

# The Restoration of the Self, by H. Kohut

## a. Quotes:

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## b. General Notes:

- Preface (pg. xiii)
  - See text
- Chapter 1 - The Termination of the Analysis of Narcissistic Personality Disorders (pg. 1)
  - "When we turn to the narcissistic personality disorders, however, we are no longer dealing with the pathological results of unsatisfactory solutions of conflicts between structures that are in essence intact, but with forms of psychological malfunctioning arising in consequence of the fact that the central structures of the personality - the structures of the self - are defective." (pg. 2)
  - "The nuclear psychopathology of the narcissistic personality disorders (corresponding to the repressed unresolved conflicts of the Oedipus complex of the structural neuroses) consists of (1) defects, acquired in childhood, in the psychological structure of the self and (2) secondary structure-formations, also built up in early childhood, which are related to the primary defect in one of two similar, but, in certain crucial respects, different ways. I shall call these two types of secondary structures— distinguishing them on the basis of their relation to the primary structural defect of the self - defensive and compensatory structures....I call a structure defensive when its sole or predominant function is the covering over of the primary defect in the self. I call a structure compensatory when, rather than merely covering a defect in the self, it compensates for this defect. Undergoing a development of its own, it brings about a functional rehabilitation of the self by making up for the weakness in one pole of the self through the strengthening of the other pole. Most frequently a weakness in the area of exhibitionism and ambitions is compensated for by the self-esteem provided by the pursuit of ideals; but the reverse may also occur. The terms defensive structure and compensatory structure refer to the beginning and end of a spectrum which has a broad central area that contains a great variety of intermediate forms. But more or less pure forms are encountered, and the transitional ones can usually be assigned to one or the other of the two classes. Basing myself on this differentiation, I postulate that the phase of termination of the analysis of a narcissistic personality disorder has been reached when we have completed one or the other of two specific tasks: (1) When, after the analytic penetration of the defensive structures, the primary defect in the self has been exposed and, via working through and transmuting internalization, sufficiently filled out so that the formerly defective structures of the self have now become functionally reliable. (2) We have also reached the termination phase in the analysis of a narcissistic personality disorder when — after the patient has achieved cognitive and affective mastery with regard to the defenses surrounding the primary defect in the self, with regard to the compensatory structures, and with regard to the relationship between these —the compensatory structures have now become functionally reliable, independent of the area in which this success was achieved. This functional rehabilitation might have been achieved predominantly through improvements in the area of the primary defect, or through the analysis of the vicissitudes of the compensatory structures (including the healing of their structural deficiencies through transmuting internalizations), or through the patient's increased mastery resulting from his comprehension of the interrelation of primary defect and compensatory structures, or through success in some or all of these areas." (pg. 3-4)
    - "In cases of narcissistic personality disorder, it is not difficult to discern the defensive nature—a pseudovitality-of the overt excitement. Behind it lie low self-esteem and depression —a deep sense of uncared-for worthlessness and rejection, an incessant hunger for response, a yearning for reassurance. All in all, the excited hypervitality of the patient must be understood as an attempt to counteract through self-stimulation a feeling of inner deadness and depression. As children, these patients had felt emotionally unresponded to and had tried to overcome their loneliness and depression through erotic and grandiose fantasies." (pg. 5)
  - "One result of the mother's incapacity to tune in on the child and to respond with adequate empathic resonance was a specific maldevelopment in the exhibitionistic sector of his personality: he did not build up sufficient sublimatory structures in the sector of his exhibitionism because, due to the insufficiency of the mother's primary mirroring responses, no adequate basis had been set up from which her structure-building, increasingly selective secondary responses (her optimally increasing frustration of his needs) could proceed; he therefore remained fixated on archaic forms of exhibitionism; and inasmuch as archaic exhibitionism cannot find appropriate gratifications in adult life, he developed brittle defensive structures of the all-or-nothing type he either suppressed his exhibitionism to the detriment of healthy forms of self-esteem and pleasure in himself and his performance, or his exhibitionism broke through in frantic activity and wild sexualized fantasies (occasionally carried over into actual behavior) in which the mirroring self-object (always a woman) was under his absolute, sadistically enforced control, a slave who had to comply with his every wish and whim." (pg. 9-10)
    - "As I have said, Mr. M.'s central self structures had doubtless been decisively injured by the lack of maternal responsiveness. It is equally certain that he then turned toward the idealized father — this is a very typical psychological move - in order to make up in the relation to the idealized self-object for the harm he had suffered in relation to the mirroring one. Mr. M. must have tried, during his childhood, first to idealize and then to acquire (i.e., to integrate into his own self) certain of his father's abilities - abilities which seem to have played an important role in the father's personality and which the father seemed to have valued highly-especially his father's skill in the use of language, of words. At any rate, it was by means of words that the patient, throughout his adolescence and as an adult, tried to find, in an aim-inhibited, socially acceptable way, fulfillment for the derivatives of his grandiose and exhibitionistic strivings. The sectors of his self, however, from which these strivings originated, had remained unmodified (archaic) because their further development - more exactly: the development of modulating, substitution-offering psychic structures surrounding them — had not been maintained by the pressure of reliable responses - first joyously accepting responses, later increasingly selective ones - from his mother." (pg. 11-12)
