

## **Chapter 2**

### **Heinz Hartmann (1894–1970)**

#### **Publishing Era (1917–1966)**

#### **Biographical Information**

Heinz Hartmann was born on November 4, 1894 in an upper class gentile Viennese family of distinguished historians and academics. His parents, Ludwig Hartmann and Grete Chrobak, married in 1892. The marriage was remarkable in that the Chrobak family was devoutly Roman Catholic while Ludwig, originally from a Protestant family, became an atheist and adamantly opposed religious practices. Because all schools, public and private, were operated under the auspices of the Church, Heinz and his 1-year-old sister, Else, were home schooled at the family estate at Gerasdorf. Heinz received individual instruction until he was 14 years of age and from then on attended public schools. The home atmosphere was that of an international salon in character, emphasizing musical performances (the composer Johannes Brahms, 1833–1897, was a frequent visitor) and debates by intellectuals on political issues. With such extraordinary stimulation, Heinz thrived and was able to cultivate his talents. He played the violin, taught himself piano, wrote poetry, painted watercolors, and kept a pet fox.

Prior to graduating from the University of Vienna medical school in 1920, Heinz spent a year in the Army. Twice he was nearly killed not by enemy bullets, but by avalanches, each time dug out by his comrades. His years at the University were not confined to a rigid course of medical studies. He audited lectures on philosophy, psychology, and sociology taught by distinguished professors of his day. He also studied pharmacology and published two papers in 1917 and 1918 on the metabolism of quinine that serve as a testament to his expertise in the experimental method.

After graduation, he pursued several careers before turning to psychoanalysis. He remained as the staff of the University of Vienna Psychiatric and Neurological Institute clinics from 1920 to 1934, with the exception of one year, 1926, in which he undertook psychoanalytic training in Berlin to continue the training he had started in Vienna. In 1924, he published a paper that validated Freud's theory of symbolization and demonstrated that mechanisms analogous to repression operate in putatively organic amnesias. This paper thrust Hartmann into psychoanalytic prominence.

Hartmann had arranged for a training (didactic) analysis in Berlin with Karl Abraham, however, because of Abraham's premature death in 1925, the analysis

never got started. In Berlin, Hartmann underwent his first psychoanalysis with Sandor Rado. In 1927, Hartmann published his textbook, *Fundamentals of Psychoanalysis*, the first such textbook, which eventually became a classic. He wrote it while in analysis with Rado. By the late 1920s, having moved back to Vienna, Hartmann had become a trusted member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Institute and grew to be the leading theoretician in orthodox psychoanalytic circles. As a theoretician, Hartmann developed an approach of first gaining theoretical distance from the clinical material, then defining its implications with exactness, striving to place it in the perspective of a scientific general psychology (Gitelson, 1965).

Hartmann married Dora Karplus in 1928; she was a pediatrician, who later become an analyst. Dora, the youngest of four children, came from a distinguished family of lawyers and professionals; her maternal great-uncle was Josef Breuer. Dora met Heinz while she was a medical school student at the University of Vienna, and he was a member of the medical faculty.

Although trained as an academic psychiatrist and as the staff of the University of Vienna Psychiatric Clinics, Hartmann grew to be deeply respectful of Freud's contributions. However, Freud originally distrusted Hartmann, due to the psychiatric establishment's ambivalence toward psychoanalysis. In 1934, Hartmann chose to resign his post at the University Clinic because of disagreements with the newly appointed head of the Clinic and political decisions made by a reactionary government. These would have forced him to compromise his personal and scientific principles in order to gain a professorship.

Anna Freud also was initially dubious of Hartmann's concepts, but with her approval and under her auspices, Hartmann began to win converts to his enlargement of the ego's role in adaptation. Although Hartmann was too academic for Freud's taste, she recognized the need to innovate and cultivate creativity. When Hartmann left the University Clinic in Vienna, Adolph Meyer, the father of American psychiatry, offered him a position as full professor at Johns Hopkins Institute. To counter this possible move, Freud invited him to continue his training analysis, free of charge, if he would stay in Vienna. Hartmann accepted and entered his second analysis in 1934, which continued into 1936.

