I believe that it is customary for an address from the chair not to direct attention to some particular enquiry that has engaged the speaker, but to make a general survey of the broad issues of a society and its discipline, to take a bird’s-eye view of the development of the subject, or to take up some fundamental issue or issues which at the moment have reached something in the nature of a turning point.

When the practitioners of an art or science feel themselves to be at the crossroads which point to different directions, along one of which the most fruitful developments are to be found, they should pause. For myself, I think that we are at some such crossroad at the moment in the study of child psychiatry, which derives its data from many sources. Indeed, the multitude of sources—general medical, psychological, neurological, sociological, psychopathological may easily lead the purist in his own field to interpret the data of child life in terms exclusively of his own inclination and training. He will select his own facts and thereby create his own fictions. He may select his facts with all honesty for the proving of hypotheses. Indeed many hypotheses are heuristic fictions, many fact-finding mechanisms are themselves created by the hypotheses, which can be satisfied either by statistical checks or through deductive reasoning from incontrovertible facts or, better still, from the study of events which all bona fide observers can share.

I said we can regard ourselves as being at the crossroads since recent advances in various fields tend to converge because of the basic biological process which all these advances imply. The psychopathology of the child, or more broadly the development of the child and its vicissitudes in the life of the family and the society of which the family is a part, touches upon the problems of its basic needs and their field of satisfaction. These are biological issues which are entangled in the recent work on instinct and higher patterns of behaviour. The fact is that in this field, the field of ethology; the work in progress suggests divergences which should give pause to those who attempt to crystallize in psychopathological terms the meaning and destiny of the instincts which appear to form or provide the substrata of all future complex conduct. The work of Tinbergen and Lorenz on Innate Release Mechanisms is being questioned by such workers as Lehrman and Hind, who claim an absence of neurological evidence for such specific mechanisms. It may be a far cry from the moorhen and the herring gull to the human infant, but if we employ biological terms such as Instinct, there should be some agreement as to basic assumptions. If we assume that a fundamental drive such as libido undergoes development, we must ask ourselves whether or not learning or modifiability is not the better concept of a process that yields clearer understanding than the concept of libido which is a fiction presupposing a datum which is not itself modifiable but only capable of displacement or deflection. What may be styled the...
embryology of behaviour may help us to collect facts, or better still to watch events. Facts are modifiable by the observer for they are more abstract than are concrete events, and it is surprising how readily we take such facts and incorporate them into our fictions so that the latter begin to resemble facts and come to be traded as such. Tinbergen and Lorenz have made a brilliant collection of observations on animal behaviour, but the former has defined instinct in such a way that a specific neural mechanism and its alleged energy has been posited in the absence of evidence of a neurological substrate that could carry its weight. In terms of actual behaviour stated embryologically, the feeding mechanisms of birds are forced to have separate components each of which has a discrete pattern, such as the head extension, the closure of the beak and the act of deglutition. Each exist separately and aimlessly in embryo. For example, the amniotic fluid swallow reflex exists by itself. It is the environmental stimulus which alone brings them together in the purposeful act of feeding or being fed. If so simple an oral pattern is composite and made of disparate elements, how can we speak freely of an oral endowment without admitting its dependence upon learning occasions?

There are many other early mechanisms of behaviour which are built up of elements which are subject to patterning under environmental signals, which are not always available, and which are only responded to when the elements themselves reach a level of maturation before they can be utilized and before we can assign a meaning to them. In the same way the neural mechanisms have an overall unity, but an embryological disparity, so the acts of early awareness are themselves operating in a partial manner and the so-called Ego must consist of a series of nuclei before these assume their place in a common act of overall awareness. Any so-called object relationship which the infant establishes must in the first place be not with part objects of perception, but with fragments of perceptual activity arising from different and not from a yet unified source. True the organism is one, but the nuclei can be said to exist in a kind of common plasmodium, and there are still a variety of short term ends to early behaviour. Furthermore, the development of the central nervous system shows a procession of events with creative potentialities, not appearing at once but accumulating in time and space which call up these potentialities and make them kinetic at the appropriate time, but not before. To attempt to call them up sooner in order to support a doctrine of psychic structure is to present a fictional unity of apperception before the conditions necessary for its operation are brought into being. If, therefore, we assume that objects of apprehension exist in the infant of six months, we ought to present the evidence for their existence at that given moment of time and not to argue retrospectively that such and such constructs appear in the growing child and the adult whose verbalizations give ground for inference as to what exists at that time. For it is at the time of verbal analysis that the mind has whole functional relationships or parts which already had some specific function in the satisfaction of basic needs. The extraordinary fruitfulness of the analytic technique has put a strain upon us all because of the welter of data it has laid bare. Having made known a multitude of events and their relationships, which support Freud's basic hypotheses, they have made some people very impatient to bridge the gap from known to unknown. This has led to an over-zealous clinging to preliminary hypotheses and to a resorting to purely deductive reasoning—a danger to all sciences with the exception of mathematics and its sister disciplines.