    - "Here, then, are the two disturbances in Mr. M.'s psychological make-up as described within the framework of a somewhat modified structural model and in the terms of a somewhat modified ego psychology. Before the analysis there was a structural defect in the "area of progressive neutralization," i.e., there was no smooth transition from the primary process (his archaic exhibitionism, his merging with the maternal self-object, and the emotions connected with both of these sets of experiences) to the secondary process (his words, his language, his writings). And there was a structural defect in the area of his goals and ideals, leading secondarily to an insufficient channeling of his exhibitionistic-grandiose-creative strivings toward well-integrated, firmly internalized goals. The absence of a sufficiently organized flow of grandiose-exhibitionistic libido toward a securely internalized set of ideals led, in turn, to an insufficient development of those executive (ego) structures that would have enabled him to devote himself successfully to his professional pursuits and to gain his major sustaining narcissistic gratifications from them." (pg. 22-23)
    - "In Mr. M.'s case, the essential psychological fact (the reactivation of the decisive genetic determinant of an important aspect of his psychological disturbance) was that he experienced his mother, and in the transference the analyst, as traumatically unempathic vis-à-vis his emotional demands and as unresponsive to them." (pg. 30)
  - "To put the description of these microstructural changes in the classical transference neuroses into a nutshell: (1) interpretations remove defenses; (2) archaic wishes intrude into the ego; (3) under the repeated impact of the archaic strivings, new structures are formed in the ego which are able to

- modulate and transform the archaic strivings (dis-charge delay, neutralization, aim inhibition, substitute gratification, absorption through fantasy formation, etc.). **The analysand**, in order to keep open the access of the archaic strivings to his ego, despite his anxiety (in the classical transference neuroses: castration anxiety in the face of incestuous libidinal and aggressive strivings), **uses the analyst as a self-object** - even in the analysis of structural neuroses! -, i.e., **as a precursory substitute for the not-yet-existing psychological structures**. (See in this context the remarks on p. 187n. below concerning the use of self-object relationships on all developmental levels and in psychological health as well as in psychological disease.) **Little by little, as a result of innumerable processes of micro-internalization, the anxiety-assuaging, delay-tolerating, and other realistic aspects of the analyst's image become part of the analysand's psychological equipment**, *pari passu* with the "micro"-frustration of the analysand's need for the analyst's permanent presence and perfect functioning in this respect. In brief: through the process of transmuting internalization, new psychological structure is built." (pg. 32)
- "[I]t was the ultimate achievement of Mr. M.'s analysis that it enabled him to bring about, in his creative work, the cooperation of the three major constituents of the narcissistic sector of his personality and thus the synthesis of his self. **The analysis opened the road to an activity that permitted him joyful self-realization.** His work as a writer enabled him to gratify his grandiose-exhibitionistic strivings to display himself to his mother, satisfy his need to merge with his idealized father, and enjoy the employment of the genuine talents he possessed." (pg. 40)
  - "[T]he psychoanalytic treatment of a case of narcissistic personality disorder has progressed to the point of its intrinsically determined termination (has brought about the cure of the disorder) when it has been able to establish one sector within the realm of the self through which an uninterrupted flow of the narcissistic strivings can proceed toward creative expression - however limited the social impact of the achievements of the personality might be and however insignificant the individual's creative activity might appear to others. Such a sector includes always a central pattern of exhibitionism and grandiose ambitions, a set of firmly internalized ideals of perfection, and a correlated system of talents and skills, which mediate between exhibitionism, ambitions, and grandiosity, on the one hand, and ideals of perfection, on the other." (pg. 53-54)
  - Chapter 2 - Does Psychoanalysis Need a Psychology of the Self? (pg. 63)
    - **"[The mother's attitude] influences a set of inner experiences that play a crucial role in the child's further development.** She responds— accepting, rejecting, disregarding - to a self that, in giving and offering, seeks confirmation by the mirroring self-object. **The child therefore experiences the joyful, prideful parental attitude or the parent's lack of interest, not only as the acceptance or rejection of a drive, but also -** this aspect of the interaction of parent and child is often the decisive one - **as the acceptance or rejection of his tentatively established, yet still vulnerable creative-productive-active self.** If the mother rejects this self just as it begins to assert itself as a center of creative-productive initiative (especially, of course, if her rejection or lack of interest is only one link in a long chain of rebuffs and disappointments emanating from her pathogenically unempathic personality) or if her inability to respond to the child's total self leads her to a fragmentation - producing preoccupation with his feces-to the detriment of the cohesion-establishing involvement with her feces-producing, learning, controlling, maturing, total child —then the child's self will be depleted and he will abandon the attempt to obtain the joys of self-assertion and will, for reassurance, turn to the pleasures he can derive from the fragments of his body-self." (pg. 76)
    - "To summarize in more general terms, the establishment of drive fixations and of the correlated activities of the ego occurs in consequence of the feebleness of the self. The unresponded-to self has not been able to transform its archaic grandiosity and its archaic wish to merge with an omnipotent self-object into reliable self-esteem, realistic ambitions, attainable ideals. The abnormalities of the drives and of the ego are the symptomatic consequences of this central defect in the self." (pg. 81-82)
