

# Self-Preservation at the Center of Personality

Superego and Ego Ideal in the Regulation of Safety

**Ralf-Peter Behrendt**

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In memory of my mother,  
Amanda Behrendt,  
1939-2016



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# Introduction

Heinz Kohut (1971, 1977) developed self psychology, a branch of psychoanalytic theory, in recognition of the central role of self-esteem and self-cohesion in the functioning of the personality. Kohut did not expand on the resonances in his theory with the works of Alfred Adler, Paul Federn, Karen Horney, and Joseph Sandler; but neither did Sandler highlight the contributions of Horney and Federn, or Horney those of Adler and Federn, yet their theories are highly compatible and complement each other. The 'principle of self-preservation', advanced by self psychology as the fundamental principle underlying social behavior and personality organization, stipulates that the subject must maintain his ties to his selfobject surround if he is to preserve the integrity of his self (Stolorow, 1983; Brandchaft, 1985). In other words, the personality is organized around the need for *approval* (Flugel, 1945), specifically, and the need for safety (Sandler, 1960a), more generally. This imperative can be in *conflict* with other demands, internal ('instinctual') or external. All psychological conflicts are ultimately concerned with the preservation of the integrity (cohesion) of the self (Stolorow, 1985). Ego defenses, the focus of classical psychoanalysis, are 'ego functions' (Hartmann) that serve the preservation of the self (ego), that is, the subject's sense of connectedness to the selfobject surround (and hence his feeling of safety [Sandler]). Ego defenses (defense mechanisms) resolve conflicts between the need for safety and 'instinctual drives' (drive impulses). Drive impulses arouse anxiety (and hence are consciously intolerable) insofar as the resulting behavior would be socially unacceptable (and invite disapproval) and would thus threaten the narcissistic homeostasis and integrity of the self. The self is 'narcissistically cathected' (Hartmann, 1964; Jacobson, 1964), meaning that it is constituted, and maintained in its cohesiveness (Kohut), by others' approving attitudes toward oneself and by others' recognition and

acceptance of oneself, attitudes that are induced and have to be maintained by oneself through employment of what can be called 'narcissistic behaviors' (proximally concerned with others but ultimately with oneself and one's safety). 'Self' and 'ego' are treated synonymously in this book, in keeping with Freud's earlier work and also with Federn (so that, for the most part, 'ego' here is *not* to be taken as part of the 'mental apparatus', developed by the later Freud, and *not* as an unconscious structure that is defined, according to Hartmann, by its functions).

Freud (1914) recognized more than a century ago that narcissism and the regulation of self-regard are at the service of self-preservation, an insight of fundamental importance for social psychology and personality theory, yet the line of theoretical development through Adler, Federn, Horney, and Sandler to Kohut is a sparsely connected and underappreciated one. Self-regard or self-esteem, being regulated by 'narcissistic object choice' (Freud, 1914) (the use of objects as selfobjects, i.e. for narcissistic purposes) and by behavior strategies aimed at enhancing one's worth and approvability in the eyes of others, refers to one's "confident conviction of being lovable" (Storr, 1968, p. 77), one's implicit knowledge of being acceptable to others and safely embedded in the social milieu. What this means is that one is protected against the *aggressive potentialities* of others. The need for approval and recognition (Flugel, 1945), for the purpose of upholding self-esteem, is equivalent to the striving for coherence of the self (Kohut) and the need to maintain the feeling of safety (Sandler), all of which can be regarded as direct expressions of our evolutionarily ancient need for protection against intraspecific aggression (Konrad Lorenz), against the risk of victimization, expulsion, and annihilation by our fellow human beings (whereby 'paranoid anxiety' [Melanie Klein] is the awareness of this risk). Protection against intraspecific aggression is principally achieved by appeasement or subordination of others and by binding them into a mutually aggression-inhibiting context.

Safety is also felt when narcissistic supplies are received or readily available. Developmentally, the first context within which safety is experienced is the mother-infant relationship (the primary narcissistic fusion with the mother). Self-esteem is similarly based on the infant's earliest experience of his mother, namely the experience of receiving "sufficient loving care" (Storr, 1968, p. 77). The mother-infant relationship is not only the first aggression-inhibiting context but also the template for all later relationships (as appreciated by psychoanalysis in general). It is from the context of 'true parental care' (involving the feeding and grooming of offspring in exchange for infantile care-seeking behaviors) (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1970) that various behavior patterns evolved that served the inhibition of intraspecific aggression in increasingly complex social formations.

