The term 'narcissistic personality' is an unfortunate one, for it evokes the multiple and confusing usages and controversies involving the narcissism concept—as a particular type of libido with a special course, as the designation for the earliest (undifferentiated) development state, as a type of object choice, as an aspect of internalization, as a regressive configuration, and, of course, as a personality type. It is my hope that, if we begin this investigation not with an exegesis of the narcissism concept but instead with consideration of the personality type which is the focus of theoretical contention between Kernberg and Kohut, then we may be able to limit the controversy and confusion to more manageable proportions. I shall first look critically at some of the contributions of Kernberg and Kohut to our understanding of narcissistic personality (see also Robbins, 1980), and then propose that some instances of narcissistic personality, like borderline personality, may best be understood in terms of pathology of symbiotic bonding.

BACKGROUND

Kernberg's contribution to narcissistic personality

Kernberg (1974) maintains that the narcissistic personality represents a disturbance in object relations; one characterized by a pathological defensive position against conflicts in the earliest stage of mature (self-object differentiated) dependency. Kernberg defines narcissism as the libidinal investment of the differentiated self-representation; he does not conceptualize a primary (undifferentiated) narcissistic state. Developments falling under the rubric of narcissistic, including pathological ones, occur subsequent to attainment of the capacity for realistic self-object differentiation and ambivalent whole object relations; after the formation of a cohesive self. Kernberg asserts that there are two types of narcissistic pathology; the first disorder in which object choice is modelled after essentially non-pathological self-representations (homosexuality) occurs subsequent to self-object differentiation. In the second, modelled after the early stage of Melanie Klein's depressive position (1934), (1940), self-object differentiation is at times sustained and at other times relinquished. Differentiated object relations entailing awareness of dependent feelings are defended against by self-self relationships; in other words a 'grandiose self' relates to a projectively idealized object. Kernberg, in contrast to Kohut, maintains that this grandiose self is not an archaic libidinally invested configuration in a normal developmental sequence, but is a 'pathological condensation' of the ego, the 'real self' (the archaic grandiose self, infantile megalomania), and the 'idealized object' (or idealized parent image). This pathological self-representation forms in defensive response to conflicting feelings on the part of the more mature self toward the whole object of dependency, including envious and rageful wishes to destroy it on the one hand, and fearful and guilty fantasies of damaging or losing it, on the other. The pathological grandiose self manifests denial and aggression in the form of covert devaluation of the real object of dependency, and also attempts to relate to a projectively idealized object. According to Kernberg, the conflicts of the borderline personality revolve around aggression, and those of the narcissistic personality relate primarily to dependency.

I have critically evaluated Kernberg's ideas at some length in earlier papers (Robbins, 1976), (1980, and unpublished). Since many of the difficulties with Kernberg's contribution are attributable to its Kleinian origins, in this discussion I wish merely to point out that Kernberg's formulation of the narcissistic personality is strikingly similar to Klein's 'manic' relation to the object of dependency in the so-called depressive position, and her theoretical description of the normal infant's struggles at the interface of that position and the developmentally preceding paranoid-schizoid position.

Kohut's contribution to narcissistic personality

Having by his own admission departed from traditional metapsychology, Kohut is able to avoid some of the conceptual confusion I alluded to by designating the narcissistic disorders as disturbances of the self, and has evolved his now well-known Self Psychology (1971), (1977), which I have criticized in more detail elsewhere (Robbins, 1980) and will briefly sketch or summarize here.

The nascent self is conceptualized as a dynamic, dissociated structural pair arising in the context of a merged (self-object) relationship as the first significant psychic development of infancy. It makes its twin debut in the middle of the second year of life (Kohut & Wolf, 1978). There are no normal, antecedent psychic developments such as Klein, Kernberg, Mahler, and so many other current investigators of infancy postulate. The self is the primary psychic structure, and the drives, conflicts, and defences are viewed as disintegration products secondary to loss of self cohesions. Kohut traces the development of these psychic pre-structures from phase-appropriate mergers of the aggressive grandiose self with the mirroring self-object, and of the idealizing self with the idealized omnipotent self-object, followed by optimal or phase-appropriate withdrawals of merger, to ultimate transmuting internalizations and structure formation. The grandiose self normally evolves within the first few years of life into nuclear ambitions, in relation to mother, whereas the idealizing self evolves somewhat later, around 4–6 years of age, into nuclear ideals, in relation to both parents. These two poles of the
cohesive self, ambitions and ideals, provide the self with a sense of continuity, and eventually become relatively autonomous and self-sustaining even in the absence of empathic self-objects.

Kohut believes the narcissistic personality originates from a developmental arrest at the normal stage of the archaic grandiose self. His theory of development is one of epigenesis rather than conflict and defence, and his theory of pathology is one (primarily) of arrested development rather than pathological or deviant developmental pathways. The bipolar or split self-object configuration which is normal in children remains unassimilated into structure in the narcissistic adult. There remains a potential cohesive self (or selves), the self-aggrandizing and idealizing configurations, which may enter into a stable narcissistic (self-object) transference with the assistance of an appropriately empathic person. In the absence of such a relationship the narcissistic personality experiences symptoms of 'ego depletion' because his investments are not in mature ego functioning but in the archaic grandiose self and idealized objects; such depletion is analogous to that which Kleinian theorists attribute to massive projective identification, and in neurotic patients is the result of repression. Symptoms of alternating grandiosity, excitement, shame, embarrassment, hypochondriasis, and depression, reflect instability of self-regulation. The grandiose self may be horizontally split-off (repressed), in which case symptoms of ego depletion, including lack of initiative and feelings of meaninglessness, as well as depression, will be prominent, and/or vertically split-off, in which case episodic manifestations of grandiosity will alternate dissociatively with more normal functioning. Idealization of an object by the narcissistic personality is seen as part of a primary, developmentally normal configuration, not as a product of projective identification, as Kernberg asserts. In response to failures of phase-appropriate merger with an empathic self-object each archaic configuration may be regressively transformed, first into delusional thinking, and subsequently into rageful, perverse, and auto-erotic fantasy and activity fragments. The object of therapy is to re-establish and maintain the self-object relationship, in the context of which the split or bipolar configurations will eventually resolve, by transmitting internalization, into tensions between the two 'normal' poles of ego functioning, ambitions and ideals.

