

- redefinition. If they were eliminated, one of the bases of the contradictions in Freud's thought would disappear.
3. Freud's discovery of the two types of object relations (the attachment type and the narcissistic type) carries within itself the potential for extremely fruitful development provided that *Anlehnung* is regarded not exclusively as the attachment of one instinct to another but also as a type of relation to the object.
 4. The concept of narcissism appears essentially to include a scopic element, as in the myth of Narcissus. The object of narcissism fluctuates between the body, the image of the body, the ego as an agency, and the person in some of his actual or imaginary characteristics or as a whole.

A Contemporary Reading of “On Narcissism”

OTTO F. KERNBERG

Freud's extraordinarily rich essay reveals several new developments in his thinking and introduces some of his most fundamental and permanent ideas. He explores narcissism as a phase of psychic development, as a crucial aspect of normal love life, as a central dynamic of several types of psychopathology (schizophrenia, perversion, homosexuality, hypochondriasis), in terms of the regulation of self-esteem, as the origin of the ego-ideal, and—by way of the ego-ideal—as an aspect of mass psychology. The only significant subjects related to narcissism that occupy contemporary clinical psychoanalysis not dealt with in his essay are pathological narcissism considered as a specific type or spectrum of character pathology and narcissistic resistances as an important factor in psychoanalytic technique. The theoretical and clinical observations that made these two subjects possible, however, are already implicit in this seminal essay.

In what follows I offer a critical reading of Freud's essay, focusing on the fate of the ideas it contains, especially on how these ideas have since been supplemented or modified.

When reading the Standard Edition version of Freud's essay (1914b), one must keep in mind that Strachey's “instinct” corresponds to Freud's

(1914a) *Trieb* (drive) and that Freud used the term as a purely psychological rather than a biological construct to denote a source of psychic motivation. It is also important to keep in mind that the translator's "ego" is not the ego of structural theory but the word Strachey chose to render Freud's *das Ich* (I), with its broader and more subjective connotations. When Freud describes, for example, how being in love can result in "impoverishment of the ego" (88), he is clearly referring to a sense of self and not to an impersonal psychic structure. In addition to making for conceptual ambiguity, Strachey's insistent use of "ego" has a deadening effect, somewhat redressed by the startling effect on us today of reading about "instincts" in a psychoanalytic context.

DRIVE THEORY AND EARLY PSYCHIC DEVELOPMENT

Bringing together indirect evidence from the study of human sexual development, schizophrenia, the neuroses, the perversions, and primitive cultures, Freud extends his libido theory. He proposes that libido evolves from a stage of primary narcissism to investment of objects with the tendency of later withdrawal of object-invested libido onto the ego in the form of secondary narcissism. This theoretical statement, sharply and concisely made near the beginning of his essay, immediately raises new questions in Freud's mind (which he deals with in the following pages) and also in our minds, questions that psychoanalytic theory is still dealing with.

Freud asks how primary narcissism relates to autoerotism and concludes that the latter is a primary manifestation of the libidinal drive that must exist from the beginning of life, whereas narcissism, the libidinal investment of the ego, requires first the development of the ego itself: autoerotism, therefore, must antedate primary narcissism. Second he asks how primary narcissism, as ego-invested libido, relates to the drive of self-preservation. The *Standard Edition* translation of this essay (1914b, 73–74) states: "narcissism in this sense would not be a perversion, but the libidinal complement to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation." In the discussion that follows, one that has its polemical aspect—namely, Freud's critique of Jung's overarching new concept of "libido"—Freud defends the need to maintain, for the time being, the distinction between ego-instincts (self-preservation) and libido. He himself, as we know, abandoned the idea of ego drives later

on when in 1920 he proposed the dual-drive theory of libido and aggression, the life and death drives.