    - **"The child that is to survive psychologically is born into an empathic-responsive human milieu (of self-objects) just as he is born into an atmosphere that contains an optimal amount of oxygen if he is to survive physically. And his nascent self "expects" —** to use an inappropriately anthropomorphic but appropriately evocative term — **an empathic environment to be in tune with his psychological need-wishes with the same unquestioning certitude as the respiratory apparatus of the newborn infant may be said to "expect" oxygen to be contained in the surrounding atmosphere.** When the child's psychological balance is disturbed, **the child's tensions are**, under normal circumstances, **empathically perceived and responded to by the self-object.** **The self-object, equipped with a mature psychological organization that can realistically assess the child's need and what is to be done about it, will include the child into its own psychological organization and will remedy the child's homeostatic imbalance through actions.** The first of these two steps, it must be emphasized, is of far greater psychological significance for the child than is the second, especially with regard to the child's ability to build psychological structures (to consolidate his nuclear self) via transmuting internalization. The formulation that the mother tames the child's aggressive drive by neutralizing it with her love or by opposing it via her neutralized aggression (firmness) rests on an attractively simple analogy with the gross mechanics of events in the physical world. It does not, however, do justice to the events in the psychological field. I believe we come closer to the truth when we say that **the child's anxiety, his drive needs, and his rage** (i.e., his experience of the disintegration of the preceding broader and more complex psychological unit of unquestioning assertiveness) **have brought about empathic resonances within the maternal self-object. The self-object then establishes tactile and/ or vocal contact with the child** (the mother picks up the child, talks to it while holding and carrying it) **and thus creates conditions that the child phase-appropriately experiences as a merger with the omnipotent self-object. The child's rudimentary psyche participates in the self-object's highly developed psychic organization; the child experiences the feeling states of the self-object** - they are transmitted to the child via touch and tone of voice and perhaps by still other means - **as if they were his own. The relevant feeling states—** either the child's own or those of the self-object in which he participates -, in the order in which they are experienced by the self/self-object unit, are: mounting anxiety (self); followed by stabilized mild anxiety-a "signal" not panic- (self-object); followed by calmness, absence of anxiety (self-object). Ultimately, the psychological disintegration products that the child had begun to experience disappear (the rudimentary self is re-established), while the mother (as seen in terms of behaviorism and social psychology) readies the food, improves temperature regulation, changes diapers, etc. **It is the experience of this sequence of psychological events via the merger with the empathic omnipotent self-object that sets up the base line from which optimum (nontraumatic, phase-appropriate) failures of the self-object lead, under normal circumstances, to structure building via transmuting internalization.** These optimal failures may consist in the self-object's briefly delayed empathic response, in mild deviations from the beneficial norm of the self-object's experiences in which the child participates, or in the discrepancy between the experiences provided through the merger with the empathic self-object and the actual satisfaction of needs. It is my impression, I might add, that the last-mentioned instance is of far less importance with regard to psychological structure formation in childhood than are the psychological failures of the self-object. I believe, in other words, that **defects in the self occur mainly as the result of empathy failures from the side of the self-objects - due to narcissistic disturbances of the self-object;** especially, and I think, more frequently than analysts realize, due to the self-object's latent psychosis - and that even serious realistic deprivations (what one might classify as "drive" [or need] frustrations) are not psychologically harmful if the psychological environment responds to the child with a full range of undistorted empathic responses. Man does not live by bread alone. The importance of the two-step sequence - **step one: empathic merger with the self-object's mature psychic organization and participation in the self-object's experience of an affect signal instead of affect spread; step two: need-satisfying actions performed by the self-object-cannot be overestimated; if optimally experienced during childhood, it remains one of the pillars of mental health throughout life and, in the reverse, if the self-objects of childhood fail, then the resulting psychological deficits or distortions will remain a burden that will have to be carried throughout life.** The fact that psychoanalysis is a psychology that explains what it has first understood is intimately connected with the two-step principle that defines human psychological functions *ab initio*. And it must also be stressed that the same principle underlies the analyst's attitude toward his analysands. Every interpretation, in other words, and every reconstruction, consists of two phases; first the analysand must realize that he has been understood; only then, as a second step, will the analyst

demonstrate to the analyst the specific dynamic and genetic factors that explain the psychological content he had first empathically grasped. Some of the most persistent resistances encountered in analysis are not interpersonally activated defenses against the danger that some repressed psychological ideation will be made conscious by the analyst's interpretations or reconstructions; they are mobilized in response to the fact that the stage of understanding - the stage of the analyst's empathic echo of or merger with the patient - had been skipped over. In some analyses— though by no means in all—the analyst will even have to realize that a patient whose childhood self-object had failed traumatically in this area will require long periods of "only" understanding before the second step-interpretation, the dynamic-genetic explanations given by the analyst - can be usefully and acceptably taken. It might be well to add here the complementary lines of thought that will explain the various forms of psychopathology resulting from disturbances in the empathic merger of the self and the self-object at the stage of psychological development preceding firm establishment of the self. **If the self-object's empathic resonance to the child is absent or severely dulled, either diffusely or vis-à-vis selected areas of the child's experience, then the child will be deprived of the merger with the omnipotent self-object and will not participate in the aforementioned sequence of experiences (spreading anxiety, anxiety signal, calmness) and will therefore be deprived of the opportunity to build up psychological structures capable of dealing with his anxiety in the same way.