Kohut's emphasis on the developmental role of the primary object—empathically holding, functioning for, and letting go—and on the pathological consequences of the failure of the object to perform these functions adequately, provides an important corrective to the more traditional psychoanalytic preoccupation with exclusively intrapsychic motivating forces. The intrapsychic bias arose out of work with more self-sufficient neurotic patients and out of Freud's scientific emphasis on a psychoanalytic technique of objectified observation, investigation, and commentary. Freud's hypothesis of a death instinct laid the foundation for the extreme, almost solipsistic example of intrapsychic bias in the theory of Melanie Klein, elaborated in the early writing of Otto Kernberg; a preoccupation with aggression, fantasy, conflict and defence in neonates and infants, to the exclusion of actual object experience, which is reminiscent of theology based on original sin. Pathogenic experiences with primary objects must be taken into account along with the patient's fantasies and conflicts in order to appreciate fully the significance of the latter. Nature and nurture both require attention. Unfortunately Kohut implies that primary objects, good enough or bad, are responsible for the growth and development of the self, and therapists, more or less empathic, for the success or failure of therapy. This goes beyond simple correction of a bias in the traditional psychoanalytic theory and encourages simplistic start-stop or off-on notions about pathology as arrested development and about therapy as application of empathy. Kohut's equally unbalanced account of development and pathology is open to the criticism that it is a theory of parent-blaming and a theory which replaces the unique intrapsychic viewpoint of psychoanalysis with a kind of social or interpersonal psychology. It makes as little sense to view adult parents as entirely responsible and their children as passive vessels as it does to go to the opposite extreme. An infant is not, after all, the tabula rasa people once thought; this insight has been one of the major contributions of psychoanalytic theory, and one we can ill afford to forget.

There are other problems with Kohut's theory, which I shall mention without elaboration because I have explored them in some detail elsewhere (Robbins, 1980). Perhaps the major objection to Kohut's theory is that it does not integrate with much else that most psychoanalysts believe. For example, Kohut's postulate of archaic self-object configurations arising around 1½ years of age is not linked with observations and theories about earlier infancy, even though most observers would maintain that meaningful thinking and relating commence prior to that time. Kohut even implies that this early period of development and its adult primitive pathological analogues are psychologically meaningless. Moreover, although the postulation of a separate line of development of the self based on a distinctive type of libido does have antecedents in Freud's theory, it is linked to aspects of the theory almost as unpopular as the death instinct, that boggy foundation for some of the most questionable aspects of Kleinian theory. It is difficult to find evidence in support of the separate developmental lines hypothesis. How can it be possible to conceptualize the self as differentiated (cohesive) while at the same time asserting that self-cohesion exists only in the context of an undifferentiated relationship (self-object or merged)? Perhaps it is because Kohut seems unaware in his writings of the developmental task of self and object differentiation that he is able to maintain that self and object do not emerge from the same developmental matrix by a gradual process of differentiation and integration. The discontinuity between Kohut's theory and other ideas about early development is also reflected in his curious notion of development as linear and quantitative, a 'road' from the dissociated bipolar aggrandizing and idealizing configurations to the adult ego's structurally separate ambitions and ideals. Such an idea does not take into account progressively complex hierarchies of psychic organization based on new integration (such as achievement of the capacity for ambivalence and conflict) and differentiation (self from object).

We must conclude that Kohutian self-psychology is not linked with the major body of psychoanalytic metapsychology; the disjunction is so significant that one must almost choose between being a self-psychologist and a more traditionally rooted psychoanalyst. While this does not of itself disqualify the Psychology of the Self (Freud's contribution was discontinuous with what preceded it), it would seem preferable to be able to incorporate some of Kohut's interesting ideas and observations about narcissistic personality within the existing framework of psychoanalytic theorizing about infancy, object relations, and later childhood. Undertaking this task is one of the purposes of this paper. Specifically,
the dissociated pre-object configurations, one more active, aggressive, and aggrandizing, the other more passive and compliant, which Kohut has observed and described in the narcissistic personality, are similar to configurations I have outlined in previous papers on deviant development and psychopathology of the borderline personality (Robbins, 1981b) and (unpublished).

Quite apart from the problems of Kohutian theory in which these conceptual configurations are imbedded, which we have noted, the configurations themselves are incompletely elucidated. Kohut has not adequately described the representational world, the executive functions, or the motivational states characteristic of each. What object representation corresponds to the grandiose self and what self representation to the idealized object? Where does the phenomenon of devaluation, so commonly observed in narcissistic personalities, fit into the configurations? What are the executive functions of the configurations and the motivational forces responsible for their activities? Kohut hints at these by use of verbs such as seeking, exhibiting, and looking. Is rage simply a fragmentation product or does it have a meaningful place in the activity of the dissociated configurations? These are some of the issues we shall explore.

Summary: Kernberg and Kohut

I shall employ the term 'narcissistic personality' in the sense both Kernberg and Kohut agree on, to denote disorders of an archaic cohesive self (more accurately, dissociated selves). I refer not to an internally maintained cohesive self but to a more or less stable self-object relationship, still partially undifferentiated. Kohut does not acknowledge the undifferentiation, though he refers to a self-object relationship designed to amplify or to mirror essential but as yet unstructured aspects of the psyche. Kernberg describes disavowed self qualities being perceived in the object (projective identification of idealization), but he does not appreciate the essential, sustaining role of the object. So far I am more or less in agreement with Kernberg and Kohut about ground rules for definition of narcissistic personality. However, I find myself in agreement only with Kernberg that the archaic self configurations are pathological rather than representing arrested stages of normal development. I shall review Kohut's 'Two analyses of Mr Z' and speculate that his own conceptualization of Mr Z's pathology may be at variance with his theory of developmental arrest. Finally, like Kernberg, I shall attempt to show that the archaic self, both normal and pathological, and the development of object relations, originate from a common matrix rather than from separate lines.

In evaluating the presentation to follow, I hope the reader will keep in mind that personality typologies are approximations, culled from predominant characteristics, and constructed for heuristic purposes. They are not rigid moulds into which real people neatly fit. Freud encouraged such model-making 'so long as we retain the coolness of our judgement and do not mistake the scaffolding for the building' (1900p. 536).

Moreover, although I have chosen to employ the term 'narcissistic personality' in order to contrast my ideas with those of Kernberg and Kohut, I am well aware that because of limitations in the breadth of one clinician's experience, the character I describe may well be a subset of an as yet unidentified larger group of narcissistic personalities. In other words, I do not anticipate that my formulation will account for all instances of narcissistic pathology.