It can be added as an aside that even in the establishment of such a deductive science as Geometry, it took 300 years from Thales to Euclid to
establish by experiment the fundamental principles from which the later deductive procedures could expand.

Before, therefore, we can proceed to build up a consistent yet elastic system of child development, we must accumulate data which are in the nature of events, which are observed by exterior studies checked by the insights we have gained from the interior studies of the child and the adult in analysis and in play behaviour. It might be said in defence of psychopathological data that what is opined is derived from facts. Many of these so-called facts are abstractions derived from deduction on the basis of the logical principle that a fact is whatever can be expressed in a proposition. But many such a hypothetical fact and proposition can be constructed from premises which are mythological or fictive. Many of these fictions derive from the subtle tendency of confusing the Substantive with Substance and to turn adjectives into nouns. This results in the reification of states of mind. It is true enough that the child, and later even the adult, seeks satisfactions and reductions of tension from relations with objects, many of them fragmentary—many of them fleeting or undergoing organization with change of meaning under the process of maturation itself. It is true we cannot avoid in experience the use of fictional or imaginal mental elements. As Vaihinger says in The Philosophy of As If—"The organism finds itself in a world of contradictory sensations; it is exposed to the assaults of a seemingly hostile external world and, in order to preserve itself, it is forced to seek every possible means of assistance, internal as well as external. In necessity and pain mental evolution begins, in contradiction and opposition consciousness awakes, and man owes his mental development more to his enemies than to his friends." This was written, I believe, independently of a knowledge of the findings of psychoanalysis, which has substantially confirmed Vaihinger's view. Melanie Klein has done much to disclose these processes in early mental evolution, but she seems to have adopted the child fictive thinking herself, raising larval incommunicable states to the level of objective certainty. It does not follow that because the child thinks in terms of fictions these fictions are facts in a universe of discourse. For when all is said and done the organism is from birth onwards subject to the correcting influences of external perception, that conditioning starts immediately and the various zones of intense affect-laden awareness are moulded from without as well as elaborated from within. Moreover, the perceptual apparatus which is the substrate of ego development arises from discrete centres, or, as Glover asserts, nuclei, and these remain discrete for a long time, so that the true object of appreciation does not seem possible and cannot therefore become centres of reference for assigning the attributes of good or bad which belong to moral ideations. To assert that it is so, suggests a level of ego development for making larval propositions (i.e. P is Q). The infant's behaviour can at most only be described "as if" it were making such propositions. The capacity to form the construct subject-predicate-object is a linguistic endowment. Although the child probably recognizes signs for picking up the favourable and unfavourable in a welter of stimuli assaults, it cannot on neurological grounds alone react to them adequately, let alone respond to them even in terms of some internal order. Even this internal quasi-order is a blind and groping experience; it is an archipelago of discrete forces and not a mapped-out continent. This, of course, is not to deny that there is an organic unity to begin with—but it is a far cry from such organic unity to a psychic unity. To quote Coghil (Anatomy and the Problem of Behaviour), "in Amblystoma the primary and secondary olfactory centres are relatively advanced in differentiation before the olfactory
nerves enter the brain; conduction paths from optic centres to the brain stem can be recognized before the optic nerve approaches the brain. The order of development of the conditioning system is therefore from centre to sense organ." “Comparative embryological studies indicate (he adds) that the higher the animal in the order of intelligence, the more the neural overgrowth as regards the immediate possibility of behaviour involves the conditioning mechanism; that is to say the mechanisms that determine the time and degree of the performance as opposed to the mechanisms that determine the form of the behaviour.” In other words, while the growth of the nervous system promises high potentials of behaviour, we cannot assume the already ripened ego development which recent theories in psychopathology suggest. To suggest that the child, well within the first year, appreciates distinctions of good and bad is to suppose a unity of apperception which it can hardly possess. To argue backwards from adult analytical finds (which are not in dispute) is to underestimate the time factor and the elaborations which have occurred in virtue of this factor. Furthermore, it presupposes an ego whose perceptual apparatus needs a high degree of unification to function.

