
Chapter

2

The Origins of Narcissism and Narcissistic Personality Disorder: A Theoretical and Empirical Reformulation

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Although they are concepts with long psychoanalytic pedigrees, narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder only recently have become topics of concern not just for psychoanalysis but for empirical research in psychology and psychiatry as well. For the most part, research in this area has comprised essentially descriptive or atheoretical attempts to identify and measure these constructs,¹ and only a few

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¹ For example, Ashby, Lee, and Duke (1979); Auerbach (1984); Buss and Chiodo (1991); Emmons (1984, 1987); Exner (1969, 1973); Gunderson, Ronningstam, and Bodkin (1990); Gunderson, Ronningstam, and Smith (1991);

studies have addressed theoretical questions, primarily those underlying the Kernberg–Kohut (or conflict–deficit) debate in narcissism. Although intriguing, the results of these studies are also contradictory. Some findings support Kernberg’s view that narcissistic personality disorder is rooted in conflict and in the use of grandiose defenses against issues of aggression, envy, and dependence (Glassman, 1988b; Harder, 1984; Raskin & Novacek, 1991; Raskin, Novacek, & Hogan, 1991a, 1991b; Shulman & Ferguson, 1988b). Other results support the Kohutian position that this form of psychopathology involves a developmental deficit in needs for mirroring and idealization (Glassman, 1988a; Lapan & Patton, 1986; Patton, Connor, & Scott, 1982; Payne, Robbins, & Dougherty, 1991; Robbins, 1989; Robbins & Patton, 1985). Finally, some delineate two forms of narcissistic character pathology (Richman & Flaherty, 1988; Wink, 1991).

Conflicting results like these constitute a major reason why psychoanalysis has so long devalued or ignored attempts to test its theories empirically. It is easier, it seems, to retreat to the consulting room, where one’s patients always seem to confirm one’s favored theories, regardless of one’s therapeutic orientation (Grunbaum, 1984; Masling & Cohen, 1987), than to cope with the ambiguity of inconsistent data or discrepant findings. And yet a detailed critique of most existing empirical investigations of narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder no doubt would reveal such efforts to be inadequate in capturing the complex phenomena that clinicians think about when they encounter and treat narcissistic disturbances.

Although studies that test theories of narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder in a more ecologically or externally valid manner are certainly needed, more and better research will not by itself resolve dilemmas regarding these topics. Adler (1986) has cited three reasons why the Kernberg–Kohut controversy continues unabated: (a) paradigm clash, or the ability of clinicians from rival schools to reinterpret

Harder (1979); McCann (1989); Millon (1982); Morey, Blashfield, Webb, and Jewell (1988); Morey, Waugh, and Blashfield (1985); Mullins and Kopelman (1988); Raskin and Hall (1979); Raskin and Novacek (1989); Raskin and Shaw (1988); Raskin and Terry (1988); Ronningstam (1988); Ronningstam and Gunderson (1988, 1989, 1990); Shulman and Ferguson (1988a); Shulman, McCarthy, and Ferguson (1988); Solomon (1982); Stone (1989); Wink and Gough (1990).

the same phenomena according to their preferred theoretical constructs; (b) sampling bias, with Kernberg having treated more disturbed narcissists and Kohut having treated healthier individuals; and (c) interview bias resulting from differences between Kernberg's confrontational stance and Kohut's more empathic approach. Of these, the first—paradigm clash—is by far the most important.

Because sampling and interview biases follow from paradigmatic assumptions, thoughtful research technique and design can control for the last two factors only to some extent. The belief that complex theoretical controversies can be resolved simply by appeals to supposedly objective data, as if data could be collected independent of the means of observation used and the research questions asked, or as if scientific knowledge could exist without some process of interpretation, is untenable (e.g., Grunbaum, 1984; Lakatos, 1970; Manicas & Secord, 1983; Putnam, 1990). Contrary to the arguments of several highly sophisticated thinkers in the tradition of Dilthey (e.g., Habermas, 1968/1971; Ricoeur, 1970; Schafer, 1976), the well-intentioned attempt to rescue the social sciences from positivism and reductionism by characterizing them as sciences of understanding or interpretation, rather than of explanation, fails because it inaccurately characterizes natural sciences as objective or noninterpretative. Instead of permitting less rigorous standards of evidence in fields like psychoanalysis or psychology, a more cogent view therefore rejects positivism as an inadequate epistemology not only for the social sciences but for the natural sciences as well. Because all scientific knowledge is to some extent interpretative, the claim that psychoanalysis is only a hermeneutic and not also an empirical discipline really amounts to a rejection of the means by which scientists attempt to contain the influence of their interpretative biases. Reports and paraphrases of patient communications are just as dependent upon the investigator's theoretical presuppositions as are the data of empirical studies but usually are gathered without observational controls and without the possibility for public critique, revision, or replication of findings.

A lack of investigative controls is one reason, among others, that Grunbaum (1984) has argued that the validation of psychoanalytic theories requires extraclinical studies. Although transcripts of psychotherapeutic and psychoanalytic sessions likely also constitute adequate data sources for testing psychoanalytic hypotheses (Edelson, 1984; Luborsky & Spence, 1978), the continued appeal to uncontrolled case

reports that are presented without accompanying session transcripts is the single most effective barrier to the revision of existing psychoanalytic theories. As the series of volumes (i.e., Masling, 1983, 1986, 1990) to which this chapter is a contribution demonstrates, it is possible to collect psychoanalytically relevant data in a scientifically valid manner. But because the collection of data depends upon theoretical presuppositions, paradigm clash is really a euphemism for inadequate theoretical conceptualization. Consider that academic psychology, despite rigorous statements of theory and considerable research, may not be able to resolve conclusively the motivation–cognition controversy (basically, a variant of psychoanalysis’s conflict–deficit debate) in personality theory because each position can be stated in such a way as to duplicate the predictions of the other (Tetlock & Levi, 1982). Ultimately, the language of conflict and the language of deficit must be integrated if there is to be an adequate account of psychopathology (Eagle, 1984).

Although this chapter is therefore concerned with empirical approaches to the study of narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder, it will neither review the accumulating atheoretical research literature on these topics nor propose research methods for resolving the Kernberg–Kohut controversy—an increasingly sterile debate that, as suggested, needs a more adequate conceptualization, not experimental tests. Instead, this chapter will regard psychoanalysis as above all a developmental theory, with narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder as developmental constructs. If there is any area of empirical psychology in which psychoanalysts and psychoanalytically oriented researchers play an active role, it is in developmental psychology. In this field, as in no other subdiscipline of psychology, psychoanalytic thinkers formulate some of the central empirical questions. Still more surprising, however, is the extent to which psychoanalytic developmental researchers in recent years have modified their theories because of their empirical findings. For this reason, it is time to apply the findings of current developmental research to the concepts of narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder—that is, to test psychoanalytic theories of narcissism and narcissistic disorder against current developmental knowledge.

Recent empirical research on infancy has questioned the validity of many core psychoanalytic developmental concepts (Eagle, 1984; Horner, 1985; Lichtenberg, 1983; D. K. Silverman, 1986; Stern, 1985). One of the notions most challenged by current knowledge of infancy is

primary narcissism. This chapter will argue, on the basis of infancy research, that the concept of narcissism as a developmental stage, like related notions of normal autism and normal symbiosis, is now inadequate and should be discarded. But since primary narcissism is a crucial construct in psychoanalysis (Sandler, Person, & Fonagy, 1991), the proposed elimination of this concept raises significant questions about many facets of psychoanalytic theory and most certainly about psychoanalytic perspectives on narcissistic personality disorder. As the term narcissistic personality disorder implies, primary narcissism is deeply implicated in psychoanalytic understanding of this form of psychopathology. Each of the two most popular theories of narcissistic disorder (Kernberg, 1975; Kohut, 1971) posits an objectless, undifferentiated phase at the beginning of development. Although the elimination of the concept of primary narcissism cannot be entertained lightly, this chapter will argue that psychoanalytic understanding of narcissism and narcissistic personality disturbance is in fact improved when it no longer appeals to erroneous developmental theories and uncontrolled case reports but instead to knowledge generated by psychological research, just as psychoanalytic object relations theory is improved when it is revised in accordance with the findings of developmental psychology and social cognition (Westen, 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1991).

The basic purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to reformulate psychoanalytic theories of narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder to make them consistent with current trends in developmental and social psychology. To that end, the paper will first review Freud's ideas concerning primary narcissism as a developmental concept. The perspectives of other psychoanalytic theorists will also be discussed. Despite the complexity of issues involved in the contemporary debate on narcissism, limited space permits only a schematic discussion of contributions after Freud. The writings of Freud and other psychoanalytic theorists on primary narcissism have, in any case, been discussed extensively elsewhere.² After traditional psychoanalytic ideas are re-

² See, for example, Balint (1968/1979); Bing, McLaughlin, and Marburg (1959); Grunberger (1971/1979); Kanzer (1964); Laplanche (1970/1976); Laplanche and Pontalis (1967/1973); Moore (1975); Pulver (1970); Rothstein (1984); Sandler et al. (1991); Smith (1985); Teicholz (1978).

viewed, the developmental findings that challenge these notions will be discussed. Because this research is presented thoroughly by, among others, Beebe and Lachmann (1988), Eagle (1984), Horner (1985), Lachmann and Beebe (1989), Lichtenberg (1983), D. K. Silverman (1986), and of course Stern (1985), this discussion will focus on material relevant to a critique of narcissism. Finally, a reformulation of narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder consistent with research in developmental psychology and social cognition will be presented. This reformulation will build on the pioneering efforts of Broucek (1979, 1982), Fast (1985), and Westen (1990a) to recast narcissism in a manner consistent with the findings of empirical psychology. Rejecting as empirically inaccurate most psychoanalytic thinking about the first year of life, it will emphasize the concordance of psychoanalytic accounts of the second year (e.g., the anal stage, rapprochement, transitional object usage, and the mirror phase) with the research literature.³ An additional aspect of this reformulation will be a reconceptualization and a possible resolution of the Kernberg–Kohut debate.

Primary Narcissism

Assumptions of Psychoanalytic Developmental Theory

At the risk of oversimplification, one might argue that, for Freud, three dimensions characterize infancy: (a) lack of investment in objects (Freud, 1915/1957, 1923/1961, 1940/1964); (b) undifferentiation from or lack of awareness of objects (Freud, 1911/1958a, 1940/1964); and

³ While I was completing the final revisions of this chapter, I came across Broucek's (1991) most recent statement on narcissism. He reaches the same conclusion that I present here in reformulating this concept—specifically, that narcissism is a consequence of the capacity for self-reflexive awareness, an ability that emerges in the second year of life. Because I did not become aware of Broucek's most recent ideas until very late in the process of preparing this manuscript, I have not revised the chapter to include them. Even without such revisions, readers will easily note the influence of Broucek's work on my thinking. His ideas, and those of other writers interested in the problems of self-reflexivity, egocentrism, and narcissism (e.g., Bach, 1985; Blatt, 1983; Westen, 1990a), are central to the argument presented in this paper.

(c) drive or tension reduction (Freud, 1900/1953, 1911/1958a, 1920/1955). In fact, as I will discuss, Freud had many doubts about describing infancy as a state in which there is neither awareness of nor investment in objects, although it is certain that tension reduction was always a core motivational postulate of psychoanalysis—for both infants and adults. Theoretical conflicts within psychoanalysis, therefore, have always been fought on the terrain of drive reduction. Nevertheless, in reading the following discussion of Freud's view of primary narcissism, one should bear in mind that research in developmental psychology has effectively refuted each of these three underlying propositions about the nature of the infant (Eagle, 1984; Horner, 1985; Lichtenberg, 1983; D. K. Silverman, 1986; Stern, 1985). The best current evidence is that neonates, although certainly not capable of constructing full representations of a human object, are biologically organized (a) to invest in objects; (b) to become aware of others as separate and distinct from themselves; and (c) to seek out an optimal level of stimulation, not to eliminate it. So, in brief, the concept of primary narcissism, because it rests upon assumptions that are empirically untenable, is hopelessly flawed. To whatever extent later psychoanalytic developmentalists (e.g., A. Freud, Melanie Klein, Mahler, Spitz, and Winnicott) incorporate these assumptions into their descriptions of infancy, their views are untenable as well.

