

REFLECTIONS ON HEINZ KOHUT'S CONCEPT OF NARCISSISM

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THERE IS MUCH diversity in current psychoanalytic literature, but for many years now my attention has been particularly drawn to Heinz Kohut's works on narcissism (KOHUT 12, 13, 14, 15). Kohut has struck me in many ways as a kindred spirit, his views being akin to my own on psychology, and his therapeutic approach similar to mine which, in itself, is closely related to C. G. Jung's analytical psychology. While reading Kohut's often microscopically subtle descriptions and interpretations, traits of various analysands, including the analysand I am for myself, would immediately come to mind. I was also struck again and again by how close Kohut seemed to analytical psychology, even in the way he sees the basic problem of psychological theorising. Because he firmly believes that 'all worthwhile theorising is tentative, probing, provisional—contains an element of playfulness' (KOHUT 15, p. 206), Kohut is tolerant about possible inconsistencies in psychological theory. As he writes, 'I am using the word playfulness advisedly to contrast the basic attitude of creative science with that of dogmatic religion' (KOHUT 15, p. 207). Here we have a striking parallel with Jung who, in his memoirs, complains about Freud's dogmatism with the following words, 'As I saw it, scientific truth was a hypothesis which might be adequate for the moment but was not to be preserved as an article of faith for all time' (JUNG 11, p. 148).

Furthermore, Kohut postulates, for example, that so-called 'narcissistic libido' goes through a progress of formation and transformation and can, in the course of a lifetime, stimulate the maturation processes of a personality. The results of this maturation he calls empathy, creativity, humour and wisdom. This view is quite contrary to that of classical psychoanalytic theory, according to which in healthy development narcissistic libido always transforms into object libido. In contrast, Kohut believes that so-called narcissistic libido has its own capacity for transformation and maturation. Such an observation immediately makes us wonder if Kohut is not using this rather prejudiced term to refer to the phenomenon that would be called, in Jungian terminology, introversion, or, even more specifically, the urge toward individuation. Moreover, in his most recent

book, *The restoration of the self*, Kohut dares to introduce a theory that reaches far beyond the bounds of traditional psychoanalysis: a new theory of the self as centre of the psychological universe. This is a big step within psychoanalysis, an essential innovation of great consequence. The analytical psychologist is then faced with the obvious question of whether Kohut's *self*, centre of the psychological universe, corresponds to the psychic experience that Jung describes and ascribes to the self. In order to answer this question we have to investigate first of all exactly what Kohut means by the term *self*.

Generally speaking, we have to remember that as time went on psychoanalysis could not avoid introducing the concept of the self. Heinz Hartmann was the first to use the term *self* in psychoanalysis, in 1950, and to suggest a conceptual differentiation from the term *ego* (HARTMANN 7). In contrast to the ego which is only one instance within the psychic apparatus, *the self* refers to 'me as a whole person'. It means 'I myself', the way I experience myself and the ideas I consciously or unconsciously entertain about myself. And thus, the specific term 'self-representation' is used, which means the way my being is, as it were, represented in my own mind—in contrast, for example, to the way objects are represented. This inner image of myself may be realistic enough and form the basis of tolerant and constructive self-evaluation. But it can also be distorted, exaggerated, superior, inferior, unreliable or labile. In the latter case my self-perception or at least my sense of self-esteem is in some way disturbed.

For many psychoanalytic authors this concept of the self is a *content* of the ego. In analytical psychology my image of myself—to the extent that it reaches awareness—would also be attributed to the ego. But the unreflected parts of this image belong to my personal unconscious, and are related to my life history. Thus, it seems that analytical psychology could also attribute this notion of the self to the psychology of the ego. However, experience has shown that the way a person sees himself can have intense emotional effects and tends to colour his entire outlook and the basic feeling tone of his personality. This is a condition which is beyond the control of ego consciousness and cannot be easily modified by deeper insights. We must therefore assume that the feeling tone underlying self-perception and self-evaluation has deep archetypal roots. Thus it might be related to the self in the specific Jungian sense.

But Kohut does not seem to be completely satisfied with the psychoanalytic concept of the self either. As I mentioned above, he is taking a step which he tries at great length to justify: side by side with the self concept in the 'narrower sense' accepted by psychoanalysis—as a content of the ego or of the whole psychic apparatus—he places an enlarged concept of the self, as the centre of the psychological universe.