Humans are, first and foremost, object-seeking (rather than pleasure-seeking) beings, as emphasized by Fairbairn (1952). The primary aim of the person is not libidinal pleasure, as Freud had proposed and early psychoanalysts had maintained, but to establish satisfactory relationships with objects, relationships that provide and recreate the context of security. Object-relations theory emphasizes our dependence on objects (Klein, 1940, 1946; Fairbairn, 1952). Self psychology elucidates the nature of this dependence, attributing to objects 'selfobject' functions, that is, the ability to act as sources of narcissistic supplies (approval, recognition, acceptance), thereby maintaining the individual's narcissistic balance (self-esteem, integrity of the self) (Kohut). It is important to emphasize that selfobjects are merely objects (significant others), but through them the self is constituted and maintained in its cohesiveness (by way of mirroring). Joffe and Sandler (1965) formulated this insight thus: the object is "a vehicle for the attainment of the ideal state of well-being" (safety), it "is ultimately the means whereby a desired state of the self may be attained" (p. 158). Wellbeing or safety results from social recognition and approval, that is, from narcissistic supplies or their

availability (Joffe & Sandler, 1968, p. 231). The feeling of safety is the developmental extension of the infant's "awareness of being protected ... by the reassuring presence of the mother"; it "develops from an integral part of primary narcissistic experience" (Sandler, 1960a, p. 4). Primary narcissism, as implicated in the earliest relationship between mother and infant, gives rise to secondary narcissism, that is, the regulation of self-regard by relating to (external or internal) objects (Freud, 1914). Primary narcissism was suggested by Sandler and Sandler (1978) to be the origin of the sense of safety or wellbeing, which the individual attempts to regain throughout life by way of relating to objects. It is the developmental departure from primary narcissism that gives rise to ongoing efforts, throughout life, to reexperience feelings of safety by relating to objects *in a way that recapitulates* aspects of the early and earliest relationship with the mother (Sandler & Sandler, 1978). The need for approval from those about us, "for the feeling that we are accepted by society", is "a continuation into adolescent and adult life of the young child's need for the approval of his parents, while the anxiety and despondency caused by the sense of being outcasts from society corresponds similarly to the infant's distress at losing their love and support" (Flugel, 1945, pp. 55-56).

Klein's concept of 'depressive anxiety' (a feature of the 'depressive position' of infantile development) refers to the infant's insight into his dependence, for survival, on the maternal object (and, later, the adult's dependence on a derivative of the primary object). By contrast, anxiety associated with the 'paranoid-schizoid position' of infantile development (*reemerging* later in life as a result of failure in early life to 'repair' internal objects, on whom the infant and later the adult depends) (Klein, 1940, 1946) relates to the potential of aggression from (persecution by) conspecifics and consequential annihilation (including the possibility of aggression from the mother). Lack of close relationships in early life (and failure in childhood to form secure internal

objects, equivalent to failure to form a secure self) renders the individual liable to regress to the paranoid-schizoid position, in which fears of persecution and annihilation are reawakened and confirmed (Klein, 1940). Insecurity (lack of securely established internal objects) brings back to the surface paranoid anxiety and the need to monitor suspiciously the world of external objects (Klein, 1940). The danger to which primitive humans would have been exposed early on in hominoid evolution was that of persecution and annihilation by the primal group; and it is to deal with this possibility and in defense against this fear that we have to draw on securely established internal objects and activate selfobject functions of external objects, objects that ensure our self-preservation by supplying us with narcissistic nourishment or having these supplies available for us (and thereby signaling to us that their aggression is inhibited). Developmentally, the role of the mother is taken over by the leader of the group; the internal representative of the mother (the superego) is projected onto the leader by each member of the group. Not only the leader, the group as a whole relates to the individual member in much the same way as the mother relates to the infant (Scheidlinger, 1964, 1968); and the individual's fears of the group and need for protection from the group (dependence on the group) mirror the infant's basic attitudes toward the mother, as described by Klein.

Anxiety arises "out of loss of narcissistic supplies" (p. 136), implying loss of *connectedness* to others and "loss of help and protection" (Fenichel, 1946, p. 44). Anxiety, "the most extreme degree of which is a feeling of annihilation" (p. 134), "means also a loss of self-esteem" (Fenichel, 1946, p. 44). Anxiety is the 'polar opposite' of the feeling of safety (Sandler) implicit in one's connectedness to and acceptance by the group or leader. Anxiety is an awareness of the basic hostility of the group and of the danger of being attacked. 'Basic anxiety' ('basic insecurity') is "a feeling of helplessness toward a potentially hostile world" (pp. 74-75), "a basic feeling of helplessness toward a world conceived as

potentially dangerous” (Horney, 1939, p. 173). In a state of basic anxiety, the environment is felt as a menace, “the environment is dreaded as a whole” (Horney, 1939, p. 75). Basic anxiety is a feeling of “impending punishment, retaliation, desertion” (Horney, 1937, p. 235). The danger for the individual consists, in part, in the possibility of being *obliterated* (Horney, 1939, p. 75), that is, being annihilated by conspecifics or the group as a whole. Basic anxiety, arising when “one feels fundamentally helpless toward a world which is invariably menacing and hostile” (Horney, 1937, p. 106), motivates the pursuit of reassurance, approval, and love (i.e., narcissistic sustenance). Receiving others’ reassurance, approval, or affection serves “as a powerful protection against anxiety” (p. 96). In soliciting others’ approval or affection, we inhibit their innate hostility toward us and counteract our sense of being helplessly exposed to a menacing world. Horney (1937) spoke of “the dilemma of feeling at once basically hostile toward people and nevertheless wanting their affection” (p. 111), a dilemma that is experienced most vividly by neurotic persons as well as patients with schizophrenia (Laing, 1960).