Virtually all psychoanalytic theorists hold one of Freud's three assumptions about infancy—that the infant is undifferentiated from objects. With little in the way of empirical backing for either side in the debate, ego psychologists (e.g., Hartmann, Jacobson, Rapaport, and Spitz) on one side and object-relations theorists (e.g., Balint, Fairbairn, Melanie Klein, Sullivan, and Winnicott) on the other fought bitter theoretical battles over the remaining two propositions—namely, the infant's hypothesized indifference to objects and the infant's hypothesized drive to reduce tensions to a minimum. Naturally, drive reduction and an initial indifference to objects are closely related concepts, so that to hold one of these ideas is to hold the other as well. Empirical research, codified by attachment theory, supports the object-relational view that infants seek both stimulation in general (Emde & Robinson, 1979; Haith, 1980; Kinney & Kagan, 1976) and human objects in particular (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1958, 1973, 1980, 1982). But even the earlier generation of object-relations theorists (e.g., Balint, Fairbairn, and Winnicott) held that infants begin life in

and only gradually emerge from a state of undifferentiation from, or in some accounts (symbiotic) fusion with, objects. Stern's (1985) work has been central to a refutation of this notion. The greater surprise in the history of psychoanalytic developmental thinking, however, is not the unity of opinion regarding primary undifferentiation but the number of reservations Freud had about regarding newborns as objectless.

In fact, Freud was of several minds regarding the earliest stages of development (see Balint, 1968/1979; Baranger, 1991; Henseler, 1991; Kanzer, 1964; Laplanche, 1970/1976; Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967/1973; Smith, 1985), although, for simplicity of exposition, one can say that he had two divergent theories of narcissism. That Freud's writings contain more than one account of primary narcissism should be unsurprising, given the complexity of psychoanalytic theory, and yet it is likely that most readers will know only Freud's (1923/1961; 1940/1964) later formulation of the concept—that primary narcissism is a state, occurring at the beginning of life, in which infants cannot differentiate themselves from objects.

Freud's First Theory of Narcissism

According to Freud's (1911/1958b, 1913/1955; 1914/1957) first theory, narcissism is a normal developmental stage midway between autoerotism—a concept in turn defined as a developmental period in which the libido is organized at the level of component drives and in which one seeks gratification not from objects but from one's own body (Freud, 1905/1953, 1911/1958b)—and object love; it is constituted by the development of the ego (Freud, 1914/1957). Specifically, Freud (1914/1957, p. 77) wrote:

A unity comparable to the ego cannot exist in the individual from the start; the ego has to be developed. The auto-erotic instincts, however, are there from the very first; so there must be something added to auto-erotism—a new psychical action—in order to bring about narcissism.

In accordance with Hartmann's (1950, pp. 54–55) clarification of the differences among ego ("a psychic system"), self ("one's own person"),

and self-representation (the ego's representation of oneself),⁴ this passage indicates that the psychical action that brings about narcissism is the infant's forming a self-representation (see Balint, 1968/1979; Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967/1973). If autoerotism is an objectless state involving gratification from one's own body, narcissism occurs when one can form an image of oneself or, rather, of one's body (cf. Freud, 1923/1961) and therefore can take one's own body, for the first time regarded as a unified gestalt, as a love object. According to this reading of Freud's theories on early development, the (body-)self is in fact the first love object (Smith, 1985). In consequence, self-overvaluation is fundamental to human psychological functioning (Freud, 1914/1957).

Although autoerotism is usually considered to be objectless, several commentators (Balint, 1968/1979; Baranger, 1991; Henseler, 1991; Kanzer, 1964; Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967/1973; Smith, 1985) have noted that Freud had many reservations about placing an objectless state at the beginning of development. In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud (1905/1953) argues that sexual drive satisfaction, following the self-preservative drive, is originally attached to the mother's breast, becomes autoerotic only when the infant becomes capable of forming a total image of the mother, and does not again seek an object until after latency. Several other passages suggest that Freud found troubling the notion that autoerotism and narcissism are objectless states and instead saw autoerotism as following an initial (self-preservative) investment in an object (Freud, 1915/1957, 1917/1963, 1923/1955). Freud's reservations in this regard are crucial because they

⁴ Because Freud used the German *Ich* to denote both ego and self—both the human subject and the subject's conception of itself—H. Hartmann's (1950) distinctions among ego, self, and self-representation are not without controversy (see, for example, Balint, 1968/1979; Kernberg, 1982; Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967/1973). Specifically, Freud's usage suggests a dialectical relationship between the ego's agency and the ego's capacity to represent itself, or invest in itself, as an object—a dialectic that some writers (e.g., Bach, 1985; Balint, 1968/1979; Lacan, 1953; Laplanche, 1970/1976) hold is essential to understand narcissism. Hartmann's terminology is adopted here because it has become standard (see, for example, Moore & Fine, 1990) and because it does clarify numerous passages (for example, the above selection from "On Narcissism") in which Freud apparently means ego as self or self-representation rather than ego as subject or agent. As this chapter argues, however, narcissism results from a dialectical relationship between ego and self.

suggest that it is possible to have a theory of narcissism without postulating an initial objectless stage. Indeed, the core postulate of Freud's early theory—that normal self-regard is narcissistic (i.e., self-overvaluing)—is supported by current research findings in social cognition (Greenwald, 1980; Taylor & Brown, 1988).

On the other hand, this first conceptualization of narcissism—although it persists in muted form in Freud's later writings—was unstable, even at the time of its initial formulation, likely because it conflicted with many of Freud's economic and energetic assumptions, especially those pertaining to drive reduction. The conceptual instability of this early theory can be seen in the distinction Freud (1914/1957) articulated between primary and secondary narcissism. Primary narcissism, according to this distinction, is the initial libidinal investment in oneself that occurs with the formation of the ego. Insofar as (primary) narcissism is a stage midway between narcissism and object love, secondary narcissism refers to the ego's recapturing of libido that has been invested in objects other than itself.

Underlying the distinction between primary narcissism and secondary narcissism, as Freud's reliance on economic and energetic metaphors suggests, is the assumption that a person has a fixed quantity of libido that must be allocated between ego and objects. An increased investment in objects decreases investment in the ego and therefore lowers self-esteem. A return of libido to the ego, either through another's love or through the approval of the ego ideal, a part of the personality that Freud describes as the heir to (primary) narcissism, raises self-regard. Although he later replaced the dualism of ego-libido and object-libido with that of Eros and the death instinct, the notion of the ego's drive to reestablish an objectless state by recapturing object-libido became increasingly central to his ideas on narcissism.

Freud's Second Theory of Narcissism

With Freud's introduction of the structural model in 1923, the ego became regarded primarily as a psychic agency, the cognitive and executive part of the personality, rather than as a self-representation. The new theoretical model made untenable the formulation that narcissism arises with the formation of a self-image. Instead, primary narcissism was now regarded as the initial stage of development, a stage in which ego-libido and object-libido (or, in more current terminology, self-rep-

resentation and object representations) are undifferentiated. This developmental period was thus characterized as one without libidinal investments in or even knowledge of objects. Freud's first theory of narcissism survives, to some extent, in his later writings and can be glimpsed in the statement, "The ego is first and foremost a bodily ego; it is not merely a surface entity but is in itself the projection of a surface" (Freud, 1923/1961, p. 26). Even with this partial survival of his earlier theory, however, Freud's final word on the subject cannot be clearer:

It is hard to say anything about the behavior of the libido in the id and in the super-ego. All that we know about it relates to the ego, in which at first the whole available quota of libido is stored up. We call this state absolute, primary narcissism. It lasts until the ego begins to cathect the idea of objects with libido; to transform narcissistic libido into object libido. Throughout the whole of life the ego remains the great reservoir from which libidinal cathexes are sent out to objects and into which they are also once more withdrawn, just as an amoeba behaves with its pseudopodia. It is only when a person is completely in love that the main quota of libido is transferred onto the object and the object to some extent takes the place of the ego. (1940/1964, pp. 150–151)

In this later model, which regards narcissism as the initial stage of development, autoerotism is no longer regarded as a developmental period in its own right but instead as a mode of libidinal satisfaction that is characteristic of narcissism but that can also be activated later in life (Freud, 1915/1957).

If, furthermore, narcissism ultimately involves an initial lack of investment in objects, it also implies an initial lack of knowledge of them. Specifically, Freud's writings suggest that infants, their functioning organized by a narcissistic structure termed the purified pleasure-ego (Freud, 1915/1957), are inclined not even to discover objects, let alone to invest in them, and would not become aware of the environment if they could satisfy themselves autoerotically. Freud (1900/1953; 1911/1958a) held that infancy is a period of hallucinatory wish-fulfillment (see also Ferenczi, 1913/1950). In other words, infants, when faced with mounting physiological tension—and hunger is the paradigmatic tension state in this regard—hallucinate the object that will satisfy their needs or wishes and relinquish this mode of gratification only when, after repeated frustration, they discover that the halluci-

nation is neither breast nor milk. Prior to this discovery, infants do not distinguish between their own bodies and mother's breast (Freud, 1940/1964) and exist therefore in a state of undifferentiation. But just as Freud was ambivalent about positing an initial lack of investment in objects, so too did he have reservations about describing infants as initially unaware of their environment. In "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes," Freud (1915/1957) delineates an original reality-ego characterized by veridical reception of stimuli but also by indifference to the objects it perceives. In his last word on the subject, however, Freud (1940/1964) returns to the position that infants cannot distinguish themselves from their initial objects—in this case, the mother's breast.

Whatever confusions Freud may have had about an initial knowledge of the environment, he was much clearer in his statements that the infant's earliest relationship to the environment, insofar as the discovery of objects depends upon frustration, is initially one not merely of indifference but of hatred. He states, "Hate, as a relation to objects, is older than love. It derives from the narcissistic ego's primordial repudiation of the external world" (Freud, 1915/1957, p. 139). It comes as no surprise, then, that Freud (1911/1958a) appropriates Bleuler's term *autism* to describe the infant's lack of awareness of the environment.⁵ Freud's operative metaphor here is the bird embryo inside its shell, shut off from all external stimuli (see Lichtenstein, 1964). In later writings, the same notion emerges as the stimulus barrier, the infant's shield against environmental stimulation (Freud, 1920/1955). Underlying this particular dimension of Freud's theory is of course the constancy principle—the organism's drive to eliminate all tensions or to reduce them to a minimum.

Narcissism and the Economic Point of View

There are numerous conceptual and empirical difficulties with placing a monadic stage at the beginning of development. Nevertheless, the notion of a monadic infant, unaware of and indifferent to others except insofar as they can gratify needs and drives, is an almost inevitable consequence of Freud's economic and energetic assumptions, just as the economic individual, motivated by self-interest, is regarded as self-

⁵ As I will discuss later, Bleuler found problematic Freud's use of this term.

sufficient and becomes involved with others only to the extent that it is profitable to do so. As problematic as these theories of autoerotism and narcissism may be, however, they indicate Freud's propensity to sacrifice his greater clinical wisdom—for example, his realization that the objectless infant is a theoretical fiction (Freud, 1911/1958a) or his interest in the oceanic feeling of fusion (Freud, 1930/1961)—in the interest of preserving his theoretical assumptions.

Thus, one can see that two basic dimensions characterize Freud's thinking about primary narcissism (see Eagle, 1981; Laplanche, 1970/1976). The first, essentially quantitative, dimension is the degree to which one invests in oneself rather than in others. It underlies the oft-quoted definition of narcissism as the libidinal cathexis of the ego—or, subsequent to Hartmann's (1950) revision, the libidinal cathexis of the self—and also emerges in Freud's confusion about an initial investment in objects. The second, basically qualitative, dimension involves the degree to which representations of self and other are differentiated from each other. This dimension underlies Freud's (1914/1957) distinction between anaclitic and narcissistic object-choices—between objects chosen for their own properties (or for their capacities, as independent objects, to satisfy the subject's psychological needs) and those chosen because they reflect properties of the self. It also emerges in Freud's confusion about an initial knowledge of objects. Although disturbances in the quantitative dimension (i.e., an excessive self-investment) are usually seen as primary in narcissistic personality disorders (e.g., see Brenner, 1974), this paper shall argue—on the basis of numerous critiques of Freud's economic assumptions about narcissism⁶—that the qualitative dimension, in the form of certain characteristic representational disturbances, is in fact primary in this form of psychopathology (see Auerbach, 1990; Bach, 1985).

A plausible reading of Freud's varied and contradictory statements on narcissism and early development is that his metapsychological assumptions led him to posit a primary objectlessness—that is, quantitatively, an initial lack of investment in objects and, qualitatively, an initial unawareness of them—despite his having many clinical reser-

⁶ For example, Balint (1968/1979); Dare and Holder (1981); Duruz (1981); Grunberger (1971/1979); Joffe and Sandler (1967); Laplanche (1970/1976); Pulver (1970); Stolorow (1975); Teicholz (1978); van der Waals (1965).

vations about these ideas. Much of the debate, after Freud, on early development has centered on the quantitative factor—that is, on whether there is a primary investment in or rejection of objects—and has ignored the qualitative or representational factor. Few ideas in psychoanalysis have received as much agreement, across theoretical schools, as the notion of primary undifferentiation, of infants' inability to represent distinctions between themselves and the object world. It is precisely this concept, especially when stated in the form of primary fusion, that has been undone by recent conceptual and empirical critiques of psychoanalytic developmental theory (Horner, 1985; Milton Klein, 1981; Lachmann & Beebe, 1989; Peterfreund, 1978; Stern, 1985).