The consequences are varied and decisive. The drives and their vicissitudes, considered by psychoanalysis till now as primary, become merely a

part of the self in formation, and serve in its development. The self is an independent configuration, greater than the sum of its drives. What classical psychoanalysis calls drive fixations and their respective defence mechanisms would, in Kohut's view, be products of decomposition due to momentary or chronic instances of disintegration of the self. Thus, the disorder in the coherence of the self would be primary and the drive conflict secondary. This is a tremendous innovation within psychoanalysis.

It is natural for Kohut as a psychoanalyst to go on to investigate the genesis of the self and its disorders. Always basic for the formation of the self is the 'empathic' presence of so-called self-objects. By this Kohut means, for example, a mother who is experienced by the infant in fusion with her as a part of his self. As he writes,

The crucial question concerns, of course, the point in time when, within the matrix of mutual empathy between the infant and his self-object, the baby's innate potentialities and the self-object's expectations with regard to the baby converge. Is it permissible to consider this juncture the point of origin of the infant's primal, rudimentary self? (KOHUT 15, p. 99).

This hypothesis seems quite similar to Neumann's concept of the primal relationship: an instance when the self, or rather the functional sphere of the self, is incarnated in the mother (NEUMANN 16, p. 18). The mother is thou and self at the same time.

The earliest primal relationship with its mother is unique because here and practically only here the opposition between automorphous self development and thou relationship which otherwise fills all human existence with tension does not normally exist (NEUMANN 16, pp. 14 and 15).

According to Kohut, a coherent self evolves in the following way. First of all the infant's magical feelings of omnipotence and his spontaneous 'exhibitionistic' activity must be greeted with joy and empathic mirroring by a maternal self-object. 'The gleam in the mother's eye' has become a sort of formula which Kohut repeatedly uses to describe this necessary condition. With the inevitable step by step frustration of its boundless needs, the child slowly learns to recognise its limitations, and thus its phantasies of omnipotence and need for admiration can gradually mature to become realistic ambitions and an adequate sense of self-esteem. When there is optimal frustration the mother who (in accordance with her function as self-object) mirrors in an empathic way is progressively internalised and gradually becomes what Kohut calls a 'psychic structure'. In other words, optimal maternal empathy lays the foundations for a healthy feeling of self-esteem that allows one to take and protect a 'place in the sun' corresponding to one's personality; one is then neither obsessed with ambition nor inhibited, ashamed nor plagued with guilt about being 'seen', about being exposed. The need to be well 'regarded', to be someone of 'regard' in the world and to enjoy 'distinction' makes me think of how this need is originally related to 'the gleam in the mother's eye'.

We are all in continual need for recognition, of having our existence and our own worth acknowledged by others. As Eric Berne humorously formulated it, we need a certain measure of 'strokes' or 'stroking' (BERNE 1). Kohut is right in comparing emotional resonance with the oxygen we need for survival (KOHUT 15, p. 253). When, however, someone is all too dependent on continual approval and admiration, when he becomes addicted to unceasing narcissistic supplies, then we can no longer speak of *healthy narcissism*. This rather indicates that his sense of self-esteem is unstable or disturbed and that a tendency to narcissistic vulnerability predominates; in such a condition the sense of the coherence of the self can from time to time be threatened.

The developmental lines of self formation which vitally need the empathic mirroring of a maternal self-object are what we normally consider as narcissistic. They are connected with the vital question of 'self-approval'.

But Kohut believes that something else also occurs during the formation of the self. Not only does the developing self want to be admired by the self-object; in its turn, it also admires the maternal or paternal self-object and experiences it as omnipotent and perfect. But as the self-object is hardly differentiated from the self's own world, its perfection also entails the self's own perfection. There is fusion with the idealised, seemingly omnipotent and perfect self-object. Progressive disappointment about the real parents' omnipotence, omniscience and perfection can, as we have said above, lead to their 'transmuting internalisation' (KOHUT 15). This is an important process that makes possible the formation of psychic structures forming the matrix of future ideals.

Whether an infant can survive physically and emotionally, can feel valued and 'whole' thus depends essentially on a good enough empathic attitude on the part of the self-object. The necessary process of gradual liberation from this dependency finally reaches its end when the system of parental values has been internalised in the structure of the super-ego—Kohut calls this 'the idealisation of the super-ego' (KOHUT 13) that is, when the Oedipus complex has been overcome.