REVIEW OF THE SYMBIOTIC BOND: NORMAL DEVELOPMENT AND PATHOLOGICAL VARIANTS

In a previous series of papers (1981a), (1981b), (unpublished) I attempted to trace the normal development of symbiotic bonding and to speculate about some pathological variants and their possible role as antecedents of the primitive personality. My focus was on borderline personality organization but I believe that similar perversions of symbiotic bonding are characteristic of the narcissistic disorders. I shall present briefly the hypothesis about development of perverse forms of symbiotic bonding, with particular reference to narcissism, and then proceed to some case illustrations. For a more detailed exposition of the developmental issues the reader is referred to the earlier papers.

Lest the term mental representation, as I shall

employ it, should seem to be another anthropomorphic psychoanalytic concept, I use the concept in the sense that Piaget (Oleron et al., 1963), Fraiberg (1969) and Loewald (1971) have employed it. This is, representations are mental signifiers of a biophysiological substrate, dependent on some trace of sensory-perceptual, kinaesthetic, motoric, drive-affective activity for registration. Representations may be classified on a continuum from recognition to evocation depending on their autonomy from the actual (external) stimulus, but their existence depends on internal biophysical stimulation, as well, at least in the early phases of development. A similar distinction between recognition and evocation may be made between the terms 'configuration' and 'structure', the former signifying an interrelated complex of representations which is incompletely differentiated from the external stimulus (e.g. a recognition complex) and the latter signifying greater autonomy from the external stimulus. In any case, the earliest mental representations are probably reciprocally interactive with biophysiological processes, involving a mutual feedback loop. That is, they are sensorimotor in character. Therefore mental representations do indeed have activating or motivational conceptual status. The nature of higher level representations is beyond the scope of this paper.

Under normal conditions the primary recognition-representation (the unconditional symbiotic representation) combines nascent infantile needs and initiatives with gratifying and joyful maternal responses. It is postulated that borderline and narcissistic personalities-to-be fail to negotiate viable unconditional and territorial symbiotic bondings. As a result, subsequent development of libido and aggression as 'internal' representations, attainment of the capacity for realistic recognition of qualities of the object evocative of each instinct, and achievement of the capacity for ambivalence and self-object differentiation, cannot occur. Instead a pathological self-destructive introjection (being 'possessed') achieves the internality and psychic primacy ordinarily characteristic of the unconditional symbiotic representation.
In the borderline personality the 'possessed' configuration is derived from maternal neglect of infantile need signals and initiatives, and hostile, rejecting projective maternal attacks. This configuration enables the earliest undifferentiated maternal representation to remain 'good enough'. It is also responsible for self-destructive behaviour which is paradoxically designed to elicit maternal attention and infantilization. The combination of maternal neglect, disruption, and infantile frustration lead the infant to represent his nascent perceptions, needs, and initiatives as bad or unpleasurable. This perverse representation then becomes the target of the infant’s as yet unrepresented rage in a primitive effort to create harmony in the relationship by anticipating and forestalling maternal attacks. In this manner some predictable maternal attentions are assured, though these derive from compliant infantile adaptation to maternal fantasy (the infant acts bad enough to correspond to the maternal attribution) rather than from maternal adaptation to infantile need. At the expense of internal harmony a bland but secure maternal self-object representation is constructed and maintained by the infant which enables it to cling to what would objectively appear to be a rejecting and devaluing mother. Because the borderline personality-to-be lacks an inner centre of security, he is inordinately dependent on this unrealistic recognition-representation of mother, and reenacts with her (and when older, with substitutes) self-destructive attacks as though possessed, and related immature clinging behaviour patterns.

The infantile situation of the narcissistic personality I am about to illustrate is somewhat different. The pattern of mothering he receives is similar to that given the borderline in that it is neither responsive to, nor encouraging of, the infant’s need signals and initiatives, but instead imposes an agenda consisting of maternal fantasy attributions. The infant learns to comply with these by formation of a possessed configuration in order to maximize harmony and to preserve a dependable recognition-representation of the mothering part of the self. The mother of the narcissistic personality is more realistically responsive to infantile need signals and autonomous gestures than the mother of the borderline, but her goal is pacification, not encouragement of her infant’s autonomy. She is disturbed by his signals of need and distress, which tend to be projectively identified with disavowed 'imperfect' parts of herself, so she tends to infantilize him, even to anticipate his needs before he makes signals and to pacify him so that he will not make a fuss. Her responses to his need signals are tainted with devaluation, disparagement, and disapproval. At first she rewards states of quiescence and passivity (good behaviour) and later she communicates via her projections demands for performance according to her own grandiose, perfectionistic expectations. In other words, the mother of the borderline is most responsive to infantile manifestations of frustration and ineptitude, as these are congruent with her hostile, destructive projections, whereas the mother of the narcissist is most responsive first to states of placidity and later to his compliant performances or achievements. In the case of the narcissistic personality, maternal responses to the infant's autonomous need signals are accompanied by a complex fantasy-attribution combining devaluation and potential perfectability. Devaluation is associated with the persistence of dependent, needy states, and specialness with compliance with directives to perform according to her aspirations, at first merely to be placid, but later to achieve more actively.

The narcissistic personality-to-be forms a more complex possessed configuration than that of the borderline, and one that is less self-destructive. Maternal attentions have emphasized differentiation of object-related needs and autonomous initiatives from states of compliance. The maternal fantasy of infant perfectability is contingent upon expunging the former and developing the latter. The possessed configuration of the narcissistic personality is constructed to include a placid, nirvana-like recognition-representation of mother conditional on renunciation (by dissociation) of infantile needs and initiatives. This conditional symbiotic representation is at first experienced passively and unpredictably. It comes increasingly under infantile control by two related processes: active introjection of maternal devaluation with direction of the appropriated maternal 'no' toward the nascent representation of initiatives and needs, and gradual divination of and compliance with maternal performance specifications. This process is a premature version of the normal phase of internal dialogue early in the second year, which involves introjection of the maternal 'no' toward selected impulses in the process of socialization. In the pathological situation the 'no' is global. The infant is left without a reliable, autonomous perceptual apparatus, without the rudiments of instinctual development, hence without dependable initiative. He has only a shared illusion to cling to. Normally undifferentiated components of the unconditional symbiotic representation (archaic pre-self and rudimentary drive precursor) become separated. This separation is maintained in the adult narcissistic personality by a variety of mechanisms, including the possession configurations themselves (possessed includes pre-self, possessor includes aggressive precursor). The conditional symbiotic representation eventually provides a source of inner stability for the narcissistic personality which the borderline lacks. Because this representation depends on dissociation of his autonomous perceptions, needs, and initiatives, which in turn are to be disavowed and projected, it lacks the developmental stimulus value of the normal unconditional symbiotic representation. Instead the child develops 'unrealistic' attitudes of grandeur and complacency. His accomplishments are not self-fulfilling; they feel false and do not engender feelings of well-being. The outcome is that potential pathways to self-esteem are blocked.