Later Theories of Early Development

Ego Psychology and Object-Relations Theory

For reasons of space, the attention devoted to Freud's conceptualization of narcissism cannot also be allocated to the views of later theorists. Yet it turns out that the differences among most later writers in their formulations on early development involve, as stated, the quantitative dimension: whether newborns can invest in objects other than themselves. It is oversimplifying (but not by much) to assert that the chief divergence between classical (or ego-psychological) analysts and object-relations theorists is whether they believe, like Freud and most ego psychologists (e.g., Hartmann, 1939/1958; Hartmann, Kris, & Loewenstein, 1946; Jacobson, 1954, 1964; Rapaport, 1951, 1967; Spitz, 1957), that infants are at best indifferent to objects and come to discover them only through frustration or, instead, like object-relations theorists (e.g., Balint, 1959, 1965, 1968/1979; Fairbairn, 1952; Sullivan, 1953), that infants are motivated to seek out objects from birth.

For virtually all psychoanalytic thinkers, the infant exists in a state of fusion with the object because of a hypothesized inability to distinguish preverbal representations of self from preverbal representations of mother (Ferenczi, 1913/1950; Freud, 1930/1961, 1940/1964). In addition, for the ego psychologists—as for Freud (1911/1958a)—the infant, although fused with objects, is essentially autistic, walled off *from the external world like a bird embryo within its shell*. The classical psychoanalytic infant is autistic and undifferentiated even when en-

dowed, according to classical and ego-psychological theoreticians, with an original reality-ego (Freud, 1915/1957) or innate capacities for perception, memory, motility, and association (Hartmann, 1939/1958). On the other hand, for object-relations theorists (Balint, 1959; Fairbairn, 1952; Winnicott, 1958, 1965), infants are merged with objects by virtue of their establishing primitive relationships that are often conceptualized as an oceanic fusion (Freud, 1930/1961) or a drive to return to the womb (Ferenczi, 1913/1950).

American Object-Relations Theories

Modern American object-relations theorists—most prominently, Kernberg (1975, 1976, 1980), Kohut (1971, 1977, 1984), and Mahler (Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975)—trying to mediate between the ideas of their ego-psychological teachers and those of the British school, have developed complicated strategies for reconciling concepts like primary indifference to objects with notions of primary object-relatedness (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). Perhaps most instructive in this regard is the case of Mahler, especially because her influence on psychoanalytic developmental theory has been second only to Freud's. Faced with a choice between describing infants as walled off from objects, essentially unresponsive to the external world, and characterizing them as so deeply related to their mothers (or primary caregivers) as to exist in a state of fusion, Mahler et al. (1975) choose both of these alternatives but place them in temporal sequence (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). First, in the autistic phase (ages 0 to 2 months), the infant is unaware of and uninvested in objects, as most ego psychologists propose, and then, in the symbiotic phase (ages 2 to 6 months), the infant is attached to and fused with mother, as Balint, Fairbairn, or Winnicott might argue. During both the autistic and the symbiotic stages, the infant, according to Mahler et al., is virtually psychotic. The normally autistic infant is described as existing in a state of hallucinatory disorientation; the normally symbiotic infant is said to entertain the delusion of a common boundary surrounding self and mother. The numerous conceptual and empirical problems of notions like normal autism and normal symbiosis have been discussed elsewhere (Eagle, 1984; Milton Klein, 1981; Horner, 1985; Peterfreund, 1978; Stern, 1985). Because these criticisms are essentially the same as those that

this chapter makes regarding the concept of primary narcissism, the critique of Mahlerian theory will not be repeated here.

Influenced by Stern's (1985) empirical and conceptual critique of Mahler's ideas, Kernberg (1991) has come to reject the notion of a normal autistic state but retains, somewhat ambivalently, the concept of normal symbiosis. Because Kernberg (1975, 1976) has long regarded the overcoming of primary fusion between self and object as the first stage in normal development and has long championed Mahler's ideas, this recent rejection of normal autism constitutes a major change in his thinking. To his credit, Kernberg (1991) demonstrates openly a willingness to allow empirical findings to influence his ideas. Nevertheless, his theory of development still begins with a state of symbiotic fusion from which infants then begin to differentiate, even though his conceptualization of narcissistic personality disorder as the result of a pathological self-formation (see Kernberg, 1975, 1984) does not require this assumption.

Finally, attempts to mediate between the autistic and the object-related infant can be found in the work of Kohut. In his early work, that most influenced by his ego-psychological forebears, Kohut (1966, 1971) refers to an archaic body-mind self that is undifferentiated and narcissistically walled off from objects and that constitutes the first stage in development. In his later writings, after his rejection of traditional drive theory, Kohut's (1977, 1984) focus on the emergence of the cohesive self in the second year of life results in the eventual disappearance of references to this entity. Although Kohut's theories contain many problematic, if not logically contradictory, features (Eagle, 1984; Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983), many thinkers who challenge the received psychoanalytic view of infancy (e.g., Beebe & Lachmann, 1988; Lachmann & Beebe, 1989; Lichtenberg, 1983; Stern, 1985) are heavily influenced by Kohut's ideas but apply them with far greater logical rigor and consistency. Kohut's later theories may not require a stage of a primary objectlessness or fusion at all.

Prenatal Metaphors for Human Infancy

In reviewing, however cursorily, the views that major psychoanalytic thinkers hold about infant development, one readily sees the ease with which theoretical positions become entrenched and the slowness with which they change. One crucial reason for this unfortunate state of

affairs is that positions about infancy are staked out on the basis of uncontrolled case reports of analyses, often of adults, without reference to the growing body of developmental research. For example, as regards the seemingly interminable controversy about whether, as ego-psychological theorists maintain, there is a primary indifference to objects or, instead, as Fairbairn (1952, p. 137) has written, "the libido is . . . object-seeking," the findings of attachment researchers, with both humans (Ainsworth et al., 1978) and infrahuman primates (Harlow, 1958), clearly favor the object-relational position. It would seem safe to conclude, as does Bowlby (1973, 1980, 1982), that infants are born with powerful drives for attachment.

Despite, however, the seemingly irreconcilable disputes between ego psychology and object-relations theory, both schools have constructed their ideas about infancy around prenatal metaphors, as if the human baby, unlike the offspring of other organisms, must be born twice. For ego psychology, the root metaphor is the primary autism of the bird embryo inside its shell (Freud, 1911/1958a). For object-relations theory, the organizing image is the primary relatedness of the fetus that, in its amniotic world, cannot be differentiated from the placenta (Balint, 1959). Theories about a drive to recover a prenatal state and claims that intrauterine life is without tensions are empirically untestable, although current empirical evidence, to be reviewed shortly, that infants seek stimulation, not tension reduction, indicates that these ideas are highly dubious. Findings (DeCasper & Spence, 1986) that infants can recognize—that is, have memory for—certain extrauterine events that occurred during the last trimester of pregnancy are also highly damaging to such claims. It is likely therefore that neither of the two prenatal images accurately characterizes the psychological stage of the human organism prior to birth.

Narcissism and the Second Year of Life

In addition, one might note that, although all of the theorists reviewed here have described the first year of life in a manner quite at odds with the conclusions of infancy research, the comments of these writers about life's second year are both more illuminating about the origins of normal and pathological narcissism and more consistent with research findings in developmental psychology and social cognition. For coincident with the emergence, during the second year of life, of sym-

bolic thinking (Kagan, 1981; Piaget, 1945/1962; Stern, 1985) is the consolidation of children's ability to recognize themselves in the mirror (Amsterdam & Levitt, 1980; M. Lewis & Brooks-Gunn, 1979). It is this ability to construct an image of one's body, per Freud's (1914/1957) early theory, that brings about narcissism. Thus, to cite the ideas of but a few of the theorists just discussed, Mahler et al.'s (1975) rapprochement stage, Winnicott's (1953, 1971/1982) transitional object stage, Grunberger's (1971/1979; cf. Freud, 1917/1955) emphasis on the anal stage as the period in which narcissistic and object-related wishes first come into conflict, and Kernberg's (1975, 1976) reformulation of Melanie Klein's (1935) depressive position as emerging in the second year of life constitute alternative perspectives for delineating the momentous, potentially traumatic consequences of the infant's discovery of the self. The transitional object, insofar as it is an illusion that helps a toddler cope with separation from mother in particular and with the discovery of separateness in general, is perhaps the most evocative example of the origin of narcissistic fantasy. To these various conceptualizations, one can add Lacan's (1948/1977, 1949/1977, 1953) mirror stage, to be reviewed briefly before this discussion moves on to consider the infant as seen through the eyes of empirical research.

Because Lacan's (1948/1977, 1949/1977, 1953) views of narcissism and early development derive chiefly from Freud's (1905/1953, 1914/1957) earlier, empirically sounder writings on these topics (Laplanche, 1970/1976) and involve, perhaps uniquely among major psychoanalytic theoreticians, a rejection of the notion of a monadic infant undifferentiated from and unaware of its surroundings (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967/1973; Ragland-Sullivan, 1986), they can be squared, most surprisingly, with the findings of current infancy research much more readily than can the ideas of thinkers who hold that narcissism involves an inability to differentiate between self and other (Muller, 1982). Lacan (1949/1977, 1953), following Freud (1914/1957), argues that narcissism involves the emergence of the ego as a self-representation—that is, as a unified self-image that is constituted through self-inflation. The mirror stage, a developmental phase occurring between ages 8 and 18 months and during which infants first come to recognize themselves in the mirror, is clearly an elaboration of Freud's first theory of narcissism.

Although empirical study shows that self-recognition really does not occur until approximately age 18 months (toward the end of the period that Lacan designates as the mirror phase) and that recognition only of the contingency of the mirror image's behavior upon one's own actions occurs by age 8 months (Amsterdam & Levitt, 1980; M. Lewis & Brooks-Gunn, 1979), such findings do not detract from Lacan's central insight: that toddlers identify with mirror images of themselves as unified, cohesive, and masterful so as to establish grandiose, potentially aggressive defenses against infantile insecurity, vulnerability, and weakness. Furthermore, according to interpreters of Lacan (e.g., Duruz, 1981; Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967/1973; Muller & Richardson, 1982), the infant identifies with its image not only in the mirror but also in mother's eye—with the mother's wish-fulfilling perception of her child, much as Kohut (1971), Lichtenstein (1961, 1964), Sullivan (1940, 1953, 1972), and Winnicott (1971/1982) have argued—and uses it to constitute the self-representation. In so doing, infants attempt to reduce the anxiety of being persons different from those who their parents want them to be.

In short, the theory of the mirror stage, despite the willful, authoritarian obscurity of Lacanian prose, not only has surprising empirical support (Muller, 1982, 1985) but also resembles the ideas of more familiar object-relations theorists about the origins of the self, especially those of Sullivan. Sullivan (1938/1964, 1940, 1950/1964, 1953), like Lacan, believes that the self is constituted as and functions as a security operation, a grandiose defense against infantile insecurities and anxieties generated by parental disapproval. Despite the many divergences of their respective theoretical languages, Sullivan, Lacan, and Freud all hold that narcissism—self-overvaluation—is endemic to human affairs, much as research in social cognition suggests (Greenwald, 1980; Taylor & Brown, 1988). If, therefore, in accordance with empirical findings that self-awareness is an achievement of the second year of life (Amsterdam & Levitt, 1980; Kagan, 1981; M. Lewis & Brooks-Gunn, 1979), one makes Lacan's mirror phase coincident with turbulence of Mahler's *rapprochement* stage (ages 15 to 24 months), one can more easily see the connections among separateness, the formation of the self-representation, and narcissism. But before turning to a reconceptualization of the second year of life, I must examine the research on the first year.

The Empirical Critique of Psychoanalytic Developmental Theories

Classical Critiques

Problems with standard psychoanalytic formulations of early development were first noted in 1912 by Bleuler (cited in Vygotsky, 1934/1986), who objected to Freud's use of his (Bleuler's) term *autism* and who argued, on biological grounds, that realistic (socialized) thinking emerges before autistic (egocentric) thinking. Rejecting the notion of hallucinatory wish fulfillment, Bleuler stated that lower animals have only realistic thinking available to them, that no viable organism could have the autistic function alone, that autistic thinking requires prior realistic experience, and that in a healthy human being, autistic thinking is always connected to realistic concerns.