In other words, self esteem can also develop and be sustained when, out of fusion with the idealised self-object, ideals have been born that stimulate worthwhile commitment. There are, for example, always people engaged in minor or major tasks that transcend their immediate, personal needs, people who are completely devoted to greater or higher aims. Their conscious intention is by no means to raise their own sense of personal worth; rather their devotion to greater matters—be they scientific, artistic, religious or social—seems to give their lives a certain transpersonal meaning. The fact that these matters might have their infantile roots in the idealisation of a self-object is probably responsible for a well-known phenomenon: often these higher aims appear in personified form, em-

bodied, for instance, in an admired and idealised person or in all kinds of charismatic leaders. Certainly commitment to matters transcending one's personal needs does not sound like what we normally call narcissism—on the contrary. And yet, the main purpose of such endeavours is maintaining narcissistic equilibrium. I feel, however, that the prejudiced term 'narcissism' is a bit out of place here. In his most recent book, Kohut replaces the expression 'narcissistic equilibrium' with a preferable term, 'the coherence of the self'. Thus we would say, the coherence of the self can also be attained by fusion with an idealised self-object; and, it can be maintained via the formation of ideals.

Jung is no doubt referring to similar phenomena when he speaks of the search for transpersonal meaning and of neurosis as the 'suffering of a soul which has not discovered its meaning' (JUNG 10, pp. 330–1).

According to Kohut the archaic grandiose self and the archaic phantasies of omnipotence are gradually transformed. In a favourable development the result is the emergence of realistic ambitions and mature ideals. The self that emerges at the end of this development has to be considered as bipolar. There is, on the one hand, a pole of ambitious initiative that strives for admiration and, on the other, a pole consisting of meaningful goals and ideals. The tension span between the poles is regulated by the talents and skills a person possesses. This means that ideally both poles of the self operate together when vigorous, spontaneous energy is directed toward goals that the person feels are meaningful and worthwhile. It is, therefore, understandable that narcissistic personality disorders are often marked by a loss of energy, a sense of inner emptiness and general lack of interest.

Is then what Kohut considers 'the self, as centre of the psychological universe' the same as what analytical psychology understands under the concept of the self? At first sight it hardly seems so. Kohut's idea of the self seems more personalistic, close to what Jung means by ego, compared with what he means by self. And yet I must point out here that Kohut also speaks of what he calls 'cosmic narcissism' (KOHUT 12), which transcends the boundaries of the individual: here wisdom would consist in reflecting on the finiteness of all being and on the transitoriness of individual existence. Furthermore, in Kohut's view, there is no original or primal self present at the time of birth (Cf. FORDHAM 4, p. 12). According to Kohut the self has slowly to develop its coherence from a state which Freud called 'primary narcissism'. Here Jungian psychology would rather say that the self is the *imperceptible*, central ordering factor responsible for psychic development, transformation and, at the same time, psychic balance. This might be the essential difference, if Kohut did not go on to say, among other things, that man's ultimate goal might be 'the realisation, through his actions, of the blueprint for his life that had been laid down in his nuclear self' (KOHUT 15, p. 133). And so we see that Kohut believes that the nucleus of the self has to do with a blueprint for life. And we are thus once again quite close

to the Jungian idea of the individuation process. The parallel becomes even more apparent with Kohut's statement that 'the self, whatever the history of its formation, has become a centre of initiative: a unit that tries to follow its own course' (KOHUT 15, p. 245). Furthermore, we have to remember here that Jung at different times considered the self as both the psychic totality *including* the ego and the archetypes *and* as also being the central archetype of order, distinct from the ego and perhaps from all the other archetypes. According to Fordham, those are two incompatible theories of the self that do not form an essential paradox, but merely create unnecessary confusion. He therefore suggests that a distinction be made: the term self would only be used to refer to psychic totality; otherwise the term central archetype of order would be preferred (FORDHAM 2).

I must admit that I am not quite sure whether those two theories of the self belong together as a paradox or not. Logically they are mutually exclusive, but we know that this has little meaning when we are dealing with the reality of the psyche. The distinction suggested by Fordham has the advantage of clarifying matters, but it has the disadvantage of separating out things which we may experience as belonging together. Yet Fordham argues that he is referring only to the place of the self in the *theoretical model* of the psyche and not to the *contents* of the self, which can, in accordance with experience, be stated paradoxically (FORDHAM 2, p. 34). For Jung, an essential aspect of the nature of the self lies in the fact that it cannot be clearly defined. And here again we find that Kohut has come to the same conclusion when he writes at the end of his book *The restoration of the self*,

My investigation contains hundreds of pages dealing with the psychology of the self—yet it never assigns an inflexible meaning to the term self, it never explains how the essence of the self should be defined. But I admit this fact without contrition or shame. The self is [...] not knowable in its essence (KOHUT 15, pp. 310 and 311).