Wilhelm Reich (1928, 1929) was perhaps the first to articulate that a person’s character is a ‘narcissistic protection mechanism’, a mechanism that protects against dangers emanating from an *inherently* dangerous outer world. Indeed, the seeking of a position of safety, a position wherein others’ acceptance, approval, or love are forthcoming or available, is the operating principle of the personality. There are different strategies, featuring in different personality types, of recreating the infant’s experience of being in the focus of the mother’s loving and caring attention, of recreating a state in which acceptance by the mother was felt to be unwavering and unquestionable. Narcissistic needs, arising once the infant recognizes his separateness from the mother (and enters the stage of secondary narcissism), “compel the child to ask for affection”, whereby the child may solicit and procure

essential narcissistic supplies by way of exhibitionistic behaviors or “by force”; or he may seek to attain them “by submissiveness and demonstration of suffering” (Fenichel, 1946, p. 41). There is, throughout life, a striving to reenact aspects of early and the earliest object relationships, so that “a great deal of life is involved in the concealed repetition of early object relationships” and reenactment of relationship patterns that have from the first years of life operated as ‘safety-giving or anxiety-reducing maneuvers’ (Sandler & Sandler, 1978). Throughout life, the individual is disposed to employ one or another mode of generating safety, submission being one them, control another, exhibitionism yet another. The aim of predominantly exhibitionistic patterns of relating, not just to another individual but also to the group or an organization, is to *display* an approvable self and to thereby attract narcissistic sustenance (positive attention in the form of approval). Submissiveness and forceful control are methods of generating and maintaining a *context* in which care-giving (narcissistically nourishing) signals can be received from derivatives of the maternal object; they are methods of controlling the *responsiveness* and availability of such derivatives. Personalities differ with regard to the extent to which these methods are woven into their habitual patterns of social behavior.

Through the exercise of power over others, generally involving a sublimated or neutralized form of aggression, the ‘purpose of the self’ (Horney), which is to maintain or establish connectedness (to the social surround) and thereby to minimize basic anxiety, can be served. Control over the other may involve the threat of abandonment. One induces fear of abandonment in an other, so that one does not have to face abandonment oneself. Making oneself *indispensable* to a common pursuit or an organization (on which the safety of each member depends) is a related method of attaining a position of safety. Compliance, being a derivative of evolutionarily older submissive behavior employed in agonistic encounters (with conspecifics), inhibits intraspecific

aggression and thereby generates a context of safety, the context in which the self can express its needs for affection and playfulness. Developmentally, compliance emerges in the mother-infant context for the purpose of upholding inhibition of maternal aggression. Noncompliance disinhibits maternal aggression and, later in development, that of the superego or of external representatives of the superego. Compliance with internal (superego) and external standards flows into many modes of relating to the social surround on various levels, modes that involve appeasement of the superego or superego projections so as to enable the solicitation of narcissistic nourishment from them. The display of helplessness is another strategy for overcoming anxiety and strengthening the self. Basic anxiety “concur with a feeling of intrinsic weakness of the self”; and this weakness gives rise to “a desire to put all responsibility upon others, to be protected and taken care of” (Horney, 1937, p. 96). The example of ‘regression’ to a position of helplessness and greater dependency also illustrates the principle that safety-seeking modes of behavior become stabilized in particular environmental or cultural contexts. Not just regression, every mode of social behavior is about recreating conditions under which the mother’s care and love were reliably available, whereby the attainment of a position of safety in this way can occur on different levels of social complexity, importantly with greater or lesser reference to the wider social and cultural context. Horney saw in basic anxiety a powerful motivator for social behavior and organizer of the personality, but she did not fully appreciate the fact that patterns of social behavior are in essence patterns of unconsciously relating to the mother and seeking the safety inherent in the earliest relationship. Horney (1937) discerned “four principle ways in which a person tries to protect himself against the basic anxiety: affection, submissiveness, power, withdrawal” (p. 96). These four principle ways, through which basic anxiety is kept at a minimum, lie at the heart of different types of personality structure. In the neurotic personality, these “moves toward,

against, and away from others became compulsive” (Horney, 1950, p. 366).