** And if, to adduce another example, the self-object reacts hypochondriacally to the child's mild anxiety, then the merger with the self-object will not produce the wholesome experience of mild anxiety changing into calmness, but, on the contrary, will produce the noxious experiential sequence of mild anxiety changing into panic. In instances of the first type the child is not given the opportunity to establish a wholesome merger; in instances of the second type the child will either be drawn into a noxious one or will actively try to escape it by walling himself off from the noxious response of the self-object. The end-result in all these instances is either a lack of normal tension-regulating structure (a weakness in the ability to tame affects-to curb anxiety) or the acquisition of faulty structures (the propensity toward active intensifications of affect-toward developing states of panic). I believe that not only the pathogenesis of anxiety-proneness but also the propensity for affective disorders has to be investigated from the point of view of the merger of the nascent self with the self-object's depressive and/or manic responses. I believe, in other words, that the psychological aspects of the affective disorders cannot be adequately formulated in terms of the gross dynamics of drives and structures (depression as unneutralized aggression turned from the object toward the self; or as the sadistic attack of the superego against the ego), but that the investigation of the merger with the omnipotent self-object—a precursor of psychological structure —will lead us to a more adequate understanding." (pg. 85-90)

- **"The precariously established self of the child (as revived in the analytic situation) depends for the maintenance of its cohesion on the near-perfect empathic responses of the self-object.** In harmony with the developmental stage of its self (phase-appropriately), **the child demands total control over the self-object's responses; it demands perfect empathy,** both in the content of the understanding that is offered and with regard to the perfect in-tuneness with the traumatic effect produced by deviations from the optimum which for the early self is the expected norm." (pg. 91)
- "A complexly organized empathic-responsive human environment reacts to the child *ab initio*: and we may well discover, as we investigate early states of infancy with more and more refined psychological means, that a rudimentary self is already present very early in life." (pg. 98)
- "True, we must assume — on the basis of information available to us through the work of neurophysiologists - that the newborn infant cannot have any reflective awareness of himself, that he is not capable of experiencing himself, if ever so dimly, as a unit, cohesive in space and enduring in time, which is a center of initiative and a recipient of impressions. And yet, he is, from the beginning, fused via mutual empathy with an environment that does experience him as already possessing a self - an environment that not only anticipates the later separate self-awareness of the child, but already, by the very form and content of its expectations, begins to channel it into specific directions. At the moment when the mother sees her baby for the first time and is also in contact with him (through tactile, olfactory, and proprioceptive channels as she feeds, carries, bathes him), a process that lays down a person's self has its virtual beginning - it continues throughout childhood and to a lesser extent later in life. I have in mind the specific interactions of the child and his self-objects through which, in countless repetitions, the self-objects empathically respond to certain potentialities of the child (aspects of the grandiose self he exhibits, aspects of the idealized image he admires, different innate talents he employs to mediate creatively between ambitions and ideals), but not to others. This is the most important way by which the child's innate potentialities are selectively nourished or thwarted. **The nuclear self, in particular, is not formed via conscious encouragement and praise and via conscious discouragement and rebuke, but by the deeply anchored responsiveness of the self-objects,** which, in the last analysis, is a function of the self-objects' own nuclear selves." (pg. 99-100)
- "In essence then, I believe that **man's destructiveness as a psychological phenomenon** is secondary; that it **arises originally as the result of the failure of the self-object environment to meet the child's need for optimal** - not maximal, it should be stressed —**empathic responses.** Aggression, furthermore, as a psychological phenomenon, is not elemental. Like the inorganic building blocks of the organic molecule, it is, from the beginning, a constituent of the child's assertiveness, and under normal circumstances it remains alloyed to the assertiveness of the adult's mature self." (pg. 116)
- "**[T]he baby's confidence is innate, that it was there from the start. The baby does not develop confidence, he re-establishes it.** Put in different words: in principle, the base line of psychological life is not revealed either in states of complete psychic equilibrium (the dreamlessly sleeping baby) or in states of seriously disturbed equilibrium, i.e., in traumatic states (the raging, hungry baby) - it is given in the experiential content of the first impulses toward the re-establishment of the psychic equilibrium at the moment it had begun to be disturbed (the healthily assertive baby who announces his wants)." (pg. 119)
- **"The primary psychological configuration (of which the drive is only a constituent) is the experience of the relation between the self and the empathic self-object.** (See in this context the description [pp. 75-76] of an imaginary interaction of a mother and her child.) Drive manifestations in isolation establish themselves only after traumatic and/or prolonged failures in empathy from the side of the self-object environment. Healthy drive-experiences, on the other hand, always include the self and the self-object - even though, as I pointed out before, if the self is not seriously disturbed we may omit it from our psychodynamic formulations without great harm. If the self is seriously damaged, however, or destroyed, then the drives become powerful constellations in their own right. In order to escape from depression, the child turns from the unempathic or absent self-object to oral, anal, and phallic sensations, which he experiences with great intensity. And these childhood experiences of drive-hypercathexis become the crystallization points for the forms of adult psychopathology that are in essence diseases of the self. Thus, here again, the deepest levels to be reached by analysis in, let us say, certain perversions do not concern the experience of the drive (e.g., in behavioral terms, the child's oral, anal, phallic masturbation). And it is not the aim of analysis to confront the patient with a now supposedly fully uncovered drive so that he can learn to suppress it, to sublimate it, or to integrate it in other ways with his total personality. The deepest level to be reached is not the drive, but the threat to the organization of the self (in behavioral terms, the depressed child, the hypochondriacal child, the child who feels that he is dead), the experience of the absence of the life-sustaining matrix of the empathic responsiveness of the self-object." (pg. 122-123)