For Kohut too then, the self is many-faceted and thus it more or less escapes definition. But in comparison with Jung, what is lacking is the wealth of symbolism and any *direct* reference to the religious experience which might be inherent in the self as God-image. For all his insights, Kohut remains here within the psychoanalytic tradition. Jung arrives at his insights mainly through his experience with, and amplification of, the wealth of images from the unconscious. Kohut's method is based on introspection and empathy with his patients' experience. It is, therefore, especially in the feeling realm of analytic practice that I find Kohut's observations, with the special attention they pay to transference-countertransference phenomena, most valuable.

But also here there are parallels with Jung's views. Kohut, for example, believes that the termination of analysis can be considered successful even if 'not all structural defects have been mobilised, worked through, and filled in through transmuting internalisation' (KOHUT 15, p. 48). Compensatory, creative solutions are also possible; as he says,

I have observed a number of patients who began to devote themselves during the terminal phase to some deeply absorbing creative endeavor. The evaluation of the analysand's total behaviour pattern—especially an attitude of quiet certitude—led me to the conclusion that the creativity of such patients . . . is not a manifestation of a defensive manoeuvre meant to prevent the completion of the analytic process, but rather an indication that these analysands have at least preliminarily determined the mode by which the self will from now on attempt to ensure its cohesion, to maintain its balance, and to achieve its fulfilment (KOHUT 15, p. 38).

Fine and good, the analytical psychologist may say. Finally, a great psychoanalyst has come to realise what Jung discovered over fifty years ago. He may also get a bit angry and find it unfair that Jung is not even mentioned here. Is Kohut an opportunist who does not mention Jung for fear of stirring up his psychoanalytic colleagues' prejudices against his ideas? In not mentioning Jung is Kohut dressing in borrowed finery? I feel we should be careful in making such accusations. At any rate, we have to recognise the author's courage, the courage it takes to step beyond the relatively tabooed boundaries of psychoanalytic theory. And I feel we can believe the author when he says that there would have been 'only one way out of the morass of conflicting, poorly based, and often vague theoretical speculation' (KOHUT 15, p. xx). The only way to progress was 'the way back to the direct observation of clinical phenomena and the construction of new formulations that would accommodate [his] findings' (*Ibid.*, pp. xx-xxi). Kohut wanted to present these findings without having first to compare them with other theories of psychology. In a similar vein, Jung says that in the lack of orientation he faced after his separation from Freud, he decided first of all, before formulating any hypotheses, to wait and see what the patients had to say for themselves (JUNG 11, p. 165). I am impressed by the closeness of the parallel.

I personally find Kohut's works so interesting precisely because he does not simply repeat Jungian ideas; but rather, with a completely different approach, he comes up with similar results. This is much more valuable for the analytical psychologist; it is encouraging and stimulating at the same time.

In any case, Kohut's theoretical views lead to innovations in psychoanalytic techniques that partially coincide with, or at least can be correlated with, those of analytical psychology. From Kohut's findings it becomes clear that empathic understanding of the patient's concerns is the most important therapeutic agent.

Such a view seems to stand in contradiction to Freud's famous dictum that analysts should 'model themselves during psychoanalytic treatment on the surgeon, who puts aside all his feelings, even his human sympathy' (FREUD 5, p. 115). In order to relieve the psychoanalyst of any and all guilt feelings he may have when not following this dictum, Kohut quotes passages in Freud's later correspondence where he informally expresses views that are clearly at variance with the injunction cited above (KOHUT

15, p. 255). Kohut rightly feels that neutrality on the part of the analyst is not to be equated with minimal response. In his opinion, a lot of a patient's resistances may be due to a 'certain stiffness, artificiality and strait-laced reserve' in the analyst whose attitude does not provide the essential 'empathic resonance' (*Ibid.*, p. 255). The extent to which this empathic resonance is of greater concern to Kohut than adhering to any strict and sanctified rules can be seen in the following quotation:

If, for example, a patient's insistent questions are the transference manifestations of infantile sexual curiosity, this mobilised childhood reaction will not be short-circuited, but, on the contrary, will delineate itself with greater clarity if the analyst, by *first replying* to the questions and only later pointing out that his replies did not satisfy the patient, does not create artificial rejections of the analysand's need for empathic responsiveness (KOHUT 15, pp. 252 and 253).