In 1937, Hartmann presented a paper before the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society entitled "Me." This paper was later translated into English in 1958, as *The Ego and the Problem of Adaptation*. This paper marks the beginning of Ego Psychology. With the Nazi annexation of Austria, Hartmann and his family moved first to Paris in 1938, where he joined the Paris Psychoanalytic Institute, and then to Geneva and later Lausanne, Switzerland, before settling in New York in January 1941. In Paris and Switzerland, the multilingual Heinz could work as a psychoanalyst. In New York, both Dora and Heinz passed the necessary foreign medical graduate licensure examinations. Dora, over Heinz' objections, was analyzed by Ludwig Jekels, supervised by a long list of celebrated psychoanalysts, and became a psychoanalyst. Hartmann became a member of the New York Psychoanalytic Institute and became a teacher and training analyst as he had been at the Vienna and Paris Institutes. As Freud's heir apparent, he brought enormous prestige to the New York Institute and helped to heal its severe political infighting and nasty polarizing splits, but never became a public voice for popularizing psychoanalysis.

He collaborated with Rado in the editorship of the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* from 1932 to 1941. In addition, he, along with Anna Freud and Ernst Kris, founded *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* in 1945 and was one of its managing editors. Later, Hartmann invited his Viennese colleagues Ruth S. Eissler and Rudolph M. Loewenstein to accept a coeditorship position for *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*. Hartmann's work on ego psychology having just been published in the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*, they found much common ground in the innovative material. In 1942, when the Loewensteins settled in New York, they found a gracious, hospitable Hartmann. Hartmann soon invited Loewenstein to teach at the Institute and even audited his course to give him pointers and feedback on teaching methods. Afterwards, Hartmann invited Loewenstein to join what was to be a 15-year collaboration with Ernst Kris (with the exception of 3 years after Kris' death) in a variety of writing projects that extended the ego psychology themes Hartmann first laid out in 1937.

From 1948 to 1951 he was the Medical Director of the Treatment Center at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, from 1952 to 1954 as the President of the New York Psychoanalytic Society, and from 1953 to 1959 as the President of the International Psycho-Analytic Association and, succeeded Ernest Jones, as Honorary President until his death. The marriage with Dora lasted 42 years. He died suddenly in Stony Point, New York on May 17, 1970 at the age of 75 of coronary thrombosis, a disease that first afflicted him in 1944. Dora who never smoked, but who had a family history of lung cancer, died of the disease in 1974. Both were cremated and their remains buried in Fextal valley in Switzerland (Hartmann, 1994, pp. 3–11).

Hartmann, who was fluent in German, French, and English, was devoted to music and was equally at home at the Louvre and the ancient ruins of Sicily. He lived a life of liberal humanism. His qualities as a human being were extraordinary. He was known and remembered for his theoretical ability, his brilliance as a teacher, intellectual acumen, his uncompromising integrity, his devotion to his family, and for his loyalty to orthodox psychoanalysis. He welcomed contributions from all fields as a way to encourage biopsychosocial thinking, awareness of cultural influence, and the propagation of developmental theory. He saw psychoanalysis as central to a general psychology (Eissler & Eissler, 1964; Eissler & Loewenstein, 1970).

Remarkably, while Hartmann was the first and foremost formalistic theoretician, his writings from 1937 onward contain only meager illustrations of clinical application of his concepts and virtually no case examples. Apparently, as he associated increasingly with the ageing and dying Freud, Hartmann may have firmly identified with his withdrawn master's increasing removal from clinical matters, turning to, and aligning himself with Freud's theoretical abstractions, metapsychology, and the application of psychoanalysis to cultural and religious speculations (Roazen, 1984, p. 518).

## Conceptual Framework

To appreciate the magnitude of the changes brought about by Hartmann's contribution, we review briefly the impact of Freud's publication of *The Ego and the Id* in 1923. In that work, Freud introduced a massive revision of his psychology. Prior to 1923, as

we have seen, Freud's positivist framework included nonsystematic statements about intrapsychic functioning subsequently gathered into five overlapping hypotheses: the economic, the topographic, the dynamic, the genetic, and the structural. Each of these hypotheses included statements about psychological elements in a functional relationship to each other. In *The Ego and the Id* (1923b), Freud formulated the three-part structure of the mental apparatus: the id, ego, and superego (and the ego ideal). The progression in Freud's thinking about the expanded roles of the ego and superego (and ego ideal) can be found in *On Narcissism: An Introduction* (1914) and in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921). This conceptualization that later came to be known as the **structural theory** permitted greater understanding of the individual's negotiations with the external world and with interpersonal relationships in that world. The structural theory, however, was still closely linked with drive theory in that the ego was seen as drawing its energy from the id and developing as a result of frustration and conflict.