The superego is an introjected source of approval and disapproval, and as such would “take over the functions of parents or other moral authorities”, but “we can never – at any rate within the range of normal mental life – become entirely independent of the approval or disapproval of our social environment” (Flugel, 1945, p. 55). Narcissistic nourishment, in the form of approval or praise, can be attained from the superego or from external superego projects on condition of compliance. Attainment of approval or praise from the superego (from internally imagined or externally projected versions of the superego) involves preparation for or performance of culturally defined social acts, including cultural and religious rituals, and aspiration to or fulfillment of valued social roles, so that both exhibitionism and compliance are brought to bear. The superego is readily projected onto external authority figures or adopts the form of internal images of significant others. God and distant ideological leaders are the clearest examples of superego projections into the realm of imagery. God provides the most striking evidence for the existence of the superego. Religious and other cultural processes in society are founded upon an unceasing and sometimes increasing need to reexperience the safety that was once provided by the mother, whereby both the need for safety and the enduring role of the mother remain unconscious. As counterpart to the externally projected superego, there is the experiential self or ‘ego’ (in Freud’s original sense of the term, and in the sense Federn continued to use it), which captures the feedback (mirroring responses) we receive for our displays of compliance and for our situationally appropriate exhibitionistic or ambitious actions. There is also the self that features briefly and indistinctly in our imagination, which encapsulates our *expectation* of narcissistic sustenance from the social milieu at large (being an abstract superego projection). The latter self is more

closely related to (or a manifestation of) the ego ideal (and also related to the ideal self [Sandler] or idealized self-image [Horney]). This imaginary self incentivizes goal-directed behavior; it aids our reality-oriented striving for acceptance by one of the developmental derivatives of the mother (or by a projection of the superego), to be accepted and be thus eligible to receive care and affection. The imagined self can however also be employed defensively in states of detachment. We may be drawn to states of introspection, states in which we imagine our self and the world as it relates to us (to our self) and in which we bolster our self in order to overcome paranoid anxiety, the fear of being deprived of others' recognition and acceptance and being expelled from the group or annihilated. To the extent that social roles have become imprecise and fluid and relationships have become fragile, the self has to be shaped or defined internally for the purpose of pleasing the superego, which then operates as a substitute for a stable external point of reference. We inspect and shape our self for one purpose, that of becoming acceptable to the superego or one of its projections. Neither the experiential self nor the self-image (related to 'ego ideal') exists in itself. The self is always bound (in a dipole) to the superego, to an external derivative of the primary object, or to one or another group; the self relates to (and is structured by) the superego or a projection of the superego.

Self psychology suggests that a stable representation of the self signifies stable connectedness to the selfobject milieu; and it entails a sense of worthwhileness, that is, an expectation that approving or comforting responses will be forthcoming, either from the selfobject milieu itself or from internal self-esteem-regulating structures (essentially the superego). The self of the child is, at first, precariously established and "depends for the maintenance of its cohesion on the near-perfect empathic responses of the self-object" (Kohut, 1977, p. 91). The child phase-appropriately "demands perfect empathy" and "total control over the self-object's responses" (p. 91). A faulty, nonempathic response

of the selfobject causes the child to respond with anxiety or rage. 'Optimal frustrations' compel the child to internalize aspects of his selfobjects (Kohut, 1971, 1977). In a process called 'transmuting internalization', narcissistic expectations are withdrawn from selfobjects and transferred to inner structures that perform mirroring (soothing and comforting) functions for the self (Kohut, 1971, 1977); capacities that develop for empathetic self-observation and self-understanding help the child to maintain self-cohesion and self-esteem at times of unresponsiveness of selfobjects (Stolorow, 1983). Nevertheless, our need for selfobjects is enduring. The child's "archaic needs for the responses of archaic selfobjects" (p. 77), for perfect mirroring and merger responses, develops into an "empathic intuneness between self and selfobject on mature adult levels" (p. 66) and an "ability to identify and seek out appropriate selfobjects" that present themselves in the person's 'realistic surroundings' (Kohut, 1984, p. 77). Throughout life, we seek out available mature selfobjects in our social surround, in order to establish empathically resonant relationships with them. Although our selfobject experiences mature, "the archaic selfobject continues to exist in the depth of our psyche; it reverberates as an experiential undertone every time we feel sustained by the wholesome effect of a mature selfobject" (Kohut, 1983, p. 398). This archaic selfobject in the depth of our psyche is nothing other than the superego.

We depart from the assumption that the external world, as we perceive it, is in a fundamental sense equivalent to the consciously experienced inner world. We shall regard the superego as a conscious phenomenon that belongs to the realm of imagery, existing on the margins of consciousness *when the social world is thought about*. Our conscious experience of the *external* social world is, to a substantial extent, an external version, or 'projection' of the superego. The most varying social configurations, including the cohesive group, represent external replicas of the superego and thus of the primary object. We will not in this book focus