  - **"...rage and destructiveness...are not primary givens, but arise in reaction to the faulty empathic responses of the self-object.** True, a modicum of frustration of the child's trust in the self-object's empathic perfection is necessary, not only in order to usher in transmuting internalizations which build up the structures necessary for the tolerance of delays, but also in order to stimulate the acquisition of responses that are in harmony with the fact that the world contains real enemies, i.e., other selves whose narcissistic requirements run counter to the survival of one's own self." (pg. 123)
  - **"It is the loss of control of the self over the self-object that leads to the fragmentation of joyful assertiveness and, in further development, to the ascendancy and entrenchment of chronic narcissistic rage.** The consequence of the parental self-object's inability to be the joyful mirror to a

- child's healthy assertiveness may be a lifetime of abrasive-ness, bitterness, and sadism that cannot be discharged - and it is only by means of the therapeutic reactivation of the original need for the self-object's responses that the actual lessening of rage and sadistic control and a return to healthy assertiveness can be achieved." (pg. 130)
- "The essential psychopathology in the narcissistic personality disorders is defined by the fact that the self has not been solidly established, that its cohesion and firmness depend on the presence of a self-object (on the development of a self-object transference), and that it responds to the loss of the self-object with simple enfeeblement, various regressions, and fragmentation." (pg. 137)
  - Chapter 3 - Reflections on the Nature of Evidence in Psychoanalysis (pg. 140)
    - See text
  - Chapter 4 - The Bipolar Self (pg. 171)
    - "It is instructive in this context to examine the disintegration of the **two basic psychological functions - healthy self-assertiveness vis-à-vis the mirroring self-object, healthy admiration for the idealized self-object** — whose presence under normal, favorable circumstances indicates that an independent self is beginning to rise out of the matrix of mirroring and idealized self-objects. When the child's self-assertive presence is not responded to by the mirroring self-object, his healthy exhibitionism — experientially a broad psychological configuration even when single body parts, or single mental functions, are conspicuously involved as representatives of the total self — will be given up, and isolated sexualized exhibitionistic preoccupations concerning single symbols of greatness (the urinary stream, feces, phallus) will take over. And similarly, when the child's search for the idealized omnipotent self-object with whose power he wants to merge fails, owing to either its weakness or its refusal to permit a merger with its greatness and power, then again, the child's healthy and happy wide-eyed admiration will cease, the broad psychological configuration will break up, and isolated sexualized voyeuristic preoccupations with isolated symbols of the adult's power (the penis, the breast) will take over. Ultimately, the clinical manifestations of an exhibitionistic or voyeuristic' perversion may arise in consequence of the breakup of those broad psychological configurations of healthy assertiveness vis-à-vis the mirroring self-object and of healthy admiration for the idealized self-object, to which - protractedly, traumatically, phase-inappropriately — the self-object did not respond. That the perversion, i.e., the sexualized replica of the original healthy configuration, still contains fragments of the grandiose self (exhibitionism of parts of one's own body) and of the idealized object (voyeuristic interest in parts of the body of others) is to be understood as a vestige of one aspect of the original self-object constellation: it was, transitionally, subject oriented (self-object) in the one instance and transitionally object oriented (self-object) in the other. The deepest analysis of either one of these two clinical manifestations does not, however, lead to a bedrock of drives, but to narcissistic injury and depression." (pg. 171-173)
    - "...during early psychic development a process takes place in which some archaic mental contents that had been experienced as belonging to the self become obliterated or are assigned to the area of the non-self while others are retained within the self or are added to it. As a result of this process a core self - the "nuclear self" — is established. This structure is the basis for our sense of being an independent center of initiative and perception, integrated with our most central ambitions and ideals and with our experience that our body and mind form a unit in space and a continuum in time. This cohesive and enduring psychic configuration, in connection with a correlated set of talents and skills that it attracts to itself or that develops in response to the demands of the ambitions and ideals of the nuclear self, forms the central sector of the personality. And I have become convinced that, to some extent at least, **a properly conducted analysis of patients suffering from a disturbance in the formation of the self creates a psychological matrix that encourages the reactivation of the original developmental tendency**. In other words, the nuclear self of the patient is consolidated, the talents and skills of the analysis and that are correlated to the nuclear self are revitalized, while other aspects of the self are discarded or recede" (pg. 177-178)
    - "It seems very likely, for example, that, while traces of both ambitions and idealized goals are beginning to be acquired side by side in early infancy, the bulk of nuclear grandiosity consolidates into nuclear ambitions in early childhood (perhaps mainly in the second, third, and fourth year), and the bulk of nuclear idealized goal structures are acquired in later childhood (perhaps mainly in the fourth, fifth, and sixth years of life). It is also more than likely that **the earlier constituents of the self are usually predominantly derived from the relation with the maternal self-object the mother's mirroring acceptance confirms nuclear grandiosity; her holding and carrying allows merger-experiences with the self-object's idealized omnipotence), whereas the constituents acquired later may relate to parental figures of either sex**. It may well be, furthermore, that the sense of the continuity of the self, the sense of our being the same person throughout life - despite the changes in our body and mind, in our personality makeup, in the surroundings in which we live - does not emanate solely from the abiding content of the constituents of the nuclear self and from the activities that are established as a result of their pressure and guidance, but also from the abiding specific relationship in which the constituents of the self stand to each other. I have tried to express this hypothesis by the employment of an evocative terminology. Just as there is a gradient of tension between two differently charged (+, -) electrical poles that are spatially separated, inviting the formation of an electrical arc in which the electricity may be said to flow from the higher to the lower level, so also with the self. The term "tension gradient" thus refers to the relationship in which the constituents of the self stand to each other, a relationship that is specific for the individual self even in the absence of any specific activity between the two poles of the self; it indicates the presence of an action-promoting condition that arises "between" a person's ambitions and his ideals (cf. Kohut, 1966, pp. 254-255). With the term "tension arc," however, I am referring to the abiding flow of actual psychological activity that establishes itself between the two poles of the self, i.e., a person's basic pursuits toward which he is "driven" by his ambitions and "led" by his ideals (ibid., p. 250)." (pg. 179-180)