These arguments long predate positions outlined by Fairbairn (1952), Holt (1967/1989) and, most recently, Stern (1985) that secondary-process (i.e., socialized or realistic) thinking must predate, and develop in close relationship with, primary-process (i.e., autistic, egocentric, or wishful) cognition. Lest the reader find Bleuler's position too biological or too reductionistic, one must remember that these ideas are cited approvingly by Vygotsky (1934/1986) in his argument against the position that humans are initially egocentric, asocial monads who become socialized, adapted, and realistic only as a result of a long process of development and the coercive imposition of societal norms. Instead, it is the received psychoanalytic view, namely that narcissism precedes object love, that is reductionistic. As Bleuler and Vygotsky argue, the relationship between autistic and realistic thinking is complex, and the two modes of cognition evolve together. That objections were raised this early to concepts like autism and primary objectlessness is quite striking.

Recent Empirical Findings

The more recent empirical critique of psychoanalytic developmental theory is already a well-known story. It begins with Bowlby's (1958, 1973, 1980, 1982) articulation of attachment theory and with empirical studies of attachment behavior in rhesus monkeys (Harlow, 1958) and

in humans (Ainsworth et al., 1978). From this base, commentators (e.g., Eagle, 1984; Lichtenberg, 1983; D. K. Silverman, 1986) have challenged, as noted, two basic assumptions of psychoanalytic approaches to development: (a) that tension reduction is the basic motivational principle of infantile (or human) life and (b) that the formation of attachments is secondary to the satisfaction of oral drives. Instead, infants are seen as actively seeking and requiring an optimal level of environmental stimulation, rather than as attempting to reduce it to a minimum (see, among many others, Emde & Robinson, 1979; Fantz, 1961, 1963; Haith, 1980; Kinney & Kagan, 1976; Roffwarg, Muzio, & Dement, 1966), and attachment is itself seen as an autonomous drive, independent of orality. By now, numerous researchers⁷ regard infants not only as attached to their caregivers but as active elicitors and initiators of interactions with them. Infant-caregiver interaction is thus increasingly conceptualized as a system of mutual regulation that requires infants, no less than parents, to have highly sophisticated perceptual and communicative abilities. These are abilities that enable an infant, at age 4 weeks, to differentiate the world of human interaction from that of interaction with inanimate objects (Brazelton et al., 1974; see Trevarthen, 1977) and, with the emergence of a core self after age 2 months (Stern, 1985), to differentiate playing with mother from playing with a rattle.

Infant cognitive abilities. Infants during the first 2 months of life show a perceptual preference not only for the human face (Emde & Robinson, 1979) but specifically for faces that speak (Haith, 1980). These preferences are unsurprising, given that the human, and more specifically the mother's, face is the most important stimulus in the world of an infant. Still more striking about infants' cognitive abilities is the capacity for cross-modal perceptual equivalence (Lewkowicz & Turkewitz, 1980; Meltzoff, 1985; Meltzoff & Borton, 1979; Stern, 1985), the capacity to correlate perceptions, made in different sensory modes (e.g., auditory and visual), of the same object. In one experiment (Mel-

⁷ For example, Beebe (1986); Beebe and Lachmann (1988); Brazelton and Als (1979); Brazelton, Koslowski, and Main (1974); Cohn and Tronick (1988); Emde (1988); Gianino and Tronick (1988); M. Lewis and Rosenblum (1974); Sander (1977, 1983); Stern (1977, 1985); Trevarthen (1977, 1979, 1984); Tronick (1989).

tzoff & Borton, 1979), for example, infants identified visually a nipple they had sucked while blindfolded and differentiated it from another nipple, with which they had had no experience, provided as a distractor. Infants at this age can also correlate light intensity with sound intensity (Lewkowicz & Turkewitz, 1980). In fact, the capacity for cross-modal equivalence in infants is so sophisticated that 3-week-olds can imitate the tongue and mouth movements of adult models (Meltzoff & Moore, 1977) and 2-day-olds can imitate an adult's affective facial expressions (Field, Woodson, Greenberg, & Cohen, 1982). While these imitations are not the same as the intentional imitations described by Piaget (1945/1962), they nevertheless indicate that infants can correlate body transformations that they can see with body transformations that they cannot see but can perceive through proprioception.

Neonatal infants also have striking memorial capacities. For example, neonates who were exposed during the last trimester of pregnancy to their mothers' reading a passage from Dr. Seuss not surprisingly preferred hearing their mothers' voices, rather than those of other adult women (see DeCasper & Fifer, 1980), but also preferred listening to their mothers read the material they had heard in utero over hearing their mothers read a different passage (DeCasper & Spence, 1986). In a cued-recall study (Greco, Rovee-Collier, Hayne, Griesler, & Earley, 1986), infants less than 3 months old demonstrated an ability to remember contingencies between their body movements and the movements of a mobile they had kicked some 1 to 3 weeks after the initial exposure. Infants less than 2 months old can remember specific objects in a training mobile for up to 24 hours (Hayne, Greco, Earley, Griesler, & Rovee-Collier, 1986). These remarkable perceptual and memorial capacities suggest that infants in the first 2 months of life have a pre-symbolic representational capacity founded on the storage of distinctive features of stimuli (Beebe & Lachmann, 1988; Meltzoff, 1985; Stern, 1985).

Formation of a core self. Between the second and sixth months of life, according to Stern (1985), infants use these early cognitive abilities to extract from their daily experiences a set of self-invariants—that is, construct a core self. These invariants are agency, self-coherence, self-affectivity, and self-history (memory). Numerous other infancy researchers (e.g., Emde, Gaensbauer, & Harmon, 1976; Piaget, 1936/1963; Sander, 1962; Spitz, 1965) have noted that infants undergo

a decisive biobehavioral shift at age 2 months. The social smile is a well-known indicator of this shift.

To cite an example with particular reference for self–other differentiation, a process crucial to a critique of primary narcissism, infants 3 months old can distinguish among constant, fixed-ratio, and variable reinforcement schedules (Watson, 1979, 1985). Thus, they can differentiate self-initiated actions, some of which have a 100% probability of success and are therefore on a constant reinforcement schedule, from other-initiated activities, most of which are reinforcing on only a variable or probabilistic basis. The ability to distinguish among these contingencies is but one of the ways in which the infant comes to extract the invariant of agency. Stern (1985) provides heuristic empirical evidence for each of the remaining three invariants. Of these, self-affectivity is especially important because affect forms the core of the preverbal or prereflective self (Emde, 1983), is an amplifier of drives (Tomkins, 1962, 1963), and, given the universality of affective facial display (Ekman, Friesen, & Ellsworth, 1972; Izard, 1971), is a primary medium of parent–infant communication during this preverbal period. Affects form one of the self-invariants because the infant learns to correlate an emotion exhibited as a discrete facial display with an emotion constituted as a specific pattern of autonomic neural firing with a concomitant experiential tone (Ekman, Levenson, & Friesen, 1983).

Parent–Infant Communication

Early communicative processes. Presymbolic representational capacities underlie not only the process of self–other differentiation but also the increasingly sophisticated communications within the infant–caregiver system of mutual regulation. Communication between infant and parent is a highly complex affair that requires the infant to perceive changes in the parent’s behavior and affect in a fraction of a second (Beebe, 1982; Beebe, Jaffe, Feldstein, Mays, & Alson, 1985; Beebe & Stern, 1977; Gianino & Tronick, 1988; Stern, 1971; Tronick, 1989). A 3-month-old infant, for example, when confronted with an image of mother’s face speaking, but with her voice delayed by approximately 0.5 second, will perceive the discrepancy between visual and auditory modalities and will be disturbed by it (Dodd, 1979). Mother–infant communication during the preverbal period requires that the infant be sensitive enough to discover even small temporal discrepancies.

In addition, mutual gazing between mother and infant, an ability that emerges by the second month of life, is central to the communicative process. In this process, it is the mother who tends to gaze steadily, while the infant controls the dialogue by making and breaking visual contact, by looking at mother and looking away (Stern, 1977). In this early stage of development, communication occurs through cycles of matching, disruption, and repair (Beebe & Lachmann, 1988; Gianino & Tronick, 1988; Lachmann & Beebe, 1989; Tronick, 1989). Thus, Beebe and Gerstman (1980; see also Beebe & Stern, 1977) have constructed a scale of mother–infant affective facial engagement. At the top of the scale is the gape smile (scale point 90); at the bottom is an inhibition of responsivity, with a limp, motionless drooping of the head and an aversion of gaze (scale point 10). In general, mothers and infants match on the direction of change, positive or negative, but avoid an exact match on the level of the scale; the overall process is controlled by mutual regulation (Beebe & Lachmann, 1988; see also Cohn & Tronick, 1988).

Tronick (1989; Gianino & Tronick, 1988) reports that cycles of matching, disruption, and repair, in which mother and infant move from matched affective states to unmatched states and back again, can and usually occur within a span of less than 1 second. Lachmann and Beebe (1989) propose that these cycles of match, mismatch, and repair constitute a presymbolic source of experiences of oneness, experiences that may provide affective content to (healthy) narcissistic fantasies, and of a sense of self. Specifically, matches and repairs may be related to the sense of oneness in later life, and mismatches, if not too intense, may be related to a sense of a separate self. On the other hand, intense mismatches, as in the still-face experiment (Tronick, Als, Adamson, Wise, & Brazelton, 1978), in which a mother attempts to maintain a deliberately still face instead of a normal interactive facial display, or pervasive mismatches, in the form of the chase-and-dodge interaction reported by Beebe and Stern (1977), are significant disruptions of mutual regulation. In the short term, as in the still-face experiment, they result in infant distress, and a sequence of mismatches, as in chase-and-dodge interaction, results in infant disengagement through gaze aversion. In the longer term, it is hypothesized, the infant begins to internalize not a sense of a separate self but instead a representation of derailment (Spitz, 1964) or of interactive misregulation.

Mother–infant communication involves not only a cycle of match, mismatch, and repair, but also an alternation between simultaneous interaction, or coaction, and sequential interaction, or turn taking, again with both varieties of interaction involving split-second timing (see Beebe, 1986; Beebe & Lachmann, 1988). Whereas sequential interaction and vocalization eventually take the form of a dialogue or conversation and may be a prereflective source of the experience of separation, simultaneous interaction and vocalization may be another presymbolic source of fantasies of oneness or merger (Lachmann & Beebe, 1989; Pine, 1986; Stern, 1983).

Intersubjectivity and communication. Further influencing the development of a sense of oneness is the emergence, in the second 6 months of life, of intersubjectivity (Stern, 1985). Whereas 2- to 6-month-old babies live in a world of interactive affective matching, 9- and 10-month-olds live in a world in which affect becomes a medium not only of parent–infant mutual regulation but also for communication between two minds, parent’s and infant’s. This capacity for intersubjective affective communication is revealed in the phenomenon of social referencing (e.g., Campos & Stenberg, 1981; Klinnert, Emde, Butterfield, & Campos, 1986; Sorce, Emde, Campos, & Klinnert, 1985). Typically, an infant, when confronted with a situation of uncertainty (e.g., a visual cliff on a crawling surface or an unusual toy), will look to a caregiver for (nonverbal) instructions as to how to proceed. If the parent, through facial expression or voice tone, signals fear or anger, the infant avoids the situation. If the parent signals interest or enjoyment, the infant approaches and explores the unusual object or stimulus.

Because intersubjectivity requires the presence of two separate minds, it also makes possible the phenomenon of affect attunement (Stern, 1985), a sophisticated form of affective matching that may be yet another presymbolic source of the experience of oneness or, at least, of relatedness. In affect attunement, a parent does not imitate an infant but instead matches, across modes of behavior, the affective features of the infant’s behavior—that is, its intensity, duration, or shape. For example, a parent may match through vocalization the intensity, contour, and duration of a baby’s motor behavior (e.g., shaking a rattle, reaching for a toy). Thus, through affect attunement, parent and infant establish a sense of interpersonal communion. A sense of separateness is also implied insofar as the parent’s behavior is not an imitation of

the baby's but instead a cross-modal matching of it. Nevertheless, communion or togetherness, if not oneness, constitutes the dominant tone of affect attunement.

Of course, misattunements, both purposeful and nonpurposeful, can occur as well (Stern, 1985). A parent can intentionally overmatch or undermatch the intensity of an infant's behavior so as to increase or decrease the infant's level of arousal. Or a parent can unintentionally misidentify the quality or intensity of an infant's affective state. Much of the time, according to Stern, misattunements are a normal part of parent-infant communication. Although severe or pervasive misattunements are usually required to induce psychopathology, sometimes even subtle mismatches can result in psychological disturbance. Thus, attunements and misattunements are the mirroring communications that, according to the various theories of Kohut (1971, 1977), Lacan (1949/1977, 1953), Lichtenstein (1961, 1964), Sullivan (1940, 1953, 1972), and Winnicott (1971/1982), establish the affective core of the preverbal self (Emde, 1983).