Still further, much has been made of the function of introjection and projection in terms of oral and anal activity. Here again there appears to be an unwarranted jump from physiological ingestion and rejection to the functions of mental assimilation. At most it is a simile, and therefore a fiction which has heuristic value and not the basis for a consistent psychological universe of discourse. Terms, or better still experiences of the child’s infra-linguistic world cannot be lightly equated with terms used in adult highly differentiated language discourse and as Mrs. Brierly stated: “We must keep clear in our minds the difference between a primary simple affect and the complex emotional attitudes of later life.”

A man who tried to use a different sign token every time he wished to indicate the same sort of object would find no one capable of learning his language. For example, instincts so-called not only have their vicissitudes but they have a multiple origin as seen in the example of birds cited already. Instincts undergo changes in their neural structure as well as in their later functioning. A primary unity undergoes defusion or differentiation in relation to the multiplicity of zones through which it finds an expression, and again undergoes fusion so that it becomes unrecognizable unless we give its parts different names. This is not a theoretical point: failure to appreciate this may lead to grave errors in therapeutic interpretation. Such premature interpretation, premature because of our continued ignorance, will again make us attach to the term a psychical fact to what is one of our own heuristic fictions. And in this sense heuristic means it works for us or in the interest of our hypothesis. Would it were that those who claimed to know the structure and dynamics of the infant psyche admitted that they speak in terms of hypothetical and not categorical and axiomatic knowledge!

That the infant with what Winnicott describes as soma-psyche has a species of implicit unity is logical enough: again, Coghill’s work on the embryo shows that there is such unity and potentiality for behaviour. Let us for a moment consider what is the relationship between Id and Ego institutions, which imply so much in both paleo-Freudian and Kleinian dynamics.

At one time, and the picturesque myth language is not mine but that of the orthodox, the Id became differentiated under the influence of experience into an Ego vested in perceptual processes. “Where Id was, there Ego shall be” is a very useful working statement. But we have both institutions; we are told
that the Ego is in warfare against Id demands—a warfare which is unceasing and even aggravated by the early growth of a Super-ego, borrowing its energies from the Id and thus squeezing the Ego between an upper and nether millstone. The Ego does, however, play a large part in the life of adjustment and is at first purely perceptual. But our latest researches into perception (vide Hebb's Organization of Behaviour) show it to be replete with motor components—see also Adrian's electric enquiries into olfactory perception. Instinct and perception are wedded—the Ego or its earliest manifestations are fragmentary, by no means unpurposeful in a biological sense, but singularly unstructured in a psychological sense. Indeed, hardly is it possible to assume a capacity for true objectivity, let alone appreciation of objects—for at this stage sensory experience consists of little more than a multiplicity of signals for action. Perhaps the claims of early gestalten have been pitched too high, that James' blooming, buzzing confusion is perhaps not altogether a misguided description of early perceptual experience.

To assign, therefore, capacities to the infant in its first year without the instrument for their operation is to throw back adult analytic values to a phase where they dissolve into the darkest night.