on the superego as an unconscious structure, although both the superego (as an aspect of imaginary consciousness) and the features and composition of the external social world (structured in part as a projection of the superego) can be readily regarded as instantiations of an unconscious representation that can also be called 'superego'. Likewise, we shall reassert the equivalence of ego and self, regarding both as phenomena not only taking shape in imagery but importantly existing on the margins of the consciously experienced external social world (whilst acknowledging that there would be an unconscious *representation* that supports such self-experience). This will allow us, through our discussions of psychic processes, to arrive at a relatively simple model of the personality. The experiential self or ego is the distillate of simultaneously experienced aspects of the external social world that relate to oneself. The experiential self, belonging to social 'reality', would correspond to the imaginary self, found in the realm of fantasy. This imaginary self is the ego ideal and serves anticipatory (and guiding) functions. At the end of the book, we will realize the full benefit of treating the ego ideal as a form of self-imagery, as the imaginary equivalent of the experiential self. Sandler et al. (1963), in view of the widely accepted unconscious conceptualization of the ego ideal, felt the need to introduce the term 'ideal self', as the conscious equivalent of the ego ideal (much as Hartmann had felt the need to define a conscious self in contradistinction to the unconscious ego). While Sandler et al. (1963) discriminated between ego ideal and ideal self, we shall treat ego ideal and ideal self here synonymously, consistent with the equation of ego with self (and the return to the spirit of the earlier Freud and the views of Federn thereafter) (while not denying that there will be neurally embedded representations that give rise to one or another set of conscious phenomena, either in externalized consciousness or in imagery). If the ego ideal were to be regarded as a conscious phenomenon (albeit an indistinct and fleeting one), then the various forms of self-imagery implicated in psychic processes (by Horney and Adler, in

particular) can be unified with much of what is known about the ego ideal and also can be understood more clearly in their relationship to the ego (self) and superego.

Regarding the structure of the book, insights gained by authorities representing different strands of psychoanalytic thinking will be presented selectively and placed side by side, so as to allow the illustration of common and uniting themes. The aim is not to critically discuss psychoanalytic schools or consider the way in which they have become somewhat fragmented or even insulated from each other. Rather diverse psychoanalytic material is reviewed from a common perspective, that which affords centrality to the principle of self-preservation, thereby bringing into focus core processes in the personality that have long been foreseen but that have been insufficiently emphasized and escaped full appreciation in the mist of terminological and conceptual differences that surrounds psychoanalytic theory at large. In particular, the compatibility of self psychology (Kohut, Stolorow, Wolf, and others) with other branches of psychoanalytic theory and the presence of self-psychological insights in the works of earlier and contemporaneous theoreticians (Adler, Arieti, Bergler, Bion, Erikson, Fairbairn, Fenichel, Flugel, Freud, Greenson, Hartmann, Horney, Kernberg, Klein, Laing, Mahler, Money-Kyrle, Nunberg, Rado, Reich, Redl, Riviere, Rothstein, Sandler, Schechter, Scheidlinger, Schilder, Winnicott, and others) will be shown. The subsequent Chapters, each dealing with a particular safety strategy, conclude with brief Summary sections; and an overall synthesis is offered in the Conclusions. It is perhaps best recommended that the paragraphs and sections in these Chapters are read one at a time and repeatedly, so as to allow them to unfold their effect and convey their message.



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# Conclusions

Narcissistic sustenance can, firstly, be solicited from the object in the form of recognition, respect, or approval and, secondly, be obtained by participation in the object's omnipotence. These two principle ways of regulating the narcissistic equilibrium correspond to two archaic narcissistic configurations, the narcissistic (grandiose-exhibitionistic) self (seeking mirroring responses from selfobjects) and the idealized parent imago (Kohut). Narcissistic (approval-seeking) behavior involves grandiose and exhibitionistic displays (which may be interwoven with appeasement signals). The object's mirroring responses (approval, praise), actively solicited by the subject's grandiose and exhibitionistic displays, replicate the 'gleam in the mother's eye' (associated with the mother's loving devotion to the infant) and thereby restore the subject's narcissistic equilibrium (Kohut). The second form of narcissism seeks to reinstate the primary narcissistic union with the mother (or with a later representative of the mother) in a more direct manner. When idealizing an object, the underlying unconscious fantasy is that self and object are merged. Idealization of the object entails identification with the object. Gratification of narcissistic needs (in either form) renews the feeling of safety (Sandler), counteracting the danger of being aggressed by the mother or the group (with the potential consequence of annihilation). The discussion shall now be limited to behaviors and psychological mechanisms that seek to generate safety by inviting (or expecting) mirroring (approving, admiring, recognizing) responses from the selfobject surround (including the mother as its earliest representative). The recurrent movement, across the social landscape, from a state of anxiety (signaling danger) to a state of safety, taking into account cultural and situational factors and adjusting time and again to naturally occurring perturbations in the selfobject surround, is what fuels defensive and character

structures and imparts on the personality its apparent intentionality and goal-directedness (Adler). Narcissistic behaviors, which in their habitually used constellation characterize a particular personality type, recreate and maintain the self (ego) as an encapsulation of the person's relative safety and of his potential to obtain narcissistic sustenance in an uncertain and inherently dangerous social world.