Implications of Research Findings

The current empirical literature on infancy is an embarrassment of riches, and this brief, highly selective summary of it in no way does justice to the present state of knowledge. It shows quite clearly, however, that infants, even in the first months of life, are biologically programmed to participate in, seek out, and develop presymbolic, pre-reflective theories about the environment. Infants are born with, and develop in the first year of life, remarkable capacities for learning about and becoming involved with the world around them, especially the human world. Although they come into the world with at most rudimentary awareness of the difference between self and others, newborns are, nonetheless, designed to start elaborating this distinction from very early on. There is no developmental period in which infants are unaware of their surroundings or uninterested in establishing bonds with their caregivers. Because babies engage with their caregivers in the mutual regulation of arousal and attempt to keep stimulation within an optimal range, one can safely reject the constancy principle, the drive to eliminate tension or reduce it to an absolute minimum, as an organizing dimension of behavior, whether infant or adult.

Under the weight of the current evidence, constructs like normal autism, normal symbiosis, primary narcissism, fusion, hallucinatory omnipotence, and other inaccurate depictions of infancy surely must give way. The theory of hallucinatory wish fulfillment, as Bleuler and Vygotsky knew, seems especially implausible, if only because an organism that normally functioned in this manner would be incapable of survival. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine attributing to other species, as a piece of normal development, an infantile stage in which hallucination is a response to frustration. Equally telling is Stern's (1985) argument that preverbal infants, much like nonhuman organisms, perceive the world literally and are, in the absence of gross pathology, incapable of distorting reality in a manner suggesting omnipotence of thought; fantasies of omnipotence—for example, the use of a transitional object (Winnicott, 1953, 1971/1982)—require symbolic thought and language (Gramont, 1990). The role of symbolic and linguistic processes in constituting phenomena like omnipotence of thought and transitional object usage suggests that, contrary to received ideas about infantile fantasies, narcissism has its origins in the second, not the first, year of life.

As with any case of paradigm change, however, old notions do not just give way automatically, and the replacement of one set of ideas by another is as much a matter of social processes as it is one of theoretical conceptions and empirical evidence. In a different context, it has been said that Chomsky's revolution in linguistics occurred not because he converted his colleagues but because he converted their graduate students. A similar situation exists today with regard to the impact of new knowledge about infancy on psychoanalytic developmental theories. Because of space limitations, this chapter cannot treat in detail the defenses of traditional assumptions. For the interested reader, some representative writers in this regard are Edgecumbe (1981; Edgecumbe & Burgner, 1972), Kaplan (1987), and Pine (1979, 1981, 1986). Counterarguments to their defenses of traditional psychoanalytic developmental psychology can be found in, among many sources, Eagle (1984), Holt (1967/1989), Horner (1985), Milton Klein (1981), Lachmann and Beebe (1989), Peterfreund (1978), and Stern (1985).

One received psychoanalytic assumption that needs further discussion, however, is the continuing equation of the concept of fusion with that of undifferentiation. Although both merger and undifferentiation entail an inability to distinguish between self and nonself, any further

analogy between these two notions is erroneous. Unfortunately, this analogy constitutes a central, if not the central, conceptual barrier to the final rejection of ideas like primary fusion, primary merger, primary narcissism, and normal symbiosis. Although it is relatively easy, in the wake of Stern's (1985) arguments, to reject the concept of normal autism, it is far more difficult, as examples like Kernberg (1991) and Pine (1986) show, to renounce the theory of normal symbiosis. There is something seductively plausible about regarding a neonate's rudimentary differentiations between self and mother as an indication of fusion between self and mother. As the subliminal activation studies of L. H. Silverman, Lachmann, and Milich (1982) confirm, the fantasy of oneness exerts a powerful influence on human behavior.

To be brief about this point, however, fusion is an experience or a fantasy—a complex but essentially narcissistic state that, like the narcissistic illusion of omnipotence, presupposes language, the capacity for self-recognition, and the capacity to regard oneself as separate (Lachmann & Beebe, 1989; Stern, 1985). It is only in the context of a capacity to experience separateness that the fantasy of oneness can become psychologically compelling. Differentiation, on the other hand, is a relative or comparative term that can refer, among its multiple meanings, to the degree of organization in a person's phenomenal experience or to the complexity of one psychological state or set of processes relative to another.

An infant, therefore, is clearly less differentiated psychologically than is an adult and cannot make the same discriminations between self and other that an adult can. Nevertheless, the infant is biologically programmed to acquire knowledge of these discriminations, much as nonhuman organisms do without ever coming to regard themselves as separate entities, distinct from their conspecifics. Furthermore, the relative lack of awareness of these distinctions does not make one psychologically fused with others, any more than an infant rhesus monkey is psychologically merged with its mother. I might also add that the fusion fantasies of toddlers, as embodied in transitional objects, are less differentiated than are the fantasies of adults about emotional and sexual intimacy; even fantasies of merger exist on a continuum of differentiation.

Although affect attunements are the likely preverbal precursors to the experience of fusion, these affective states cannot be regarded as moments of merger in the absence of the experience of separateness

(Lachmann & Beebe, 1989; Stern, 1985). Such preverbal states are easily explained, without recourse to psychoanalysis, as consequences of mutual caregiver–infant regulation. What requires psychoanalytic explanation are not babies' moments of affective contentment but instead adults' essentially narcissistic fantasies about these infantile experiences.

A Reformulation of Narcissism and Narcissistic Personality Disorder

By now, it should be clear that the term *narcissism*, at least when used to characterize normal infant development as objectless, is problematic. If normal development contains no truly objectless phases, then perhaps, contrary to Freud's positing of narcissistic neuroses, there are no truly objectless forms of psychopathology. In short, if infants, from the very beginning of life, have object relations, then Freud's (1914/1957) idea that certain severe forms of pathology involve a regression from object relations to a narcissistic, and hence objectless, point of fixation becomes untenable. But if narcissistic personality disorder does not involve a characterologically based absence of object ties, the question arises as to the grounds on which such a disorder may legitimately be called narcissistic. The following pages contain an admittedly speculative attempt, on the basis of clinical lore and empirical research in social cognition and developmental psychology, to answer precisely this question. Because empirical research indicates that the self-representation emerges at age 18 months (Amsterdam & Levitt, 1980; Kagan, 1981; M. Lewis & Brooks-Gunn, 1979), this account will stress the centrality of the second, rather than the first, year of life in the origin of narcissistic phenomena.

Of course, a simpler argument, given Freud's (1914/1957) linking not just objectlessness but grandiosity to the concept of narcissism, is that persons with a narcissistic disorder are especially conceited or arrogant. This account misses, however, the dialectical character of narcissism (Andreas-Salome, 1921/1962; Bach, 1985; Grunberger, 1971/1979; Lacan, 1953; Laplanche, 1970/1976)—in this case, the involvement of narcissism in some forms of low self-esteem. As Grunberger (1971/1979, p. 3n) wrote, "The narcissistic person is one who

loves himself well, but also one who loves himself poorly or not at all."

The oxymoron contained in the term *narcissistic object choice* also reveals the paradoxes of narcissism. It certainly is possible to think of an object choice patterned after some characteristic of the self, but insofar as narcissism has traditionally denoted objectlessness, the term *narcissistic object choice* seems to imply that an object choice can exist in an objectless state. Only a dialectical theory of narcissism avoids such terminological conundrums and recognizes the narcissistic dimensions of poor self-esteem and certain intense object relations.

The Myth of Narcissus and the Paradoxes of Narcissism

Narcissus. In fact, an awareness of these paradoxes is essential to an understanding of the myth of Narcissus. Although Narcissus spurns object ties, he is not objectless, and in several versions of the myth he falls in love with an object clearly other than himself (Spotnitz & Resnikoff, 1954). In the best known version of the myth, that of Ovid (8/1958), Narcissus falls in love not with himself but with his reflection in the water and initially fails to recognize that the object he desires is not another but instead the image of himself. He is drawn to an image that he takes to be an object, an other, and even after he recognizes himself in the water, he continues to relate to the image as if it were someone other than himself. Thus, he dies from self-neglect and unrequited love, not self-admiration, as he pines away for an object that he cannot have, an object that unconsciously reminds him of his absent mother (Rosenman, 1981; Spotnitz & Resnikoff, 1954). In short, the story of Narcissus is a story of intense but pathological object relations, not of objectlessness.⁸

Normal narcissism and self-enhancing biases. The practical value of Freud's paradoxical concept is therefore twofold. First, Freud seems to have identified a fundamental human truth: that normal functioning is narcissistic (i.e., self-overvaluing); that, as research in social psychology confirms, normal self-esteem involves not accurate self-

⁸ For a very different reading of this myth, one that regards Narcissus as objectless and therefore as the original example of primary narcissism, see Bergmann (1987).

appraisal but “overly positive self-evaluations, exaggerated perceptions of control or mastery, and unrealistic optimism” (Taylor & Brown, 1988, p. 193). For example, most Americans believe they are above average in intelligence and attractiveness (Wylie, 1979), a belief that may originate in early childhood (Harter, 1990), and by the beginning of adolescence, individuals have come to develop self-concepts in which they regard positive traits as central or typical aspects of themselves and negative traits as peripheral or atypical features (Harter, 1986). Numerous studies demonstrate the pervasiveness of a self-enhancing bias—specifically, a bias to take excessive credit for one’s success and to evade responsibility for one’s failures (see Greenwald, 1980; Muller, 1982; Sackheim, 1983; Taylor & Brown, 1988; Zuckerman, 1979). There is even a propensity not only to avoid responsibility for negative outcomes but also to attribute the blame to others instead (Johnston, 1967). The presence of these essentially narcissistic distortions correlates with happiness or contentment, ability to care for others, and capacity for creative productive work—in essence, psychological health and the opposite of (narcissistic) pathology. Their absence correlates with low self-esteem and moderate depression (Alloy & Abramson, 1979, 1988; Ruehlman, West, & Pasahow, 1985; Taylor & Brown, 1988; but see Ackerman & DeRubeis, 1991, for a critique).

Also striking is that the self-enhancing bias may not exist in Asian cultures, and a modesty (i.e., self-effacing or other-enhancing) bias may prevail instead (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Whereas Americans take excessive responsibility for positive outcomes and deny responsibility for negative outcomes, studies among the Japanese reveal the opposite pattern—specifically, an inclination to assume blame for negative outcomes and to attribute responsibility for positive outcomes to sources other than oneself (e.g., Shikanai, 1978). If narcissism is a linear concept indicating excessive self-esteem, such findings would suggest that narcissism is not universal but merely a characteristic of individuals raised in Western cultures. But if narcissism is paradoxical or dialectical, if it involves not just a desire to stand out but also a desire to merge with a totality larger than oneself (Andreas-Salome, 1921/1962; Balint, 1959; Grunberger, 1971/1979; Rothstein, 1984), then the presence of a modesty bias among Asians suggests that indeed narcissism is universal. On this perspective, a culturally pervasive propensity to diminish self-evaluation and to (over)affirm object ties is just as narcissistic as the reverse inclination to inflate self-evaluations and to

diminish the importance of others. More pragmatically, the self-effacing bias is narcissistic because, in its diminution of the self, it is no more accurate an account of the interpersonal world than is the bias for self-enhancement.

Narcissism and self disorders. The second practical reason for continuing to employ Freud's paradoxical concept is that nowadays clinicians see themselves as treating patients whose problems are not the classical symptom neuroses (e.g., obsessionality or hysteria) but instead disturbances in self-esteem, identity, and object relations. These are precisely the aspects of personality functioning that are implicated by the concept of narcissism, especially if narcissism, construed as a pathological phenomenon, is taken to refer not to objectlessness but to intense object relations in which the chosen object resembles the self (Freud, 1914/1957) or fills a selfobject need (Kohut, 1977). Although no epidemiological data support the contention that disturbances in the clinical population have shifted from transference neuroses to self disorders or narcissistic neuroses, most clinicians would agree that such a change has occurred. This shift in clinical populations, if a reality, would explain the current popularity of theorists like Kernberg and Kohut. However, even if recent developments in clinical emphasis reflect a change not in the actual patients treated but only in the way psychotherapists have come to understand themselves and others, this transformation of outlook within a profession with considerable influence on societal definitions of normality and abnormality still suggests that concerns about a culture of narcissism (Lasch, 1979) are well founded indeed.