Hartmann's legacy is that he drew attention to the **adaptive point of view** and its role in development. The adaptive hypothesis stated that infants are preadapted to cope with the demands of the environment in which they are born. Both Freud and Hartman drew different inspirations from Darwin's account of evolution. Freud emphasized the dark, archaic, instinctual relationship to other species, whereas Hartmann stressed the notion that animals were designed to adapt to the environment. Through the process of evolution, organisms interacted in a "continual reciprocal relationship" with their surroundings (Mitchell & Black, 1995, p. 36). As the father of ego psychology, Hartmann was the psychological architect who moved the psychoanalytic enterprise beyond the intrapsychic focus of drive/defense and psychopathology to a general theory of human development. He moved psychoanalysis "from an isolated, self-contained treatment method to a sweeping intellectual discipline;" a discipline that indirectly encouraged contributions from nonpsychoanalytic sources (1995, p. 35).

Even though the adaptive hypothesis can be considered a post-Freudian advance, it is very much an expansion and modification of ideas that Freud and his colleagues worked with in the aftermath of the horrors of the World War I. Following that war, Freud and his followers developed a deeply pessimistic perspective of human nature and emphasized the struggle to transform amoral primitive childhood urges into civilized adult behaviors and norms. In contrast, ego psychology took a different direction, as it began to take shape in the late 1930s both in Vienna and in England and was elaborated after the World War II mostly by expatriates who immigrated to the United States to escape Nazi persecution. Consistent with American optimism and the notion of unlimited opportunity, a sense of hopefulness about human nature took hold among psychoanalysts and a shift in attention from the chaotic id to the resilient possibilities of the ego received increasing attention. Berzoff and her colleagues (1996) state

"ego psychology encourages practitioners to think about the developmental processes across the life cycle, the unfolding of human capacities in response to the interaction between environmental influences and inborn developmental potentials, about the inborn forces that propel individuals toward ever more complex and goal-directed patterns of

organization, and about the ways individuals either adapt to their social and physical environments or modify those environments to make them more compatible with personal needs and wishes.”

Berzoff, Flanagan, and Hertz, 1996, p. 68

Ego psychology provides a theoretical framework for repairing abnormal psychosocial functioning and facilitating a better fit between an individual’s psychological needs and the normative expectations of society.

### *The Ego Reconceptualized*

Hartmann believed that because “the ego is man’s special organ of adaptation,” infants are born and immediately get equipped to fit into their physical and psychological environment (Hartmann, 1950, pp. 78–79). This equipment consists of a set of intrinsic potentials or **conflict-free ego** capacities. The potential embedded in these functions can flourish in an “**average expectable environment**,” that is, in an environment that is responsive to the child’s psychological needs (Hartmann, 1939).

Unlike the Freuds, Hartmann “believed that the id and the ego develop simultaneously and function independently, yet in synchrony. They evolve from an undifferentiated matrix with reciprocal influences on each other, emerging as ‘products of differentiation’ (Hartmann, 1950, p. 79). Each had its own biological roots and energy source” (Austrian, 2002, p. 26). Consequently, the ego’s central role in development was to facilitate not only conflict among various agencies of the mind that is the id, ego, and superego, but also adaptation to the environment. Hartmann argued that the ego development comes about “as a result of three sets of factors: inherited ego characteristics (and their interaction), influences of the instinctual drives, and influences of outer reality” (Hartmann, 1950, p. 79).

### *Primary and Secondary Autonomous Ego Functions*

Hartmann divided ego functions into primary autonomous functions and secondary autonomous functions (Hartmann, 1939). **Primary autonomous ego functions**, such as the cognitive functions of perception, intelligence, thinking, comprehension, language, learning, and the synthetic function of the ego are innate, inherited ego characteristics, and conflict-free. **Secondary autonomous ego functions** are those functions that were once involved in developmental conflicts, such as oral, anal, or phallic/oedipal and were freed as a result of the resolution of those conflicts through the process of neutralization (Hartmann, 1950, p. 81). For example, a child’s ability to think clearly may be contaminated by conflicts around sexuality or aggression. Secondary autonomy of that function results in clear, unambiguous thinking following the resolution of those conflicts (Hartmann, 1939). When the transformation, from energies embroiled in conflict to neutralized energies, occurs a **change in function** results (1939, pp. 25–26).