The narcissistic adult seeks to facilitate the grandiose aspirations of his chosen object, often in conjunction with his work or with some social role. In so doing, he represents the impediments internally, as part of the possessed configuration. These impediments to merger include his autonomous needs, perceptions, and initiatives, and any problems as defined by the object. The possessed configuration includes structured efforts to rid himself of this representation. The narcissist combines compliant passivity and subtly self-destructive behaviour such as ignoring his own needs, and this is accompanied by an attitude of self-devaluation. The narcissist’s chosen grandiose object tends to respond with some degree of disavowal and attribution of object-related needs, and condescends to look after, or infantilize his disciple (the narcissist), whose thralldom is so complete that he may appear incapable of properly caring for himself. There is much emphasis on attribution of archaic narcissistic qualities—actual perfection to the object, and potential perfection to the narcissistic subject. This latter quality is particularly illusionary as there is no developmental pathway such as follows from the unconditional symbiotic representation leading to the formation of a potent sense of self and libidinal investments in objects.
When the infant who has formed a conditional symbiotic representation as a maternal possession becomes developmentally capable of recognition of strangeness and unpleasure, and of projection, he can begin to form a more active relationship based on dissociation of the archaic narcissistic illusion from dependent, needy feelings aroused by objects other than mother. At that time attitudes toward the world at large develop. A second and dissociated pre-object configuration, the 'possessor', develops. It is a perverse reciprocal of the first. The possessor configuration requires a pre-object to sustain it by mirroring the more active elements of the conditional symbiotic representation; a person in whom object-related needs (dependency) may also be recognized and controlled. In the borderline personality the pre-object is locus for recognition of unpleasurable affects for purposes of destruction rather than for purposes of progressive internalization and mastery. That is, the object is perceived as selfish, rejecting, and angry. Whereas in the case of the borderline the purpose of projection is destructive, the narcissistic personality has internalized a stabilizing archaic representation contingent on dissociation of needs and dependency feelings. It seems sufficient for him to recognize projectively these needs in the object, where he can tolerate them condescendingly, while the object, in turn, attends to the simultaneously disavowed needs of the narcissist and mirrors his grandiosity. The possessor relationship with objects formed by the narcissistic personality has some constructive potential for both parties. Little potential for gratification exists for the narcissist, however, as the relationship is based on a false self constructed according to external specifications.

As for the world at large, it is projectively endowed with the unpleasure which never gained recognition in the maternal representation, and responded to with hostility and phobic avoidance. In both the borderline and narcissistic personalities the pathway to significant and gratifying social-cultural adaptation through exploration of the unfamiliar remains undeveloped. A small number of primary objects remain indispensable. Their importance in the psychic economy of the narcissistic personality is less evident than in the case of borderline. The narcissist maintains the illusion that the status or task which has come to be associated with the conditional symbiotic representation is all-important. The narcissistic personality is usually more stable and capable of at least superficial autonomy, and conveys an impression of successful social-cultural adaptation. This may tend to obscure the fact that he leads a circumscribed and dependent existence, and is fearful of what is unfamiliar. His need to maintain the conditional symbiotic representation through active and passive possession behaviour often leads him to significant social and work accomplishments.

The structural dissociation, or failure of integration between the two possession configurations, remains characteristic of the narcissistic personality, as well as the borderline, for normal unconditional and territorial symbiotic bondings which could support the development of realistic negative dialogue with objects have never developed.

The relationship of these hypotheses about normal development and primitive personality formation on the one hand, and the generally accepted psychoanalytic theory about later childhood and psychoneurosis, on the other, is beyond the scope of this paper. I explored the subject from the perspective of the normal symbiotic bond in an earlier series of papers (Robbins, 1981a), (1981b). I hope to examine it from the perspective of Gedo & Goldberg's (1973) concept of an epigenetic hierarchy of mind models in a future paper.

**KOHUT'S TWO ANALYSES OF MR Z**

Before presenting two cases of narcissistic personality from my own practice, I should like to return to my earlier comment that Kohut's own conceptualization of the pathology of his well-known patient, Mr Z, may support the formulation of narcissistic personality disturbance I have just proposed better than it does Kohut's own theory. Space considerations prevent me from reviewing the 1979 case report here, and, most regrettably, from essaying a discussion of the accuracy and adequacy of Kohut's data. Instead

I shall accept what Kohut has offered at face value, and scrutinize the manner in which he has formulated it.

In conclusion of his paper, Kohut presents a Fairbairn-like diagrammatic view of Z's personality, split vertically (dissociated) and horizontally (repression), each compartment containing what Fairbairn might describe as a bit of ego or self, a bit of object, and a linking affect or drive. Kohut conceptualizes two dissociated configurations, one of an 'arrogant' (aggressive) grandiose self merged with a normally idealized object (mother), and the other a more complex configuration involving a devalued, masochistic self in relation to a defensively idealized object, the defensiveness involving repressed attitudes of healthy self-assertiveness, feelings of rage at mother, and idealization of father. I shall put aside my doubt that Kohut's material is sufficient to prove that these configurations are indeed dissociated and proceed to note that Kohut is not describing the archaic bipolar self configurations which he claims enter into the analytic transferences of narcissistic personalities. The arrogant configuration might be interpreted as a developmentally arrested merger of the grandiose self with the normally idealized object except that arrogance is probably not a developmentally normal infantile affect, nor is it likely that any normal developmental process could lead to idealization of a person like Z's mother who related by projecting and devaluing. The other, self-devaluing configuration, however, is undoubtedly not Kohut's archaic idealizing self. It would seem then, that regardless of how one chooses to view the later developments in Mr Z's analysis the initial 'dissociated' configurations Kohut describes are not the so-called normal configurations of the archaic cohesive self which he postulates, nor do they seem to be products of disintegration, but rather they appear to be dissociated pathological efforts at symbiotic adaptation using disavowal and attribution (the arrogant possessor) on the one hand, and compliant over-inclusion (the masochistic slave) on the other.