As I have already said, I find comparisons with Kohut that merely stress the superiorities of Jungian psychology of little interest. Instead of pointing out how unoriginal all of this is and how much has already been said by Jung—at least fifty years beforehand—I feel that Jungian psychology is basically open enough to be able to integrate some of the results of Kohut's findings. I have found this to be a profitable way of refining one's own therapeutic procedure. (This is obviously true not only of Kohut but also of various other approaches according to the specific needs of each individual case.)

In practice I particularly see the usefulness of the two transference-countertransference models related to the bi-polar self. As is well known, Kohut differentiates between mirror transference and idealising transference. In the first case the analysand expects the analyst to provide empathic resonance to his very being, a yearning for 'the gleam in the mother's eye'. The idealising transference, on the other hand, stems from the analysand's need to merge with the seemingly omniscient and omnipotent self-object projected on to the analyst.

I would like here to give a practical example of how these two transference-countertransference configurations can be experienced. During three consecutive sessions with an analysand, a woman of about forty, I felt so tired that I had to fight off sleep. The 'ideal analyst' in me did not like this at all, but the fact that it happened three times made me realise that it was probably a syntonetic countertransference reaction (FORDHAM 3). But what did it mean? The problem could not have been what my patient was talking about. The subjects were interesting enough even though they were presented in a bit too much detail.

When this incidence of fatigue occurred, my patient had been in analysis with me for four years. She had come because of a symptom that was extremely embarrassing for her: she could not pick up a glass of wine, a cup of coffee or a spoon in the presence of other people without her whole arm's starting to tremble. This made her feel terribly exposed and flooded

with shame; consequently, she tended more and more to avoid being with people. She was increasingly afraid and ashamed of being exposed and getting into such a state.

And yet, my patient was greatly gifted in listening to and understanding others; her empathy—a trait which Kohut usually finds lacking in narcissistic personality disorders—was very well developed. This gift must have been furthered by the fact that, from her earliest childhood on, she had been forced to develop an extreme sensitivity in order to adapt to her mother's constant expectations; it was the only way she could get at least a minimum of vitally needed attention from that obviously narcissistically disturbed woman. Later on in life she continued to give other people's needs priority over her own; whenever she could not fulfil someone's expectations, she was tormented by very intense guilt feelings.

In analysis too she tried to adapt to 'my expectations', and she tremendously idealised my 'spiritual side'. For her this idealisation meant having to provide me with important dreams and interesting subject matter. Whenever she failed to do so, she felt very frightened, ashamed and inferior, and had a sense of inner emptiness. At such moments it was clear that fusion with the idealised self-object, i.e., with the so highly-prized 'spiritual principle', had failed once again. On the whole, my patient showed a lively interest in the analysis, co-operated well, was intelligent and had a highly differentiated feeling for psychological connections. As she was such a tactful person, her admiration for me did not feel too intrusive. The stress laid on the spiritual was not too obviously a mere defence against the erotic component, but seemed to correspond to a genuine need in her. And so, in the countertransference thus far I had felt on the whole animated by her presence and full of ideas for possible interpretations. Occasionally, however, I found myself delivering lengthy, very knowledgeable explanations. Still my analysand seemed to feel nourished and enriched by such discussions, although she sometimes feared that on her way home she would forget all the interesting things she had learned.

As far as her symptoms were concerned, with time there was definite improvement. But we were both aware of the fact that her continuing tendency to feel easily hurt and embarrassed still prevented her from being really spontaneous. I must add here, however, that at this stage of the analysis she no longer hesitated to expose herself to a large team and even to her superiors whenever she felt she had to stand up and fight for an important *cause*. At such times she had the feeling she was borne on by some transpersonal, spiritual ideal—probably a sign of fusion with an idealised self-object. But going to a restaurant and drinking a cup of coffee with the same people still cost her tremendous efforts in trying to overcome her fears of exposure.