Freud had maintained that in **sublimation**, the ego harnesses instinctual energy and channels it into socially acceptable pursuits. For example, the voyeur became a photographer. Hartmann's concept of **neutralization** was different. Neutralization actually strips the drives of their sexual and aggressive qualities. Those energies then become conflict free or autonomous and available for use by the ego; they become secondary autonomous functions. Such ego functions become independent from the id and the ego can use the available energies in the service of adaptation and mastery. In the case of secondary autonomous functions, the energy was neutralized, the conflict removed, and the ego function then contributes to adaptation (Hartmann, 1939).

The **synthetic function of the ego** was a term that Hartmann borrowed from Nunberg (1930). It is one of the autonomous ego functions deemed by Hartmann to occupy a place of organizational significance as "the centralization of functional control" or personality integration. It involves the ability to synthesize (or to integrate and organize) experiences and thus adapt to reality. He predicted that the synthetic function may one day extend the sphere by which psychoanalytic and physiological, especially brain, processes and concepts can become integrated (Hartmann, 1959/1964, p. 117; Summers, 1994, p. 7).

Finally, Hartmann ended his 1950 paper, *Comments on the psychoanalytic theory of the ego*, with the question, what constitutes ego strength? "Any definition will have to include as an essential element the consideration of the autonomous functions of the ego, their interdependence, and their structural hierarchy, and especially of whether or how far they are able to withstand impairment through the process of defense" (Hartmann, 1950, p. 94).

## *Ego Defenses*

Hartmann devoted considerable time to the study of the ego's defenses and their functions from the perspective of adaptation. However, he seems not to have expanded on the defenses elaborated by Freud (1926) or on those of Freud (1936). He devoted virtually no publications to this topic. He believed that both defensive and adaptive functions were organized as part of the ego's synthetic function (see Nunberg, 1930; Summers, 1994, p. 7). The ego mobilizes defenses to protect itself from four types of dangers including conflict among the id, ego, and superego, conflict in interpersonal relationships, conflict in relation to social norms, and the disruption that occurs in response to trauma.

Consistent with his interest in the origin of the defenses, Hartmann speculated on the relationship between defenses and ego functions. During development, what started in a situation of conflict may secondarily become, through a change of function, part of the nonconflictual sphere. "What developed as an outcome of defense against an instinctual drive (and against reality, or against the superego) may grow into a more or less structured function. It may come to serve different functions, like adjustment, organization, and so on." In other words, it may come to serve adaptation. For example, every reactive character formation, originating in defense against

the drives, will gradually take over a wealth of other functions in the framework of the ego." Such functions may indeed become stable, even irreversible and are considered secondary autonomous functions (Hartmann, 1950, pp. 81–82).

### *Adaptation and Accommodation*

Hartmann saw adaptation as reciprocal and evolving, not as a static process. He used two technical terms to describe a person whose ego is modified in the service of adaptation. **Alloplastic change** occurs when the person alters the environment to cope with challenges that he or she may encounter. In the opposite situation, **autoplastic change** occurs when the person shifts to accommodating to the environment by modifying aspects of him or herself to deal with reality. For the individual to successfully adapt, Hartmann hypothesized four ego tasks involving the reconciliation of inter and intra-systemic conflicts: (a) maintaining a balance between individual and external realities; (b) establishing harmony within the id among its competing instinctual drives; (c) maintaining a balance among the three competing mental agencies: id, ego, and superego; and (d) maintaining a balance between its role in helping the id and its own independent role that goes beyond instinctual gratification (Hartmann, 1939, p. 39). Also, in discussing the ego's adaptive nature to the reality principle, Hartmann suggested that the ego can make modest compromises in its adjustment to the demands of reality and still function adequately. These compromises called defensive maneuvers, as opposed to unconscious defense mechanisms, are often preconscious, situationally specific, can become routine patterns, and tend to be more mobile (Hartmann, 1956b, p. 41).

### *Ego-Syntonic and Ego-Dystonic Responses*

While the terms **ego-syntonic** and **ego-dystonic** do not originate with Hartmann, he refers to them frequently in his publications after 1939 (Hartmann, 1939, pp. 86–99). The term "ego-syntonic" was first used by Freud in "*On Narcissism: An Introduction*" (1914) and later in "*Two Encyclopedia Articles*" (1923a) to describe instincts or ideas that are acceptable to the ego, i.e., compatible with the ego's integrity and its demands. He used the expression to describe the view of the ego as total, integrated, ideal. The term "ego-dystonic," was used to describe those instincts or ideas, which are antagonistic to the ego and are, consequently, repressed.