In my opinion, the masochistic configuration is the primary identification with mother, developing in lieu of unconditional symbiotic bonding, and in response to mother's obvious need for a possession rather than an autonomous being. She tended to project a sense of dirty defectiveness on to Z and then to search it out and attempt to expunge it from his bowels and pores. He was in fantasy her toilet or perhaps her sewage treatment plant, a receptacle for badness with potential for grandiose metamorphosis. The evidence of his indispensability to her and her conviction about his future success suggests a related maternal fantasy of future greatness in which she might share without active effort and accomplishment of her own. Z's earliest efforts to create a reliable maternal self-object representation probably involved introjection of a representation consisting of badness, associated with any autonomous agenda of his own which might tend to separate him from his mother, and potential greatness, if he complied with her fantasy-agenda, and he probably directed actual frustration consequent to
his mother's unresponsiveness and intrusiveness toward these 'internal' problems, in order to gain maternal validation. From this 'possessed' configuration originated Z's masochism and low self-esteem, his unquestioning allegiance to mother, and perhaps his homosexuality, as well.

I interpret the more active arrogant configuration not as a primary grandiose merger with mother, but rather as a secondary development, after unpleasant became capable of external representation in the experience of strangeness, so that Mr Z's grandiosity might be mirrored and object related needs might be recognized and devalued in a self-object other than mother. Arrogance toward others may have gained Z validation from mother, who was herself paranoid, and wished Z to remain exclusively devoted to her. In other words, the arrogant configuration may have come to include an aggressor identification. In my opinion a primary merger with a mother who is aggressive towards her infant, which is what Kohut suggests, is likely to lead to development of destrucive attitudes towards the infant's own person, not toward external objects.

We know that, at the start of analysis, Z was incapable of aggressive feelings and attitudes toward his mother. His 'arrogant' behaviour towards Kohut in the transference was countered by Kohut's forceful projections, and the result was reinstatement of the passive, compliant possessed configuration, which characterized his relations with mother. Why did Z dream that he was barring the door to a gift-bearing father at the end of the first analysis? To me it suggests his sense of responsibility, both in his primary family and his undifferentiated re-enactment in the first analysis, for having remained a maternal possession, enjoying the fruits of her infantilization and sharing her fantasies of his potential greatness; father left the family when Z was 3½ and the first analysis lasted 4 years.

At the beginning of the second analysis possessor behaviour re-emerged and was neither actively suppressed, as in the first analysis, nor actively analysed. Z used Kohut, in a sense, as a toilet with a mirror attached, to contain and examine his productions and needs, while mirroring his grandiosity. It is possible that Z's aggressive, enslaving behaviour was gradually transferred to the work arena, which became the context for his passive adaptation, for this arrogant behaviour did mitigate in the analysis, and we know Z was planning a 'major work' when the second analysis concluded. The data are not available to support or refute such an hypothesis.

THE CASE OF ARTHUR

Arthur began intensive psychotherapy midway through his sophomore year of college because of nearly immobilizing periods of depression, during which he would take to bed, assume a foetal position, and listen to music; he also complained of being overwhelmed by the demands of school and of interpersonal relations. He lacked interest in girls and he feared that his physical attraction to men might eventuate in overt homosexuality. Both his parents were accomplished professional musicians, and his father was unusually successful in business, as well. Neither had seemed interested in family life, and they had divorced in Arthur's mid-teens to pursue their separate careers as well as a series of affairs with increasingly youthful partners. I inferred from Arthur's description that both were depressed. Both had undergone considerable psychotherapy, and both, but particularly father, seemed very invested in Arthur. In fact, he had been referred for psychotherapy by his father's therapist, who was described as the 'guru of psychiatry' in the large city where they lived.

Arthur seemed to be a 'perfect' psychotherapy patient, and by college graduation he had metamorphosed into a self-assured young man of striking appearance who had not only acquitted himself with high scholastic honours but also had many friends, male and female, and seemed capable of warmth and intimacy with others. He was unusually psychologically minded and worked hard to form an identity of his own, differentiated from parents. As Arthur improved, however, he seemed obsessed with the need to finish therapy. He made two efforts to do so, each of which failed. These were both characterized initially by denial that he had further problems, and absence of feelings other than rage about ending our relationship. He attributed pressure to continue our relationship to his alleged depression and need for his money. In each instance, he became progressively depressed, aloof, and withdrawn from his girl friend and myself, and more openly and unquestioningly dependent on his father, who seemed only too ready to take care of him. After the second of these instances, the outlines of his narcissistic personality became fully evident.

Most of our separations during the course of therapy had been initiated by Arthur at school holidays, and involved trips home to see father. After each holiday he manifested a certain passivity and loss of self-awareness. In studying the termination failures, we discovered that Arthur's termination fantasy was one of going home, telling father his treatment had ended and he was now perfectly cured and individuated. Then he might bask eternally in father's infinite admiration and caretaking. Termination proved to be synonymous with perfection, eradication of weakness, and a transition from disciple to guru or monument. Further need to experience feelings or struggle to have a life of his own would be unnecessary. The stress of termination revealed this fantasy of re-establishing a passive relationship with an idealized mirroring object, and highlighted his use of me and his girl friend as devalued objects to stabilize a cohesive, grandiose self.

Arthur sought out relationships with people such as myself and his girl friend, whose strengths and interests in him were used to 'fuel' him during the day. We were also selected for our perceived weaknesses or vulnerabilities. Our feelings and needs, he believed, made us unable to manage without him. In fact they facilitated projection and devaluation. In my case it was an alleged latent depression and a need for his money. In the case of his girl friend it was an element of dependency, low self-esteem, intermittent depression, and a need for an idealized male object. She was attentive, compliant, at times even idolatrous of Arthur. When she attempted to assert independent or contrary views he devalued her and they would ultimately join forces to enhance his omnipotent feeling. Sometimes he responded to her initiative with assertions such as 'You don't really want to do that'. Often he sulked in angry silence until her growing concern and irritation prompted her to ask what was the matter and had she done something wrong. In response he would suddenly feel happy and begin to focus attention on
'her' problem (anger, guilt, devaluation of self). He used 'family life' as his parents had done, to refuel his grandiose self and rid himself of his devalued and emotional self, of which he was subtly contemptuous. It must also be pointed out that he and his girl friend both cared for each other, and both perceived their relationship as important and preponderantly good. Their relationship seemed quite stable.

It was difficult for Arthur to initiate exposure to new and unfamiliar experiences. Like his father, he sought 'servants' selected for expertise, but covertly devalued because they were inevitably less perfect in other areas, as his guides. I was secretly thought of as such a flunky. Meanwhile Arthur harboured fantasies of omnipotence and grandiosity which he 'knew' would be actualized if and when he chose to assert himself in these other fields.