    - "[W]e can say that **the healthy person derives his sense of oneness and sameness along the time axis from two sources: one superficial, the other deep. The superficial one belongs to the ability** — an important and distinguishing intellectual faculty of man - **to take the historical stance: to recognize himself in his recalled past and to project himself into an imagined future**. But this is not enough" (pg. 180)
      - "I arrived at the hypothesis that the rudiments of the nuclear self are laid down by simultaneously or consecutively occurring processes of selective inclusion and exclusion of psychological structures. And, furthermore, I came to hold the view that the sense of abiding sameness along the time axis—a distinguishing attribute of the healthy self - is laid down early as the result of the abiding action-promoting tension gradient between the two major constituents of the nuclear self. If both of these hypotheses concerning the formation of the self are correct, then we can, in turn, posit now two tenets with regard to the psychoanalytic restoration of a formerly fragmented or otherwise faultily established self: (1) The disengagement from the working through processes of certain ill-functioning structures indicates, under certain conditions, that the analytic work is nearing completion, that a functioning self has been formed; it does not indicate a flight-into-health incompleteness of the analysis — not even the kind of incompleteness that would be acceptable as a realistic compromise. (2) Analogous statements can also be made with regard to the recovery of childhood memories. The recovery of the past has, in principle, come to its end in the analysis of some cases of narcissistic personality disorder when a sense of the abiding sameness of the self along the time axis has been established. The purpose of remembering in the analysis of disturbances of the self is not to "make conscious" the unconscious components of structural conflicts so that these conflicts can now be resolved in consciousness — a move from the system *ucs* to the system *pcs*., from primary process to secondary process, from the pleasure principle to the reality principle, from the id to the ego — but to strengthen the coherence of the self. The Proustian *Remembrance of Things Past* attempts to provide an experientially valid continuity for the self" - Proust laid out artistically what the modern psychology of the self attempts to give to man in scientific formulations. We turn now to the second set of the processes which, as we can reconstruct on the basis of our observations in the therapeutic setting, determine the decision whether the nuclear self will be firmly consolidated during early development and, if so, in what specific form it will be established. Once the rudiments of the self have been laid down

by the first group of processes—the processes of selective inclusion and exclusion of structure — the decision whether, and, if so, in what form, the self will indeed be firmly established is often decisively influenced by a second one. This group of processes makes its specific contributions to the formation of an ultimately cohesive self by compensating for a disturbance in the development of one of the constituents of the self via the especially strong development of the other. Stated in different terms: the child has two chances as it moves toward the consolidation of the self — self disturbances of pathological degree result only from the failure of both of these developmental opportunities. The two chances relate, in gross approximation, to the establishment of the child's cohesive grandiose-exhibitionistic self (via his relation to the empathically responding merging-mirroring-approving self-object), on the one hand, and to the establishment of the child's cohesive idealized parent-imagō (via his relation to the empathically responding self-object parent who permits and indeed enjoys the child's idealization of him and merger with him), on the other. The developmental move frequently proceeds — especially in the boy — from the mother as a self-object (predominantly with the function of mirroring the child) to the father as a self-object (predominantly with the function of being idealized by the child). Not infrequently, however — especially in the girl — the child's successively mobilized developmental needs for different self-objects en route to the laying down of the nuclear self are directed toward the same parent. And, finally, exceptional circumstances in the environment may occasionally force a child to turn to his parents in the reverse order (from a mirroring father to an idealized mother). From the point of view of the child, the developmental movement (in the majority of cases) leads from the self's greatness being mirrored to the self's active merger with the ideal — from exhibitionism to voyeurism (in the broad sense discussed before); that is, the two basic constituents of the nuclear self which the child attempts to build up appear to have divergent aims. Still, insofar as concerns the whole nuclear self that is ultimately laid down, the strength of one constituent is often able to offset the weakness of the other. Or, expressed in developmental terms, a failure experienced at the first way station can be remedied by a success at the second one. Briefly, we can say that if the mother had failed to establish a firmly cohesive nuclear self in the child, the father may yet succeed in doing so; if the exhibitionistic component of the nuclear self (the child's self-esteem insofar as it related to his ambitions) cannot become consolidated, then its voyeuristic component (the child's self-esteem insofar as it is related to the child's ideals) may yet give it enduring form and structure. The definition of the bipolarity of the nuclear self and the correlated outline of its genesis is no more than a schema. Yet, although it is an abstraction — or perhaps because it is an abstraction — it permits the meaningful examination of the complexities of the empirical material the psychoanalyst observes in his clinical work. With its aid not only can we understand the many shades and varieties or types of nuclear selves (whether primarily ambitious or idealistic, charismatic or messianic, task-oriented or hedonistic), apart from evaluating their relative firmness, weakness, or vulnerability, we can also grasp the significance of the variety of environmental factors (again, not only gross events and broadly outlined factors in the child's early life, but also — and principally — the pervasive influence of the personalities of the parents and of the atmosphere in which the child grew up), which, singly or in combination with each other, account for the specific characteristics of the nuclear self and for its firmness, weakness, or vulnerability." (pg. 183-187)