### **In His Own Words**

We were unable to find any published case material by Hartmann. The following excerpt is intended to illustrate how he may have approached a clinical situation. (Excerpted from Hartmann (1964). Problems of infantile neurosis. In H. Hartmann



(Ed.), *Essays on Ego Psychology: Selected problems in psychoanalytic theory* (pp. 207–214). New York: International Universities Press. Reprinted with permission from International Universities Press.)

As to our topic of infantile neurosis, at present we have more questions than answers. Still, it is pleasant to think that most of the discomfort many of us feel in approaching this problem today is due to the fact that we know actually much more; that is, we know much more about developmental psychology in general, which makes us more ambitious in specifying our hypotheses. We know more about normal development, and we all agree that an understanding of neurotic development is not possible if it is not based on a very detailed analysis and on precise knowledge of what normal development is. Consequently, we have to deal with a greater number of hypotheses on this subject today.

It is actually not so easy to say what we call an infantile neurosis. You remember that when Freud first approached this problem, he found that what he actually considered a neurosis was frequently considered naughtiness or bad upbringing by the parents and the teachers. Today we are confronted with the reverse situation; i.e., in rather broad circles, every naughtiness, actually every behavior of the child that does not conform to the textbook model, and every developmental step that is not according to plan are considered as “neurotic.” What does this mean? It means that the broad range of normal variations of behavior is not recognized, and that the specific features of what analysts call a neurosis get lost sight of. Apart from this, however, many of the very early neuroses are really different from what we are used to calling neurosis in the adult. Many problems in children which we call neurotic are actually limited to a single functional disturbance; and the way from conflict to symptom is often shorter than in adult neurosis.

What Anna Freud said long ago (1945) is, of course, true, namely that the apparently strong ego of a neurotic child is actually weak, and also that infantile neurosis may mean “calcification.” This danger is inherent in rigid fixations on certain instinctual aims, or on certain defenses. The consequence then is that parts of the growing personality are, at least temporarily, excluded from further development. But there are several points to be considered here. First, there are also very recalcitrant and durable fixations that do not lead to neurosis or psychosis and still interfere with some aspects of later development. I remind you, for instance, of those “distortions” of the ego (Freud, 1937b) with whose help the development of a neurosis may be avoided. Such phenomena, though still little considered in analysis, are probably very frequent. Also the fixations on early specific frustrations, described by Anna Freud, do not necessarily lead to neurosis, though they may determine symptom formation if neurosis develops. Early traumatization may have similar effects.

Thus, in childhood, there are a variety of factors that may, in a sense, be called “pathogenic,” but do not by themselves lead to neurosis or psychosis. There are also neurotic phenomena in childhood that are amenable to correction and modification in the course of growth and development, which I have to mention here in order not to make the picture too one-sided. The theoretical basis on which we can build here



is a thought that Freud expressed in some of his later papers (e.g., 1926), namely, that the repressed instinctual demand is not necessarily rigidly preserved in the id. That is, it may be elaborated by the ego, or used by the ego, as is commonly the case in the more normal passing of the oedipus complex when repressed instinctual drives are sublimated and used in the resulting identifications. This gives us an explanation for the fact that the calcification we often find after childhood neuroses may be only a transient phenomenon; and this will make us less inclined to dispute, on theoretical grounds, the possibility of a spontaneous cure of these neuroses. It will appear even more plausible if we keep in mind the modifying power of maturation, also mentioned by Anna Freud, on the side of the id, but also of the ego, through which some anxiety conditions may lose their importance.

There is no yardstick for the pathogenic potential of infantile neurosis except for the long-run developmental consideration. We have to bear in mind that every new phase of maturation creates new potential conflict situations and new ways of dealing with these conflicts; but, on principle, it also carries with it, to a certain degree, the possibility of modifying the impact of earlier conflict solutions. The new aspect of the subsequent phases is the changed dominance of certain instinctual and certain ego functions; this includes also phase-specific capacities to deal with conflict situations and, in some degree, to revise old conflict solutions. The main thing in approaching these problems is that the genetic, the historical, aspect of later conflicts must be clearly distinguished from their phase-specific possibilities.