These 'fuel-pump' relationships with devalued objects enabled him to enter the arena of work, after college graduation, where he sought passive compliant relations with idealized bosses whose values and demands governed his life totally. The others in his life were expected to share his exclusive, self-sacrificial preoccupation with his job. He was astonished, hurt, angry, incomprehending, when I denied his request to begin his therapy hour (which he knew was the first of my day) half an hour earlier because he felt it would be better if he got to work earlier. Yet his job was also devalued, as it was not in the artistic area his family thought most prestigious. The arts were so thoroughly invested with fantasies of perfection that to confront them his actual limitations evoked intolerable feelings of passivity, depression, and self-devaluation.

We began to study dissociated parts of Arthur, which he first named the 'master' or 'guru' and the 'disciple' or 'slave', and later less self-indulgently came to call 'manipulator' and 'shmuck'. He used one or more relationships to maintain each state. Activity and projection were characteristic of the guru state; passivity and introjective compliance marked the disciple state. The times when the guru part of Arthur was ascendant were those in which he believed himself to be perfect, free from painful emotions; an expert about the behaviour and problems of others. He fancied himself a therapist with his own disciples, he denied any need for help with problems of his own. At other times, he seemed to be a disciple himself; he acted passive, dependent, depressed. He was without a mind of his own, defined by problems and immobilized by them. He felt devalued, insecure, and totally devoted to the service of his idealized objects. However, as disciple he was not able to articulate feelings and needs precisely, and he felt entitled to have his idealized objects intuit his needs and lavish special caring and attention on him.

We discovered some of the fantasies he had probably shared with his parents involving creative perfection and everlasting youth and beauty. We discovered that they had infantilized Arthur and alternately projectively identified him with these grandiose fantasies and then exploited his helpless, dependent, depressed, inept aspects. We reconstructed that he and his mother had 'communicated' through his assumption of 'her' depressed feelings and self-devaluing attitudes. During his childhood she had spent a year in a mental hospital. Some of his most poignant memories involved curling foetus-like under the night table in her bedroom and feeling overwhelming sadness as he recalled that her separation from his father, whom she had never seemed to like, and the commencement of a series of affairs with young men, occurred after Arthur had passed through puberty.

Father's interest in Arthur was more direct in some ways. They had a mutual admiration society. Father lavished material goods on him, made plans for him and arranged his life, and was ever-present to respond as if by magic to Arthur's often unarticulated depression and ineptitude. It was a source of repeated annoyance to Arthur early in therapy that I did not seem to know what he wanted and take care of it unless he told me. In turn, Arthur was always at father's back and call to listen, gullible and full of awe, as father pontificated his philosophy of life and implied his greatness in ways which at times verged on the bizarre. Father presented himself to his son as omnipotent and omniscient, potentially the greatest if ever he committed himself in any single area instead of being a Jack-of-all-trades. Yet he was involved in seemingly lifelong intensive therapy and could not make a move without seeking the advice of his psychiatric 'guru', whose opinions Arthur often repeated to me, or that of other gurus who were idealized for their special skills and devalued for their narrowness.

In summary, as one possessed, Arthur tended to be passive, dependent, and depressed. He placed himself at the disposal of idealized figures who cared for him but defined his reality by projection of their own interests and fantasies. He struggled with infantile devalued attributions which left him inept and depressed at times, and grandiose attributions which mirrored his own illusions and made him euphoric at other times. As possessor Arthur believed himself omniscient and omnipotent. He projectively identified those of us who cared about him as dependent, potentially depressed people who could not live without him. Then he cared in a condescending fashion, while at other times, he seemed to be a disciple himself; he acted passive, dependent, depressed. He was without a mind of his own, defined by problems and immobilized by them. He felt devalued, insecure, and totally devoted to the service of his idealized objects. However, as disciple he was not able to articulate feelings and needs precisely, and he felt entitled to have his idealized objects intuit his needs and lavish special caring and attention on him.

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THE CASE OF ALEXANDER

Alexander was the only boy and the fourth of five children in an aristocratic upper class family which had fallen upon hard times during the depression years. He was the avowed favourite of his mother, perhaps because his father had 'failed' in business and seemed to be an object of her polite contempt.

Although mother's style of relating to Alexander was emotionally distant, this quality was masked by representing herself as an unselfish executor of God's Will, and by constantly soothing Alexander or flattering him. She related to him not as he experienced himself, a person of feelings, turmoil, and limitations, but rather as he secretly wished to be, a perfect shining creature who could and would accomplish anything he chose. Alexander experienced this 'approval self' both as false and as tremendously seductive, exhilarating, and
powerful. He attempted to be as mother described him, and to rid himself of the feelings and needs which seemed impediments, in order to maintain definition by mirroring in her eyes. Mother herself was impeccable in appearance, behaviour, and morality; a pillar of quiet good works and charity in their community. Alexander almost literally believed her to be a deity, even after he had reached a position of considerable prominence in his own profession as an adult. Their mutual idealization society consisted of denial of dependent needs and affective responses to one another, regardless of the provocation, and of mutual mirroring of a kind of moral righteousness in which individuality was transcended.

In contrast, Alexander feared his father, and seemed to share his mother's disappointment and contempt for him. Although from Alexander's descriptions father appeared to be an emotional, creative, and individualistic man with obvious talents and equally obvious limitations, Alexander viewed him as seriously flawed because of this very vitality. Alexander's contempt for his father drew upon the elements of fearfulness and devaluation of emotional hence imperfect parts of himself. Father died when Alexander was a young adult, and mother remarried. Alexander was shocked and enraged at the disruption of his fantasied exclusive relationship with her and at this incontrovertible manifestation of mother's emotional needs. He responded by acting as though his mother whom he fantasied a deity were dead. This fantasy mother continued to play a central role in his inner life, while he maintained a perfunctory relationship with his real mother.

Like his mother, Alexander became a pillar of his community, widely respected in his profession. However, as he was unable to set personal limits in his work, he allowed himself to become overwhelmed and exhausted. A decade of decline, including ulcers necessitating gastrectomy, moderate alcoholism, and finally a narcotic addiction, had led to a year in a psychoanalytically-oriented mental hospital in a city distant from his home. There a diagnosis of personality disorder with obsessive-compulsive and addictive features was made after a thorough evaluation. The hospitalization was terminated prematurely, for financial reasons, and Alexander, who was then in his middle age, was sent home and referred to me.