The most remarkable aspect of the formulations on narcissism and object-libido in this essay is Freud's concept of the intimate relationship between libidinal investment in the self and in objects, and the central function of this dialectic relationship in normality and pathology—concepts that gave rise to the idea of normal and pathological narcissism. In contemporary language we might say that the investments of libido oscillating between self and objects, brought about by introjective and projective mechanisms, determine the mutual reinforcement of affective investment of the self and of significant others, the simultaneous buildup of an internal and an external world of object relations, which strengthen each other. There are, however, also problems derived from Freud's new formulations.

Even if we eliminate from consideration the outdated problem of whether or not self-preservation and narcissistic libido are the same, a major problem remains with the concept of primary narcissism itself. In light of what we now know about early development, it is legitimate to question Freud's implicit assumption that the psyche originates in what we would today call a closed system. Thus, the "autistic" phase of earliest development hypothesized by Mahler (Mahler and Furer, 1968) is currently being questioned (Stern, 1985). Whatever capacity for self-object differentiation exists in the first few weeks and months of life, the earliest stages of intrapsychic development would seem to be characterized by parallel, simultaneous developments of the symbolic structures reflecting self and object. In other words, I regard as highly questionable both the concept of autoerotism and that of a self or ego predating the psychic experience of the actual relation of the infant with the primary object.

Psychoanalysts are still debating whether, in the tradition of Melanie Klein (1945, 1946, 1952) and Fairbairn (1954), one may assume the existence of a differentiated self from earliest infancy; or whether, in the tradition of Jacobson (1964) and Mahler (Mahler and Furer, 1968), a symbiotic stage of development (lack of self and object differentiation) is the earliest organizing frame of psychic life; or whether, as Stern (1985) has suggested, an inborn capacity for differentiation of self and object is a fact that needs to be explored as regards its translation into intrapsychic experience. But all these theoretical currents point to the very early simultaneous development of self and object representations and question the notion of a state of autoerotism and of primary narcissism as well (unless primary narcissism is considered

equivalent to primary object-love). In fact, Freud himself, in one of the final pages of the narcissism essay, as if in an afterthought, virtually equates primary narcissism and primary object-love! "The return of the object-libido to the ego and its transformation into narcissism represents, as it were, a happy love once more, and, on the other hand, it is also true that a real happy love corresponds to the primal condition in which object-libido and ego-libido cannot be distinguished" (Freud, 1914b, 100).

A parallel discussion has shaped the status of the concept of "primary masochism"—not referred to at all in this essay—which constitutes, in terms of Freud's later dual-drive theory of libido and aggression, the counterpart of primary narcissism. This discussion also points to the absence, in Freud's work—and a still unfinished task today—of a general integration of the developmental schemata of libido and aggression.

Although recent infant research is suggesting that infants are capable, in actual behavior, of extremely fine discrimination between objects in the first few weeks of life, one has to differentiate inborn behavior patterns from their psychic representations. It is also necessary to keep in mind the stage at which the capacity for symbolic manipulation of psychic experience develops. Following Jacobson and Mahler, I think that, from about the second to the fifth month of life, the baby begins to develop primitive representations of the self and of the object, but does not yet differentiate one from the other.

These self-object representations are of two kinds, depending on the experiences leading to their formation. If the experience is pleasurable (particularly in the context of pleasurable peak-affect-states), a "positive" self-object representation is established; if the experience is unpleasurable (particularly in the context of traumatic, painful peak-affect-states), a "negative" self-object representation is established. I believe that the libidinal investment of the positive or pleasurable self-object representations occurs in parallel with the aggressive investment of the corresponding painful self-object representations and that both libido and aggression are thus simultaneously invested in primary, undifferentiated, fused self and object representations. Simultaneously, however, under conditions of milder or moderate positive or negative affect-states, a more differentiated integration of experience may develop, with more reality-oriented perceptions of self and others that are only gradually integrated with the more "extreme" psychic structures constituted by the affectively overwhelming libidinally and aggressively invested self and object representations.

Returning to our starting point, I think that narcissistic libido and object-libido develop simultaneously, in affective investments that are not yet differentiated in terms of self and object, and that narcissistic libido and object-libido differentiate themselves only gradually from their common matrix in the undifferentiated, positive self-object representations. The same would be true for aggression, whether directed at the self or the object.