Indeed, the long period of dependence of the human infant tends to extend the dark winter night, and because of the relative limitation of stimuli it is hard to believe in the highly structured phantasy life, which has been claimed to exist and can scarcely be substantiated. To me it is a welcome sign that in Winnicott's article on "Transitional Objects" he retreats, I think wisely, into the term "transitional phenomena", an admission of uncertainty as to what is really implied. He adds very wisely that more observations need to be made in this field and that it is a field in which many direct observations are possible which would give us data for a check-up system through which analytic findings could be usefully established. In fact, there are very clear and hopeful signs that this behaviouristic approach in the broad sense is being followed with encouraging results. I regard the work of Spitz, Goldfarb and Bowlby as signs of this pursuit on the part of those who could hardly be accused of antagonism to the basic principles of Freudian psychopathology. Here at least we see child behaviour in relation to primary figures being examined at first macroscopically, so that the fine adjustment, as it were, of analytic findings can be focussed upon demonstrable facts. I hold that it is important at this stage in our insight therapies to pause and look at accumulated facts so that we can see them as part of a procession of events whose course can be mapped out parallel with the observations made, say, in play studies with the very young, uncrystallized by such interpretations, which while they may influence behaviour in a curative direction, may only too easily arrest the natural autonomously directed processes in child behaviour by statements which in themselves create a pattern determined by our own doctrines. If we do not from time to time check up on our psychopathological fictions by observations, we may by purely deductive reasoning formulate elaborate doctrines of increasing complexity. The good craftsman gets excellent results from a minimum of tools: the amateur only too frequently feels in need of more and elaborate tools to gain the same end. How often do we notice how simple behaviour has been given recondite interpretations and how quickly the speculative heuristic concepts of the master are transformed into real things and real mechanisms because they are an aspect of them. No sooner had Freud thrown out the suggestion of a Death Instinct with a pseudo thermodynamic explanation than some analyst discovered them straightaway, elaborating a fundamental aggression process unsubstantiated except within the already
existing system of ideology. The merest tyro of psychiatry and the debutante in psychopathology discovers a population of bad and good objects in the youngest infant whose only language is a cry. The three institutions of Freud in some hands have become five and the Ego has been triplicated to meet not the facts of analytic discovery but the hunger for more and more complex mechanism. Fairbairn has himself warned himself as well as his readers against seeing this growing internal population as a return to demonology. (How excellent it would be if every young analyst were given a birthday gift of Occam’s razor!) If mental concepts were cut down to a minimum we might have, it is true, fewer interpretations and more time for facts. A moratorium on interpretation might be usefully introduced.

There is no reason to doubt that the best line of approach to the understanding of mental growth is through process theory, or to use the current threadbare term, dynamic concepts; but we cannot have it both ways, that is to give a fixity to psychic institutions and at the same time to make them into moving parts of a mechanism. As Fairbairn says, internalized objects have a dynamic independence which cannot be ignored. What does that expression mean? Either they are objects with outlines, frontiers and meanings and, if so, then their dynamism lies outside them, or they are the fleeting moments in process which needs a different nomenclature altogether if we wish to free our language from melodrama. Poetic diction is fine for poetry and from its suggestiveness next steps can be made, but science cannot live on metaphor alone. It seems to me that psychopathology which roots itself in the child psyche must get away from mid-nineteenth century mechanics; the confusion of such mechanisms with psychic growth is out of step with the best in modern experimental psychology and functional neurology. These disciplines admittedly have their own fictions, but they are factually constellated and are rapidly shed with the advent of new facts which repeatedly call for new hypotheses where the old ones have not acquired an axiomatic authority.