Recent Attempts to Reformulate the Concept of Narcissism

Although the concept of narcissism is essential to understand disturbances in self-esteem, identity, and object relations—disturbances generally grouped under the rubric of self disorders, narcissistic disorders, or borderline disorders—the link between normal and pathological narcissism needs to be made clear. Nowadays, theorists trying to avoid the pitfalls of the economic definition of narcissism as the libidinal investment in the self often regard narcissism as part of self-esteem regulation—specifically, as the maintenance of positive self-esteem (e.g., Dare & Holder, 1981; Stolorow, 1975). Such definitions constitute a distinct advance over the traditional conceptualization because they

recognize that self-esteem results from a complex interplay of wishful (or drive-related) satisfactions, experiences of efficacy, and object relations, both internal and external, not just from a hypothetical libidinal cathexis of the self (Dare & Holder, 1981). Nevertheless, these newer conceptualizations remain essentially flawed. They still consider narcissism to be a linear construct, not a dialectical one.

One possible solution to this problem is to regard narcissism not as a unitary construct but as several linear, interactive dimensions, as Stolorow (1975) and Westen (1990a) have done. Because this strategy allows for the possibility of empirical research, it should be embraced, not discounted. Factor-analytic and principal-components studies of self-report narcissism scales (Emmons, 1984, 1987; Mullins & Kopelman, 1988; Raskin et al., 1991a, 1991b; Raskin & Terry, 1988; Wink, 1991), for example, rely on this conceptual approach, although they arrive at descriptive, not theoretical, dimensions. According to the simplest of these statistical solutions, a principal-components analysis of several narcissism inventories, these measures can be resolved into two orthogonal factors: Vulnerability-Sensitivity and Grandiosity-Exhibitionism (Wink, 1991). The most complex solution (Raskin & Terry, 1988), an analysis of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory alone, arrives at seven oblique dimensions (Authority, Self-Sufficiency, Superiority, Exhibitionism, Exploitativeness, Vanity, and Entitlement). These investigations therefore permit a more precise description and measurement of narcissism's behavioral paradoxes, but they do not and cannot provide personality constructs that explain these paradoxes.

In contrast, Westen's (1990a) theoretically sophisticated review of research in social and developmental psychology decomposes narcissism into four explanatory dimensions: egocentrism, complexity of self-representation, absence of capacity for investment in others, and self-esteem. He treats these constructs as interactive but essentially linear variables, even though one of them, egocentrism, with its Piagetian lineage, is really a qualitative concept that provides a bridge between the multidimensional approaches of empirical psychology and the dialectical formulation of narcissism to be advanced here (see also Blatt, 1983).

A more dialectical understanding of narcissism focuses primarily not on quantitative dimensions (i.e., not on self-esteem regulation, self-focus, or self-investment) but instead on the qualitative dimension—on the manner in which the self and the relationship of the self to

others is represented (Auerbach, 1990). In this regard, egocentrism, defined as the inability to shift from one's own perspective to the viewpoint of the other and thus to regard oneself as an object (Piaget, 1923/1951, 1924/1952, 1926/1960), clearly involves a disturbance in the representation of self, especially when this cognitive limitation is manifested in a manner inappropriate for a person's age or presumed level of cognitive organization. It is therefore noteworthy that the two most prominent theories of narcissism, those of Kohut (1977, 1984) and Kernberg (1975, 1984), despite their many differences, regard narcissistic personality disorders as involving disturbances in the representation of self and others, not just disruptions of self-esteem regulation. Kernberg argues that narcissistic personality disorder involves a pathological fusion of real self, ideal self, and ideal object. Not a misallocation of libido, but a pathological self-formation, with its concomitant distortions of object representation, is the essential feature of Kernberg's understanding of narcissistic disturbance. As for Kohut, his emphases on selfobjects and self-experience indicate that the fundamental problem in pathological narcissism is the manner in which one experiences oneself and one's ties to sustaining figures and that disturbances in self-esteem follow from disruptions of the matrix of self-object ties. But if distortions of self- (and object) representation are the essential feature of narcissistic personality disorder, the specific nature of those distortions also must be delineated.

Self-Reflexivity

Returning, then, from the realm of pathology to that of normality, let us consider that the self-representation is unique among the constituents of the representational world. What distinguishes the self-representation from representations of objects is self-reflexivity (Mann, 1991; Mead, 1934). In his classical account of the self, James (1890/1958; cf. Mead, 1934; Schafer, 1968) distinguished between the *I* (the self as knower or agent, as subject) and the *me* (the self as known, as object). Whereas one knows, and relates to, objects only through what one can observe and infer about them, the situation with self is far different. Self-knowledge, in contrast to knowledge of others, involves (at least) two sources (Bach, 1985; Duval & Wicklund, 1972; M. Lewis & Brooks-Gunn, 1979; Mead, 1934; Piaget, 1924/1952, 1926/1960, 1937/1954): (a) subjective self-awareness, or the experience of oneself

as, in Kohut's (1977, p. 99) phrase, "a center of initiative and a recipient of impressions" and (b) objective self-awareness, or observations of oneself as an object among other objects, a self among selves. Reflexive self-awareness, or self-reflexivity, is the capacity to integrate these distinct sources of knowledge—to move easily between subjective and objective perspectives on the self. As such, it is the opposite of egocentrism (Piaget, 1924/1952, 1926/1960, 1937/1954). Because one cannot simultaneously regard oneself as an object and immerse oneself in one's own subjectivity, except perhaps during mystical experiences or states of ecstasy, and because these two modalities for self-knowledge can result in highly discrepant self-images, the capacity for reflexive self-awareness necessarily produces psychological tension and conflict, especially about one's conception of oneself (Lichtenstein, 1963).

A Definition of Narcissism in Terms of Self-Reflexivity

Narcissism is here defined as the attempt to escape, whether through self-enhancement or self-effacement, the conflicts that result from self-reflexivity—to replace a necessary division within the self with an illusory oneness. It thus shares much with Rothstein's (1984) ego-psychological definition of narcissism as the pursuit of the felt experience of perfection. On the other hand, in seeing self-reflexivity and the concomitant experience of separateness as factors fundamental to the tensions underlying narcissism, this approach rejects the notion of a tensionless developmental period, whether before or after birth. It further rejects the notion that a drive to recover a prenatal state underlies the yearning for oneness (Lachmann & Beebe, 1989). The conceptual roots of this reformulation are in object-relations theory, developmental psychology, social cognition, and Lacanian theory, rather than ego psychology. Most essential to this account are the writings of Bach (1985), Blatt (1974, 1983; Blatt & Shichman, 1983), Broucek (1982), Westen (1990a), and other commentators who have explored the relationships among self-reflexivity, egocentrism, and narcissism.

Although objective self-awareness is a complex skill, its crucial feature, from the standpoint of this reconceptualization of narcissism, is that it creates a state of psychological tension or of negative affect. Duval and Wicklund (1972), in their empirical analysis of the differences between objective and subjective self-awareness, propose that

subjective self-awareness, because it involves a focus of attention away from oneself and toward the environment, is associated with feelings of control and mastery and with a sense of at-oneness with the external world (i.e., of well-being and vitality). In contrast, objective self-awareness, with its increased attention to attributes of the self, results in a recognition of discrepancies between oneself and one's internal standards, between actual self and ideal self. The recognition of these discrepancies in turn results in self-criticism, in negative affect, and in lowered self-esteem. To resolve this psychological tension, one must reduce the observed discrepancies between actual self and ideal self, either by modifying one's behavior to bring it more in accord with one's standards or by escaping, either psychologically (e.g., through denial) or physically (e.g., through unfocused activity), from the state of increased self-focus into one of subjective self-awareness. In a series of studies, Duval and Wicklund (1972) demonstrated that an increase in objective self-awareness, brought on by experimental manipulations like the presence of a mirror, a camera, or an attentive person, resulted in lowered self-esteem, in attempts to obviate discrepancies between real self and ideal self, and, above all, in efforts to escape from self-focus.

Objective Self-Awareness, Narcissism, and Shame

Duval and Wicklund (1972) do not specify the nature of the negative affect brought on by increased objective self-awareness, but clinical lore tells us that the affect in question is usually embarrassment or shame (Broucek, 1982). Although shame is a complex affect with multiple sources, one essential feature of this feeling state is the experience of exposure (e.g., Kinston, 1983, 1987; Schneider, 1987; Wurmser, 1981, 1987)—an experience that requires the capacity for self-observation or objective self-awareness (Broucek, 1982).

There are, to be sure, also prereflective sources of shame. Tomkins's (1962, 1963) affect theories, with their emphasis on innate, preverbal facial displays and patterns of neural activation, are also central to an understanding of the relationship between shame and narcissism (Broucek, 1979, 1982; Nathanson, 1987). Preverbal shame displays can be observed in infants 3 or 4 months old in response to experiences of inefficacy or of disruption in caregiver–infant interaction. And Spitz's

(1965) 8-month stranger anxiety, with its shyness, lowered head, and lowered eyes, may also be a preverbal shame display.

These prereflective shame phenomena, along with experimental demonstration that infants can become extremely distressed when their parents are emotionally unresponsive for even brief periods (Tronick et al., 1978), indicate that the traditional psychoanalytic hypothesis of infantile omnipotence (e.g., Ferenczi, 1913/1950; Freud, 1900/1953, 1911/1958a, 1913/1955; Grunberger, 1971/1979; Mahler et al., 1975; Winnicott, 1960) is in error (see Holt, 1967/1989; Horner, 1985; Peterfreund, 1978). According to this dubious notion, infants less than 6 months old, when frustrated, satisfy their needs through hallucination, and preverbal infants older than age 6 months resort to wishful or magical thinking.

Aside from the sheer implausibility of normal hallucinations in neonates (Holt, 1967/1989; Horner, 1985) and the likelihood that magical thinking requires capacities for language and symbolic thought (Gramont, 1990; Stern, 1985), it is certain that the prereflective infant, like any other nonverbal mammalian organism, experiences failure, inefficacy, affect misattunement, and frustration and is unable to wish away these states. Because even prereflective shame calls attention to defects and limitations of the self and to disruptions of interpersonal relatedness (H. B. Lewis, 1980, 1987), shame is the crucial narcissistic affect (Wurmser, 1981, 1987), the opposite of pride (Nathanson, 1987) and an attenuator of interest and enjoyment; it constitutes the affective core of narcissistic injuries—of blows to self-concept and self-esteem (Broucek, 1982; Kinston, 1983; Wurmser, 1987).

The absence of objective self-awareness during the first year of life, however, means that infants, although not living in a world of omnipotence, do manifest a certain elevation of mood, much as Duval and Wicklund's (1972) analysis of self-reflexivity in adults suggests. This euthymia emerges in the practicing subphase (ages 9 to 15 months), when the achievement of upright locomotion propels the child to separate from mother, expands the infant's horizons, and provides a sense of exhilaration (Mahler et al., 1975). The emergence of objective self-awareness brings to a close the euphoria of the practicing stage and calls forth for the first time shame affect proper. The concurrence of these developments is no coincidence. The ability to regard oneself as an object—as indexed by the capacity for self-recognition in the mirror, in photographs, and on videotape—is consolidated between

ages 18 and 24 months (Amsterdam & Levitt, 1980; M. Lewis & Brooks-Gunn, 1979). The period between ages 18 and 24 months corresponds, of course, with the height of the rapprochement subphase, a developmental period ushered in by the discovery that one is indeed a small and separate being in a large world (Mahler et al., 1975), by the discovery of shame (Amsterdam & Levitt, 1980).

A period of relative emotional tempest and turbulence, rapprochement corresponds with the anal phase (or at least toilet training), with the establishment of gender identity (Money & Ehrhardt, 1972), and with the emergence of a superego or at least of evaluative standards (Kagan, 1981), the last of which is consistent with the beginnings of self-reflexive shame at this stage. The turbulence of this period, on the traditional account (Mahler et al., 1975), is due to oscillations between fears that, on the one hand, in separating and individuating, one will lose mother and be left all alone but that, on the other hand, in clinging to mother, one will be reengulfed by her and will lose one's emerging autonomy. Because the proposition that infants differentiate from a fused state and are in psychological danger of being reengulfed into it is highly dubious, the present account disregards this hypothesis and focuses instead on the experiential states that the traditional perspective has associated with the new capacity for objective self-awareness. These include a sense of separateness or of being distinct from others, especially from mother (Rothstein, 1979), of smallness and vulnerability (Mahler et al., 1975), and of distress at being unable to measure up to newly constructed evaluative standards (Kagan, 1981), all of which can be regarded as narcissistic injuries. An upsurge in these feelings, insofar as they result in disruptions of attachments and of the sense of efficacy, quite easily accounts for the negativistic, willful behavior of the 2-year-old. Issues of anality are also likely to be crucial at this time, if only because anality is associated with shame-filled experiences of defectiveness, dirtiness, and loss of control (Erikson, 1963). But anality, along with early genital play, becomes a focus of toddlers' negative self-appraisals because it is a focus of parental disapproval (Amsterdam & Levitt, 1980).