Using this developmental frame, I have introduced the concept of affects as intimately related to that of drives and of the development of drives as opposed to the presence of a differentiated drive from the beginning of life. The extent to which libido and aggression as overall drives are "ready-made" at the moment of birth and/or mature and develop throughout time, and the developmental relationship between affect and drive development, remain subjects of controversy and research in psychoanalysis as well as in other disciplines (Kernberg, 1984, 227–38).

SCHIZOPHRENIA, PARANOIA, AND HYPOCHONDRIASIS

Freud mentions various examples of the withdrawal of libido from objects onto the ego (or self) throughout the narcissism essay. He refers to the state of sleep, in which libido is withdrawn onto the self, the withdrawal of interests from the external world under conditions of physical pain and illness, and the case of hypochondriasis. He suggests that hypochondriasis reflects the withdrawal of object-libido onto the self and the body, in a way similar to the withdrawal of object-libido in other "actual neuroses" (neurasthenia and anxiety neurosis) onto "fantasied objects": object representations, as we would say. In contrast to hypochondriasis, schizophrenia ("paraphrenia" is Freud's effort to coin a term that encompasses schizophrenia and paranoia) would reflect the extreme of such withdrawal of object-libido onto the ego, in a parallel to the extreme withdrawal of object-libido onto fantasized objects, by the process of "introversion" in the psychoneuroses (the other actual neuroses would reflect more limited withdrawal of object-libido). Freud relates the extreme unpleasure associated with the withdrawal of object-libido onto the ego and the body to the intensified "damming-up" of libido. He proposes that all intensifications of tension are experienced as painful, all tension discharges as pleasurable. This proposal has been challenged by Jacobson (1953), who underlines the clinical observation that there are plea-

surable tensions as well as discharges and unpleasurable discharges as well as tensions.

Based on his bold generalization regarding the effects of quantitative shifts in libido, Freud formulates a psychoanalytic theory of schizophrenia, postulating that, in the psychotic process, libido is withdrawn from objects onto the ego or self. The excessive damming-up of this libido brings about megalomania corresponding to a psychic mastering of the libido; a failure in this psychic function would give rise to the hypochondria of paraphrenia. Freud draws a parallel between this last outcome and the development of neurotic anxiety in the transference neuroses. He also refers to the restitutive phenomena in schizophrenia, which he later (1917a) describes as the psychotic reinvestments of objects in the hallucinations and delusions typical of that illness.

Even if the psychoanalytic exploration of schizophrenia and manic-depressive psychosis in the past forty years has generated understandings that have shifted psychoanalytic formulations in new directions, Freud's early hypotheses anticipated these directions and may be detected at the roots of contemporary psychoanalytic theories of psychosis. Thus, his concept of the withdrawal of libido from objects onto the self drew attention, first, to the "decathexis" of ego boundaries, then to the lack of differentiation between self and nonself, and eventually, to the lack of differentiation between self representations and object representations as the intrapsychic preconditions for loss of the capacity to differentiate between self and others. Jacobson's (1971) explorations of psychosis, her description of "psychotic introjection" (in which a regression occurs to undifferentiated or fused self and object representations), probably contributed more than anything else to the transformation of Freud's early, quantitative, energetic formulation on psychosis to a qualitative, structural one.

Freud's study of mourning and melancholia (1917b) and his later development of the dual-drive theory of libido and aggression pointed to the importance of aggression in psychotic regression. Stimulated by this work, Fairbairn (1954) and Melanie Klein (1940, 1945, 1946) studied primitive object relations and primitive defensive mechanisms dealing with libidinal and aggressive investments. Following the same lead, Hartmann's work (1953) and American ego psychology in general focused on the failure to neutralize aggression in psychosis. In light of Mahler's (Mahler and Furer, 1968) and Jacobson's (1964) concepts of the symbiotic stage of development, I have proposed that, in schizophrenia, a fixation and/or regression to

a pathologically activated state of fusion of self and object representations occurs under the impact of the dominance of aggressive over libidinal aspects of all early relations, with a corresponding predominance of the primitive defensive operations described by the British school (Kernberg, 1986, 1987).