So far I have belaboured you with the problems which arise from language and misplaced authority, the Idols of the Market place and the Idols of the Theatre; and I have tried to stress the fact that these preoccupations do not confine themselves to theoretical issues alone, for in my submission, as bad currency drives out good, so where there is bad theory there is bad practice, and where theory passes too easily over to practice without due circumspection we have the seeds of corruption. Nevertheless I can pass to consider a more practical issue which cannot thrive unless it arises from well-considered theory growing out from practice or concrete studies. Here indeed one can say are the Idols of the Cave, the realm of shadow concepts which men see and accept by too much privacy of vision. The now familiar term “the multidisciplined approach” is a fairly modern attempt to correct the errors of prejudices of individual observation in subject matter which derives from a variety of sources. Now this multiple approach is not comparable to the employment of a variety of techniques as in general medicine where we use the special gifts of the biochemist, the microscopist, the radiologist. The investigation of the whole human being in his various aspects calls for study not of partial functions but of divisions of function as the methodologist sees it. In child psychiatry once upon a time the physician was able—or so he regarded himself—to deal with the whole child in the confines of his consulting room and this autocracy was born of the narrow view of child mental health seen by the paediatrician, who viewed behaviour as a function of disease or metabolism or viciousness. Now with the rapid growth of general psychology, the progress in the psychopathology of the family
in its social setting, the emancipation of psychiatry of childhood from pediatrics, the psychiatrist, the psychiatric social worker and the educational psychologist crouch for employment in every clinic; but although in the American model each contribute for the benefit of the psychiatrist's enlightenment, we are still being concerned with the dominance of one or other of the three. The fight of local authorities to possess and to structure clinics need not concern us now. I am concerned with the advantages and disadvantages of this not so holy Trinity examined in the light of the art of fact finding and the dangers of fictions which each discipline creates for itself as preliminary to shaping its hypotheses as to the part it plays in the disorder of a given child. It is a matter of both theoretical and practical interest to determine at what stage each worker is most useful. Moreover, it might be asked in reverse of this proposition what fallacies are introduced by separating functions which are in reality indivisible and which are only separable on pragmatic grounds or because, in common parlance, neither one nor the other of the team can be a jack of all trades.

There was a time—and not in the distant past—when a child analyst would take on the task of elucidating a child's disorder without any co-operation, let alone interference from the parents, guardians or school. They stated the problem, retired discreetly and left the stage to the analyst and his charge. I think there are a diminishing number of such autocrats; certainly the clinic renders this isolationism almost impossible. What fallacies are abolished and indeed what fallacies are introduced by the team approach? Prima facie there is economy in fact finding, but against this we are confronted by the attitude to facts which each specialist brings to the common task. The psychiatrist may come from mental hospital practice, perhaps with little or no training in pediatrics and with, let us concede, some general knowledge of psychopathology but with a Kraepelinian set of blue prints of mental disorder, not in terms of their ontogenesis but in terms of a very clear-cut phenomenology or iconography. His concepts are fictions in so far as they are satisfying, easily handled tools for a diagnosis. For adult psychiatry they are valuable, economic and yield rules for reasonable prognostics. When leavened by the genetic, historic attitude engendered by a basic psychopathology, the diagnostic and prognostic accuracy is increased by the addition of a new dimension. For a long time this conjunction of the classical psychiatry with the undertones of mental development derived from psychopathology was sufficient for pragmatic purposes, until the discordant notes of two sometimes divergent views of each became more apparent. When the general psychologist's aid was solicited—and I am speaking of the early days—his or her contribution was that of psychological testing for I.Q. the specialist abilities, estimation of linguistic imperfections which were sometimes regarded as causes of emotional disorder in their own right. The dimension revealed and measured was treated as a unitary process—emotional or or ectic factors were generalized and were revealed say as appearing in "scattered" test responses. The psychiatric social worker arrived on the scene with sometimes striking pictures of family life and neighbourhood qualities viewed in the light of social concepts. The fiction of the family as a unit, as a social product, as an economic instrument for survival, gave an interesting slant which might, and sometimes rightly so, modify the psychiatrist's conception of the processes he had seen or had inferred from his doctrines. In the case conference of the formal kind, the facts collected from the three main sources were brought together for the purpose of interchange and discussion. One frequently had to ask oneself are the facts collected by the several specialists logically comparable and, still more so, were the instruments for their collection and
A collection of psychometric specialists could agree upon the interpretation of results from tests whose utility and accuracy as the base of accepted standards could be agreed upon. Fundamental axioms regarding "G" status of tests, and what special ability tests disclosed, could be widely accepted even admitting the hypothesis regarding "G" and so forth. Turning to the facts collected by the psychiatrist concerning history and alleged processes, it is obvious that in terms of quantification on the one hand and axioms of mental growth and dynamics, there is a world of difference between the two disciplines—while each may possess a high degree of internal consistency, they are two universes of discourse which overlap as regards facts of behaviour but may have few points of correspondence as far as concepts of mental mechanisms are concerned.

