routes that the neurotic safeguarding tendencies could follow'.[81]

For those who think of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy within Freudian or post-Freudian parameters, Macmurray's conclusions will seem to be merely *non sequiturs*. However, if Macmurray's work is related to Adlerian concepts, particularly those developed by Künkel, then the psychotherapeutic conceptual scheme in Macmurray's Christianity is clarified. The suppressed impulse that appears in disguised form in organized religion, and which Macmurray hopes to liberate, is the striving towards mature community rather than towards egocentric mastery. Where Freud's motto was '*Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*' (traditionally translated as 'Where Id was, Ego shall be'), Macmurray supposes that the real therapeutic aim is to replace the compulsive and deadening ego with the emotionally mature and genuinely other-centred self: 'Where Ego was, We shall be' would be a fair summary of Macmurray's position. Without such liberation of genuine mutuality, Macmurray believes, we shall remain egocentric in the specific psychotherapeutic sense developed by Adler and Künkel.

For the egocentric personality, the fundamental relation to the world is one of mastery, rather than knowledge, enjoyment, appreciation, or love. It is therefore important to note that Macmurray, Künkel, and Adler concede the validity of a Nietzschean hermeneutic of suspicion in which the 'will to power' works, more or less latently, in all our accomplishments, from the most obviously aggressive to the seemingly most civilized (art, morality, science). This is why Macmurray's use of 'egocentrism' is as elastic as Künkel's: it covers such

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[80] Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, 105.
[81] Stepansky, *In Freud's Shadow*, 121.

phenomena as selfishness, wishful thinking, hedonistic aesthetic response, consolatory theology, emotional indulgence, the vanity of good deeds, and pride in one's knowledge and expertise. It includes both the corruption of 'objectivity' by self-interest, and the replacement of objectivity with illusions that are (narrowly conceived) 'life-enhancing'. But, while conceding the potential validity of such suspicions, Macmurray argues – with recourse to the ideas of Adler and Künkel – that they are illuminating only for those individuals who have fallen into an egocentric way of life. He therefore turns the hermeneutic of suspicion against itself, and produces a hermeneutic of charity and confidence in which the will-to-power and the will-to-illusion conceal our original altruism and objectivity.

Macmurray's response to a hermeneutic of suspicion that ferrets out the will to power means that he is still our contemporary, at least for an age in which 'critical theory' in the humanities is besotted with thinkers such as Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Lacan, and many others, all of whom develop, or at least extend, arguments more concisely and elegantly expressed by Nietzsche. It is, for instance, both instructive and amusing to note that, within an Adlerian conceptual scheme, the hierarchical binary oppositions so relentlessly pursued by post-structuralist thinking are merely the contingent by-product of the neurotic personality. According to Adler, only the neurotic (or the egocentric, in the Künkel-Macmurray vocabulary) is so enmeshed in a world structured according to superiority and inferiority that he or she projects upon it an 'antithesis' which 'resolves itself in accordance with […] "man—woman", so that the feeling of inferiority, uncertainty, lowliness, effeminacy, falls on one side of the table, the antithesis of certainty, superiority, self-esteem, manliness on the other'.[82]

Macmurray's relation to the Adlerian tradition also helps with a more local project – the recovery of Scottish intellectual history. The Adlerian connection provides, for instance, a useful counterweight to narratives which relate Scottish psychoanalytic ideas to the 'object relations' tradition associated with Melanie Klein (1882–1960). It is tempting to see the work of Macmurray, Suttie and Fairbairn as innovations within a Kleinian framework: one might say that instead of an infant relating to Kleinian 'part objects' such as the breast, these three theorists postulate an original relation to the 'whole object', *viz.* a person. Yet perhaps only Fairbairn really sees himself as responding to and developing Klein's work (a relation he makes apparent in articles such as

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[82] Adler, *Neurotic Constitution*, p. 99.

'Steps in the Development of an Object-Relations Theory of the Personality'[83] (1949)). Macmurray and Suttie for their part seem to have been more significantly informed by the Adlerian tradition. Such connections may also prove of interest to scholars of Adler, since as, Stepansky notes, '[i]n the decades following Freud's death, only two theorists of any psychoanalytic stature have expressed indebtedness to work of Adler'.[84] Suttie and Macmurray are another two theorists who are undoubtedly indebted to Adler; but, for their own somewhat unclear reasons, they are reticent about expressing this allegiance.

It is also worth noting, as a final *caveat*, that the extent to which Künkel may himself be indebted to Macmurray is uncertain. Since Künkel's arguments generally appear before Macmurray's publication of similar ideas, Macmurray seems to be following in the German's footsteps. Yet it is also possible that there may have been some unrecorded dialogue between the two. Künkel had clearly come into contact with Macmurray's thought by the 1940s, when he was living in the US. In the foreword to *In Search of Maturity* (1943), he explicitly names Macmurray in his acknowledgements:

> The conclusions of the following presentation are largely based on well-known facts as discussed in psychotherapeutic literature. Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, and C. G. Jung should be mentioned as the teachers to whom I owe most. In the religious field, Reinhold Niebuhr, John Macmurray, and Gerald Heard have contributed considerably to the clarification of my thinking.[85]

There may, then, have been a greater degree of interdependence between Macmurray and Künkel than is apparent in the materials that I have drawn upon. Further research may yet reveal the existence and extent of such a dialogue.

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[84] Stepansky, *In Freud's Shadow*, 2.

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