Later in his narcissism essay, Freud refers to the importance of the ego-ideal in the determination of persecutory delusions in paranoia. The term "ego-ideal" here is used to cover functions he later incorporated in the concept of the superego. Freud traces the origin of the ego-ideal to the critical influence of the parents. It is not clear, however, whether he considers such persecutory delusions (and hallucinations) to be caused by the pathology of the ego-ideal or to be part of the restitutive phenomena that represent a psychotic effort to reinvest objects. In fact, Freud left open the major question of the extent to which narcissistic regressions in psychosis imply a libidinal abandonment of external objects and withdrawal onto the ego versus an abandonment of external objects with a regression toward internalized relations to primitive, pathological object representations.

Behind this question again lies the question of whether primary narcissism predates object relations or develops in parallel to the establishment of internalized object relations. When Freud proposes that the libidinal drive is inborn whereas the ego has to develop, it seems to me that he is tacitly assuming that such a drive has an object, even though the ego or self as an agency is not yet constituted. If this is so, is he implying that the objects of drives and the objects to which the self relate are of a different kind? Again, one of the crucial questions, then and now, involving the concept of narcissism is that of the intimate relation of the development of narcissism and object relations.

ANACLITIC TYPE AND NARCISSISTIC TYPE OF OBJECT CHOICE

The description of two types of selection of a love object is undoubtedly the central theme of Freud's narcissism essay and constitutes a basic contribution to the psychology of normal and pathological love relations. It is striking that, in contrast to the enormous recent literature on the psychology of sexuality, Freud's equally important observations on the psychology of love should have remained relatively neglected in psychoanalytic thinking over many years. Only the past two decades have witnessed a new out-

pouring of contributions to this subject, particularly in the French literature. I am thinking here of the work of Braunschweig and Fain (1971), David (1971), Aulagnier (1979), Gantheret (1984), Chasseguet-Smirgel (1985), and others.

Freud suggests that a person may love according to the narcissistic type: that is, what he himself is, was, or would like to be, or someone who was once part of himself. Or he may love according to the anacritic, dependent, or attachment type: the woman who feeds him, or the man who protects him, and the succession of substitutes who take their place. Freud stresses that "both kinds of object-choice are open to each individual, though he may show a preference for one or the other," adding that "a human being has originally two sexual objects—himself and the woman who nurses him—and . . . we are postulating a primary narcissism in everyone, which may in some cases manifest itself in a dominating fashion in his object-choice" (88).

Freud proposes that men display predominantly the attachment type of love, and that the marked sexual overvaluation of the sexual object that characterizes the state of being in love derives from the transfer of the child's original narcissism to the sexual object. In contrast, the "purest and truest" type of woman evinces the narcissistic object choice, a love of herself reflected in the desire to be loved, so that the man who fulfills this condition is the one who finds favor with her. Freud's distinctions between male and female psychology have been seriously questioned in contemporary psychoanalytic literature on love relations, particularly the French literature mentioned above (Kernberg, in press a, in press b). Further, the distinctions Freud makes between narcissistic and anacritic love become problematic throughout this essay, in which many observations seem to turn rapidly into their opposites, in the context of a dialectic relationship between narcissism and object-love.

For example, a woman who loves a man because he loves her is also choosing an anacritic object because the man she chooses feeds her narcissistic needs and protects her, so that her object choice complements her narcissism. Or the man who anacritically idealizes a woman whose sexual attractiveness he overvalues is also projecting his narcissistic overvaluation of himself onto her. Again, the original narcissism of the baby practically coincides with the projected narcissism of the parents who transfer their own infantile narcissism onto him. Particularly women, Freud tells us, project their own narcissism onto their baby, a road "which leads to complete object-love" (89). And "His Majesty the Baby" evolves in different direc-

tions according to whether the baby is male or female, thus pointing (implicitly) to the impact of infantile sexuality on the vicissitudes of narcissism and object-love in both sexes, a subject Freud touches upon only briefly in this essay.