Narcissistic behavior, that is, the seeking of positive attention (approval and recognition) from others is probably an evolutionary derivative of attachment behavior. Proximity-seeking behavior, that is, attachment behavior in the narrow sense (Bowlby), can be regarded, along with narcissistic behavior (Behrendt, 2015), as an expression of the self-preservative drive (Silverman, 1991; Goodman, 2002). Separation anxiety (Bowlby) would be on a continuum with (and the evolutionary precursor of) the type of anxiety that arises when one does not receive positive attention from the social surround or when one realizes one's separateness (distinctiveness) from the object (without there being spatial separation from the object) (Rothstein, 1979). This form of anxiety, being probably identical with Kohut's 'disintegration anxiety' and Horney's 'basic anxiety', is counterbalanced by self-experience, representing one's connectedness to the social surround and one's closeness to the superego that unconsciously structures this surround. Ego defenses maintain the integrity of the self (or 'ego'); they can therefore be said to operate in the interest of the self-preservative drive (in accordance with classical psychoanalytic theory). Preservation and integrity of the self mean that the individual is safe in a (mostly latently) hostile social world, which is equivalent to the individual being acknowledged, recognized, and approved by others (as these are attitudes that signal the inhibition of others' aggressiveness). Disintegration anxiety arises when needed narcissistic sustenance is not received (despite being sought) (Kohut) or when ego defenses break down.

Self-preservation can have two meanings, relating to inter- and intraspecific aggression. Firstly, with regards to the need to avoid becoming the victim of interspecific (predatory) aggression, the infant's movements toward the mother and efforts to stay in the proximity of the mother complements the infant's attempts to attract the mother's attention. Separation anxiety is coupled with attention-seeking behavior. The second meaning of self-preservation relates to the inherent aggressiveness of the mother (as recognized by Storr [1968] and others). The infant has to employ behaviors aimed at appeasing the mother. In species with pronounced intraspecific aggression, obtaining the mother's attention would not be enough; her aggressive potential would have to be inhibited, too. Likewise, it is not enough to be in the focus of the group's or the leader's attention; the aggressive potential of conspecifics has to be inhibited, and it is constantly being inhibited by appeasement gestures woven into the fabric of social behavior (Lorenz, 1963; Hass, 1968; Storr, 1968; Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1970; Moynihan, 1998). The individual, in other words, has to keep paranoid anxiety (which Klein understood forms a substratum of psychic organization) or fears of annihilation (Fenichel) at bay (by way of situationally appropriate narcissistic behaviors, including appeasement gestures). Paranoid anxiety and disintegration anxiety are probably closely related to each other (although the former refers more the external world and the latter more to the self). Paranoid anxiety would be an evolutionary derivative of separation anxiety, much as predatory (interspecific) aggression (to which the infant exposes himself when becoming separated from his mother) was the likely evolutionary predecessor of intraspecific aggression. Developmentally, separation anxiety precedes stranger anxiety, the first manifestation of paranoid or social anxiety. The seeking of others' attention, originally borne out of separation anxiety, remains an integral part of the spectrum of behaviors used to appease others and inhibit their aggressive potential.

Compliance with social norms inhibits others' offensive aggressiveness, because it signals to them acceptance of their social position or rank. Compliance also appeases the superego and safeguards the superego's love, much as compliance appeased the parents and ensured continuation of their loving care. Assertiveness is another method of retaining the parents' or object's love and ensuring their ongoing commitment to oneself. Assertiveness, an aim-inhibited form of intraspecific (offensive) aggression, can also protect access to narcissistic supplies from the wider selfobject surround; it can help to ensure that abstract superego projects continue to provide supplies of approval, respect, and recognition, which are needed to maintain one's safety (vis-à-vis the group's or leader's aggressive potential). Access to narcissistic resources is controlled in a manner that is not dissimilar to the way in which territorial boundaries are protected. Territorial aggression is a form of intraspecific aggression; but intraspecific aggression can also be used to protect one's ranking position in the social order (abstractly, one's proximity to the representative of the primary object), which more clearly defines one's access to narcissistic resources and one's safety in an environment of latent or overt mutual aggressiveness. Assertive control of the object, for the sake of ensuring the object's commitment, can spill over into overt aggression against the object. In a relationship, aggression can induce submissive (respectful) behavior (which provides a form of narcissistic sustenance) in the object and bind the object to oneself more tightly (through its aversive and punishing effects on the object), thereby maintaining the context in which safety can be experienced. The principle of subordinating others for the purpose of attaining safety is starkly illustrated by sadistic attitudes and behaviors. Masochistic attitudes and behaviors, too, have as their aim the binding of the object to oneself, again for the sake of approximating the sense of safety that was first experienced in the state of primary narcissism (the undifferentiated union of mother and infant). Sadistic and masochistic behaviors serve the purpose

of maintaining the object's *availability* and *responsiveness*. Submission to others or conformity with norms as well as assertion of dominance or subordination of others generate a safe context for the expression of exhibitionistic and affectionate impulses, which are more directly concerned with the solicitation of narcissistic sustenance.