I want to make just one more point about the capacity of modifying, reversing, or compensating for developments which, if unchecked, may lead to pathology. An essential aspect of this is the capacity of the child to neutralize instinctual energy, libidinal, and aggressive. This faculty for neutralization may be different in regard to libido and aggression. And this faculty for substituting neutralized for instinctual energy must be viewed in connection with the substitution of ego aims for instinctual aims – the two processes varying partly independently, as seen in the cases of sexualization or aggressivization of ego functions. This is particularly relevant for the understanding of fixations and their consequences – which shows a continuum from the rigid fixation on an instinctual demand to those, on the other end of the line, that finally survive predominantly as an individual form, or direction, or intensity of an ego function.

All these show that the impact of development on infantile neurosis cannot be judged without using, in each individual case, all the tools that child psychology has developed as well as a knowledge of the relative relevance of these many factors mentioned, and of many others not mentioned here. The question of the extent to which infantile neurosis will determine later neurosis, or psychosis, or character development, or positive achievement is basically an empirical question. But developmental theory can give us models, it can tell us what factors have to be considered, in such a study, and what their most likely interaction is. Thus, theory can direct clinical studies on childhood neurosis, but it could not possibly replace them. And that is why we hope that in the following discussion, we will hear many clinical examples to enrich and also to test our developmental hypotheses.

## Summary and Conclusion

One of the many Viennese who became drawn to the psychoanalytic enterprise and the captivating presence of the aging Freud, Hartmann was among the flood of intellectual Jewish refugees who fled the Nazi holocaust and eventually came to New York. Building on Freud's *The Ego and the Id* (1923b/1980), he has been called the "enthusiastic father" (Monte, , p. 181) of ego psychology. Shortly before leaving Vienna, he presented a paper in 1937 to the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society entitled "Me," which later was published as *Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation* (1939/1958). This profoundly influential essay established Hartmann's place in the history of psychoanalysis as Freud's heir. Along with Anna Freud's *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (1936), it marked the beginning of ego psychology.

Hartmann undertook an approach to developmental theory that involved first gaining distance from the clinical material, then defining its implications with academic and scientific precision. This academic approach at first was distasteful to Freud. Anna Freud was also initially cool to Hartmann's concepts, but later came to accept his ideas regarding the ego's role in adaptation. Referred to as the adaptive hypothesis, it complemented Freud's five metapsychological points of view, and assured that psychoanalysis would become an all-encompassing multidisciplinary intellectual enterprise.

The adaptive point of view maintains that infants are born with the equipment they need to adapt to their environment. In contrast to Freud, who emphasized the dark and instinctual aspects of human nature, Hartmann emphasized the idea that infants were designed to adapt to their environment. He shifted the emphasis of psychoanalysis from the view that a chaotic id motivated all thoughts and action to a position that endorsed the existence of a resilient ego capable of coping with the drives, the superego, and the environment. The effect of these proposals was to move psychoanalysis beyond the less hopeful focus on intrapsychic processes of drive/defense and psychopathology to a more optimistic general psychology of human development.

Hartmann emphasized the primacy of the ego in development, not only in its role as manager of conflicts that occur between id, ego, and superego, but also in adapting to the environment. The equipment with which infants are born enables them to adapt to their environment. It includes a set of potentials that Hartmann referred to as conflict-free ego capacities, or primary autonomous ego functions. He believed the potentials that exist within these functions could flourish if the child is provided an environment that is reasonably responsive to his or her needs, which he referred to as an average expectable environment. One of the primary autonomous ego functions is the synthetic function of the ego, which involves the ability to integrate or synthesize experiences and thus adapt to reality. Both defensive and adaptive functions were part of the ego's synthetic function.

Hartmann also proposed that during development, drives are freed from conflict and undergo a transformation through which their sexual and aggressive qualities are neutralized. They accrue to the ego secondary autonomous ego functions, which are independent from the id and are available to the ego to be used in the service of adaptation.

Hartmann described two ways through which modifications in the ego occurs in the service of adaptation. Alloplastic change takes place when people attempt to

change their environment to cope with challenges they face. Autoplastic change occurs when people attempt to accommodate to the environment by modifying themselves to deal with reality.

**Keywords** Adaptive point of view • Alloplastic change • Autoplastic change • Average expectable environment • Change in function • Conflict-free ego • Ego-dystonic • Ego-syntonic • Neutralization • Primary autonomous ego functions • Secondary autonomous functions • Structural theory • Sublimation • Synthetic function of the ego

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