As Laplanche (1976) has convincingly stated, what Freud here describes is really the intimate, indissoluble, and complex relationship between object-libido and narcissistic libido and the multiple transformations, integrations, and interactions of libidinal self and object investments in love relationships; this brings us to the transformation of narcissistic investment into the investment of the ego-ideal.

THE EGO-IDEAL

Freud now presents his first schema of what will later become the concept of the superego. When he describes the repression of significant aspects of infantile narcissism as motivated by the ego's "self-respect," the inadequacy of Strachey's "ego" as a term becomes apparent: it is hard to imagine an impersonal ego developing self-respect. Leaving aside the ambiguity of whether repression of infantile narcissism brings about its replacement or substitution by the ego-ideal or whether it is the ego-ideal that motivates the repression of infantile narcissism, this ego-ideal becomes the target of what was originally the self-love enjoyed in childhood. Infantile narcissism, the libidinal investment of the self, is replaced (at least to a significant degree) by the libidinal investment of the ego-ideal. Freud clarifies that the idealization involved in the process of formation of the ego-ideal has to be distinguished from sublimation, a process affecting object-libido, whereas idealization concerns the object, not the drive. Freud also postulates that another agency, "conscience," evaluates the relation between the demands of the ego-ideal and the actual achievements of the ego, regulating in the process the individual's self-esteem.

These formulations represent significant advances in Freud's move toward the theory of the tripartite structure. The demands for perfection, related to idealization processes in the ego-ideal, are implicitly linked to the self-attack and self-criticism derived from the prohibitive, punitive aspects of the superego. His comments on the functions of a "conscience" point to what we now call the sadistic precursors (Sandler, 1960; Jacobson, 1964) underlying the establishment of more mature integration of parental demands

and prohibitions into the eventual superego. Freud explicitly links the normal self-criticism of conscience with the persecutory hallucinations and delusions of paranoia (95).

In light of Freud's discussion of the vicissitudes of object libidinal and ego (or self) libidinal strivings, it becomes evident that the ego-ideal, inheritor of primary narcissism, also represents the internalization of the idealized objects of infantile love, an idealization of the early objects that, in turn, reflects object libidinal strivings of the anaclitic type. Freud is hereby proposing a circular process in which, first, the hypothesized primary narcissism is projected onto objects that are idealized, and thus narcissism is transformed into object-libido simultaneously with the enactment of the anaclitic type of object choice. This process is followed by the internalization of idealized objects (reflecting object-libido) into the ego-ideal and the concomitant transformation of infantile narcissism into the narcissistic investment of the ego-ideal.

It seems to me that with time, the actual process of idealization is gradually transformed, together with the products of this process. Early idealizations, with their unrealistic character, and the strongly narcissistic implications of the early ego-ideal, gradually become transformed into processes of idealization that set up the complex value systems of early childhood. This, in turn, facilitates the development of the still more advanced or normal processes of adolescent idealization that are implied in the investment of aesthetic, ethical, and cultural values.

In this context, considering once more the vicissitudes of the development of aggression that a modern psychoanalytic conception based upon Freud's later, dual-drive theory would relate to that of libidinal transformations, one might add that the earliest idealization processes are also defenses against split-off persecutory tendencies related to projected aggression, and that later idealization processes have the characteristics of reaction formations against unconscious guilt (because of aggressive impulses) and of reparative and sublimatory libidinal strivings related to objects. Indeed, Freud (95–97) hints at this intimate relation between the vicissitudes of libidinal and aggressive strivings in his comments on conscience, its self-critical functions in normality and pathology, and its intimate link to censorship in dreams, although he has not yet taken the step of bringing together the ego-ideal and unconscious, infantile morality as the structure of the superego. The elements are there, however; their integration will follow, carried out not only by Freud but by a generation of psychoanalysts after him—for

example, in Sandler's (1960) comprehensive analysis of the concept of the superego in Freud's work and Jacobson's (1964) systematic analysis of the structural development and integration of the superego.