I could not shake off her idealising transference and interpret it as 'mere compensation'; it was a matter of too vital concern for her. Kohut

finds it important for the analyst to embody the idealised transference figure for a certain time. The analysand's disappointment that the analyst does not correspond to the ideal phantasy figure, and that has to take place gradually, stimulates the process of transmuting internalisation. In Jungian terms we would say the analysand can take back the projections: the projected content is recognised as intra-psychic and can be partially integrated. My analysand too began to express some criticism towards me; from the standpoint of the therapy I welcomed her new courage.

But what did my repeated attacks of sleepiness mean? The third time this countertransference reaction occurred, I decided not to fight it off, but to discuss it in some way with my analysand. Given her vulnerability, I obviously could not state the problem directly and tell her she evidently bored me to the point of sleep. What I did ask her was if at the moment she might have the feeling that she was far away, or even isolated from me. And, in fact, she was then able to say that she had the impression she was babbling about completely uninteresting things and could naturally not expect me to be interested; consequently, she felt more and more unsure of herself. What she said meant, in other words, that when she did not have my empathic resonance she felt rejected and worthless. Further analysis of our situation showed that she found herself constantly having to fend off an ever-increasing need: a deep yearning for a mirroring self-object. This need had been deeply buried and was now slowly coming to light. It was a need to be seen and admired, that is, to experience 'the gleam in the mother's eye'. However, as it was connected with early traumatic memories of disappointment, it was coupled with fear and had had to be repressed. Therefore, all she could consciously experience at this stage of the analysis was intensified fears of not meeting up to my expectations and boring me. As my sleepiness shows, she did manage to bore me and thus to turn me into the unempathic, rejecting maternal figure; at the same time she was unable, even by the most timid of signs, to communicate to me her real need for a mirroring self-object. Our efforts at interpreting the emerging mirror transference helped her to express herself more freely whenever she felt that I had misunderstood her, hurt or rejected her. This was the beginning of further progress on the way towards self-assertion and overcoming her symptoms.

Generally speaking, it must be said here that in our society the need for praise, recognition and admiration is usually masked and can only be expressed indirectly. Narcissism is considered as something negative. As the saying goes, 'self praise is no recommendation'; one should be meek and humble in the true Christian way. Narcissistic needs often have something embarrassing about them and most people today can speak more openly about their sexual problems than about their narcissistic ones. Those who do not hesitate to show off and are not shy in displaying narcissistic enjoyment therefore often attract typical shadow projections—a combination of

rejection, envy and secret admiration. In keeping with its nature, narcissistic 'orgasm' is triggered by the beautiful self-image in the mirror, that is, by admiring applause. That is the reason why it tends to seek release not in the intimacy of a quiet little room, but in public. But 'public orgasm', if I may call it that, can only be really enjoyed by true exhibitionists; a lot of narcissistic orgies are only allowed to exist in the secret realm of phantasy. As an example of the conflict involved in narcissistic enjoyment, I can think of a relatively well-known playwright with a nearly insatiable greed for narcissistic supplies of praise and admiration, who was at the same time extremely touchy about the slightest criticism. One day a work of his was performed at a very important festival. When it had been duly applauded, he stood in the artists' box, anxious for admiring attention. And yet, when people congratulated him on his success, he was so embarrassed that he could not look them in the eye. This, in turn, was not very encouraging for those trying to congratulate him. Another playwright once told me it always took him weeks to recover from a success and the emotional turmoil it brought with it, and to find himself again. It seems to me that in such cases we can speak of what Kohut calls the discomfort caused by an 'influx of narcissistic-exhibitionistic libido' (KOHUT 13).

For an analyst, also, it is not necessarily easy to cope with the boundless admiration he receives in idealising transferences. On the one hand, such transferences tend to constellate the analyst's fears of being flooded in an embarrassing way with his own latent phantasies of omnipotence (Kohut's 'grandiose self'). On the other hand, he may feel under great pressure not to disappoint his patient's idealised expectations. Thus, the analyst may in his turn unconsciously experience his patient as a self-object whose idealising admiration he needs intensely for his own narcissistic balance. In addition to this, it can be extremely embarrassing for the analyst to have to realise the tremendous pleasure he gets from being seen as such an admired and idealised person. This does not mean that he cannot at the same time be narcissistically hurt when the patient's disappointment slowly leads to the withdrawal of projections and the analyst finds himself no longer so deeply loved, admired and needed. However, as this is usually a good sign for the analytic process, the analyst's narcissistic needs can find a certain compensation in the form of heightened professional self-esteem.