- "This group of **disorders of the self includes five psychopathological entities**: (1) the psychoses (permanent or protracted breakup, enfeeblement, or serious distortion of the self), (2) the borderline states (permanent or protracted breakup, enfeeblement, or serious distortion of the self, which is covered by more or less effective defensive structures, and (3) the schizoid and the paranoid personalities, two defensive organizations employing distancing, i.e., keeping at a safe emotional distance from others — in the first instance via emotional coldness and emotional shallowness, in the second instance via hostility and suspiciousness — which protect the patient against the danger of incurring a permanent or protracted breakup, enfeeblement, or serious distortion of the self. The deepest roots of these pervasive defensive positions reach back to the time when the small child's psyche had to wall itself off against the noxious penetration by the self-object's depression, hypochondria, panic, etc. (See pp. 88-90 for a discussion of the pathogenic sequence of the child's attempt to merge with a soothing self-object, the self-object's pathological reaction to the child's need, and the child's being flooded by the self-object's pathological affective state.)" (pg. 192)
  - "They are (4) the narcissistic personality disorders (temporary breakup, enfeeblement, or serious distortion of the self, manifested predominantly by autoplasmic symptoms [Ferenczi, 1930], such as hypersensitivity to slights, hypochondria, or depression), and (5) the narcissistic behavior disorders (temporary break-up, enfeeblement, or serious distortion of the self, manifested predominantly by alloplasmic symptoms [Ferenczi, 1930], such as perversion, delinquency, or addiction). In these last two forms of psychopathology, the diseased sector of the self enters spontaneously into limited transference amalgamations with the self-object analyst — indeed, the working-through activities concerning these transferences constitute the very center of the analytic process." (pg. 193)
- "...the disturbance in the self occurs as the result of the child's having been deprived of the wholesome relation with self-objects in both of the crucial areas of the development of the nuclear self that a wholesome interaction with the idealized self-object did not heal the damage done by the pathogenic interaction with the mirroring one." (pg. 198-199)
- Chapter 5 - The Oedipus Complex (pg. 220)
  - "To state explicitly what has been implicit all along: **the presence of a firm self is a precondition for the experience of the Oedipus complex**. Unless the child sees himself as a delimited, abiding, independent center of initiative, he is unable to experience the object-instinctual desires that lead to the conflicts and secondary adaptations of the oedipal period. Furthermore, if we acknowledge the presence of an active self during the oedipal period, then our conception of the oedipal strivings themselves, as well as of the functions of the psychic structures that are the heirs of the oedipal experience, will reflect psychic reality more accurately." (pg. 227)
  - "[T]he child's experiences during the oedipal phase become understandable only when they are considered within the matrix of the empathic, partially empathic, or unempathic responses from the side of the self-object aspects of his environment. The affectionate desire and the assertive-competitive rivalry of the oedipal child will be responded to by normally empathic parents in two ways. The parents will react to the sexual desires and to the competitive rivalry of the child by becoming sexually stimulated and counter-aggressive, and, at the same time, they will react with joy and pride to the child's developmental achievement, to his vigor and assertiveness. Although under normal circumstances these seemingly inconsistent parental attitudes are fused, I will in the following discuss them as if they could be neatly separated. Concerning the first-mentioned parental responses, little needs to be said — indeed, little can be said that is not implicitly contained in the teachings of classical analysis, or, to say the least, that is not easily integrated with the classical tenets concerning this phase of development. We will say then that the empathic hetero-genital parent will, consciously or preconsciously, grasp the fact of having become the target of the child's libidinal desires and will respond in an aim-inhibited libidinal fashion to the child's advances. The homo-genital parent, too, will consciously or preconsciously grasp the fact of having become the target of the child's rivalrous aggression and will respond in aim-inhibited counter-aggression to the child's hostility. It is evident that both the parents' correct perception of the child's intentions and the fact that their appropriate responses are aim-inhibited are important with regard to the child's growing capacity to integrate his libidinal and aggressive strivings — that, in terms of mental-apparatus psychology, **the child acquires psychic structures that modulate drive expression**. It is clearly deleterious for the child's maturing psychic apparatus if the parental responses to the oedipal manifestations are grossly sexual or grossly counter-aggressive. But, apart from declaring these extremes unacceptable, we must admit that a wide variety of parental responses should be regarded as — even if not actively promoting health and development — at least nonpathogenic and not interfering with psychic development. We shall consider parental responses that can be characterized in this way as lying within the normal range of parental behavior. Thus, within the limits indicated, we can say that a whole spectrum of parental responses lies within the realm of normalcy. In patriarchally organized groups, for example, the parental attitudes toward the oedipal boy foster, as a result of his oedipal experiences, the development of a mental apparatus that is characterized by a firm superego and a set of strong masculine ideals. This type may be specifically adapted to the tasks of a frontier