The concept of the ego-ideal, that fundamental substitute/complement for infantile narcissism, provides Freud with a frame of reference to study the regulation of self-esteem, my next subject.

SELF-ESTEEM REGULATION

In the latter part of the essay, Freud turns to the clinical aspects of self-esteem regulation. After having established a theoretical framework—a metapsychology—for narcissism, he focuses on the most immediate clinical manifestation of narcissism—namely, fluctuations in self-esteem. These two basic aspects of the concept of narcissism also correspond, in effect, to the practical contemporary dual use of the term "narcissism" to refer both to the libidinal investment of the self (first spelled out thus by Hartmann, 1950) and to the clinical process of (normal or abnormal) self-esteem regulation.

At the level of metapsychological formulations, I prefer to think of the "self" as a substructure of the system ego reflecting the integration of the component self-images or self representations that develop throughout all the real and fantasied experiences of interactions with others—objects. The libidinal investment of the self evolves in parallel with the libidinal investment in objects and their psychic representations ("object representations"), which constitutes object-libido. I see object-libido and self-libido as intimately related to each other and also intimately related to the parallel investments of self and object representations by aggression. A healthy self is one that integrates not only libidinally invested but also aggressively invested self representations. In contrast, a pathological, grandiose self, which characterizes the narcissistic personality, implies a failure or incapacity for such an integration of aggressively invested self representations and a corresponding failure to integrate libidinally and aggressively invested object representations as well.

Returning now to the clinical use of the concept of narcissism as regulation of self-esteem, Freud begins by pointing out that self-regard, dependent on narcissistic libido, is in potential conflict with object-libido; that the investment of a love object tends to lower self-regard: "A person who loves

has, so to speak, forfeited a part of his narcissism, and it can only be replaced by his being loved" (98). At several points Freud returns to this idea, one that has since been questioned in, for example, Chasseguet-Smirlé's (1985) comprehensive study on the ego ideal. In fact, Freud himself observes that it is unrequited love that ends up with reduced self-esteem while requited, mutual love increases it. Again, the increase of self-esteem in a satisfactory love relation points to the intimate connection between narcissistic and object-libido.

In my view, falling in love itself normally raises self-esteem, but only insofar as what is projected onto the love object is not a primitive type of ego-ideal but the sophisticated, developed ego-ideal of normal adolescence and adulthood, reflecting value judgments that transform aspects of the mature ego-ideal into a new reality created by the relation to the loved and idealized object. The actualization of the ego-ideal in the love relationship raises self-esteem. Neurotic falling in love, which involves more primitive aspects of idealization as well as many other sources of feelings of inferiority, differs from normal falling in love. And normal falling in love is gradually dissolved, if love is not requited, by a mourning process that, in turn, leads to further ego growth and not to lowering of self-esteem: the opposite holds true for the neurotic response to unrequited love. Normal mourning for the object of unrequited love enriches the experience of the self and opens new channels of sublimation.

Freud then examines the decrease of self-esteem that results from an inability to love: when, because of severe repressions, erotic love becomes impossible, self-esteem diminishes. If we accept the idea that the representations of loved objects are normally internalized in the ego, we might then say that the love received both from external objects and from their internalized object representations (including those that form part of the ego-ideal as well as those incorporated in the ego) increases self-esteem.