This might be the reason why training candidates are often so reluctant about even raising the subject of the transference with their patients. They are afraid their patients might find them conceited and narcissistic; unconsciously they often confuse their possible importance as a transference figure with their personal importance. Consequently, there is a lot of beating about the bush on this matter. This is perhaps not the case for candidates of the London group where the interpretation of the transference is 'the fulcrum of analysis' (GORDON 6). And yet I can imagine that it takes a lot of narcissistic investment to attain such a high level of sensitivity

in dealing with the transference, keeping at bay feelings of grandiosity or inferiority must, therefore, also somehow be involved. One cannot deny how important it is for an analyst to come to terms with his own narcissistic needs and phantasies, lest they become counterproductive for his patients. In the attempt to find a *modus vivendi* with one's grandiose self, I can favourably recommend another one of Kohut's suggestions, namely the development of humour. I truly believe that tolerant humour is the best way to deal with the drive-like demands of the grandiose self. If I can accept with a good portion of humour the side in me that would so much like to be omniscient, omnipotent, world-famous and loved by all, then a great deal of inhibiting, complex-laden embarrassment can be overcome. I then acknowledge the existence of such phantasies and, to a certain extent, let them have their due; at the same time, however, I can consider them with a certain measure of humorous detachment.

It must also be noted here that in numerous places in his writings Jung shows a rather negative, even moralistic, attitude towards narcissistic needs, for example, in *Two essays*, where he says,

The more we become conscious of ourselves through self-knowledge, and act accordingly, the more the layer of the personal unconscious that is superimposed on the collective unconscious will be diminished. In this way there arises a consciousness which is no longer imprisoned in the petty, oversensitive, personal world of the ego, but participates freely in the wider world of objective interests. This widened consciousness is no longer that touchy, egotistical bundle of personal wishes, fears, hopes, and ambitions which always has to be compensated or corrected by unconscious counter-tendencies; instead, it is a function of relationship to the world of objects, bringing the individual into absolute binding, and indissoluble communion with the world at large (JUNG 9, p. 176).

One of the ideals of Jungian analysis is, therefore, overcoming and outgrowing this personal, touchy 'ego world' as quickly as possible in order to get onto the real, deep and numinous dimensions of the self in the collective unconscious. Analysts and also patients who have read Jung often work with this ideal in mind. They consider it less important to analyse contents that seem to belong 'only' to the personal unconscious and are seemingly unaware of the consequent danger: that these contents actually remain unconscious and intensify the shadow problem.

In Kohut's terminology the goal of this ideal of Jungian analysis would be bringing to life the compensatory structure of the self via fusion with an idealised self-object. In other words, what usually happens is fusion with an idealised 'Jung' and his ideas about the wonder world of the collective unconscious. It is true that in many cases the compensatory structure can contribute to a certain 'restoration of the self'. But often it seems rather to be a defensive structure against the primary defect. At any event, we know that people who have, for a long time, been moving in 'the deepest waters of the unconscious' do frequently still show notable signs of narcissistic vulnerability.

In this paper I have attempted to investigate some trends in the practice

of analytical psychology from the standpoint of Kohut and not the opposite, i.e., to examine Kohut's theses in the light of Jungian psychology. I think that travelling is very important, in so far as one can do so with open eyes and not with blinkers that only help to prove how much better everything is at home. Travelling makes comparisons possible, offers new perspectives that can help one to see the specific traits of one's own country more clearly. My approach does not mean that I completely identify with Kohut, at least I hope not.

There has already been one attempt at interpreting Jung's personal psychology as well as his ideas on psychology largely in the context of Kohut's concepts (HOMANS 8). Although this undertaking shed some new light on many problems, I feel it was only partially successful. My own approach is rather related to the question of whether integrating some of Kohut's ideas in analytic practice might not be helpful in refining our therapeutic tools for the benefit of our patients.

SUMMARY

This paper deals with some of the astonishing similarities between H. Kohut's theories on narcissism and many basic views of C. G. Jung. As in his last book, Kohut places the self as the 'centre of the psychological universe', those similarities have become even closer and call for a differentiated comparison. Kohut seems to have arrived at his conclusions independently, by his own observations, without reference to Jung. There are many of his subtle insights which can also be used fruitfully in the practice of an analytical psychologist—as a case example tries to show. The paper, furthermore, contains some reflections on the taboos of many narcissistic needs in our society. It finally deals with some difficulties which can be inflicted by the 'grandiose self' also upon the analyst.

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