In a relationship, partners unconsciously assign roles to each other and induce each other to respond in certain ways, replicating patterns of interaction established in childhood. These 'role relationships' are a vehicle for the attainment of safety (Sandler & Sandler, 1978). The way in which the individual relates to the group is a reflection of early object relations, too (Scheidlinger, 1964, 1968). Social situations are generated in daily life with the objective, unconsciously, of attaining or preserving the goodwill and responsiveness of a projected version of the superego (especially the 'dominant other' [Arieti, 1973]). Interactions within a group are competitive and collaborative (pursuing a common goal defined by the leader) and serve to confirm or challenge hierarchical (dominance) patterns and alliances, all of which define the individual's proximity to the leader (or dominant other) or his acceptance by the group as a whole (either of which is a representative of the primary object). The way in which the social environment at large is perceived and shaped is continuous with the infant's attempts to overcome the anxiety associated with the realization of his separateness from the object and the fear of the object's potential aggressiveness (Klein's 'paranoid-schizoid' developmental position) (as well as the anxiety associated with realizing the dependence on the object ['depressive position']). The social environment is patterned by the projected superego (the representative of the primary object) and perceived with reference to the individual's concerns about his safety (which is guaranteed by the projected superego but is also under threat from the projected superego and the group). It is also from the social environment, that the individual extricates his sense of self;

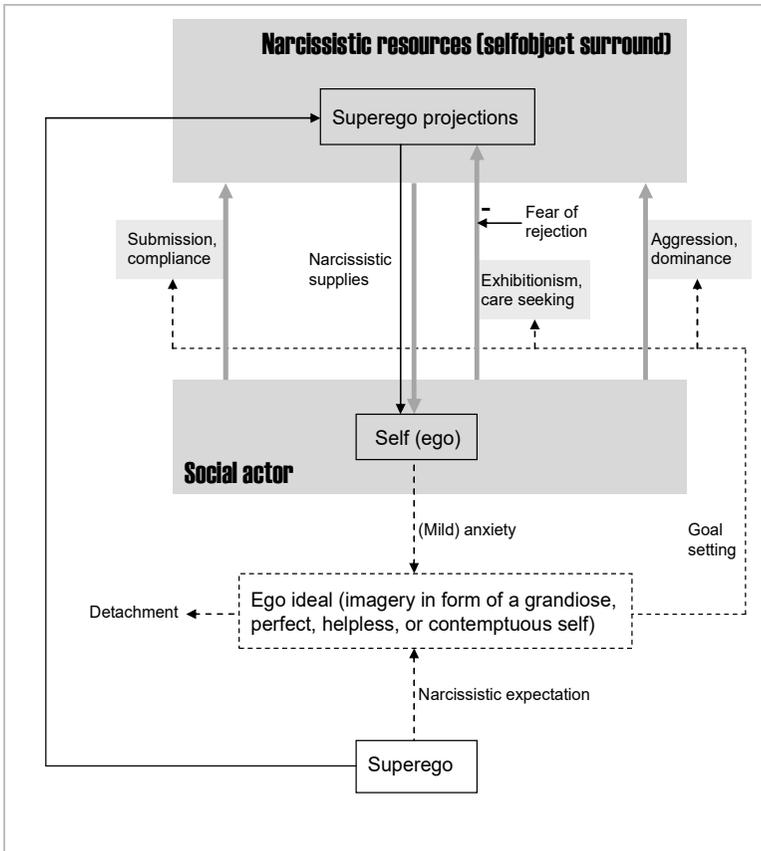
the environment is perceived as a set of references to the self. While the self (ego) reflects the individual's connectedness to the social surround, that is, his acceptance and potential to be approved by others (especially the 'dominant other' and other superego projects) as well as the effectiveness of his attitudes and behaviors geared toward inhibiting others' aggressive potential (ultimately the aggressiveness of the primary object and hence the superego), the ego ideal (ideal self) relates to the individual's *desired* state of safety. The ego ideal is constituted and reshaped by way of imitating successful persons encountered in the course of development, persons who are attractive for and readily approved by the dominant other. The individual identifies with role models and emulates his ego ideal in order to please authority figures and thus to feel safe.

The self as an *internal* image of oneself depends on approbation received from imaginary objects (representatives of internal objects). The self as an internal image is visible to and therefore approvable by an imaginary audience (Cashdan, 1988) (which is usually not consciously elaborated). When thinking about oneself, one intermittently adopts someone else's perspective. By virtue of this identification with an other, the self is looking at itself; the self is an object to itself (Federn). The superego represents this audience and this observing self. The observing self is, in other words, the self identified with the superego, which is also the *inner* representative of the primary object. Feeling the need to be accepted and approved by the superego, one adopts the perspective of the superego, so as to consider from this perspective one's (the ego's) worthiness of approval. In a state of detachment, when conscious fantasy is prolonged, the self can transform itself into its ideal (self-glorification) and thus reach the height of the superego (and potentially reunite with it) without the need to engage with the external social world. The ego ideal, when the ego identifies with it in conscious fantasy, entails an expectation of approval from the superego (narcissistic expectation). For this reason, the