Elaborating on Freud's thinking in the light of the contributions to this subject by later generations of psychoanalysts, we might say that self-esteem fluctuates according to gratifying or frustrating experiences in relationships with others and a person's sense of being appreciated or rejected by others, as well as according to the evaluation by the ego-ideal of the distance between goals and aspirations, on the one hand, and achievements and success, on the other. Self-esteem also depends on the pressures that the superego exerts on the ego: the stricter the superego, the more self-esteem is lowered, and at bottom, such lowering of self-esteem would reflect a predominance of self-

directed aggression (stemming from the superego) over the libidinal investment of the self. Self-esteem may also be lowered by lack of gratification of instinctual needs of both a libidinal and an aggressive nature, so that unconscious ego defenses that repress awareness and expression of such instinctual needs will impoverish the ego of gratifying experiences and thus "deplete" libidinal self-investment and diminish self-esteem. Finally, the internalization of libidinally invested objects in the form of libidinally invested object representations greatly reinforces the libidinal investment of the self; in other words, the images in our mind of those we love and by whom we feel loved strengthen our self-love. In contrast, when excessive conflicts around aggression override libidinal investment of others and, secondarily, their corresponding object representations, the libidinal investments of the self and self-love also suffer.

These observations regarding self-esteem regulation point once more to the intimate and complex relation between narcissistic and object-libido, and between libido and aggression. From that perspective, I believe we may question a certain tendency in Freud's essay to consider narcissistic libido and object-libido as adding up to a fixed total amount, in an inverse relationship with each other; I think self-invested libido and object-invested libido may actually strengthen and complement each other.

FREUD'S FINAL SUMMARY AND SOME FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

The last section of the essay reformulates earlier thoughts and adds new topics, which hint at things to come. To begin, in summarizing the relation between self-regard and libidinal investment of objects, Freud not only repeats that unrequited loving reduces self-esteem whereas being loved increases it but also states that "a real happy love corresponds to the primal condition in which object-libido and ego-libido cannot be distinguished" (100). Again, primary narcissism is practically equated to primary object-libido.

Freud states that, though one part of self-regard is primary—"the residue of infantile narcissism"—another part arises out of the omnipotence derived from fulfillment of the ego-ideal, and "a third part proceeds from the satisfaction of object-libido" (100): again, narcissism and object-love flow into each other.

In an interesting if cryptic comment, Freud now states that being in love

"consists of a flowing-over of ego-libido onto the object and has the power to remove repressions and reinstate perversions" (100). Freud then alludes to the importance of polymorphous perverse strivings as part of a normal love relation (a subject that has only recently begun to be explored further in psychoanalytic thinking [Kernberg, 1988]) and points to the intimate connection between perversion and idealization. He also refers to the narcissistic function of sexual love when a neurotic finds his or her sexual ideal by making a narcissistic object choice. This is the "cure by love" that Freud also mentions as a typical compromise formation in some patients whose initial incapacity for love, resulting from extensive repressions, is gradually resolved in the psychoanalytic treatment but who then, as an escape from the frustrations in the transference, select a substitute idealized sexual object to rationalize a premature disruption of the treatment. In his final paragraph, Freud briefly touches on the relation between narcissism and group psychology, a subject too complex to be explored in this discussion.

As I said at the beginning of this essay, one major subject related to narcissism that, for all practical purposes, Freud does not touch upon is narcissism as character pathology. He refers only to one type of character pathology linked to narcissism—namely, that of the narcissistic object choice of male homosexual patients. These patients may select another man who stands for themselves, while they identify with their own mother and love the other man as they would have wanted to be loved by her. In light of our present knowledge, this type of character is only one of several. I have described the following types (Kernberg, 1984, 192–96):

1. Normal adult narcissism, characterized by normal self-esteem regulation. It is dependent on a normal self-structure related to normally integrated or "total" internalized object representations, an integrated, largely individualized, and abstracted superego, and the gratification of instinctual needs within the context of stable object relations and value systems.
2. Normal infantile narcissism, of importance because fixation at or regression to infantile narcissistic goals (infantile mechanisms of self-esteem regulation) is an important characteristic of all character pathology. Normal infantile narcissism consists in the regulation of self-esteem by age-appropriate gratifications that include or imply a normal infantile "value system," demands, and/or prohibitions. A first type of pathological self-esteem regulation, reflecting the mildest type of narcissistic character pathology, consists precisely in fixation at or regression to this level of normal infantile narcissism. This type is represented in the frequent cases

of personality or character disorders in which the regulation of self-esteem seems to be overdependent on the expression of or defenses against childish gratifications that are normally abandoned in adulthood. Here the problem is that the ego-ideal is controlled by infantile aspirations, values, and prohibitions. One might say that, in fact, when Freud described the neurotic lowering of self-esteem related to excessive repression of sexual drive, he was implicitly describing what later would be formulated as the structural characteristics of psychoneurosis and neurotic character pathology. This is a very frequent and—in light of our present knowledge of more severe narcissistic pathology—a relatively mild disturbance that is usually resolved in the course of ordinary psychoanalytic treatment.