Moving over to the social psychiatric descriptions of family and social events, the convergence of psychiatry on social studies may be more obvious but again their concepts need not necessarily overlap for, as Durkheim expressed it, social facts are best explained by social facts; and even if we adopt the nomenclature and technique of Lewin that all members of a collective of mother, father and child (or children) possess group qualities, or better still properties of the life space they occupy, they are psychiatrically individuals. Lewin would, of course, have accepted the interplay of the internal life space of the individuals and the field properties which family life itself imposes. A psychoanalyst sympathetic to the field theory of Lewin would have reasonable grounds for accepting the nomenclature but might not be prepared to assimilate the emergent qualities of group existence which he would interpret as nothing more than an elaboration of social ties from the primary libidinal ties of the parent–child relationship. Furthermore, the educational psychologists also accepting this nomenclature might add that the school or the nursery life each has its essential qualities; that the child in these fields has to adopt the roles emerging from this field. Indeed the facts as collected are coloured by the hypotheses which each observer brings to his observations. In other words, as already argued, the fictions of each are presented as facts; and again these facts are moulded by the instruments of collecting. Some two years ago when the follow-up on results of therapy were considered at the Inter-Clinic Conference, it was suggested by Dr. Barbour and myself that an approximation to accuracy of assessment could only be arrived at by comparing the judgments of independent observers, the child, the parents, an independent psychologist, the teacher or other person with knowledge of the child. Even if they all agreed that the child was better, worse or stationary, their agreement could only come about by preliminary common agreement as to stable behaviour, adaptation, adjustment, or what you will, but we would still be in the dark as to the mechanism producing the change unless all the facts were disclosed to all the judges at simultaneous moments in the process from start to finish of the treatment whatever technique were adopted.

Fortunately within recent years conditions have changed in the direction of training of those who participate in team diagnosis and treatment. Psychiatrists have become more conversant with psychopathological concepts of mental growth, psychiatric social workers have shared this new orientation, and psychologists have emerged from the laboratory and lifted their eyes from statistical tables to take cognizance of emotional factors and to adopt a more receptive attitude to psychopathological claims. The convergence has been even sharper since so many members of a team have recognized the desirability of a training analysis to close in their personal scotomata and meet one another on a
common conceptual platform. This leavening has not only sharpened individual insights but has made team work easier. But there are certain patent disadvantages which cannot be ignored and which spring, I think, from the greater readiness to accept common fictions which have not been presented as hypotheses for confirmation by research. It seems to me to be a pity that with this convergence each department of specialization tends to blunt the edge of its own viewpoint. The psychiatrist of phenomenology loses some of his powers of detached observation, his sense of distance by plunging headlong into psychopathology, the social observer may neglect his or her social awareness because of the satisfactions and fascinations of depth psychology and the psychologist in his turn may lose that critical gift which comes from submitting all phenomena to tests and verifying procedures. In my submission much must be lost for the progress of our subject if the trained specialist abandons his specific skill which he should bring to the team meeting. Only in this way can we check up on one another's collected facts. In so doing we shall, and admittedly by soft degrees, confirm our hypotheses and so render diagnosis more reliable and our pursuit of treatment more and more free from the fictions which can be so satisfying, so restful and, in the long run, so misleading. And this, I think, is most clearly shown in our work upon the very young. How much do we really know of the early growth of infants from stark and laborious observations; or how much do we know about the common habits of mothers in their care of children and the habits of the fathers who in recent years have been left so much out of account.

We should, I believe, make slow but solid gains if we decide in our research projects to wed the fundamental concepts of psychopathology to observational techniques so that our hypotheses take the place of dogmatic fictions, and these hypotheses are confirmed by rigid checks. Comparative studies of different cultures will disclose much, for the claims of analysis cannot be accepted unless we study the variances in different social groups. Social anthropologists with the greatest sympathy for psychopathology have shown that instincts are not only inhibited in the aims according to different usages, but are much more plastic than we ever imagined. This will, I think, dissipate some of the rigid notions that we have been adumbrated about the mind of the infant. There is no intrinsic harm in having fictions as long as we pause to examine them before interpreting too freely the intentions of the infant whose destiny is in our hands. And lastly, for the sake of our growing science, too, we might well make fewer claims until such time as we have cleared the Augean stables of unwanted theories about realms which are still too dark for our instruments to penetrate.