ego ideal can act as an incentive goal for behavior concerned with enhancing one's approvability (in the eyes of external superego projects). The ego ideal sets a goal to be realized by ambitions, the derivative of the infant's exhibitionism (Kohut). The ideal self (conscious instatement of the ego ideal, according to Sandler, if the ego ideal were to be regarded as an unconscious construct) guides exhibitionistic and ambitious behaviors aimed at reengaging the leader (or another superego project). Other forms of self-imagery (Horney's 'idealized image') serve similar ends. Imagery of a contemptuous and guilty self leads to behavior that invites punishment from the leader (or any other superego project) with the objective of establishing the leader's forgiveness. Imagery of a victimized self, in association with self-punishment and injustice collection (Bergler), leads to efforts to induce guilty and reparative behaviors toward oneself. The helpless and infantile self gives rise to behavioral expressions that attract care and thereby neutralize the object's hostility and that of the wider social surround. Thus, the inner self pictures itself in one or another safe position, which would incentivize the self's efforts to engage an external derivative of the primary object, to attain this object's recognition and assurances (**see Figure below**).

Exhibitionistic behaviors (and hence also ambition) may be related to separation calls, given that the purpose of exhibitionism is to attract attention (specifically from the primary object). Once separation anxiety has been superseded, developmentally and evolutionarily, by the anxiety that is associated with the realization of one's separateness, a separateness that is aversive because it bears within it a sense of vulnerability to being attacked and annihilated by others, the task set before the individual is to attract *positive* attention (narcissistically nourishing attention). Attention from and approach by the object calms separation anxiety; and, if anxiety is intense, negative attention from the object would be preferable to no attention, in which case there could be said to be a

regression to a state when attention received by the infant was not differentiated into positive and negative attention. Such regression, manifesting as primitive attention-seeking behaviors, may occur when anxiety is intense (and self-disintegration [Kohut] is imminent). When anxiety is less intense, the capacity of foresight (anticipation) can be engaged, wherein the self is viewed in a desired safe position ('idealized image'), so as to provide guidance for adaptive goal-directed behavior. When the group is not clearly centered on a leader and the group's aggressive potential is not clearly bound to an external objective, the need increases to appease others within the group and to ensure oneself of the benevolence of whatever transiently occupies the role of the primary object. It is then that the self (the inner self) emerges as a defensive entity that guides efforts to enhance the individual's acceptability and approvability in the eyes of the superego internally or externally. Being integrated into a cohesive group and identified with a common cause, on the other hand, is associated with regression in superego development (Freud) and dissolution of the self (loss of one's awareness of oneself as an individual). In a cohesive group, the narcissistic balance of each individual would be upheld by the occupation (and defense) of a relatively stable position in the social hierarchy (centered on a leader), through the exchange of signals of submission and dominance with others in the group. There will be an equilibrium in the group between expressions of dominance by some and expressions of submission or subservience by others, affording each individual with a degree of security (protection against others' innate hostility) and maximizing the amount of safety distributed across the group (and hence stabilizing the group). Dominance positions, being dynamically maintained in such a network, are of vital importance to each member because they define each member's closeness to the leader, the ultimate source of narcissistic gratification and provider of safety.



*Aggression, compliance, and the ability to channel narcissistic demands (demands for attention) into realistic directions are employed in shaping the selfobject surround (representing the availability of selfobject responses, i.e. of narcissistic supplies). Aggression and compliance, in particular, are used to control narcissistic resources (the selfobject surround), which are developmentally continuous with the availability and responsiveness of the mother, in much the same way as territorial animals manage their territory. The exhibitionistic component of behavior is more directly concerned with attaining positive attention (narcissistic supplies) from an external representative of the primary object (which is, at the same time, a projection of the superego).*

*Narcissistic homeostasis (self-cohesion) is upheld proximally by soliciting approval and admiration from the representative of the primary object and distally (or more abstractly) by defending one's social position (using aggression and submission) or by enhancing one's approvability within the group and in the eyes of the leader (so as to control access to narcissistic resources and their responsiveness to narcissistic demands). The self of the 'reality'-oriented social actor and observer serves as a point of reference to narcissistic resources and encapsulates rights of access to them, whereby self-esteem is the confident expectation of others' self-confirming responses to one's exhibitionistic and care-seeking displays. The self can also be said to be a distillate of received narcissistic feedback and of environmental cues relating to the availability of such feedback (cues which in turn are controlled by the social actor, in part through acquisition of prestige and possessions). While the self (or 'ego', for the purpose of this book) is situated on the margins of conscious experience of the external world, the ego ideal (ideal self) can be found in the margins of internal imagery. The ego ideal (ideal self) can adopt various forms, any of which can be used, in states of detachment, to solicit narcissistic supplies from an imaginary internal audience (the superego) or, in 'reality'-oriented states, to set goals for actions, actions that in themselves express various combinations of assertive, compliant, exhibitionistic, and care-seeking impulses. Thus, while the ego ideal is situated vis-à-vis the superego in the realm of imagery, the self is situated vis-à-vis the superego project in the 'real' world; and while the ego ideal serves anticipatory functions, the self serves functions related to self-localization in the social landscape (emphasizing the suggested derivation of goal-directed social behavior from evolutionarily older goal-directed locomotor behavior [Behrendt, 2015]).*

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