3. A second, more severe, but relatively infrequent type of pathologic narcissism is precisely that described by Freud in his essay as an illustration of narcissistic object choice. Here, as in the case of male homosexual patients, the patient's self is identified with an object while, at the same time, the representation of the patient's infantile self is projected onto that object, thus creating a libidinal relation in which the functions of self and object have been interchanged. This, indeed, is found among some male and female homosexuals: they love another in the way they would have wished to be loved.
4. A third and most severe type of pathological narcissism is the narcissistic personality disorder proper, one of the most challenging syndromes in clinical psychiatry. Because of the intense study of its psychopathology and the psychoanalytic technique optimally geared to resolve it, it has now become one of the standard indications for psychoanalytic treatment. Freud's essay on narcissism stimulated later contributions to the understanding of the narcissistic personality, including those of Jones (1955), Abraham (1949), and Riviere (1936) during Freud's lifetime, and of Klein (1957), Reich (1960), Jacobson (1964), Van Der Waals (1965), and Tartakoff (1966) of a later generation. More recently, Grünberger (1979), Rosenfeld (1964, 1971, 1975), Kohut (1971, 1972, 1977), and I (1975, 1984) have attempted to develop new theoretical models as a frame of reference for the pathology of the narcissistic personality, as well as technical approaches specifically geared to deal with these patients.

It is my belief that pathological narcissism reflects a libidinal investment not in a normally integrated self-structure but in a pathological self-structure.

This structure, a pathologic grandiose self, condenses real self representations, ideal self representations, and ideal object representations, whereas devalued or aggressively determined self and object representations are split off or dissociated, repressed, or projected. In other words, in contrast to the normal integration of libidinal and aggressively determined self and object representations into the normal self, here what might be called a “purified pleasure ego” constitutes the pathological self-structure.

These patients typically project their own pathological grandiose self onto their temporary love objects, so that they are either idealizing others who unconsciously represent themselves or expecting admiration from others while identifying themselves with their own grandiose self-structure.

For these patients, the ordinary linkage of self to object is mostly lost and replaced by a grandiose “self-self” linkage underlying their frail object relations, a pathological development that truly constitutes a severe pathology of object relations with loss of both the investment in a normal self-structure and the capacity for normal object relations. The narcissistic personality has not replaced object-love by self-love but gives evidence, as Van Der Waals (1965) first pointed out, of a combination of pathological love of self and of others as well.

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The Theory of Narcissism in the Work of Freud and Klein

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FREUD'S THEORY OF NARCISSISM

Freud's paper on narcissism marks a watershed in the development of his thought. By 1913 the theoretical model laid out in chapter 7 of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) had been steadily developed and expanded. The paper "On Narcissism," however, caused a "disagreeable jolt" and "some bewilderment" (Jones, 1958). This paper saw the first revision of Freud's instinct theory and marked the beginning of a major return to theoretical questions that received their fullest exposition in the "Papers on Metapsychology" (1915). Reading the paper, one has a palpable sense of Freud's uneasiness with it. He wrote to Abraham, "The narcissism paper was a difficult labour and bears all the marks of a corresponding deformation" (Jones, 1955).

In the first phase of the development of his theory Freud's principal object was to trace the vicissitudes of the libido through an examination of the perversions. But by the beginning of the next phase, ushered in by the narcissism paper, he was becoming increasingly preoccupied with the functioning of the ego. Only four years before the narcissism paper Freud had coined the term "self-preserved instincts" (1910b).