society or at least to a society in which the values of a frontier society still hold sway. Parental attitudes in groups in which gender differentiation has lessened, may produce, in consequence of different responses to the oedipal child, girls whose superego firmness and ideals correspond more to that normally found in boys of the patriarchal group. And such girls may well be specifically adapted to the tasks of a society that is non-expansive - perhaps the societies of the stabilized populations of tomorrow." (pg. 230-232)

- "In summary, then: **The (sexual and destructive) id and the (inhibiting-prohibiting) superego are constituents of the mental apparatus of Guilty Man. Nuclear ambitions and ideals are the poles of the self; between them stretches the tension arc that forms the center of the pursuits of Tragic Man.** The conflictual aspects of the Oedipus complex are the genetic focus of the development of Guilty Man and of the genesis of the psychoneuroses; the nonconflictual aspects of the Oedipus complex are a step in the development of Tragic Man and in the genesis of the disorders of the self. The conceptualizations of mental-apparatus psychology are adequate in explaining structural neurosis and guilt-depression - in short, the psychic disturbances and conflicts of Guilty Man. The psychology of the self is needed to explain the pathology of the fragmented self (from schizophrenia to narcissistic personality disorder) and of the depleted self (empty depression, i.e., the world of unmirrored ambitions, the world devoid of ideals) - in short, the psychic disturbances and struggles of Tragic Man." (pg. 243)
- "[F]rom the point of view of the psychology of the self we will look upon the oedipal period more as a source of potential strength than weakness." (pg. 245)
  - "We know that the self-objects failures to be empathic with the whole self of the young child has disintegrating results, that in consequence of the incapacity of the self-objects to respond to the whole self, the complex experiential configurations of which it is originally made up begin to fragment, and that, in further consequence, isolated drive experiences (and conflicts about them) begin to manifest themselves." (pg. 247)
- Chapter 6 - The Psychology of the Self (pg. 249)
  - "During the analytic process the analyst's psyche is engaged in depth. The essence of his evenly hovering attention is not to be defined in the negative, as a suspension of his conscious, goal-directed, logical thought processes, but positively, as the counterpart of the analysand's free associations, i.e., as the emergence and use of the analyst's prelogical modes of perceiving and thinking. Evenly hovering attention, in other words, is the analyst's active empathic response to the analysand's free associations, a response in which the deepest layers of the analyst's unconscious from the area of progressive neutralization (Kohut, 1961; Kohut and Seitz, 1963) participate." (pg. 251)
  - "As I said earlier (see p. 85), **man can no more survive psychologically in a psychological milieu that does not respond empathically to him, than he can survive physically in an atmosphere that contains no oxygen.** Lack of emotional responsiveness, silence, the pretense of being an inhuman computer-like machine which gathers data and emits interpretations, do no more supply the psychological milieu for the most undistorted delineation of the normal and abnormal features of a person's psychological makeup than do an oxygen-free atmosphere and a temperature close to the zero-point supply the physical milieu for the most accurate measurement of his physiological responses. Appropriate neutrality in the analytic situation is provided by average conditions. The analyst's behavior vis-à-vis his patient should be the expected average one - i.e., the behavior of a psychologically perceptive person vis-à-vis someone who is suffering and has entrusted himself to him for help." (pg. 253)
- Chapter 7 - Epilogue (pg. 267)
  - "Today's child has fewer and fewer opportunities either to observe its parents at work or at least to participate emotionally, via concrete, understandable imagery, in the parents' competence and in their pride in the work situation where their selves are most profoundly engaged and the core of their personalities is most accessible to the empathic observer. Today's child can, at best, observe the parents' activities during their leisure hours. And here are then indeed opportunities for the child to participate emotionally in parental competence and pride when son or daughter, for example on a camping trip, can participate in the father's putting up the tent and catching fish and in the mother's preparing the family meal. But although I am fully aware of the significant wholesome effect that the emotional closeness to such parental leisure activities provides for the child's forming self, I submit that **the emotional participation in the parental play and leisure activities do not supply the child's nuclear self with the same nutriment as the emotional participation in the activities of real life** - particularly with regard to the limited, optimal, nontraumatic parental failures that provide the fuel for transmuting internalizations." (pg. 269-270)
  - "**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, whether conceived within the framework of the psychology of the self in the narrow sense of the term, as a specific structure in the mental apparatus, or, within the framework of the psychology of the self in the broad sense of the term, as the center of the individual's psychological universe, is, like all reality - physical reality (the data about the world perceived by our senses) or psychological reality (the data about the world perceived via introspection and empathy — not knowable in its essence. We cannot, by introspection and empathy, penetrate to the self *per se*; only its introspectively or empathically perceived psychological manifestations are open to us. Demands for an exact definition of the nature of the self disregard the fact that "the self" is not a concept of an abstract science, but a generalization derived from empirical data. Demands for a differentiation of "self" and "self representation" (or, similarly, of "self" and a "sense of self") are, therefore, based on a misunderstanding. We can collect data concerning the way in which the set of introspectively or empathically perceived inner experiences to which we later refer as "I" is gradually established, and we can observe certain characteristic vicissitudes of this experience. We can describe the various cohesive forms in which the self appears, can demonstrate the several constituents that make up the self - its two poles (ambitions and ideals) and the area of talents and skills that is interposed between the two poles —and explain their genesis and functions. And we can, finally, distinguish between various self types and can explain their distinguishing features on the basis of the predominance of one or the other of their constituents. We can do all that, but we will still not know the essence of the self as differentiated from its manifestations." (pg. 310-311)

c. Further Readings:

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