When I met him Alexander was a picture of passivity, anhedonia, and dysphoria. He was restless, irritable, depressed, anxious, with multiple vague somatic complaints. Aside from a near overwhelming urge to obtain the 'perfect' euphoria-inducing drug he envisioned no gratification in living. Although widely respected, he had no close friends. He had no sense of personal identity or interests aside from his work, at which he was unremittingly driven to excel, and from which he derived no emotional pleasure. Whenever separated from a work project, he became disoriented. At weekends he wished only to sleep and be spared exposure to the emotions and needs of his wife and children.

When our relationship commenced he secretly resumed his addiction for a time, and suicide seemed quite possible. Face to face intensive psychotherapy was ineffective; polite scepticism veiled his contempt for psychiatry and for the world of emotion, and he seemed impressed in passivity, trying to intuit what would and would not please me and then to produce it, in hopes that in return for what he did for me, I would cure or at least anaesthetize him. All the while he reiterated that he found me cold, distant, and ungiving. Psychoanalysis was undertaken and within its context his narcissistic personality structure gradually unfolded.

In his work, which was the only part of life Alexander valued, he was single-mindedly devoted to discovering what his clients and colleagues wanted and supplying it with utmost tact, regardless of consequences to himself. This behaviour, which took no account of his own limitations or values or the realism of the expectations of others seemed designed to produce mutual mirroring of grandiosity. He worked long hours, did almost anything clients asked, ate erratically, chain-smoked, exercised not at all, and took vacations with reluctance and uneasiness only when forced by his wife. When separated from his work, he became depressed and disoriented, for he had no agenda of his own. Periodic states of exhaustion and rage were experienced as physical illnesses. For the most part he seemed unaware of feelings or needs of his own, but when they intruded into his awareness he devalued and dismissed them as illogical. This devalued, immature, emotional self seemed to be projectively identified in his relationships with upset clients, dependent young women, junior colleagues, his children (who had problems of emotional immaturity), and his wife, who seemed to ventilate anger excessively, but who was aggressively preoccupied with his rights and his welfare. These people were covertly devalued and overtly soothed and infantilized. To them, he became an omniscient and indispensable presence. His grandiose false self was depended on, while his affective, needy and angry self was disavowed and projected on to others whom he could control by gratifying and keeping at a distance, and who could, in turn, look after his neglected needs.

The consequences of this peculiar form of self-abnegation were great, though not recognized as such. Alexander suffered periodic physical and emotional collapses. These ranged from more subtle states of incapacitating headache and nausea, exhaustion, depression, and disorientation, to more catastrophic events like haemorrhaging ulcer, addiction, and states of shakiness.
classical narcissistic symptomatology of depression, disorientation, and anxiety, but far from feeling that he missed me, Alexander experienced a 'school's out' feeling of relief to be rid of me.

As we explored the side of Alexander which required infantilization, it was clear that what even the most devoted people in his retinue did for him was far from perfect. Ideally his 'intruders' should know his feelings and needs without his articulating them, really without even experiencing them. People should soothe and comfort him as mother had done, and anaesthetize him against feelings; what he seemed to desire was not people at all, but the 'perfect drug', available after work and on weekends, to induce passive euphoria. It was a source of endless grievance and sometimes rage that I did not do these things. He experienced me as cold and aloof. As he began to discover his body and his feeling self it was frightening in dimension and power because disowned, and experienced as dirty and awkward because devalued. To summarize, Alexander sought the perfect merger with the grandiose fantasies of his idealized objects. At work he acted as one possessed; though physically active he was passive, self-abnegating, and exclusively compliant with the goals of his clients. He would work fiendishly to accomplish them, regardless of the consequences to himself, never convinced that he was living up to what was expected of him. In the process he was destructive to his own health, emotional well-being, and family life. His reciprocal behaviour as possessor seemed to have two parts. With junior colleagues, some of his more dependent clients, his children, and to a lesser extent his wife, he projectively identified painful feeling states and dependencies. While secretly condescending in attitude, he engaged in a great deal of controlling, caretaking activity designed to extinguish these feeling states in others which made him so uncomfortable. For these efforts he obtained considerable mirroring of grandiosity. At the same time he enacted with his wife and his doctors a curious kind of irresponsibility for himself, associated with a sense of entitlement. These devalued people, whom he projectively identified as being concerned with needs and feelings, were to care for 'his' needs so that he would have to be as little aware of them (the needs and the caretakers) as possible, and so that he might experience a state approximating euphoria, nirvana, or anaesthesia.

DISCUSSION

I have presented case material to illustrate—not to prove—the hypothesis that some narcissistic personalities and borderline personalities have much in common, and that both these 'primitive personality disorders' may usefully be viewed as pathological efforts at symbiotic bonding. In each disorder the person behaves as two dissociated sub-personalities, which I have named 'possessor' and 'possessed'. Each of these configurations strives to form a characteristic merger with an object, the possessor functioning projectively, to disavow and attribute, the possessed introjectively, to over-include. In other words, the primitive psyche is not integrated. It forms mirror image dissociated relationships with pre-objects. In these the dyad functions like the

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 discrete parts of a single entity, and 'unseen' parts of the self are recognized in the other. This is not the amorphous undifferentiation characteristic of states of psychotic merger. These are functionally essential mergers in which the object acts in lieu of intrapsychic structure of the subject, hence the term pre-object relationship. These relationships are not products of arrested stages of development. The kinds of bonding I have described have developed to compensate for failures of the normal developments of unconditional symbiotic bonding, territorial symbiotic bonding, and ambivalent dialogue, and are incompatible with further growth. Among the normal developments which do not occur are differentiation of libidinal and aggressive drives, achievement of self-object differentiation, structural integration which would lead to personality consistency and the capacity for experiences of ambivalence and conflict, and mature ego and superego formation.

As the possession of another, both borderline and narcissistic personalities suffer an internal sense of crippling disruption which precludes recognition of object-related needs, wishes, and nascent initiatives. There is no pathway for development of more mature object relations. However, a representation of perfectability or potential grandiosity, involving complicity with the narcissistic fantasies of an object, opens to the narcissistic personality a 'false-self' developmental pathway. According to this hypothesis, the crucial developmental distinction between the borderline and narcissistic personalities is not the attained stage of development, as Kernberg and Kohut assert, for both seem to commence during the second half-year of life. It is the nature of the maternal contribution, specifically, the quality of her fantasy projections.