In any case, the attempt to ward off feelings of shame—that is, a sense that one is weak, incompetent, defective, dirty, and above all unlovable (Wurmser, 1981)—constitutes the motivational structure underlying normal narcissistic illusions. To limit feelings of shame, one can inflate oneself, proclaim an illusory self-sufficiency, and minimize

one's needs for or ties to significant objects. Or one can diminish and efface oneself, elevate one's object ties, and attempt to merge with a totality—in short, create an oceanic fusion. The former strategy attempts to eliminate division and separateness by taking the viewpoint of subjective self-awareness and by attempting to ignore the withering glare of objective self-awareness; it reduces shame through self-inflation and an elevation of self-esteem (Bach, 1985; Broucek, 1982; Kinston, 1983, 1987). Within the realm of normal behavior, this strategy leads to assertiveness and competitiveness, as well as to self-enhancing biases. At a pathological level, this increased self-esteem is termed grandiosity or exhibitionism. The latter strategy, self-effacement, copes with the experience of division by adopting the viewpoint of objective self-awareness, by attempting to annul one's subjectivity and vitality; it reduces shame through a diminution of self-esteem, through an effort to hide, and through an idealization of the other (Bach, 1985; Blatt, 1983; Broucek, 1982; Kinston, 1983, 1987). Within the normal range, this strategy is associated with cooperativeness, politeness, and modesty. At a pathological level, these efforts are termed compliance, submissiveness, or even masochism. Ultimately, concepts like infantile omnipotence or normal symbiosis, among numerous others of equally questionable validity, derive from a wish for a state not only without reflexive self-awareness but indeed without tensions. Such concepts, in other words, reflect narcissistic fantasies—illusory attempts to annul division and separateness, to create a sense of oneness that never was.

Reflexive Self-Awareness and Pathological Narcissism

Returning to questions of narcissistic personality disorder, one can see the points of continuation between normal forms of self-awareness and self-representation and manifestations that are pathological—between subjective self-awareness and grandiose exhibitionism on the one hand and between objective self-awareness and narcissistic depletion on the other. Narcissistic personality disorder involves an impairment in evocative constancy that is similar to but less severe than the representational disturbance that many theorists (Adler & Buie, 1979; Blatt & Shichman, 1983; Masterson & Rinsley, 1975; Modell, 1963; Rinsley, 1982) attribute to the borderline disturbances. Evocative representational constancy is the ability to evoke images either of a cohesive, effective self or of a nurturing, constant object during periods

of increased stress, reduced structure, or disturbance in relationships with significant others (Adler & Buie, 1979; Blatt & Auerbach, 1988; Blatt & Shichman, 1983).

Associated with object permanence, the ability to recall an object that has been hidden from view (Piaget, 1937/1954), as well as with reflexive self-awareness, evocative constancy also emerges during the second year of life (Fraiberg, 1969). But whereas borderline personalities, under conditions of stress, will have difficulty in calling to mind images either of a benevolent, nurturing object or of a competent, effective self or of both, narcissistic personalities can easily evoke cohesive self- and object images. The problem for these individuals is that the vitality of the self-image requires the deadening of the images of others and vice versa. Narcissistic object relations involve either a grandiose, exhibitionistic self and an empty, shadowing other, or else an idealized, inflated other and a depleted, shadowing self. Thus, the representational disturbance for narcissistic personalities is a difficulty not in evoking stable, vital images of self and other but instead in making a smooth transition between vital images of the self and vital images of the object—between subjective and objective forms of self-awareness (Bach, 1985).

Varieties of Narcissistic Disturbance: Grandiosity and Shame

In his classic description of narcissistic personality disorder, Kernberg (1975, p. 227–228) writes, of the peculiar tension between grandiose self-preoccupation and intense psychological need:

The patients present an unusual degree of self-reference in their interactions with other people, a great need to be loved and admired by others, and a curious apparent contradiction between a very inflated concept of themselves and an inordinate need for tribute from others. . . . On the surface these patients appear to present a remarkable lack of object relationships; on a deeper level, their interactions reflect very intense, primitive internalized object relationships of a very frightening kind and an incapacity to depend on internalized good objects.

H. B. Lewis (1980, 1987) regards shame as the affect that mediates the tension between grandiosity on the one hand and feelings of neediness

and deprivation on the other. In attempting to annul their dependence, their feelings of shame, and the sense of objective self-awareness, Kernberg's narcissists assert a hypertrophied sense of subjective self-awareness and present themselves as shameless in their grandiosity and entitlement (Blatt, 1983; Broucek, 1982; Gabbard, 1986). Their self-sufficiency is illusory, however, because every narcissist needs a mirror.

In contrast to these grandiose patients are the narcissistic personalities who seem to suffer from excessive shame and inadequate self-esteem. These individuals present the opposite paradox of Kernberg's narcissistic personalities—namely, a curious contradiction between a presentation that may be modest, shy, compliant, or even submissive on the one hand and a hidden self-preoccupation, often in the form of hypochondriasis or diffuse anxiety, or a hidden grandiosity, ambition, or sense of entitlement on the other. Kohut's (1971, 1977) descriptions are the most relevant discussions of these individuals. In characterizing these persons, Kohut highlights symptoms like emptiness and depression; lack of zest, enthusiasm, and initiative; subtle feelings of depersonalization; and pervasive hypochondriacal brooding. Like Kernberg, he notes the extreme dependence of these individuals and their positive mood states on external praise. Their resultant feelings of excitement, however, are experienced with discomfort and are transitory. Narcissistic injuries, narcissistic vulnerability, and intense feelings of shame are prominent in Kohut's (1971, 1977) description of narcissistic pathology. These patients can be described as shame-prone narcissistic personalities who feel, under the pressure of objective self-awareness, that their every flaw is exposed for observation (Broucek, 1982; Gabbard, 1986). They experience intense anxiety, hypochondriasis, and a sense of emptiness because, in observing themselves, they suppress the sense of subjective self-awareness and its associated feelings of vitality. They regard themselves as damaged individuals who can in no way measure up to their grandiose ambitions and ideals. They idealize others and attempt to merge with them to compensate for this sense of damage or defectiveness.

Thus, Bach (1985) and Broucek (1982) have used the concept of reflexive self-awareness to propose an ingenious resolution to the Kernberg-Kohut debate. Kernberg's narcissists, in their shameless grandiosity and entitlement, overemphasize subjective self-awareness; Kohut's narcissists, in their shame-ridden hypersensitivity, vulnerability, and submissiveness, overemphasize objective self-awareness (cf. Gab-

bard, 1986; H. B. Lewis, 1980, 1987). Of course, this dichotomous typology of narcissistic personalities—grandiose and shameless versus compliant and shame-prone—involves great oversimplification. If narcissistic disturbance concerns the inability to make a smooth transition between subjective and objective forms of self-awareness (Bach, 1985), then there should be many transitional forms of narcissistic pathology between the two poles, grandiose and shame-prone. To some extent, every grandiose narcissist is warding off shame, and every shame-ridden narcissist has covert feelings of grandiosity. A more useful characterization is that narcissistic personalities, with their difficulty in making transitions between subjective and objective self-awareness, display poor integration of shame and pride or, in other words, demonstrate highly variable self-esteem regulation. In treating narcissistic personalities, therefore, the therapist will have to confront, like Kernberg, the grandiose, exploitative behavior for which these individuals are known and to empathize, like Kohut, with the feelings of defectiveness and emptiness from which these patients suffer. In some patients, the former issues will predominate; in others, the latter.

If, however, the dichotomization of narcissists into shame-ridden and grandiose (e.g., Bach, 1985; Broucek, 1982; Gabbard, 1986), or clinging and counterdependent (Balint, 1959), subtypes is simplistic, it is not without heuristic or empirical value. As noted, self-report narcissism scales can be resolved into orthogonal factors of Vulnerability-Sensitivity and Grandiosity-Exhibitionism (Wink, 1991). And whereas the first factor measures introversion, defensiveness, vulnerability, and anxiety, and the second extraversion, self-assurance, aggression, and exhibitionism, both factors tap central narcissistic features like conceit, self-indulgence, and disregard of others.

Some Remaining Conceptual Issues

This account of narcissism leans heavily on the emergence of objective self-awareness toward the end of the second year of life and on the interplay of this new ability with subjective awareness. Its basic thesis is that many narcissistic phenomena, from self-enhancing and self-effacing biases in normals to experiences of grandiosity and intense shame in narcissistic personalities, can be explained as attempts to escape the sense of separateness and division that arises when one

finally comes to recognize oneself as merely an object among objects, a self among selves (Bach, 1985). Many criticisms can be made of this hypothesis, only a small number of which I will take up here.

Limitations of the Theory of Reflexive Self-Awareness

First, this theory, as stated, appears to be monocausal. It traces virtually all narcissistic phenomena to the coordination of two representational states. In this sense, the theory as stated is too broad, and the discovery of its limitations is inevitable. A specific problem with this theory is that it provides an adequate explanation of narcissistic disturbances in which there is representational instability but has little to say about neurotic-level narcissism, in which a person has inflated self-esteem and excessive self-focus but also has stable attachments and reasonably stable, cohesive representations of self and others (e.g., Blatt & Shichman, 1983; Freud, 1931/1961; W. Reich, 1949; cf. Westen, 1990a). Neurotic-level narcissism may simply be a defense against self-critical depression (Blatt & Shichman, 1983), but the currently articulated theory does not speak to that issue. For reasons of space, the differentiation of higher level from lower level forms of narcissistic disturbance will not be discussed here.

A broader problem is that the theory currently under discussion seems to explain all the complexities of the human personality in terms of narcissism. It must be stated explicitly, therefore, that the concepts of narcissism and self-reflexivity have implications for all of personality functioning but that they are by no means the only relevant, or even the most important, factors. Variations in affect and drive regulation, in self-esteem, in self-focus, in identity formation, in object relations, in work, and in love are each only partially related to transformations of reflexive self-awareness or its representational antithesis, egocentrism, and each of these factors can itself be considered as an independent dimension in explaining human behavior, depending upon the specific aspects of personality functioning upon which one is focusing.

The current focus on reflexive self-awareness is especially useful for illuminating problems of narcissism. The present theory explains the paradoxical narcissism involved in certain deep depressions and intense object relations while avoiding the quagmire of defining narcissism in purely quantitative terms, as either the libidinal cathexis of the

self or the regulation of self-focus and self-esteem. It is also empirically testable, insofar as narcissistic adults, although in many ways unlike normal children, should show some of the same difficulties that children display when asked to perform standardized tasks in which they try to understand the thoughts or feelings of other persons (e.g., Feffer, 1970; Feffer & Gourevitch, 1960; Flavell, Botkin, Frey, Wright, & Jarvis, 1968; Harter, 1983; Rothenberg, 1970; Selman, 1980; Shantz, 1983). Failure on these tasks would demonstrate a facet of the egocentric confusion of subjective with objective social perspectives that, according to theory of impaired reflective self-awareness, should be widespread among narcissistic personalities. Among narcissistic personalities, confusions between subjective and objective perspectives should also emerge on projective measures of object representations (e.g., Blatt, Brenneis, Schimek, & Glick, 1976; Urist, 1977; Westen, 1990b) and of boundary disturbances (Blatt & Lerner, 1983), much as they do among borderlines (Lerner & St. Peter, 1984; Lerner, Sugarman, & Barbour, 1985; Singer & Larson, 1981; Spear & Sugarman, 1984; Wilson, 1985). Mirror responses on the Rorschach (e.g., Exner, 1969; Gacono, Meloy, & Berg, 1992) should provide another index of disturbances in reflexive self-awareness among narcissists. In addition, narcissistic personalities, according to this theory, should be unusually sensitive to the experimental manipulations that Duval and Wicklund (1972) used to increase objective self-awareness (e.g., the presence of a mirror, a camera, or an attentive person).