Although the mother of the narcissistic personality is unresponsive to or devaluing of her infant's needs and initiatives, she provides soothing 'infantilizing' ministrations at other times, particularly during states of emotional quiescence and passivity. These are accompanied by grandiose fantasy-projections. This narcissistic illusion, originally shared with mother, associated initially with infantile passivity and compliance and later with performance in specified areas, is first recognized in the maternal stimulus, and gradually internalized. This is not to be confused with the normal unconditional symbiotic representation, at first signified by the specific smiling response to recognition of mother, and later associated with joyful maternal responses to the child's affective and behavioural initiatives. The narcissistic illusion is linked neither with active, constructive, autonomous states of the pre-self nor with early libidinal developments, and therefore possesses a developmental thrust which is compliant rather than truly autonomous in character. In fact the maintenance of this narcissistic representation depends on the infant's continuing efforts to eradicate evidence of real and maternally projected dependency, object related needs, and initiatives. It depends on the effective functioning of that aspect of the possessed configuration which the narcissistic and borderline personalities share, which attacks the representation of need and wish states, and on its dissociation from the grandiose representation. Hence, the 'narcissistic' representation may be called a conditional symbiotic representation. The conditional symbiotic representation is a stabilizing force which the borderline personality, possessed exclusively by bizarre ideas of badness and self-destructive feelings, lacks.

The narcissistic personality seems to be engaged in a quest for a euphoric or nirvana-like state, associated with ideas of specialness, independence, invulnerability, and perfection. This representation of self must be kept uncontaminated or undisturbed by object related needs and affects, which are associated with childishness, dependency, and vulnerability. The overvalued narcissistic configuration and
the devalued affective configuration are actively dissociated.

In addition, the internalization and structuring of the two configurations is rudimentary. Objects are used as possessions to recognize and process, alternately, one or the other configuration. The object relationship involves sensorimotor-affective repetition or re-enactment of the narcissistic representation, in partner or self, while reciprocally, in partner or self, recognition of object related needs and affects is achieved for purposes other than developmental internalization.

The narcissistic personality attempts to be the possession of another person with dissociated narcissistic problems. This person uses the patient

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to represent unintegrated devalued but in fantasy perfectable aspects of himself. By introjection the narcissistic personality shares the fantasy that this other person is perfect and that he, also, though devalued, imperfect, and bad, might ultimately attain perfection by expunging his own needs and initiatives, solving the problems attributed to him, and devoting himself exclusively to the grandiose aims of the object. As one thus possessed the narcissistic personality lacks self-esteem and devalues his own needs, interests, and autonomous aims while paradoxically clinging to grandiose fantasies of his own and vigorously supporting the narcissistic agenda of the object.

The narcissistic personality also relates as possessor to a separate and devalued class of objects. Then he disavows dependency, neediness, and emotional attachments, and lays claim to being a perfect person, omnipotent and totally self-sufficient. On to this subservient object is projected the devalued states of neediness and imperfection. The object is infantilized and condescended to for these very qualities, and perhaps encouraged to harbour illusions of grandeur, while being expected to worshipfully mirror the illusionary grandiosity of the narcissistic personality and to take care of his human needs as unobtrusively as possible.

The symptoms of the borderline personality, such as self-destructive behaviour, bizarre delusional ideas about the self, and paranoid-like reactions to important objects, all seem to be manifest in the context of their chaotic, unhappy relationships, which seem to be the most important thing in their lives. In contrast, the relationships of the narcissistic personality tend to be less conspicuous. His work or status seems more important, and symptomatology tends to be manifest when relationships are disrupted, not when they are serving their function.

Whereas in the borderline personality, the dissociated possession configurations often operate simultaneously in the same relationship or else in off-on fashion, lending a sense of constant self-contradiction and chaos to that relationship, the possession relationships of the narcissistic personality are likely to involve separate objects and relationships.

In both personalities objects are selected, at least in part, for real qualities, and attributions are responsive to these qualities as well as being figments of the primitive person's imagination. The essential step from possession configuration to pathological symbiotic bond involves some degree of complicity on the part of the object, in making or accepting 'narcissistic' attributions, as the case may be. The narcissistic personality is capable of more realistic assessment of objects than the borderline, however, and is able to grant them some personal autonomy as well as to retain some of his own. The relations of the borderline personality are governed more completely by projective and introjective considerations in which one party exploits the other. Hence relations of the narcissistic personality tend to be more constructive than those of the borderline.

The borderline personality is able to recognize and bear object-related need feelings toward important persons only transiently; however, he does recognize hatred and rejection of object related needs in the object representation, projectively and unrealistically, for purposes of riddance and destruction. The narcissistic personality recognizes in the object representation need feelings and dependencies, combining realistic perception and projection in the process. In this way he keeps needs and affects at a distance, devalued and controlled, neither internalizing them nor trying to destroy them. For this reason narcissistic personalities appear to care little for others, or for that matter, for their own needs, so that elemental aspects of their care are relinquished to their devalued objects. In contrast, the borderline, who requires an externally perceived illusion (an ideal object) rather than an internal one (grandiosity), values relationships above all else. Paradoxically, his relationships are more destructive.

In practice these distinctions between borderline and narcissistic personalities are not always as clear as I have made them seem for heuristic purposes.

CONCLUSION

My contribution is based on the premise that early psychic development involves interrelated processes of biophysical maturation and phase-appropriate learning (structuring) which takes place in the context of an incompletely differentiated relationship. I consider the primitive personality disorders as outcomes of a primary

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relationship with four essential characteristics: It has made demands on the infant ('no' to object related needs and initiatives) prematurely (without sufficient biophysical maturation or the necessary antecedent intrapsychic structure). It has made demands on the infant inappropriately (global 'no', attribution rather than responsiveness). It has been neglectful and has failed to facilitate the infant's phase appropriate efforts to form essential substructures (the unconditional symbiotic representation and the territorial symbiotic representation). Finally, through psychic assault it has disrupted what efforts the infant has been able to make to form these substructures.

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SUMMARY

I have attempted to integrate our theoretical understanding of a particular group of borderline and narcissistic personalities and to relate their development to mother-infant failure to form a normal symbiotic bond, and pathological efforts to compensate. I have attempted to preserve and to integrate some of the valuable contributions of Kernberg and Kohut while, hopefully, avoiding the pitfalls of each theoretical system. The result is a theory of dissociated possession configurations and their actualization in relationships. This is neither a theory of nature (innate rage) nor of nurture (maternal failure) but of the pathological form of adaptation in which objects are used as possessions in order to compensate for absent structures. Whereas the primary introject of the borderline personalities is unmitigatedly self-destructive, the narcissistic personalities have formed a more complex introject including a conditional symbiotic representation, the maintenance of which involves active dissociation of object related needs. The conditional symbiotic relationship, in turn, is a stabilizing and constructive force in his relationships.

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