Reflexive Self-Awareness Through the Life Cycle

A second criticism is this theory's seemingly exclusive focus on the importance of the second year of life. A valid criticism of virtually all psychoanalytic theories is that they mistakenly attempt to compress the etiology of psychopathology, especially severe psychopathology, into the first years of life, instead of recognizing that the unfolding of critical developmental issues, both normal and pathological, spans a lifetime, with later experiences not only developing out of earlier ones but actually revising them (Behrends & Blatt, 1985; Lachmann & Beebe, 1989; Mitchell, 1984; Stern, 1985; Westen, 1989). A related, equally telling criticism is that traditional psychoanalytic theories equate the disturbed functioning of the pathological adult with the immature capacities of the normal child (Eagle, 1984; Peterfreund, 1978; Stern,

1985). The present account focuses on the second year of life because that is when objective self-awareness emerges, but it recognizes that objective self-awareness is a capacity that changes throughout life and that a normal 2-year-old's difficulties in constructing the self as a constant object are less sophisticated than are those of an adult narcissist or borderline (Westen, 1990a, 1990b, 1991). Classical developmental principles like Piaget's vertical decalage or Werner's (1948) hierarchical spirality might be useful in understanding these distinctions. These principles hold that an ability (e.g., objective self-awareness) that emerges at a particular level of development is often reacquired and reintegrated at higher developmental levels. In more traditional psychoanalytic language, psychopathology results in uneven development of ego capacities.

For example, objective self-awareness refers, during early childhood, to the recognition of concrete, physical-perceptual aspects of the self and to an understanding, not consolidated until approximately age 6 or 7, that self remains constant despite situational factors and is not part of the body (see Broughton, 1978; Guardo & Bohan, 1971; Keller, Ford, & Meacham, 1978; Secord & Peevers, 1974; Selman, 1980). Awareness of the self as an inner feature of the personality emerges in adolescence (Bernstein, 1980; Broughton, 1978; Livesley & Bromley, 1973; Montemayor & Eisen, 1977; Rosenberg, 1979; Secord & Peevers, 1974; Selman, 1980). Conservation of the self's internal properties through the integration of contradictory traits or dispositions is not consolidated until late adolescence—and then only in narcissistic terms, with positive traits as part of the core self and negative traits as peripheral attributes (Harter, 1986). In addition, although adolescents no longer regard the self in absolute or literal terms or as a physical object, the continuing difficulties that teenagers have in integrating subjective and objective forms of self-awareness emerges in their propensity to establish a rigid separation between a true inner self and a false outer appearance (Broughton, 1981). Thus, the capacity for reflexive self-awareness emerges during the second year of life and over the course of development becomes successively organized at sensorimotor-enactive, iconic-imagistic, and lexical-symbolic levels (Blatt, 1974; Bruner, 1964; Horowitz, 1972), but it remains in flux both for adolescents and, given the pervasiveness of the self-enhancing biases (Greenwald, 1980; Taylor & Brown, 1988), for adults.

Although narcissistic personality disorder is therefore considered to have its origins primarily in parental failures and representational disturbances during the preoedipal period (Adler, 1985; Kernberg, 1975, 1976; Kohut, 1971, 1977; Masterson, 1981; Rinsley, 1982, 1989), no empirical data substantiate this claim, however plausible it may be, and arguments that severe character pathology involves oedipal conflicts (Abend, Porder, & Willick, 1983; Rothstein, 1984) are no better confirmed. It is also conceivable that postoedipal traumas or parental failures, if severe enough, can result in severe character pathology or that more constructive object relations in the postoedipal period can undo preoedipal traumas (Westen, 1990b). At this point, the actual interplay of hereditary or constitutional with socioeconomic, developmental, representational, and object-relational factors in producing narcissistic disturbances is simply unknown.

Despite these considerations, there remains a certain validity to the current emphasis on the second through fifth years of life as crucial to the genesis of narcissistic disturbances. Although disturbances of reflexive self-awareness can occur at any stage of development, I hypothesize here, in accordance with typical psychoanalytic assumptions, that disruptions early in the development of this ability are involved in narcissistic personality disorder and that these early disruptions cause distortions in later aspects of this capacity. The underlying assumption, of course, is that impairments in reflexive self-awareness, or in the closely related capacity for evocative representational constancy, result from disturbances in parent-child attachment and from the toddler's concomitant inability to manage the experience of separateness. Consistent with the hypothesis of a preoedipal origin for narcissistic representational disturbance are clinical observations that narcissistic personalities typically suffer from an impairment in integrating bodily experiences or physical actions with more abstract self-representations (Bach, 1985; Westen, 1990a) and have difficulty on projective tests in differentiating their perceptions of stimuli from their emotional reactions to them (Lerner & Lerner, 1988), much as one might expect if deformation of the capacity for reflexive self-awareness began relatively early in development. Only longitudinal research, however, can definitively test this hypothesis.

The Necessity of Narcissism and a Possible Transcendence Through Intersubjectivity

With their capacities for reasoning, language, and objective self-awareness, humans necessarily live, even under optimal circumstances, in a

world of separateness and division, of ambiguity and uncertainty, and of conflict, loss, and death. Narcissistic illusions exist because life would be intolerable without them. Thus, the Greek word *narke*, meaning stupor or numbness, is the root of both narcotic and Narcissus (Spotnitz & Resnikoff, 1954). On the other hand, as this etymological relationship suggests, the narcissistic resolution to the problem of separateness, even if endemic in human affairs, remains problematic. The myth of Narcissus is a cautionary tale; it tells us that the price of self-absorption and self-inflation—in essence, of vanity—is death. More immediately, clinical considerations tell us that narcissistic personality disorder is still pathological and that even normal narcissism still involves an overvaluation of the self at the expense of others (or, in Asian cultures, the reverse).

Naturally, therefore, one wonders whether a nonnarcissistic resolution to the dilemmas of separateness is possible. If, by nonnarcissistic resolution, one means a state in which narcissism no longer exists, then such a condition is highly improbable. Narcissism is an attempt to eliminate the tension of division within the self and from others through the pursuit either of an illusory merger with the totality or of an illusory omnipotence. On the theory articulated here, even mysticism, which attempts to repair division and separateness by annulling the ego and evoking the oceanic feeling, is essentially narcissistic. Nevertheless, an alternative resolution—one that preserves but also attempts to transcend narcissistic tensions—is at least conceivable. This resolution, one of intersubjectivity (Benjamin, 1990; cf. Stern, 1985; Winnicott, 1971/1982), has its roots in the ideas of Hegel (1807/1977).

Hegel (1807/1977), in describing the development of self-consciousness, delineated a conflict between the ego's desire for absolute independence and its need for recognition. He discussed this conflict as a dialectic between master and slave. In its longing for omnipotence and its hostility to that which differs from itself, the ego, as construed by both psychology and philosophy, is essentially narcissistic (Benjamin, 1990; Buber, 1923/1970; Freud, 1911/1958a; 1915/1957; Horkheimer, 1947/1974; Horkheimer & Adorno, 1944/1972; Kirshner, 1991; Lacan, 1948/1977; 1949/1977; Sartre, 1943/1956). But as Benjamin (1990, p. 39; cf. Muller, 1985), commenting on the master-slave dialectic, writes, "The need for recognition entails this fundamental paradox: In the very moment of realizing our own independent will, we are dependent on another to recognize it." In other words, persons are independent selves only to the extent that they renounce illusory

omnipotence and come to realize instead that independent selfhood requires, and is limited by, recognition by other independent selves. This recognition by independent others is precarious because other persons, insofar as they are truly independent selves, can always choose not to bestow recognition but to withhold it—to be abandoning, critical, or rejecting. Thus, to discover one's autonomy is also to discover one's dependence and limitation.

Independent selfhood and the human capacity for reflexive self-awareness arise, therefore, from the interpersonal matrix, and are constituted only on the basis of mutual self-recognition (Benjamin, 1990; Buber, 1923/1970; Habermas, 1968/1971; Kirshner, 1991; Winnicott, 1971/1982). On the other hand, because mutual self-recognition necessarily involves dependence and limitation, there is always the temptation to retreat from intersubjectivity to narcissism. One may either deny the other by asserting a grandiose, illusory self-sufficiency or deny the self through merger with the totality (Andreas-Salome, 1921/1962; Bach, 1985; Balint, 1959; Grunberger, 1971/1979; Rothstein, 1984). Each of these narcissistic strategies, either shameless grandiosity or shame-ridden timidity, indicates a failure in the regulation of reflexive self-awareness (Bach, 1985; Broucek, 1982; Kinston, 1983, 1987).

Recognizing the dangers of illusory, narcissistic responses to ineradicable human dilemmas, Benjamin (1990, p. 40) writes, "From the standpoint of intersubjective theory, the ideal resolution of the paradox of recognition is for it to continue as a constant tension between recognizing the other and asserting the self." This is a resolution based on an awareness of the tragic and ironic aspects of human existence and of the tensions that necessarily emerge in a dialogue between two independent perspectives. Because of the human need for narcissistic illusions, whether of omnipotence or of tensionless merger, it is foolish, if not impossible, to eliminate such fantasies. But if there is an antidote to the pervasiveness of human narcissism, a real solution to the dilemmas of human weakness and frailty, it is in the continuing dialogue of self and other.

Summary

Freud was of at least two minds regarding early infant development. His most well-known theory, found largely in his later writings, is that

infants are born into an objectless state—that is, without interest in objects or knowledge of them—and only come to discover other persons through frustration and hatred. This theory is consistent with the economic assumptions of his thought—specifically, a limited quantity of libido and a drive to eliminate tension—but Freud had many reservations about this account of early development.

According to his earlier theory, which Freud never fully abandoned, narcissism is a developmental stage between autoerotism and object love. It begins when an infant first becomes capable of forming an ego or, in modern terms, a self-representation. Infants then shift from autoerotic gratification to a libidinal investment in the early self-image. Self-inflation is therefore fundamental to the ego. Freud also held that the autoerotic stage is preceded by a period in which infants seek objects (i.e., the breast) out of the self-preservative drive. But although, in this early theory, the neonate has complex interactions with the object world, Freud's economic assumptions drove him increasingly to describe babies as monads.

Freud's confusions about early development have since given way to a surprising unanimity of psychoanalytic opinion. Both classical and object-relations theorists, despite bitter theoretical battles over the question of primary indifference to objects versus primary attachment, describe the infant as fused with or undifferentiated from mother. Narcissism is thus conceptualized as a tensionless state, a continuation of prenatal existence.

Current empirical research increasingly disputes this characterization of the first year of life. Recent findings suggest that differentiation between self and object begins at birth, if not before. Because this research also portrays newborns as active, stimulation-seeking organisms who establish with their caregivers a system of mutual affective regulation, traditional accounts of a tensionless, narcissistic stage are of dubious validity.

Although the concept of primary narcissism is problematic, Freud's first theory of narcissism—that narcissism begins with the formation of the self-representation—is far more in accord with the findings of social and developmental psychology, as are several psychoanalytic concepts used to describe the second year of life (e.g., rapprochement, the mirror stage, and transitional object usage). Because research in social cognition confirms Freud's insight that normal self-esteem is narcissistic (i.e., self-enhancing), this chapter proposes a theory of nor-

mal and pathological narcissism that rejects traditional psychoanalytic conceptions of infancy and views narcissism as beginning in the second year of life with the emergence of reflexive self-awareness.

According to this theory, narcissism exists because human selfhood is divided by self-reflexivity. Emerging toward the end of the second year of life, the capacity to recognize oneself as an object gives a person two, potentially discrepant, perspectives on the self. In subjective self-awareness, one exists immediately as a center of perception, thought, and action; in objective self-awareness, one comes to regard oneself as an object among other objects and a self among other selves. The former state is associated with increased self-esteem and brightened affect, but also with decreased self-knowledge (i.e., with self-enhancing biases); the latter is associated with decreased self-esteem and lowered affect, especially shame. Although there are differences between normal and pathological self-reflexivity, even the normal manifestations of this ability, because of their tendency to evoke shame, result in inner tension.

Narcissism is therefore the attempt to escape the tension produced by this division within the self and by the concomitant experience of separateness. The attempt to escape this tension results in two characteristic fantasies, each of which involves a wish to establish a tensionless state. These fantasies are illusory omnipotence, associated with subjective self-awareness, and the oceanic feeling, associated with objective self-awareness. Narcissistic fantasies are endemic to human life but are usually well regulated by the capacity to integrate subjective and objective self-awareness. Difficulties in integrating these perspectives constitute narcissistic personality disturbance.

Most likely, although certainly not exclusively, a consequence of disturbances in early (preoedipal) attachments, impaired self-reflexivity results in highly variable self-esteem, identity disturbances, and pathological object relations. These narcissistic disturbances take the form of the grandiose personality, the shame-prone personality, and myriad variations of exhibitionism and shame proneness in between.

Finally, this chapter argues that narcissistic illusions are pervasive among humans because, in a world of separation and death, life would be unlivable without them. Nevertheless, narcissism remains a highly problematic solution to the dilemmas of self-reflexivity and of separateness. A more adequate resolution of these problems involves intersubjectivity—specifically, the realization that one's autonomy as an

independent self is constituted, and therefore limited, by another's recognition.

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